



Local 1277

News

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Organized labor is alive and kicking!

A Lesson for MTA Unit Members From Recent Successful UTLA Strike

By Mauro Varela - Treasurer, Local 1277

In these gloomy days of continuing and ruinous attack on organized labor and working families across America, unionized teachers in Los Angeles and other big cities have stood up, fought back, and shown that we can, indeed, beat the bullies.

Here in Los Angeles, our teachers, who help shape our most valuable asset, our children, came out winners in their recent job action against the Board of Education. I congratulate the tough, determined, and *absolutely right* brothers and sisters who took to the streets, air waves, and halls of political power to make their case heard and honored!

With their courageous action, UTLA teachers won:

- **A 6% pay hike over the life of the new contract**
- **A pledge to reduce the size of overcrowded classrooms**
- **New support staff, including librarians, nurses and counselors**

Organized labor in Los Angeles—in this case, the UTLA—flexed its muscles, captured public opinion, and turned its demands into a better, fairer contract. Organized labor still matters, and when we act together, we can win together!

Even more recently, unionized teachers in Denver, Colorado, went out on strike for similar demands as our UTLA brothers and sisters. And, guess what? The strike was settled after less than a week, and the teachers came away with most of what they fought for, including:

- **A 7-11% base-salary pay increase in the first year of the new contract**
- **Cost-of-living increases in the following years of the contract**
- **An end to the unfair and economically indefensible huge bonuses for school district administrators**

Chalk up another win for organized labor—even in the face of a shaky economy, brought about by those “leaders” in Washington, D.C.

And keep your eye on Oakland, California, where teachers are out of their classrooms and in the streets, fighting for similar issues on behalf of their students and their own dignity.

Recently, organized labor has taken a lot of body blows: Anti-union people appointed to the National Labor Relations Board; a rollback of the progressive and much-needed labor reforms of the previous presidential administration, and a consistent and depressing drum beat of anti-working people, anti-working families, anti-union statements from our current leadership.

And yet, here we are: Picking our fights and winning them. Despite the anti-union nonsense from this administration, more and more working men and women are remembering why unions *matter*, why they are working people’s best hope for *job and income equality*, and why *membership and solidarity* are important. Working Americans are re-discovering the value of union membership and remembering that it was the union movement that built our country’s strong and enduring middle class!

The UTLA Strike and a Lesson For ATU Local 1277’s MTA Unit

UTLA members and ATU Local 1277 brothers and sisters may come from different backgrounds and have a different set of important professional skills, but I think the teachers’ determined job action should make us in our Union think about something:

Some of our MTA-Unit members have to avoid job complacency and an attitude of “Let the other guy do the work.”

Too often, I have noticed that MTA buys buses that come with long-term warranties that cannot violate our CBA. Because of this, some of our repair and maintenance members have come to feel that it is o.k. to let a vendor’s people do whatever non-warranty work is necessary, rather than do it themselves.

Similarly, in rail, some of our members complain that there is too much work, even if that extra work leads to always-welcome overtime pay. *But there’s a lesson here, brothers and sisters: Our Union cannot sit back and allow any of our properties to subcontract out all the work we are trained to do and perform so well!*

Simply put, such an attitude only encourages management—and down the line, who knows, maybe our other properties—to chip away at the work we do. *To chip away at the work that we, as unionized workers, do.*

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Think about it: What stops MTA from thinking, well, if they (Local 1277 members) don't want to do the work we trained them to do, why not subcontract out more and more of their work? It's cheaper and we'll get the job done. Then what happens? ***In the years to come, MTA cuts back on our work, curtails hiring new unionized workers, and we lose our hard-won jobs through attrition.***

And if that happens, there go our careers, family security, benefits and overtime pay! We must do as much of our warranty—and other—work as possible! We must do everything we can to keep the Authority's subcontracting out of our work to a minimum!

Our teachers stood and fought for their rights and the best interests of the students they so greatly influence. *We, as responsible transit professionals, can and must do no less. We must be sure we perform the work as only we can, in the best interests of the mass-transit-dependent public we serve.*



Teachers and Local 1277: An unbeatable team!



A note from Local 1277 President Art Aguilar: I know we had a lot of members who went out and supported the teachers during their strike. I thank you for going out and getting involved. Members and teachers walked all over Boyle Heights and downtown Los Angeles (as did many others). I especially thank Albion Elementary School. I received many pictures during the strike. This card is a "thank you" from Albion. It will be placed in our office as a remembrance of **solidarity**. ***Si se Puede! Yes we can!***

Advancement opportunities for all

Clarifications about Training Classes

By Jeff Shaffer - Financial Recording Secretary

A number of Local 1277 MTA-Unit members have asked me about who is eligible for the Authority's training programs. I would like to clear up any misunderstandings about these classes, as well as answer questions concerning the Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC).

It is critical to know that **all ATU Local 1277 MTA-Unit members are eligible to take part in the training programs. These programs are not just for members in any particular classification.**

ATU/MTA's training programs are described in Article 8, Sections F & G of our Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), which states (in part):

"The Authority has established a training program for employees in the ATU bargaining unit who desire to avail themselves of possible advancement to a higher classification." (Section F).

Please review your current CBA (pages 22-24) in order to learn all the details about these training programs. *They are a very worthwhile career-advancement opportunity, and I urge all Local 1277 MTA-Unit members to consider taking advantage of them as a way to move up in your profession.*

But, again, the key point is that these classes are open to all Local 1277 ATU-Unit members.

The Joint Apprenticeship Committee

Members of our MTA-Unit have also approached me wanting to know how many classes (credits) are needed to get into the JAC Program. *A total of 24 college credits (from an accredited school like Los Angeles Trade Tech, or local community college, or four-year school) is needed in order to qualify for the JAC program.*

The JAC was originally created in Side Letter of Agreement #97-03, which has been replaced and put into our CBA under Article 8, Section G which states (in part):

"The Authority has established a training program for employees in the ATU bargaining unit who desire to avail themselves of possible advancement to a higher classification in rail."

*"Training opportunities will be offered as a vacancy occurs in the following classifications: **Maintenance Specialist; Traction Power Inspector, and Track Inspector and Signal Inspector.**"*

Further details about the JAC Program can be found on page 23 of our current CBA. Much like MTA's training classes, the JAC Program is an excellent way to advance your career.

Twelve Local 1277 Members Retire from Careers at MTA

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

John Estel, Rail Electronic Communications Inspector, Rail Comm, 10 years, November 20, 2017; **Enoch Adeyemo**, Traction Power Inspector, Heavy Rail, 26 years, April 9, 2018; **Linda Edwards**, Mechanic A, Division 18, 28 years, June 4; **Tommy Morris**, Property Maintainer A, Facility Maintenance, 32 years, September 28; **Roberto Covarrubias**, Property Maintainer B, Facility Maintenance, 38 years, October 19; **Carlito Calacsan**, Senior Service Attendant, Blue Line, 29 years, November 21; **Antonio Chua**, Digital Systems Technician, ITS Operations, 15 years, January 2, 2019; **Ernest Pringle**, Facility Services Technician, Facility Maintenance, 38 years, January 2; **Luis Saco**, Senior Service Attendant, Division 9, 31 years, January 2; **Adolfo Soto**, Mechanic A/ Local 1277 Financial-Recording Secretary, Division 9, 38 years, January 3; **Wyatt Lopez**, Warranty Equipment Mechanic, CMF, 38 years, January 5, and **Michael Palmer**, Master Mechanic, CMF, 40 years, January 9.

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

Seventeen More Local 1277 Members Contribute to Vital ATU COPE Fund

Seventeen 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.

Daniel Alavez; Florencio Cabamongan; Richard Ramos; Abraham Garfias; Michael A. Rodriguez; Randolph Hickey; John Locke; Jim Roman; Charlie Rivas; Rene Duran; Vincent Rodriguez; Javier Diaz; Thomas Helliwell; Randal Tamaye; Richard Merritt; Howard Luong, and William Mundan.

To earn a jacket, one must contribute \$12.50/month, for a total of \$150.00/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.

It could—and probably will—happen!

When Disaster—Natural or Man-Made—Strikes, We all have to be Prepared in Order to Survive

By John DiRito - Executive Board Member-at-Large

Good morning, afternoon, and evening, brothers and sisters!
I hope this message finds you all well at home and on the job.

Safety and security for ourselves and our families. It's something that we all take for granted: Being well. Being safe. Being secure with the promise of another pleasant tomorrow.

But, living in here Southern California, *especially in this damaging and world-wide era of global warming and climate change*, we are learning that safety and security are no longer guaranteed to us. In fact, experts in environment, earthquakes and weather have been saying that we are due for an impending 'shaker' in the future, and it may well be a significant event. And don't forget the possibilities of wildfires, flooding, mudslides, and power outages!

On Saturday, December 15, 2018, I had the pleasure of attending an informational and training seminar sponsored by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and the American Red Cross. This is the first of a series of classes that will be offered to us to make us full-fledged first responders. The discussion covered preparations for that inevitable big day. Joining me at the seminar were Dean Boykin, Division 18 Shop Steward, Louie Palomino, Division 2 Shop Steward, ATU Local 1277 President Art Aguilar, and several other volunteers and members from various local unions.

We received information and training on a wide variety of scenarios, including how to actively manage temporary shelter centers. But the thing that hit hardest for me was the fact that *I may not be with my family when disaster strikes!* That was a hard notion to push past! Sadly, that scenario could be the same for our members as well, and we need to be prepared. We need to prepare ourselves and our loved ones.

I want to share with you a list of items we covered, that will help us all survive through any unforeseen events. ***Keeping a backpack and a small box in your vehicle with the essentials may well make the difference in how well we all pull through.***

Emergency Backpack: (because you may need to walk home)

- *Flashlight – be sure to replace batteries every 3 years
- *Screwdriver (6 in 1)
- *Knife
- *Duct Tape
- *Lighters
- *Whistle (for signaling)

- *Cordage/rope (for tying things, rigging shelter)
- *2 Spring Clamps
- *Plastic Bags (storage, sanitation)
- *Baby Wipes (cleanup, toilet paper)
- *Nitrile Gloves (prevent contact w/contaminants)
- *Dust Mask (minimum class N95)
- *Ibuprofen
- *Sunscreen
- *Bandages
- *Notebook, pencil, and pen
- *Rain Poncho (can be used as emergency blanket)

Additional Emergency Supplies for your car (which can be accessed in a moment's notice)

- *Full gas tank
- *Water (minimum 1 gallon per person, per day, in clear plastic container)
- *Shoes (good walking shoes)
- *Long Pants, Long Sleeve Shirt, Jacket
- *Hats (large brimmed, beanie for warmth)
- *Blanket (in case you need to sleep in the car)
- *Cash – small bills, change (pay phone, vending machine)
- *Cell phone charger
- *Jumper Cables
- *Road flares
- *Deck of cards
- *Non-perishable food
- *Fire extinguisher
- *Cups, plates, utensils, roll of paper towels, toilet paper

***List of important contact numbers:**

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| --family | --school |
| --neighbors | --doctor |
| --out-of-town contact | --medical insurance policy number |
| --workplace | --home insurance policy number |

Most importantly, talk with your family. Literally. Speak the words, describe the possibilities: Earthquakes; wildfires, water and mud flooding. Decide where the central meeting place at your residence will be, or discuss what the plan of action will be if your home isn't safe. Don't be afraid to include the children in these talks, they will be better informed when you do.

Remember, brothers and sisters, you and your families are facing a "new normal" here in California: Bigger and more frequent wildfires; rising sea levels and more dangerous mudslides after wildfires; overloading and potential sabotage of the power grid and, the "old favorite," an earthquake.

Be prepared and be safe!

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

Tuesday, March 5:	Los Angeles area members:
Tuesday, April 2:	L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 6:	Riverside area members:
Wednesday, April 3:	1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 7:	Palm Springs/SunLine members:
Thursday, April 4:	Cathedral City Branch Library, 33520 Date Palm Drive, Cathedral City Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 7:	Long Beach:
Thursday, April 4:	Machinist Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m.