



December  
2008

# Amalgamated Transit Union Local #1576 Newsletter

## President's Report by Kathleen Custer, President/B.A.

Before I start my brief report this month, I want to express my deep appreciation to all of you who have kept my family and I in your thoughts and prayers during this time of grief that we have been going through. Many of you have heard about the sudden loss of my younger brother, Todd. As you can only imagine, this has been a most difficult time and my I cannot express how much it has meant to my family and I to receive your cards and flowers and to know that we are in your prayers. We can't thank you enough for all the kind words. Thank you to all.

Needless to say, I have had little opportunity to write a comprehensive newsletter article this month. VP Rick did detail in his article about our Informational Picket so I just want to thank all of you for your support during our Informational Picket regarding the lack of a contract with Community Transit. It was wonderful to hear all the cheers, horns-honking and to have all of the support of our membership standing out there in the cold weather with us in our effort to demand that Community Transit come back to the table and negotiate our contract. We had a lot of media coverage including from King 5 News (aired on Tuesday morning, afternoon and evening news), The Everett Herald, Labor Neighbor Radio and the Enterprise. The support was outstanding and we **thank you** for it being as successful as it was. Special thanks go out to Financial Secretary Patty Ceis, Vice President Rick Jurkovic, Recording Secretary John Sainz and Executive Board Officers Randy Franklin, Bruce Kurjiaka, Elaine Vail, Shop Stewards Dani Charles and Debra Laik for helping to make all of this successfully happen.

I wish you and your family a safe and Happy Holiday's and a wonderful 2009.  
Kathleen Custer



# Vice President's Report by Rick Jurkovic, Vice President Page 2

## Behind the Lines

I thought I would share with you some tidbits from our Informational Picket in this newsletter article. Our members at First Transit Everett and First Transit Tacoma and our members at Senior Services in Everett have the ability to strike, but at Community Transit the membership does not have that option as public employees. What they can do is an informational picket and this is how it all went down. Our intent was to get their passengers to e-mail or call the board members on Community Transit's Board of Directors and urge them to demand that CT get back to the bargaining table. The decision to do this was discussed at our E-board meeting and from that discussion a committee was formed from your Executive Officers, 3 Executive Board Officers and two Shop Stewards from CT.



The first thing the committee did was work together to plan our strategy and how we were going to carry it all out. Each of the 3 days of picketing lasted from 6am to 6pm, we started at the Lynnwood Transit Center on Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and handed out over 2000 flyers to passengers. We were telling passengers that our members have been without a contract for over 11 months and asked for their help in getting CT back to the bargaining table. On Wednesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> we picketed at Swamp Creek Park and Ride in the early morning, then went to Highway 99 and Airport Road where CT was having their ground breaking ceremony for the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit). Senator Patty Murray and Mayor Ray Stephanson were special guests at this function. We were all standing along Hwy 99 and along Airport Road with our picket signs for about 45 minutes before the function began. Senator Patty Murray is "labor friendly" and one of her top aides came out to talk to Patty Ceis and I. We explained to him why we were picketing. He then conferred with Senator Murray. The Senator came out and spoke directly with President Kathleen Custer. I truly believe Senator Murray would have excused herself from this function had we asked her to, but President Custer said we did not intend to disrupt her speech. However, we did want the Senator, CT's Board of Directors and the public to know the situation with our contract.

After all the speeches and the ground breaking ceremony, Mayor Ray Stephanson of Everett came over to speak to us. After talking with him briefly, I walked with him and introduced him to President Custer. Kathleen explained to the Mayor what we were doing and why we were doing it. He said if there was anything he could do for us to please let him know.

Both Senator Murray and Mayor Stephanson are "labor friendly". Senator Murray spoke at the Washington State Labor Council last August and she values the support of labor. Mayor Stephanson has been a guest several times at the Snohomish County Labor Council and addressed the council after being elected mayor telling us that he would do all that he could to support labor. Our Local is a member of both of these councils and sends delegates to them. As delegates to these councils we unite with other Unions to decide which issues we support and who we support as candidates. Candidates come to these councils and actively seek our support and promise to support us. Needless to say, all of the officials who have given their support to Labor were not comfortable on the other side of the picket line.

On the last day of our picketing we were at Ash Way Park and Ride where we passed several hundred more flyers. Later that afternoon we picketed outside CT until their monthly Board of Directors meeting began. Our committee and many coach operators attended the Board Meeting. President Custer addressed the Board. She outlined our concerns and asked the Board to demand that CT return to the bargaining table. Toward the end of the meeting, Snohomish County Councilmember Dave Somers spoke and urged CT to get back to the bargaining table with the ATU. Mill Creek Councilmember Mike Todd was in agreement with Mr. Somers' comments. Joe Marine, the mayor of Mukilteo, also urged a settlement to our contract. All of the Board members are elected officials and many of them seek Labor's support in their campaigns. The Board then had a closed-door session to discuss the labor issue brought before them. We waited out in the hallway for over an hour until the doors were re-opened. When the meeting resumed, Lynnwood Councilmember Ted Hikel resolved that the Board direct CT to return to mediation with ATU if it is still possible to work toward a contract through the mediation process. If mediation is not possible, then the Board wants us to get through the arbitration process as soon as possible.

So, it seems that we were successful; that the Board members, as we requested, "demand that Community Transit return to the bargaining table in good faith." To all the members who do not work for CT, I hope that this article gives you an idea of what is going on and what your Officers are capable of accomplishing should we need to picket for your contracts in the future. To all the members at CT, we honestly hope that this process will serve to get all of you a contract you can support and agree to.

Lastly, thank you to all who worked with us behind the lines. We appreciate the work of President Custer who lead the way and the tireless work of our team members Patty Ceis and John Sainz. Thank you to all the committee members: Randy Franklin, Elaine Vail, Bruce Kurjiaka, Debra Laik and Dani Charles. There is not room to thank all the rest by name who picketed before work every day or after work or on their split. Thanks to all of you for your hard work and dedication to this Informational Picket. Good job, well done sisters and brothers!

In Solidarity,  
Rick

# Financial Secretary/Treasurer's Report by Patty Ceis

## MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD

It was terrific last week witnessing the show of solidarity in our Union. Our three days of picketing was in cold weather and luckily no rain, but that didn't hinder our members participating in healthy numbers. I believe we took CT by surprise when we showed up in full force at the BRT groundbreaking. Although we didn't know until we got there, Senator Patty Murray was scheduled to speak and was left with an unexpected dilemma being there when labor appeared demonstrating our lack of a contract. That SNAFU left Joyce Eleanor with serious political egg on her face.



After the picketing, we ended up at the CT Board of Directors' meeting. Since we aren't a part of the Board, the only opportunity we have to make any presentations is during the 'public comment' and we're limited to three minutes only with the rest of the public. President Custer read a letter from our negotiating team during that time. When the scheduled business was taken care of, the Board went into 'executive session to discuss labor relations' which they estimated would be for 20 minutes. After over an hour of waiting, we figured the unpredicted overtime meant that the session most likely wasn't going as cut and dried as they'd planned and would be good news for us. They agreed it would be beneficial to return to the table.

This entire experience has driven home to me how it is of utmost importance that the A.T.U. Legislative Council succeeds in getting our bill pushed through the State Legislature this year. Our bill, if passed, will give the largest labor groups employed by public transit agencies in our State, a voice on every Board of Directors. Since the drivers always comprise the largest organized group in transit agencies, then the Union that represents them would provide the representative. That means not only that we wouldn't be subject to the 3 minute limit with the rest of the 'public' to voice our views, but we could actually participate as a legitimate Board Member, but with no vote. Wouldn't it be great to genuinely feel like an actual voice in the decision-making at Community Transit? I've been involved for several years as a delegate of the ATULC, and in the last two sessions in 2007 we've attempted to gain the Washington Legislators' support for our bill. The session beginning in January will mark our third attempt and we're more hopeful now than ever. During interviews we did prior to the last election, we decided which candidates we would support based on their stand on the rights of the working class. It appears at this time that we have a lot of friends in Olympia. I'll give you an update next month so we can all contact the legislators in our districts and tell them we expect their support in putting this bill into effect during the next session! See: [www.leg.wa.gov/legislature](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature)

Happy Holidays to you all,  
Patty Ceis

## Fred's Vision Quest: Chapter 2 by Tim Lynch, Coach Operator, CT

It was encouraging to see many of us out with our Informational Pickets at the Park & Rides. It was bone-chilling cold. (Now here's an idea: no doubt we'll be doing this again for the next contract ((after we get this one)) and maybe Fred can arrange to have the Operations Managers come out and get us coffee!!!!). We had more positive reactions from our customers. What good was it: Our ridership saw this activity as well as the Company. In addition, the Board of Directors saw and heard first hand that "things" are not good at CT. And yet, we're doing exactly what we need to do for our customers: providing them with the service they need to get where they want to go. Nowhere did we sign up for the abuse we've taken in the past and currently taking in the negotiations for a contract. Previous contracts have taken 18 to 22 months to finalize. This one is rapidly approaching TWELVE MONTHS.

Well, I don't know. Maybe when you see Fred, give him a big hug and tell him we'll get through this without his help.  
That's how I see it,  
Tim Lynch

**Working Off the Clock**

**by Patrick Fitzgerald, Executive Board Officer, Senior Services**

I've noticed a disturbing trend at my workplace recently which needs to be addressed. This is the issue of "Working off the Clock". As Union Workers operating under a contract negotiated between our agency and the Union, we are afforded certain rights and privileges. One of these is guaranteed wages and hours of work. When a Union brother or sister performs their duties outside of contracted conditions they violate the both the spirit and the letter of the labor agreement. By their actions they serve to undermine the entire collective bargaining process.

I am certain that the members performing these extra duties are unaware of the ramifications of their actions. Our employer is likely unaware that this is even occurring. (After all this isn't Wal-Mart!) My observation is they are either: overly helpful, forget to punch the time clock, or are too lazy to fill out a meeting form or overtime slip. I urge the membership to be aware of the rules governing work and wages. Please clock in when and where appropriate, and do the paperwork as required.

Don't get me wrong. There are occasions when the gift of time and effort is truly warranted. Holiday fund drives, agency social functions, NEGOTIATED un-paid preparation time, and certain emergency situations warrant the gift of labor; however, performing normal job functions, or worse, performing another members functions for them, while "off the clock" cannot be tolerated. I urge our members to be aware of their actions, punch in and out on time and abide by the labor agreement. It's for your own good.

**Snohomish County Labor Council**

**by Chris Brydges, ATU 1576 SCLC Representative**

At the November 19th Snohomish County Labor Council meeting it was reported that 3,300 families were helped by the local food banks in Snohomish County the week before. One thousand seven hundred three families had signed up for holiday food baskets with another 350 families put on a waiting list, depending on available supplies. Bottom line.... If you can help out with donations of food, money or time, please do so by calling Suzanne Moreau at the Puget Sound Labor Agency at (425) 252-1112 for the names and locations of various Charities needing our help. Suzanne also reported that the Agency's Operation Shortfall was helping Union members make ends meet two to one over last year, with the Boeing strike contributing to most of the increase.

As 2008 comes to an end, my New Year's wish for all of you is good health, Peace, love and laughter in 2009. I'm proud to be a member of the Amalgamated Transit union, local #1576.

Thank You,  
Chris Brydges

**Contract Negotiations Coming Up**

**by Laura Sandoval, Executive Board Officer, First Transit Tacoma**

The end of our contract is almost here. If you have any good ideas of what you would like to have included in our next contract, now is the time to think about it. President Custer is going to be sending out surveys to us so we can list, in order of priority what we would like to see in our next contract.

If you have any issues that need to be addressed please let Roy Ott, Tony Digilio or myself know so we can bring them up at the next Labor/ Management meeting. If we don't know of a problem, we can't try to get it fixed.

We need to be especially careful driving in school zones. This means weekends, too. There are cameras in several school zones that are active even on weekends, and the school speed limits are often still in effect Saturdays and Sundays. Our rainy weather is back. This means using extra caution. Lower your speed and increase your following distance.

Lastly, let's all please remember the following: Safety, Service, Schedule. Safety comes first. Also, please make sure we escort all our passengers. Ambulatory or not, they **all** need to be escorted, even at the Transit Centers.

Hope you have a safe and happy Holiday,

# Commentary by John Sainz, Recording Secretary

It holiday time again. This is the time of the year when we give thanks for the blessings we have received during the year, celebrate with friends and loved ones and offer hope for a joyful and prosperous new year.



It should also be a time to remember those less fortunate than ourselves. There are any number of relief agencies to which you may donate food, clothing or money. The need is extremely great this year. As a former member of the U.S. Air Force, my personal favorite is the Toys for Tots programs conducted by the U.S. Marine Corps. They have programs to distribute toys to young children as well as teenagers. They began the Toys for Teens program a few years back because it was pointed out that the need for something under the tree is just as great for a fourteen year old as a four year old. I recently heard a radio commercial some of you may find to be a good alternative. It was suggested, in lieu of giving presents, try giving a donation to the favorite charity of your family members and friends in their name and ask they do the same for you. I will be making a donation to Cystic Fibrosis as well as Toys for Tots this year.

I'd like to take a moment to address the non-CT membership. I tried at the beginning, while I was still your Interim Recording Secretary, to offer comments and other items relevant to all four properties. Admittedly, most of the recent articles have been CT Negotiations related. I haven't forgotten the rest of you and do apologize if that seems to be the case. The entire membership's issues are equally important to myself and my fellow Officers. This is one reason why we announced last issue we'd like offerings for a "Letters to the Editor" segment. If you feel there's something I need to comment on, by all means, let me know.

One issue that does concern all of us, is that there are still some folks who insist on waiving their Weingarten Rights going alone to a meeting with Management. Brothers and Sister, this Right is for your protection. I have a tendency to want to express myself in very blunt terms at times. I have learned to trust our Stewards enough to do the talking for me, unless I feel there is something I think they need to bring up and I'll write that in a note to them. The last thing I want to do in such a situation is to lose my own grievance for myself. It was a hard fought Right and one you need to take advantage of.

A safety issue has been brought to my attention. It seems there are some of you who allow passengers to remain standing ahead of the yellow line. Can't do that, folks. I know it's hard when there's a busload and then some, especially when it comes to students at a particular few of the area high schools and Edmonds Community College, to stop them **all** from boarding, but there is regular service for these passengers who might have to wait for 15-20 minutes, but that beats your being unemployed and them waiting to be released from the hospital should an emergency stop happen.

Lastly, I want to thank our President, Kathleen Custer, for her leadership in preparing for our Informational Picketing. I also want to thank Vice President Rick Jurkovic for his seemingly endless energy on the line. Thanks also to Financial Secretary Patty Ceis, Executive Board Officers Randy Franklin, Bruce Kurjiaka and Elaine Vail and Shop Stewards Debra Laik and Dani Charles for all their efforts to pull off a successful picket.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Joyous New Year,  
John.

## Union Dentists

Sunrise Dental is proud to announce that it expanded to ten locations, with the newest location being in Everett, WA. Sunrise Dental is the first and only **unionized** dental group in the State of Washington. Sunrise Dental will take our dental insurance as full payment. This means that you will have **no out-of-pocket obligation!** These 100% covered services include general dentistry, endodontics, periodontics, oral surgery and even crowns. Please go to their web site, [www.sunrisedental.com](http://www.sunrisedental.com), to find the nearest location.

**A final thought for 2008. "Quality is not an act. It is a habit." So said Aristotle. It's a trait exhibited by so many of our members and quality is what caused the ridership to continue to grow, even after the price of fuel dropped like a lead balloon. Your Officers are proud to be associated with so many people who strive for quality in the performance of their daily tasks. We also thank you for all your support this year. Here's to a great 2009!!!!**



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**WEINGARTEN RIGHTS**  
 “If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative, Officer, or Steward be present at this meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to participate in this discussion.”

If you haven't yet done so, please check out our Local's new website at: **atu1576.org**

If you are not receiving the **In Transit** Magazine, we probably don't have your correct information. Please take the time to fill out a form:  
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**\*Upcoming Charter Meetings\***

**Sunday January 18, 2008 @ 1:00 P.M.**  
**(2810 Lombard, Everett)**

**Sunday January 18, 2008 @ 5:30 P.M.**  
**(IBEW Hall, 3049 S. 36th, Tacoma)**

**Tuesday January 20, 2008 @ 10:00 A.M.**  
**(2810 Lombard, Everett)**

Flowers were sent by our Local to **Enes Hadzic**, First Transit Everett, **Dave Thompson** and **Connie Zesbaugh**, Community Transit and **President Kathleen Custer**.

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