



Local 1277

News

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President's Report

ATU International and Local 1277 Mourn Loss of Beloved "Double O Express"

Once again, it my heartbreakingly sad duty to report another tragic and untimely death in the leadership of our International Union.

ATU International Secretary-Treasurer, *Oscar Owens*, the ATU's beloved "Double O", passed away on Friday, October 25, shortly after being re-elected to his *seventh* term as our Union's International Secretary-Treasurer at our recent convention. Our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy goes out from your Executive Board and every Local 1277 brother, sister and family to Brother Owen's wife, Betty, and their family.

Brother Owens' life is really the story of our great Union. An army veteran, he joined ATU Local 192 (Oakland) in 1966. Serving ably as an A/C Transit Operator, he rose steadily to become a Shop Steward and then President/Business Agent of his local. Throughout his years, he was a tireless, effective organizer for his local.

During those exciting, turbulent years of labor progress and national social upheaval, Brother Owens served his membership—and organized labor throughout California—with fierce loyalty, dedication and drive. He worked effectively with the California Conference Board, our advocacy arm in Sacramento, helping make it the strong force it is today. Brother Owens was a founding member of the ATU's Black Caucus, and *never* backed down from his determination to see social, racial and economic justice throughout both California and the United States.

Brother Owens served our Union for 37 years—under six International Presidents, including, of course, the late Larry Hanley—in a variety of important positions, including, Special Organizer, International Representative, International Vice President and, for almost 20 years, International Secretary-Treasurer. He served our Union with a wonderful and welcome blend of street smarts, stability, progressive views and unshakable loyalty to all our goals.

His lifelong fight was—and is—*our* fight: An unceasing effort for equality, an end to all forms of injustice, and a never-ending commitment to making the lives, worksites and futures of every ATU brother, sister and family safer and better.

Brother Oscar Owens was a giant in our Union and our lives. His personal credo *was* his life: "*Fired Up and Ready to Go!*" That's how he lived his life, and we—Local 1277 and the ATU International—are all better for the years and dedication he gave to organized labor and working people and families in the U.S. and Canada.



*Rest in Peace,
Brother Oscar Owens.
Your career and example
are your richly deserved memorial!*



The view from the Convention

The Future of our International Union

By Mauro Varela - Treasurer, Local 1277

I was honored and privileged to represent our Union, Local 1277 as a delegate to the 59th ATU International Convention in late September. It is at these special events that we delegates have a say in the direction that our International Union will head for the next three years. The vast majority of the elected delegates were rank and file members, but there were also officers from their local unions, as well as Shop Stewards. *Regardless of the title they held, all delegates had a voice.*

I was proud to be selected as a member of a new and very interesting group, the “Next Generation” Committee. The focus of this committee was to find new and innovative ways to motivate and excite our newer, younger members across the country and in Canada. Our goal was to help identify those brothers and sisters who will take the ATU into the future.

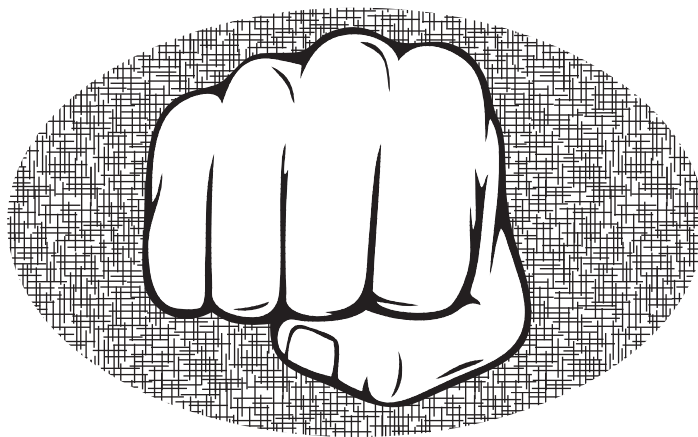
Now, please don’t get me wrong: We were *not* trying to replace current leaders (unless they are not doing a good job). We were simply trying to identify the next generation of members who want to serve our great union. We want the “new blood” to get the training they need so they will be ready to take over when the day comes that our current leaders are ready to step down and pass the torch. The creation of the “Next Generation” Committee demonstrates that the leadership of the ATU International Union is thinking not only about *now*, but looking to make our union stronger and better prepared for the *future*.

Although we did not come up with all the answers at the convention, we did have lots of questions. Questions that will help guide our International Union to develop training for our current members and future leaders. This type of training is greatly needed, and now is the right time to get it going! The union movement hasn’t seen this type of popular, nationwide support in decades, as more and more working men and women are realizing that being part of a union is good for themselves, their careers, their families and their futures—*contrary* to what big business and the administration in Washington, D.C. keeps saying.

Unions across the country took a big blow to the gut when the U.S. Supreme Court decided to overturn the long standing *Abood* decision and side in Mark Janus’ favor—allowing employees to opt out of union membership at some jobsites but still get union representation and benefits. The *Janus* decision was supposed to crush the union movement and end our existence and influence once and for all.

Except it didn’t! In fact, that anti-union, anti-working family decision *helped* set a fire and start the wave of appreciation for unions that is sweeping the country. It started with the teacher protests and victories in several states, then spread to grocery workers, hotel employees, healthcare workers, and now the autoworkers. We, as an overall union movement, had been complacent because we had not been legally challenged until the *Janus* case. What we didn’t realize was that we needed that kick in the butt to get us going again. *And going we got!*

It has been amazing and heartening to see the solidarity and momentum of other unions across the country. This is why the ATU International chooses not to sit by idly. This is why we are thinking outside the box, trying to find ways to get our members involved, *because being involved—at work, politically, in the community—is what being a union member is all about.* But just being involved is only the beginning. Developing the next generation of leaders requires hard work and training. Training to help the next generation fill the shoes of the leaders who have come before us. The theme of the 59th convention was “**Together we fight! Together we Win!**”, but perhaps it was best described by one of the guest speakers at the convention, Kafui Attoh, who said, “**Together we fight, and fight we must!**”



Being a member of the “Next Generation” Committee has taught me a few valuable lessons: 1) As union activists, we must *never* be complacent again! 2) The union movement is never to be counted out, even in the face of defeat! 3) *Fight, fight, and fight!* As our great, late International President Larry Hanley used to say, “*Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living.*” The Next Generation Committee is only the beginning of the ATU’s fight, and like any fighter knows, you can’t win unless you train. And we *will* train the “Next Generation” of ATU leaders!

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 and the company! Have a great time, *but remember*: There may be consequences—*serious, life-changing consequences*—if you celebrate too much.

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

See the title of this article? *Think before you drink!* It is worded that way because—to be as honest and concerned as I can be—most people don't do a lot of thinking after they've been drinking and, besides, it's likely that it will be too late to help, anyway.

California, along with many other states and cities, always needs new revenue sources. Therefore, among other reasons, state and local 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 rightly and honorably 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 your worksite, 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 union brother or sister, injury or even 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 which 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!**

don't drink & drive

Consequences of Drinking and Driving

Before you make the terrible 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 a 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! At any time, the risk you are taking at work or on the road 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 has not been drinking or even driving will haunt you for the rest of your life.

If You Need It, Help is Available

If you fear you may 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. If you have any questions about EAP, or wonder if it can help you, talk to your Shop Steward or a Union officer. Life is too short to fool around with drinking and driving!

A 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 all of our properties is not fooling around or making idle threats. You can lose your job, your career, your future and that of your family's! Please get help if you need it. Only you can save your job and everything that flows from it.***

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 enjoyment.

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 and Northern 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.

Please try to help those who are much less fortunate than we who have homes, food, careers, healthcare, savings and pensions. There are many ways you can do this; please pick a way and do so.

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

Seating only those who belong

Report from the Credential Committee

By Errol Frazier - Vice President, Local 1277

The committee I served on provided the 59th ATU International Convention a very important cog to help the proceedings roll smoothly and fairly.

Under the ATU Constitution and General Laws Section 6.17, Credentials Committee, "The *Credential Committee* is changed with examining and passing upon the credentials of the delegates to the Convention. The Committee is responsible for examining all credentials; reporting to the Convention, all credentials which are not contested, so that the delegates may be seated; hearing from all members whose credentials are contested; and making a recommendation to the Convention so that it may decide whether to seat delegates with contested credentials."

As a Committee member, I was able to see all our efforts come to life. For example, one of our brother delegates had an issue with his credentials. The Financial-Recording Secretary from his local union had had a health issue around the time that all of the credentials had to be sent in. So, the brother had to *hand carry* his credentials all the way to the Convention to make sure it was properly received. Once we started to examine his case, it was a relatively easy and quick fix. We were able to clear him for his credentials, and the brother was able to go onto the Convention floor as a voting member. In fact, he was even nominated for a seat at the International AFL-CIO Convention.

The International Union put together all of the committees, or cogs to the wheel to make the proceedings roll easily. I was more than happy to first, get the experience and the knowledge of the inner workings of the Credentials Committee, and secondly, just to do my part to help our ATU International Convention move forward.

I will end with the theme of the convention, "*Together We Fight, Together We Win!*"

Delegate votes matter

Fair and Accurate Elections at The ATU International Convention

By Jeff Shaffer - Financial-Recording Secretary

I had the honor and privilege to be appointed to the Balloting Committee at this year's ATU International Convention in Las Vegas. The election process I was involved with at the convention was unlike any I have been involved with at Local 1277. Because of the untimely and very unfortunate passing of International President Larry Hanley earlier this year, all the elections at our convention took on even more important significance.

Our first election involved the nomination of Interim International President John Costa as ATU International President. In a show of great confidence in Brother Costa, there were no challengers for this position. I must tell you it was a proud moment to be not only a Local 1277 member, officer and delegate, but also to be involved in the democratic process we practiced during our convention.

As a Balloting Committee member, you have the obligation to provide a true and fair process for voting when an election presents itself. Along with the other committee members, we began by setting up a room up for a smooth and complete monitoring of elections. From confirming the names and local unions for all voting members, to providing their ballots, and allowing them to cast their vote, we worked hard so that they could return to the convention floor as soon as possible.

There were 21 General Executive Board (GEB) positions for consideration and voting, including International President, International Vice President and International Secretary-Treasurer, along with 18 International Vice Presidents. In addition, there were eight AFL-CIO Delegates and Alternates to be elected.

I thank all the members of the Balloting Committee for their diligence in providing a fair and honest counting of the ballots cast for all the positions that were challenged, and also for being on call if the need for consulting or decision making arose at any time during the nomination/election process. I was truly glad to help continue the ATU's tradition of fair and open elections.

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! All members will receive credit for the meetings.

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| Tuesday, Dec 3: | Los Angeles area members: |
| Tuesday, Jan 7: | L.A. Building Trades Council, 1626 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Evening Session 5:00 p.m. |
| Wednesday, Dec 4: | Metrolink Unit members: |
| Wednesday, Jan 8: | Union Offices, 1744 North Main Street. Morning Session 11:00 a.m. |
| Wednesday, Dec 4: | Riverside area members: |
| Wednesday, Jan 8: | 1074 E. La Cadena Dr., Riverside Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m. |
| Thursday, Dec 5: | Palm Springs/SunLine members: |
| Thursday, Jan 9: | Rebirth Temple of Faith, 1243 North Main Street Suite 115, Palm Springs Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 4:00 p.m. |
| Thursday, Dec 5: | Long Beach: |
| Thursday, Jan 9: | Machinist Hall, 319 W. Broadway, Long Beach Morning Session 10:00 a.m. Afternoon Session 3:00 p.m. |