Members at Sunset Empire Transportation District in Astoria are moving in the right direction as they ratified their first contract on April 20. Following closely behind them with their first contract is CC-Rider in St. Helens. This newly-organized group had a battle to fight when CC Rider management laid off drivers. With budget restraints, Columbia County had to meet with MTR and produce a plan to keep this much-needed transportation service available to residents in this rural area.

Salem MV went to the floor to vote on their contract a second time. I am happy to report that they voted in the contract!

TriMet has rolled out their Crisis Intervention Stress Management Team (CISM). This Peer Group is available to give support to ATU members when needed. Please know that when you meet with CISM team members, each session is confidential. They are not meeting with you to get anyone in trouble. This team is just there to lend an ear when you need to talk to someone or to ask for guidance. The group consists of retirees from both bus and rail, active bus and rail ATU members and a controller.

On another good note, I have news and HOPE from C-TRAN/C-VAN in Vancouver! It has been nearly one year since their Chief of Operations, Inessa Vitkko, was hired. Inessa is a former Tri-Met employee. She tackled the issue of C-VAN Operators who work part-time being required to work 6 days per week. Ms. Vitkko organized a team to review these practices called the Forced Work Team or FWT. The FWT, often called the Onion Committee, got to the root causes of Forced Work. The amazing findings of the Onion Committee: NOT ENOUGH OPERATORS! The FWT is now renamed the “Hope Committee.” Inessa expects them to get creative and give her options and solutions. The first outcome is that anyone who volunteers or is forced to work on their RDO will be paid overtime! The contract already pays any operator who works over 8 hours per day overtime. Overtime pay will now apply to operators who work overtime on any day of the week.

We HOPE Inessa continues to be the “gold standard” for all employers of ATU Local 757 members.

Paratransit Summit
ATU Local 757 held a Paratransit Summit April 12. Members from throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington were there to discuss problems paratransit operators face on the job. Among those attending were Janice Bachman, Cheri Hall and Matt Leist (photo right) from Region 3. In the photo above are Back row; left to right: Cheri Hall, Klari Cannard, Kathi Brown, Jim Collell, (hat), Warren Hoefr, Matt Leist, Jon Hunt, Josh Taverne, (beard), Carolynne Erickson, and Sherry Pease.
Greetings and salutations brothers and sisters.

We have already made it to May, and we are about to start the new service Bid. This will be the last time this bid will be on the road. Fixed-route has some major changes to routes and service increases coming in September. What it will look like, we won’t know until we do the run-cut towards end of June/early July. This run cut for September will be the first time we will be using the new Trapeze software C-Tran has purchased. We are hoping it will streamline and simplify the run-cut and bidding process; however, it may take a bid or two to work out all the bugs.

I would like to congratulate C-Van dispatcher Jill Carrillo on her election to be the next Liaison Officer for represented staff, clerical customer service and C-Van Dispatchers. Jill has many years of service to the Union as a shop steward, and I am confident she will do an excellent job representing her members. Congratulations Jill.

Hopefully by the time you have read this, many of you will have seen some operators wearing a device called a dosimeter. C-Tran is testing for carbon monoxide (CO). Testing is to be done on the buses, both C-Van and fixed-route, with some possible testing to be conducted later by L&I.

We are experiencing several part-time operators being continuously forced to work. Mostly C-Van operators at this point, also some FR operators as well. To help alleviate this, we have been in discussions with C-Tran, and they have agreed to pay any part-time operator who works on their day off at time and one half. It will be retro to April 1st, 2019, and will continue to the end of the year. We continue to push for double time for all operators who work on their days off.

Yes, we are working on trying to get better choice for shorts. C-Tran is not finding this to be a priority right now, but with summer approaching, we are. I know the shorts we have as our selection are not the most comfortable.

I have met with several new hires who have left good jobs to come to TriMet to work for the opportunity to enter one of our apprenticeship programs, not to continue here to be threatened by a supervisor that has very bad supervisory skills. A lot of our Helpers and Service Workers, not only new hires, are left confused and are still waiting for years to get into a program.

It is a damn shame that there is such a big disconnect between the employer and employees here at TriMet! Could it be because of lack of training, emotional opportunities and the lack of respect from the district? When TriMet stopped promoting from within and started hiring people who do not know our trade, how transit agencies function and how transit functions within the communities, that’s when I knew we were in trouble. It put a strain on all of us, as we were training new management personnel how to do work that they said we weren’t qualified to do. Think about that one. It’s a trade, hands-on training and years of experience. You can’t get this kind of knowledge in college or out of a text book.

All we had to do was be trained by our fellow peers to do what we do: Rail techs, bus mechanics, MOS techs, bus drivers and rail operators. For years TriMet was the leaders in transit training. Other properties envied our training programs and used them as a national standard. So, what happened? Very bad management decisions! At one time we were also rated the #1 Transit Agency in the country. Could this be accomplished again? Yes, I believe so because I believe in the workforce. The current management leadership is heading in the wrong direction. TriMet would have to make a 180 degree turn in the right direction. TriMet Management needs to review Respectful Workplace Rules 6.1, 6.2 & 6.3. TriMet has low ridership and a disgruntle workforce. Contractors and G&G are not loyal employees that care about TriMet’s future. TriMet Management could prevent so many issues by partnering with their labor force and the riders to help come up with solutions to help solve a majority of TriMet’s transit problems. We’re all in this together.

Until next time, Cowboy Joe.
Welcome from Bend, Oregon!

I would like to start by saying congratulations to our new drivers, Kevin, Courtney and Sam! We are so proud of the hard work they put in to get their CDL’s. If you see them, give them a warm welcome. We want to keep the drivers we are all helping to train.

ALL our drivers need to remember to take their 10-minute breaks, regardless of if it makes their routes late. It’s the law! Scheduling may be out of our control, but we have the right to take them. Same goes with bathroom breaks. If you need to go, go! I am hearing from other locations around Oregon about the problems they are having with this issue. We are fortunate with having a transit center and access to it at any time. Again, it may interrupt your timing on fixed routes, but holding it too long can cause many health problems.

We now have a grievance filed on behalf of ALL employees at Bend ParaTransit because of lunch breaks not being provided for some or very late for others. Oregon State law is very clear on when they MUST be taken by.

Summer months are quickly approaching so all of us will need to be extra vigilant to watch for school age kids out and about on our roads.

We also need to put together a Safety Committee. This will be made up of mostly drivers and one member of management.

Considering some of our issues that keep coming up with our buses and "disagreements" about what is safe and what isn't for us as drivers, I am going to ask for help from you to make this happen and it make it work. We are a team and as such we need to work together to keep each other safe. "See something, say something" or in some cases, when you hear a fellow driver on the radio, and you can help, please do! Our new drivers, especially, may not know yet when they can say no about anything, whether it's an unruly passenger or a leak in the air brakes. We are here to support each other. I know from personal experience how much we all care about each other, so let's extend that hand and don't let your fellow drivers get bullied into an unsafe situation.

Lastly, but definitely not least, I would like to say thank you for trusting me enough to be your new liaison. I promise to do the best I can for YOU. Bear with me as I learn what to do and how to do it to best represent you.

Solidarity is important! We have our golden-ened solidarity t-shirts. Let’s wear them proudly and support one another! Fridays are our day to shine!

Remember the radio is for communicating with the District about student management and time. Refrain from calling other drivers about faulty pieces on their buses. That can be done through dispatch or in person.

If you are having problems with your bus parking, please let dispatch or Alex and I know. Maybe we can help. Please don't just park anywhere. In Solidarity,

Mulligan's Stew

As reported by Tim Mulligan

Hola from the Endless Summer Bar in Mexico, where I am listening to karaoke while watching my Bruins lose to the Leafs. A $25 peso cerveza and shrimp poor boy with salad 100 pesos. (Shortcut dollar conversion...Take a 0 off the peso amount and divide by half. Hence 100 pesos would become $5 U.S.) Suppose to be a non-fumar bar, but two smokers sit beside me. Thus, the smoke floats.

I am still playing soccer in an over-50 league in a town North of here, La Penita. My town is in the Central Time Zone. It is just 15 minutes away and is an hour earlier. So, if I have a 9 a.m. game in La Penita, it is 10 a.m. at my casa. I have been getting much playing time at right forward since December, since we barely had enough players. But our last match was my most important because if we won, and we did, then we go to the playoffs. So, 18 players showed up and I was low-man, so I sat and watched the game. New gringo on the block. Shite! Did I utter gringo. Si. It means a person with a foreign accent; especially Irish. Seriously. Damn. Everybody is FACT-checking at once. Ha ha. The old appar- ent usage in the 1846-47 Mexican-American war was green coats go (US soldiers dressed in green). A Spanish speaking Mexican would use verde, not the word green. Okay back to futbol...playing time and being last to sub. Thus, the ball bounces and brave to a UNION-style seniority system. Then again, being 10-years older than my teammates would make me a bit less fit. They do allow me to use my walker on the field, though! It comes in handy when to trip a fleet-footed opponent with it. Tis a joke. My deceased walker-bound dad would have chuckled.

And now, a few cost comparisons. My wife Ilana and I had our 20-month-old Border collie spayed for $68. Yes! And they also have free neuter clinics. Dollars go further here. Our 2000 Windstar van needed alignment and tires balanced. We paid $25.

I don’t miss the CORPORATE part of USA. Medical, dental and pharmaceutical are priced REASONABLY in Mexico. Live to enjoy! This life is not a dress rehearsal. You only get one try. Peace! SALUD! Cheers! Brothers and sister!
Gone through the initial assessment from an outside consulting firm, Mercury Associates. Hopefully they can identify areas for improvement, especially as it relates to fleet management and replacement. Nearly every aspect of the organization has felt the crunch of too few roadworthy buses. Too many times has Maintenance Management relied on crossing their fingers in hopes of making pullout for afternoon service. First things first, Maintenance Management needs to identify all its needs, create a budget, develop a plan and follow through on that plan. All these except for identifying needs have proven difficult for Maintenance Management in the past, but hopefully from now and into the future, things will be more consistent. Your Union will be actively involved in this process to ensure the front-line workers’ opinion is heard and considered.

We have some newer stewards at the District. Please thank them for stepping up. They are the eyes and ears of the Union, and each will bring their skills to help advance our ability to represent our members to the fullest. They are John Gangl and Mike Funderburk from Operations and Trevor McMurrick from Public Safety. All your officers, including these new stewards, attended an ATUni-