



Local 1277

News

November, 2016

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Website: www.atu1277.com

Our 75th Anniversary: 1941-2016

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

58TH ATU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION IN TORONTO DEALS WITH UNION AND POLITICAL ISSUES

By Art Aguilar, President, Local 1277

Your Executive Board was in Toronto from October 3 – 7, representing Local 1277 at the 58th ATU International Convention. Our great Union's delegates gathered to celebrate our 125th year of advancing the rights, goals and dignity of just under 200,000 dedicated, hard-working and skilled mass-transit professionals across the United States and Canada.

Our agenda included a review of the ATU's efforts on behalf of its members at all our properties since our last convention in 2013, as well as a summary of the organizing and political work we have done during that time. Additionally, we re-elected our International officers and swore in several International Vice Presidents, including the former President of Local 1277, Brother James Lindsay.

ATU International President Larry Hanley addressed us, noting his close cooperation with the other International officers and praising the union's recent organizing efforts, which have added more than 3,000 new members across the U.S. and Canada, bringing our membership up to a record 198,000. President Hanley noted the significant effort to train 6,000 members—including 600 officers—to be effective, pro-active representatives and fighters for mass transit and the working men and women who keep it running for millions of riders. He also noted that these new trainees are joining the union-wide effort to prevent privatization of smaller properties.

International Secretary-Treasurer Oscar Owens, in a somber, moving speech, recalled the last time the ATU had convened in Toronto for its International Convention. Recalling the tragic day of September 11, 2001 and its shattering effect on every delegate and our nation, he said, "In the years since, we have faced recession, threats of privatization, attacks on our pensions, wages and benefits, and the destruction of the living standards that we spent decades fighting for. And now as delegates

representing your locals, you will have the special responsibility of charting the future course of our great Union."

In keeping with the heavy political overtones to our convention (the U.S. Presidential and Congressional races, and the newly elected Canadian government), Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) addressed us, praising the ATU's active involvement in both national and local elections. She spoke highly of the everyday work our members do to ensure that millions of mass-transit-dependent riders across the U.S. and Canada have safe and reliable means to get around. Congresswoman Gabbard had warm words for President Hanley's leadership of the ATU, and she blasted the international trade deals that threaten the employment, security and future of so many American working families.

Day Two

The second day was largely devoted to "nuts and bolts" union matters.

The delegates adopted a resolution stating: "*The ATU International shall provide legal, legislative and political support to each Local to facilitate the negotiation of ATU-COPE check-off as part of their Collective Bargaining Agreements. The ATU International shall encourage Locals to contribute to ATU-COPE.*" (Editor's note: This is the very important effort we remind you now and then to make on behalf of the fund).

Delegates permitted the Convention to consider a resolution in support of the teachers in Chicago's public schools who soon may be forced out on strike over wages, benefits and poor conditions in their schools.

Delegates approved the International Secretary-Treasurer's report, which shows the ATU International to be in sound financial shape. The Credentials Committee confirmed the presence of 655 delegates at the Convention, of whom 611 were eligible to vote. Delegates then viewed a sometimes-heartbreaking video showing the many natural disasters around the country which received financial support from the ATU's Disaster Relief Fund.

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58TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CONTINUED

Larry Cohen, the recently retired President of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) spoke to us, praising the political, principled and union leadership of President Hanley, including the ATU effort to organize 14,000 Uber drivers. He strongly opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), saying that many of its thousands of proposed regulations would harm the interests of both our country and millions of working people and families.

Day Three

We heard the International President's report. In it, there was great praise for the ATU's expansion of education and training programs, as well as the creation of the *Tommy Douglas Conference Center*. Further, the report the ATU's legislative and political accomplishments over the past three years, including Congressional approval of the landmark FAST Act, expanded legal services to our Locals, and big growth in ATU membership, making our Union stronger and more influential.

The General Executive Board report cited the close cooperation between that board and the International President and staff towards the common goals of advancing the agenda and interests of our members and their families. President Hanley commented favorably on the upswing in ATU training and education over the past three years, with an emphasis on reaching out to smaller Locals in need of such assistance.

Dr. Lara Skinner of Cornell University's "Labor Leading on Climate" Institute warned us about the increasing dangers and problems on human-caused global warming. Since buses are 10 times more efficient than cars, she said, the transit industry—and the ATU—can be leaders in the major and necessary fight to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Expansion of mass-transit use means more jobs, cleaner air, and a reduction in income inequality, with good-paying union jobs.

"We have a planet-wide crisis and mass-transport will be a major factor in alleviating it," Dr. Skinner said.

A number of awards were presented by International Executive Vice President Javier Perez, Jr.

ATU-COPE (Locals raising the most money for the fund): Locals 1395, Pensacola, Florida; 1287, Kansas City, Missouri; 618, Providence, Rhode Island, and 726, Staten Island, New York. **(Locals with the highest percentage of members in ATU-COPE):** Locals 1209, New London, Connecticut; 704, Little Rock, Arkansas; 694, San Antonio, Texas, and 85, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **(Largest individual contribution to ATU-COPE):** Michael Breihan, President, Local 788, St. Louis, Missouri. **Gary Mauer Organizing Award:** Locals 689, Washington, D.C.; 1027, Fresno, California, and 1577, West Palm Beach, Florida.

Day Four

This day's highlights were the nomination and election of ATU International officers and International Vice Presidents.

Larry Hanley was nominated and unanimously elected to his third term as ATU International President.

Javier Perez, Jr. was nominated and unanimously elected to his second term as ATU International Vice President.

Oscar Owens was nominated and unanimously elected to his sixth term as ATU International Secretary-Treasurer.

Seventeen ATU International Vice Presidents were nominated and unanimously elected by the delegates (a new eighteenth IVP was to be elected). I proudly nominated our former Local 1277 President, Brother **James Lindsay**, as IVP, seat number 17.

Finally, the delegates nominated and elected ATU representatives to the next AFL-CIO National Convention. This concluded the business of the 58th ATU International Convention, a productive and timely gathering of dedicated, forward-looking organized-labor leaders.



The Local 1277 delegate team at the Toronto convention (left to right in front): Michael Ashford, Shop Steward, MTA Division 5; Marilyn Archie, Shop Steward, MTA Division 8; new ATU IVP Jim Lindsay; President Art Aguilar; Treasurer Jeff Shaffer, Financial-Recording Secretary Adolfo Soto, Mauro Varela, Shop Steward, MTA Division 7, and Bruno Angel, Shop Steward, MTA Facilities Maintenance. **Left to right, rear:** Board Member-at-Large Doug Kurowski and Vice President Errol Frazier.

STEP BY STEP FOR OUR HOMELESS HEROES L.A.'S 10TH ANNUAL "HOME WALK"

On Saturday, November 19, we will continue the noble and very-much needed tradition of walking or running five kilometers in order to raise money to help tens of thousands of homeless veterans throughout Southern California. I urge the Local 1277 active members and retirees, and their families and friends, to turn out to raise badly needed money to help those deserving men and women who have fought and sacrificed for our country.

In 2014, Local 1277 participants raised \$1,200.00 for this very worthy cause. We hope to do even better this year! Last year, more than 500 participants, representing more than 40 unions, raised, in total, more than \$30,000—not including corporate matching grants! **For information on how you can participate, along with the time and starting place for this year's event, please contact Brother Mauro Varela at Mauroatu1277@hotmail.com or 323/350-4722.** This is a truly necessary and inspiring event and cause, and I hope many members of the Local 1277 "family" will participate. Thank you.

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER COMMITTEE

By Adolfo Soto, Financial-Recording Secretary, Local 1277

I am proud and pleased to report that I had the honor of being appointed to the International Secretary-Treasurer Committee at the recent ATU International Convention.

This important committee thoroughly reviews and evaluates the report that is given to the convention by the ATU International Secretary-Treasurer (IS-T). This important financial report is prepared by the IS-T's office in strict compliance with both the ATU Constitution and General Laws Section 9 (duties of the International Secretary-Treasurer).

We carefully went over the ATU International's financial records covering the period between **December 31, 2013** and

June 30, 2014, December 31, 2014 – June 30, 2015, and December 31, 2015 – June 30, 2016. This was a total of three years of financial records.

After reviewing the IS-T's report and commenting on its findings and their significance, our committee reported its findings back to the delegates at the convention. We presented and summarized the IS-T report and carefully explained its details and their significance.

The IS-T Committee is made up of 25 Financial Recording-Secretaries, representing ATU local unions from across the United States and Canada.

TWELVE LOCAL 1277 MEMBERS RETIRE FROM MTA

Twelve Local 1277 members have retired from MTA after long and productive careers. They all were hard-working employees and loyal members of our Union.

Jose S. Gomez, Mechanic A, Division 3, 29 years, February 29, 2016

Randy Hoover, Painter Facility Maintenance, 12 years, July 30

Thomas Shelter, Mechanic A, Division 1, 27 years, August 1

Lawrence Remata, Mechanic A, Division 8, 38 years, August 15

Bruce Busse, Mechanic A, Division 8, 17 years, August 16

Arthur Martinez, Non-Destructive Technician, Central Instruction, 36 years, August 19

Leona Swedenhjelm, Mechanic A, Division 10, 30 years, August 31

Chan Le, Maintenance Specialist, Blue Line, 15 years, September 1

Dennis Messer, Rail Warranty Equipment Maintenance Specialist, Light Rail, 25 years, September 2

Alfonso Villanueva, Mechanic A, RRC-B, 11 years, September 6

Charles Etherton, Signal Inspector, Heavy Rail, 15 years, September 21

Abel Saucedo, Systems Electronic Communication Technician, ITS, 27 years, September 23

Local 1277's Executive Board and members wish these brothers and sisters long, enjoyable and healthy retirements. They will be missed!

TEN MORE LOCAL 1277 MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE TO VITAL ATU-COPE FUND

Ten members of our Union have generously contributed to the important ATU COPE Fund. As you know, our International Union amasses this war chest in order to support our political friends and causes, and fight the enemies of working people and families. We are proud to present Union pins and jackets to those members who have realized how vital the ATU COPE Fund is for expanding labor's influence in Congress and advancing our agenda.

Angel Navarro; Eugene Berwager; Howard Luong; James Newman; Mark Calinog; Antonio Sanchez; Juan De La Cruz; Jaime Nava; Henry Diaz, and Luis Lopez-Martinez.

To earn a jacket, one must contribute \$12.50/month, for a total of \$150/year. Congratulations to those members for their public-spirited and timely action. The ATU COPE Fund is very important. Please contribute whatever you can to it! Thank you.

THE SPIRIT OF CARING AND GIVING

REMEMBER LESS-FORTUNATE PEOPLE AND FAMILIES THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA IN THEIR TIME OF NEED!

By Art Aguilar, President, Local 1277

We begin this holiday season by giving thanks for what we have. We treasure our spouses, children, siblings, parents and grandparents. Please always remember to be thankful for what you have and, never take anyone or anything for granted!

Many of our brothers and sisters, and their families, are beginning, or in the middle of, shopping for your loved ones. You will be attending parties at the homes of family and friends, and hosting similar festivities at your house. All this is well and good, and a central part of the holiday season we all enjoy so much.

But—and this is terribly important—please pause in the midst of your celebrations and shopping and think about this:

We must take the time to remember those who have been hit hard—and continue to be hit hard—by our still recovering economy and the scourge of “income inequality”, where the very rich at the top are getting richer and tens of millions of Americans in the middle and bottom are in dire economic straits.

Yes, the overall economic picture—across the country and here in California—has been improving. Slowly, to be sure, and still very painfully for far too many people and families, but times are better.

Nationally, unemployment is holding steady at 5%. That’s further proof of President Obama’s sound economic policies and leadership, but never forget: *When someone is out of work, his or her unemployment rate is 100%!* California’s unemployment rate is down from the dreary high of just a few years ago, but same reality applies to those out of work here.

Our Brothers and Sisters

Many of the unemployed continue to be fellow union brothers and sisters, or family members and friends. Too many families are still affected and we all need to step up and help out those people who are economically challenged, those brothers and sisters who maybe can’t help themselves and may be too proud to ask for assistance.

I ask every ATU Local 1277 brother, sister and family to make an effort to reach out and help others in need during the upcoming holiday season. Let’s all give generously to our favorite local charities. Many churches, community centers, and local charities are collecting food, toys and clothing. We must open our hearts and do whatever we can do to help fill someone else’s holiday season with some happiness.

Further, I call on every Local 1277 Shop Steward to please start a food/toy/clothing drive this coming holiday season. You might want to work in groups in order to minimize costs, and divide your members into small teams, with some participants buying food, some toys, and some clothing. *It is all about teamwork, as it is so much on the job and in life.*

If you are not sure what to buy, then purchase grocery—or other-store—gift cards and donate them. Check with your tax consultant; such contributions may well be tax deductible.

Doing the Right Thing

When those families that receive gifts and assistance show their joy and gratitude, then we all know that it simply was *so right* that we took the time to care. And, brothers and sisters, even if we donate and help others, but never actually see people’s reactions or hear thank you, *we still know in our hearts that we did the right thing. That we got into the real spirit of the holiday season and cared about others less fortunate than we are.*

It is never too late to get involved, to care. *Doing nothing is not an option.* Giving and sharing make the holiday season mean all that much more to you and your families. And it teaches your children a fundamental life lesson: We are all together and we must always help each other.

To our brother and sisters who have lost loved ones this year, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your families during this special time. Your loved ones will live in your hearts and memories forever.

And—please—always remember: Do not drink and drive! Protect your families, jobs and lives! Do not become a statistic! Remember and help those less fortunate than we are!

Together, we can make a difference this holiday season!

Here are the upcoming Local 1277 membership meetings for November and December. Please make every attempt to attend the meeting for your unit. It’s your Union, and we need your participation at our meetings!

Tuesday, November 1:

L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles.

Tuesday, December 6:

Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. **Evening Session:** 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday November 2:

1074 E. La Cadena Drive, Riverside.

Wednesday, December 7:

Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. **Afternoon Session:** 1:00 p.m. **Evening Session:** 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, November 3:

Cathedral City Branch Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City.

Thursday, December 8:

Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. **Afternoon Session:** 4:00 p.m.

Machinists Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach.

Morning Session: 10:00 a.m. **Afternoon Session:** 3:00 p.m.