



# Local 1277

# News

December, 2016

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## Our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: 1941-2016

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### **WE'RE GETTING INVOLVED!**

## **ATU TACKLES THE LOOMING ISSUE OF HUMAN-CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE**

*By Douglas Kurowski, Board Member-at-Large*

Too many Republicans, including many who may staff the new administration, flatly deny it, calling it a hoax! Too much of Corporate America is indifferent about it. Even otherwise intelligent people in all walks of life sometimes make light of it.

What is *it*, brothers and sisters? *It* is human-caused climate change, global warming, and the destruction of our environment and, if things get too far out of hand, *maybe our planet's life-support system itself*. This is no wild-eyed, out-of-left-field rant, either—this is a condition, a new and deadly fact of life, that is bad and getting worse every year.

Our heat waves are longer and hotter. Hurricanes and tornadoes are more severe. The glaciers are melting, the polar icecaps are thinning, and the seas are rising. Air is dangerously unbreathable in many of the world's biggest cities. The sky at noon looks like dusk, as millions of people wear masks to avoid breathing in toxic pollutants.

Science has shown, and in today's media we have seen the devastating effects of climate change and global warming. Some of the effects are sunny-day flooding, more destructive and out-of-control forest fires, severe long-lasting droughts and the increasing loss of animal and plant species. Then, there's Basra, in Iraq, thought to be the original Biblical Garden of Eden, where temperatures have reached **129 degrees** this year, a level where humans can't survive outdoors. Similar heat levels are plaguing India. The effects are real and our call to respond is even more essential.

### **The ATU Gets Involved**

At our recent 58<sup>th</sup> International Convention, not a stone was left unturned when it came to considering the perils of climate change. Our International Union created a new, trend-setting body, the Committee on Climate Change.

Why, you might ask, is a union whose members serve the mass-transit-dependent public, so interested in global warming and its threats to our lives? *Because climate change and global warming and greenhouse-gas increases are very real*. They threaten our health, our lives, our cities, our society, our very existence.

On a global scale, transportation of all kinds contributes about 14% to negative climate change. In the United States alone transportation's carbon footprint is about 29%, with only our insatiable need for energy topping that, at approximately 33%. We all know about automobile-caused air pollution; that's been a fact of life for generations. We might like to think that mass-transit is cleaner, and while it is true that buses and electric trains cut down on overall pollution, mass transit is not completely fault free.

It is, however, worth noting that simply by *doubling* the use of mass transit worldwide (considering the many, many overcrowded and congested cities around the globe, this should be a top infrastructure priority), harmful pollutants and greenhouse gas emission would drop by a whopping **60%**! Further, consider this: it is estimated that by 2050, there will be *two billion* cars on roads around the world. Think about all the pollution they would send into the air we all have to breathe! Expanding mass transit systems as much as possible worldwide—given geographic, technological, political and financial considerations—is not only common sense, it is life-saving.

We all have an idea of the negative effects of diesel engines, whether they are clean-burning or not, but the effects of compressed natural gas (CNG) on the environment are not clear yet. Its use in engines and industry are still being studied. However, the extraction of these gases have caused unforeseen environmental problems in the Mid-West, with unprecedented results being earthquakes, leaks during extraction, and containment and transportation issues. Further, there are dangerous health effects of small amounts of the fracking fluid that is injected into the ground in order to remove the gases; those unhealthful effects are now showing up in ground water.

### **The ATU Works on Solutions**

Our International Union is taking the lead within organized labor by providing its local unions and their members with whatever knowledge is necessary to *recognize* climate change and global warming, *learn* about it, and *combat* it as best we can. Whether it is maintenance training on buses, trains or facilities, new technology like (PTC) Positive Train Control or even discussions on blind spots on the new buses for our drivers, our International is in the forefront of what must be a political, technical, industrial, scientific and personal planet-wide effort.

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## **LIVES AND CAREERS ARE AT STAKE!**

# **Think Before You Drink!**

**By Art Aguilar, President, Local 1277**

During the holiday season—and throughout the year—you and your families probably attend many parties and other social get-togethers. Enjoy the festivities! Have a great time, *but remember*: There may be consequences—*serious consequences*—if you celebrate *too* much.

Or, to put it more bluntly: ***If you drink too much and lose control, you may be risking everything of value: Your career, your families' well-being and security, and even your lives!***

California, along with many other states and cities, always needs new revenue sources. Therefore, local and state law enforcement set up an increasing number of sobriety check points along many streets and highways. You know what inevitably comes next: More and more drivers are being tested—and *arrested*—for driving under the influence! More and more drivers are involved in fatal and non-fatal crashes.

### **Please do not become a statistic!**

Due to the nature of our work, most ATU Local 1277 members are considered “safety-sensitive employees”. Your work directly affects public safety. With this in mind, never forget: ***Your driver's license is a privilege, not a right.*** Your license is, however, clearly a *professional necessity* for our Coach Operators and for our members in many other classifications.

**Please do not drive anywhere, or come to work under the influence!**

You may be randomly tested at work or you may well be pulled over at a sobriety check point. At work, a number of factors come into play: Under the influence, you are hampering both your judgment *and* reaction time to a possible emergency. This in turn may cost a co-worker, a brother or sister, his or her life. While driving to and from work—or to and from a holiday celebration—you may be involved in a serious or even *fatal* collision, one that may drastically affect loved ones.

Is this a risk worth taking? *Of course not!* Enjoy your parties and travel to and from work, but always—*always*—***think before you drink!***

### **Consequences of Drinking and Driving**

Before you make the mistake of drinking and driving, think of the consequence.

***If you are convicted of Driving Under the Influence (DUI), of alcohol or drugs—while driving commercial vehicle (testing at 0.04% or higher), or a personal vehicle—you will, for a first offense, lose your Class “A” license for one year.***

***If this is your second conviction within 10 years—while driving a commercial or non-commercial vehicle, your driving license will be revoked for life!***

***Once again, I remind you in the strongest-possible way: Your California Driver's License is a privilege, not a right!***

*Think before you drink!* This risk you are taking at work or on the road at any time will affect you and your family forever. You cannot undo the past. The loss of a loved one, co-worker, or a completely blameless person on the road who is not drinking or even driving will haunt you for life.

If you fear you have an alcohol or substance-abuse problem, *help is available*. ***Do not wait until you are involved in a life-changing accident before seeking assistance!*** Through your Union, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for you to use. Do not hesitate to take advantage of this excellent resource. Life is too short to fool with drinking and driving!

Final reminder: A number of Local 1277 brothers and sisters—too many, actually—have been *terminated* for alcohol or drug abuse. ***Never forget this: Management at the properties where we work is not fooling around or making idle threats. Please get help, if you need it. Only you can save your job and career, and your family's security and future!***

### **On a Happier Note**

As we head into another joyous and, hopefully, safe and healthy holiday season, my family and I join your Executive Board and their families in wishing every Local 1277 active and retired member, and your families and friends, the very best in holiday cheer and fun.

But even as we prepare to celebrate the season, we must never forget the economically challenged people and families who live among us throughout Southern California. Too many people live in shelters or, worse, on the streets. Too many children will miss the joy of opening presents and, far worse, will be hungry and cold during this holiday season.

If you can, please try to help those who are much less fortunate than we who have careers and healthcare and pensions. Try to give what you can for people who don't have a roof over their heads, no access to medical care, and no family members to care about them. There are many ways you can help, many places you can bring food, clothing and toys. *Please try to do so.*

Enjoy the holidays. ***Be safe and responsible.*** We don't want *any* Local 1277 brother or sister ending up as a holiday-season statistic! You know what I mean!

***Happy holidays, and the very best to you, both on the job and at home throughout 2017!***

## A DIAMOND IN THE ASHES

Out of the ruins of election night, our Union can take some hope: Job-killer state Proposition 53 went down; our candidates for the powerful Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors—Barger and Hahn—won, *and the vitally important County Measure M won nearly 70% of the vote!*

As you know, Measure M raises the sales tax by one-half percent well into the future in order to finance much-needed mass-transit projects and improvements, as well as operating funds (which include our wages!). It is estimated that in 2017—including revenue from 2008's voter-approved Measure R—some *\$860 million* will be raised and available for such worthwhile projects as expansion of the new Expo Light Rail Line, improved bus service, street repairs and paving, and other systems that will help alleviate vehicle gridlock and clean our air.

Along with voters in San Francisco (approving billions of dollars to upgrade the Bay Area Rapid Transit System—BART) and Seattle, people throughout the county rightly recognized the pressing need for more and better mass transit. Thousands of well-paying unionized jobs will be created. I thank the voters for their wisdom in snatching this victory from the jaws of defeat!

### **Shout Outs to Local 1277 Brothers and Sisters Who Contributed Their Time to Pass Measure M**

I warmly thank the following members of our Union who dedicated their time to inform voters about the absolute importance of passing Los Angeles County Measure M:

*Henry Arias*, Division 15; *Eugene Berwager*, Facilities Maintenance, Division 15; *Gustavo Caldera*, Stops & Zones; *Sidney Carr*, Division 8; *Henry Chow*, Division 1; *Enrique Davalos Rodriguez*,

Division 2; *Melvin Ford*, Stops & Zones; *Julio Gonzalez*, Division 7; *Oscar Gonzalez*, Division 15; *Ramon Gutierrez, Jr.*, Division 3; *Kimberly Horrice*, Division 8; *Yolanda Johnson*, Stops & Zones; *Mary Davis Johnson-Jones*, Division 8; *Daniel Joyce*, Division 8; *Yuriy Kaganovski*, Division 8; *Karabed Karabedian*, Division 8; *Lawrence Kimp*, Division 8; *Michael Kinne*, Division 8; *Trimm Nguyen*, Division 8; *Janina Quinney*, Division 3; *Miguel Rodriguez*, Division 8; *Yolanda Ruffin*, Stops & Jones; *Angel Salvador*, Division 8; *Maurice Strong*, Division 7, and *Russel Yang*, Division 8.

These Shop Stewards also contributed their time to help “get out the vote”: *Marilyn Archie*, Division 8; *Charley Barba*, Operations Steward, LBT; *Leo Garcia*, Division 3, and *Mark Pane*, Operations Shop Steward, LBT.

ATU Local 1277 Executive Board Members: *Errol Frazier*; *Douglas Kurowski*; *Jeff Shaffer*; *Adolfo Soto*; International Vice President *James Lindsay*, and myself.

I especially thank *Michael Ashford* and *John Dirito*, who led the fight and were out informing our ridership for 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week. Between all of our volunteers, we handed out *45,000* flyers in L.A. County! The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor assisted in the South Bay, as well and handed out another *35,000* flyers!

Last but not least, I commend our International Union, which greatly assisted our effort. IVP (and former Local 1277 President) *Lindsay* came out and assisted during the campaign, including, ordering and financing 75,000 flyers, and contributing in other ways to the success of our effort. And what a success it was: *Measure M passed with 70% approval!*

This was a terrific team effort and a big win for us. Passage of Measure M shows what organized labor can do when we work together for a vital cause! *Thank you!*

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### **ATU TACKLES THE LOOMING ISSUE OF HUMAN-CAUSED CLIMATE CHANGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

*Now is the time to look into more clean renewable energy.* Whether it is solar or wind, we need to really to seriously consider alternate sources of carbon-based fuels. New fuels can help cut down on pollution, help clean the air we breathe, and provide thousands of industrial and technological jobs. Of course, some long-traditional jobs like coal mining will be lost, but hopefully re-training will help place those workers in new industries (like clean energy).

Some countries, for example, China, have banned new coal mines all together. Here in the U.S., we have barred new fossil fuel infrastructure projects. Some environmentalists and scientists have even suggested that we have to keep the bulk of remaining fossil (unrenewable) fuels in the ground, even to the point of passing a “Keep It in the Ground Act”, regardless of the positions of companies like Exxon-Mobil and the official position of the federal government.

*Our Committee on Climate Change marks a serious effort by the ATU International to use education, innovation and action to better approach this global issue and figure out how best to mitigate its potentially devastating effects.*

In closing, I wish to tell you the experience of a good friend who saw the reality of global warming and climate change up close and personal. In 2010, he and others hiked to a glacier in Alaska. Along the walk, during a hot, dry day (in Alaska!), he saw a marker which showed where the glacier had reached in 1860. Then another showing where it had reached in 1910. Then finally one showing the extent of the glacier in 1960. You can guess it: those markers were all in dry, brush land. When they reached the limit of the glacier in 2010, the people all looked back to see just how far that great glacier had retreated (melted)—under heat, sun and global warming—in 150 years. What an eye-opener!

I congratulate our International Union on its leadership in acting against global warming. I plan to attend more educational and training seminars on this extremely important subject in order to keep you informed and advance the dialogue.

## “RECREATIONAL” MARIJUANA USE LEGALIZED

# PASSAGE OF PROPOSITION 64 DOES NOT CHANGE BANS ON DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE AT OUR PROPERTIES!

By Adolfo Soto, Financial-Recording Secretary

Availability is No Excuse!

On November 8, California voters approved State Proposition 64, which legalizes the purchase of marijuana for “recreational use” for people over 21, beginning in **2018**.

Fine. This was the fair and valid will of the people of California, and barring any legal or other challenges, the provisions of Proposition 64 will go into effect on January 1, 2018.

***But, brothers and sisters, make no mistake of this: The fact that voters approved Proposition 64 does NOT mean that you can—or ever should—use marijuana or have it in your system while on the job! I cannot stress this enough: Marijuana will continue to be regarded as a Schedule-1 substance, like alcohol, and if you are detected with it while on the job—or even on the way to work—you will be severely disciplined and most likely lose your career!***

*This prohibition against marijuana abuse at work applies to every ATU Local 1277 member at all of our properties—MTA, RTA, SunLine and LBT! Never forget this!*

Federal Department of Transportation regulations remain in force, regardless of the passage of Proposition 64 here in California. Marijuana (and other drugs) and alcohol are completely **illegal** while you are at work. Local 1277 members are designated as **public-safety personnel**, responsible for the lives and well-being of hundreds of thousands of mass-transit-dependent riders every day throughout Southern California.

“Well, it is everywhere. I couldn’t help using it.” **Forget it**, brothers and sisters! That excuse won’t get you anywhere. It most certainly will *not* save your job or career, or family’s future.

*Just as ignorance—“But I didn’t even know I was using it”—is no defense against drug or alcohol abuse on the job, it will be no defense for you, with respect to marijuana, beginning in 2018.*

Look, we all know that marijuana can be found in all sorts of things: Rolled cigarettes; cookies, brownies and other pastries, even in cooked dishes like lasagna and other familiar items. *But that will be no excuse!* If you consume marijuana—much like drinking—before you report to work, and if you are tested, **you will be busted!** Don’t think otherwise! If it is found in your system, you will be sunk.

***Again: Marijuana availability or a claim that you didn’t know you were ingesting it will be no defense! A positive test and you are toast!***

If you want to use marijuana recreationally, at home, on your own time, just be sure to remember this: ***You can test positive for the substance for weeks after a single use! But if you use—abuse—marijuana or alcohol on the job that is everyone’s business: Management’s, your Union’s, and especially the people who rely on and use public transit! Proposition 64 is NOT a go-ahead for marijuana misuse at work, nor is it a get-out-of-jail-free card if you are caught!***






**Local 1277’s Executive Board and Staff**

**wish every active member and retiree—and their families—**

**a joyous, safe and healthy holiday season,**

**and the very best for 2017.**








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

**Tuesday, December 6:**  
**Tuesday, January 3**

L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles.  
**Morning Session:** 10:00 a.m. **Evening Session:** 5:00 p.m.

**Wednesday December 7:**  
**Wednesday, January 4:**

1074 E. La Cadena Drive, Riverside.  
**Morning Session:** 10:00 a.m. **Afternoon Session:** 1:00 p.m. **Evening Session:** 6:00 p.m.

**Thursday, December 8:**  
**Thursday, January 5:**

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