

NO SECRET DEALS

By Darrel Rothe

MCTS has pulled a new rabbit out of their hats in their stubborn refusal to award promotions by seniority. One union brother, who was turned down for platform instructor, filed a grievance to be the top choice when more instructors are picked. The company had gone 2 years back in the man's driving record as the basis for turning him

down. But our grade book says accidents are only counted against you for 18 months! Not so quick. The company produced a one page separate agreement giving the company that right for deciding on promotions. This agreement was signed by the previous union administration. These secret "agreements" have no place in our union. It's too bad when we end up finding out our rights from the company.



RUNNING HOT

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TURN UP THE HEAT

By Bruce Colburn

The coldest part of the winter is here. It looks like a long, hard winter. If that isn't bad enough news, MCTS has been pitifully prepared to deal with the cold. Either that, or company officials haven't come out of their warm offices long enough to check out the winter conditions.

The worst is at KK station. MCTS has been building the new station for what seems like forever. But they forgot any plans to heat the old station if the new one got delayed. The scene at KK these last few weeks would almost be comical if it wasn't so bad. Drivers could be seen huddling around small heaters trying to stay warm. People were told to go across the street to use the bathroom because the pipes had frozen. Finally, the company brought in a large gas heater but the fumes were enough to make someone sick. Meanwhile, the boss was boarded up in his warm and cozy office.

With MCTS expansion there has not been enough room to park many of the buses inside overnight. At KK, buses have been left outside for even longer periods of time. At Fond du Lac, they agreed to have mechanics start the buses at least 30 minutes before pullout. At KK, they said it wasn't necessary because that station was closer to the lake (COME ON!).

A driver at KK was suspended for a day for calling for a bus change in the parking lot-refusing to drive a bus that had been sitting in the freezing cold for many hours.

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MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

SEE CENTER FOLD

Joel McNally



It's about time the County Board showed a little political courage and statesmanship regarding bus fares.

The puny 15-cent increase passed by the board is pathetic. The time for halfway measures is past. It is time for them to stop nickeling and diming us to death.

What I propose is nothing less than a \$15 fare increase. A transfer could be, oh, \$27.

Sure, we might lose a few poor people, but those are not people

we particularly care about anyway.

The important thing is to turn the Transit System into a real revenue producer. The nice part is that by limiting bus transportation to higher income people we could improve the entire system.

If we had a better class of people riding the buses, service would be a lot better. Higher income riders would never stand for the shoddy treatment poor people get.

Besides, we would get rid of all those that we really don't want on our buses anyway. Namely, black kids with radios.

You don't catch rich white kids walking around with loud radios and tape decks. They drive around in their Mercedeses with top-of-the-line stereo components.

All those complaints about rowdiness on the buses would disappear if we got rid of poor people. Rich kids are just not as terrifying. If they get out of hand, their parents send them to military school.

THE INNOCENT BYSTANDER

Equally important would be the improvement in bus aesthetics. Let's face it. The reason many people do not like to take the bus is that there are so many tacky passengers.

Many of the present riders do not dress well. Wouldn't it be much nicer to have buses full of well-turned-out professional people in designer outfits?

Some of the better people around are even seriously concerned about whether it is healthy to mix with bus people. Who knows where these people have been or what diseases they might carry?

Buses would be much more sanitary if they were limited to people who could afford good health care.

Besides, you never know when you might run into people on buses who talk to themselves in loud voices about meaningless, nonsensical things. Business people get enough of this during political discussions with their friends.

If we had thought of limiting the buses to decent upper income people before, we could have planned for it a little better. We wouldn't have bought all those chintzy new buses that don't work.

We might even have gone for something a little nicer than those genuine imitation plastic seats and interiors. As it is now, if the air conditioning ever goes out on a hot day, there is a serious danger of meltdown.

The 30% fare increase passed by the County Board is a step in the right direction, but it is not nearly enough. Let's drop the facade of serving low-income people and go for the big bucks.

OSHA HERE?

By Jan Kruk

The tremendous response to the article on the Flxible Grumman brake system has helped to bring about some positive response on the part of the union and the safety committee. At the last union meeting, Board members Brown and Brzkala announced that OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) would be called in to check the Flxibles out. Mr. Ulma, of the training division, has told the union that he is willing to take anyone out and prove that the Flxible brake system is as safe as any other system.

We, as the drivers are the party held responsible for any accidents occurring because of the anti-skid. We have a responsibility to make sure that the buses are checked out under the conditions that they are most unsafe--wet, icy and slippery roads.

Mr. Brzkala has promised that he would post in the station the dates and times that OSHA would be around. We will hold him to this.

I urge all of the drivers who have had accidents caused by the Grumman Pulse Break System's shortcomings, and those drivers that have grievances filed on this matter to submit a report in writing to OSHA and the safety committee informing them of the details. If we don't speak out and get the facts to the right people, the unjust discipline will continue for accidents that happen when the braking is taken out of our control.

Let's stand firm and united on this issue and see something accomplished instead of just swapping stories in the station and wagging our heads.

Several drivers have also indicated they feel that the braking system of the RTS II needs to be checked out. Well, here's your chance to bring the problems out in the open.

BY-PASS ANTI-SKID

Drivers have told us story after story of problems with the Grumman Pulse Brake system.

Take for instance the new man at the Fond du Lac station who fell victim to the Flxible brakes. He was travelling down Fond du Lac Ave. at normal speed when he stepped on the brakes.

The only trouble he had was that the bus didn't stop. It slid sideways and knocked over a light post.

Even though he took his foot off of the brake the anti-skid device kept on working and of course he kept on skidding.

As a new man he was

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RUNNING HOT? Call us at 444-9530

TURN ON HEADLIGHTS JAN. 15

FOR DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY TO BECOME A NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

Jerome Williams

A.O. Smith workers' Memorial Hall once again will host the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. birthday commemoration. The program is to take place Thursday, January 15th, at 7:30pm and is sponsored by the Dr. Martin Luther King coalition. The coalition consist of Labor unions through out the city and the Milwaukee Labor Council, as well as other community organizations.

Our own Local 998 is one of the principal unions sponsoring the Dr. King program. Some 998 members are selling Dr. King buttons at all three stations and the shops. The response from the Membership has been great. As one driver commented, "Dr. King was a great fighter for freedom and justice. It is not enough that we get double pay on Dr. King's birthday January 15th should be a Sunday schedule stemming from a national holiday".

Local President James Brown has appeared on radio stations urging the entire Milwaukee community to attend the Dr. King

program at the Smith Steelworkers Hall. At the union meeting, all drivers working on January 15th were urged to turn on and keep on their bus headlights to pay tribute to this great freedom fighter.

Nationally Milwaukee joins other cities in trying to convince Congress to make Dr. King's birthday a national holiday. Musical superstar Stevie Wonder is calling for a march on Washington for



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January 15th. A national holiday on Dr. King birthday would be a step toward recognizing the contributions of Black people in

this country.

All 998 members, family and friends are urged to attend the Dr. King program.

WHO RUNS MCTS

By John Goldstein

When Local 998 President Jim Brown proposed turning on the headlights on the buses to honor Martin Luther King, MCTS management did a typical double-take. President Brown took the proposal to Galen Larsen, who turned it down. At the morning union meeting, drivers were outraged that the company could be so arrogant in the face of this simple request. We are turning on our lights to show respect for the late Dr. King, and to join with the national movement to make his birthday a national holiday.

So President Brown took our case to the "higher authorities", including none other than WZUU's Larry the Legend. Well, "The Leg" got MCTS's Henry Mayer on the phone. Mayer said he didn't know

anything about the situation. After a few minutes, he called back to say there had been a lack of communication and, of course, we could turn our headlights on January 15.

Who does run the transit system? Larsen? Mayer? Larry the Legend said it all when he advised President Brown to give him a call whenever any other problem comes up, and he'll take care of it.

Well, Larry, I don't have enough running time, the buses are cold, we need more comfort facilities, our pension stinks and when you solve those, I'll give you some more.

Meanwhile, let's all turn on our headlights on January 15. Help make Martin Luther King's Birthday a national holiday.

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SLIP SLIDING AWAY

By Linda D. Phifer

"Clean up your own backyard before poking around in mine."

My sentiments exactly! The Transit Company continuously states that the primary concern of our jobs as bus drivers should be safety first at all times. Well, my hat is off to that--but what about the safety of their employees in the garages? We are constantly stepping in oil and grease on the floors.

FLXIBLE cont. from page 3 surprised when the company backed up their equipment (the braking system) instead of the employee. The officer at the scene of the "accident" seemed to understand because no ticket was issued. The driver won his grievance against the company's unjust disciplining of him. It turned out that the bus in question had been in repairs for brake problems over the past few months.

These Flxible buses are causing problems all across the country. There have been law suits, cracks have been found in many of the frames of Flxibles in New

That can be awfully dangerous when walking through with a heavy cash box. Drivers have already been forced off the job by falling accidents in the garage.

Where is the company's concern for our safety on the job? If we as employees try to at least maintain safety on the highways and byways at all possible costs why can't the company provide us with hazardous free work conditions?

York and Chicago. In Chicago there has been trouble with computerized brakes. Drivers found they were being set off accidentally at radio stations and bridge crossings. Like in Milwaukee, they have proved unsafe in slippery conditions. But unlike MCTS Chicago is voluntarily (with a little push from the union) disconnecting the brakes.

A while ago MCTS said they couldn't disconnect the brakes because the Flxible buses were under warranty. What is the excuse now? Remember safety first! **DISCONNECT THE FLXIBLE ANTI-SKID DEVICE.**

HAPPINESS IS A WARM BUS

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It was one of those buses that was so cold when you touch the metal your hands stick to it. As of this date, the company has refused to pay the driver for the day.

To top it all off, County Executive O'Donnell is proposing that the new station that is built at Watertown Plank Road doesn't need a garage for buses. If they think there is a problem with cold buses now, he is just asking for trouble.

All these things only add to the problem that many of the buses (new and old) are just not equipped to deal with this kind of cold. The union has made it clear to MCTS that our members will not be forced to drive under these conditions--even if it takes a job action to back this up. After being confronted both by the union and a handicapped passenger at a transit board meeting, MCTS has promised to run the buses that are outside for a number of hours before pullout.

We should make sure that MCTS sticks to their promise. But the company should also take this a step further. Many times there are partially empty tracks while buses remain parked outside. As many buses as possible should be parked inside. Buses should be rotated inside as others are pulled out.

Second, the heating system is not functioning right on many buses. Many drivers pull out only to find the heating system is not working. There is no reason for this. Water levels should be checked nightly. Any bus turned in for lack of heat should be fixed before it is sent out again. No driver should be harassed for exercising their right to a bus that is warm enough to drive.

Last week, a supervisor ordered a woman driver to take off her stocking cap while driving her bus. The plain truth is that many of the buses are so cold you have to bundle up to drive them. Then the company has the nerve to complain about the size of the sick list. To h--- with their dress code.

Many of these problems are caused by MCTS expansion. New facilities will help alleviate some of the problems. But we cannot let progress come at the expense of our health. Remember, you have the right and the obligation to only drive buses that are safe (warm) to operate.