



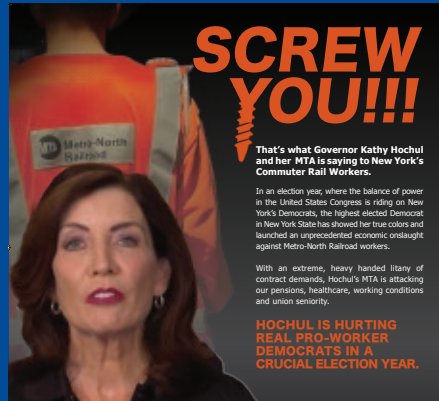
The Audacity To Fight

TWU Confronting Job-Killing Technology



AIR / 19

Big Win Against Airlines
Sending Repair
Work Abroad



RAIL / 23

Metro-North Workers Ratify Contract – and a New Contract Battle Erupts



TRANSIT / 26

CONTRACT VICTORIES
Transit Division
Secures Contracts

Plague of Violence Requires Strong Federal Action

By International President John Samuelsen



On October 26, Bus Operator Bernard Gribbin, a U.S. Army veteran, was shot and killed by a passenger in North Philadelphia.

Weeks earlier, subway Station Agent Baboo Singh, a 74-year-old grandfather, was sucker punched and brutally beaten by a stranger. Singh suffered a cut above his right eye, along with fractures to his nose and other facial bones.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, an unhinged bus rider grabbed the on-board fire extinguisher and threatened to bash Bus Operator Sania Coleman.

All across the country, transit workers are outrageously attacked and abused every single day. Our members are being harassed, menaced, spat upon, beaten up - even shot and killed.

It's been crystal clear to The TWU that ending this plague of violence requires strong action by the federal government. Too many transit agencies and transportation companies seem to think such bursts of violence are unfortunate but largely unavoidable. Some callously see our broken bones, bloodshed, and emotional trauma as the price of doing business when it comes to moving large volumes of people. Of course, they aren't paying the price. We are.

So, the International has pursued a course of aggressive and relentless advocacy. Our efforts recently led to a landmark development: The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) issued its first-ever General Directive on worker assaults. Once finalized, the directive will require every urban agency to take these steps:

Analyze the cause of assaults in their systems.

Have worker-management safety committees craft a plan to prevent anti-worker violence.

Submit to the FTA both the analysis and the safety plan so it may develop further safeguards.

This is progress. But the FTA must make sure the agencies involve workers. No one knows the transit environment better than workers who interact with the public while delivering bus, subway, and light-rail service.

"Federal action can't come soon enough. Bernard Gribbin, Baboo Singh, and Sania Coleman are more than just statistics, more than just numbers in a ledger book. They are victims who should have been able to go to work and return home to their families unscathed."

The FTA also must ensure agency safety plans aren't just documents sitting on shelves gathering dust. Agencies need to implement tangible safety improvements, not just sketch out ideas or make empty promises.

Finally, the FTA should show a willingness to punish agencies that don't comply.

Federal action can't come soon enough. Bernard Gribbin, Baboo Singh, and Sania Coleman are more than just statistics, more than just numbers in a ledger book. They are victims who should have been able to go to work and return home to their families unscathed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Samuelsen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO

JOHN SAMUELSEN
International President

ALEX GARCIA
Int'l Executive Vice President

JEROME LAFRAGOLA
Int'l Secretary-Treasurer

CURTIS TATE
Int'l Administrative Vice President

MIKE MAYES
Int'l Administrative Vice President

MICHAEL J. QUILL
Int'l President, 1934-1966

MICHAEL O'BRIEN
Int'l President Emeritus

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| Delisa Brown | Tom Lenane |
| Willie Brown | Thom McDaniel |
| Greg Cosey | Jeffrey Mitchell |
| Dale Danker | Benyoel Morgan |
| Richard Davis | Gary Peterson |
| John Feltz | Andre Sutton |
| Amy Griffin | Tony Utano |
| Debra Hagan | James Whalen |

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Randy Barnes | Horace Marves |
| John Chiarello | Lyn Montgomery |
| Latonya Crisp | JP Patafio |
| Derick Echevarria | Brian Pollitt |
| Victor Gonzalez | Kevin Smith |
| Tim Hughes | Donald Yates |

EXECUTIVE BOARD

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Carlos Albert | Vanessa Jones |
| Albert Barbosa | Robert Kelley |
| Bedennia Barnes | Shirley Martin |
| Anthony Ballester | Claude Marshall |
| Carlos Bernal | Michael Massoni |
| Constance Bradley | Dennis McCormick |
| Dino Centrone | Gus Mohgrabi |
| Jose DeJesus | Moisley Pawa |
| Joseph D'Elia | Robert Payne |
| Brian DeLucia | Patrick Reynolds |
| Patrice Delva | Dan Rivera |
| Grigoriy Dunichev | Richard Rocco |
| Juan Elvira | Peter Rosconi |
| Christa Gifford | Gary Schaible |
| Jessica Hayes | Jenny Schar |
| Allison Head | Christina Scott |
| Craig Holmes | Lynwood Whichard |
| Patrick Howard | |

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO
Published by the Transport Workers Union of America — ISSN 0039-8659

1220 19th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036
Phone: (202) 719-3900

Annual subscription price \$2.00 per year.

Pete Donohue, Senior Communications Director, and Alex Daugherty, Director

Postmaster: Send address changes to TWU EXPRESS, 1220 19th Street NW, 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20036



DEPARTMENTS

- 2 President's Column
- 4 Secretary-Treasurer's Column
- 15 State Conferences
- 26 Committee Updates



FEATURES

- 5 After a Dark Past, A Miami Bus Operator Sees A Bright Future. A Member Story
- 8 Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.
- 18 Women in Nontraditional Roles: Denise Andrade, Local 591
- 20 Flight Attendants Day of Action



DIVISIONS

AIR

- 19 Big Win Against Airlines Sending Repair Work Abroad
- 22 Flight Instructors Pick TWU

RAIL

- 23 Metro-North Workers Ratify Contract and a New Contract Battle Erupts
- 25 Action Needed on Freight Rail Safety

TUUS

- 12 Landmark Contract in Ohio
- 28 Union Saves Job of Assaulted Bus Operator Who Fought Back



Pro-Union, Pro-Worker Candidates Deserve Support

*By International Secretary-Treasurer
Jerome Lafragola*



My first union event wasn't a seminar or a summer picnic. It was practically a riot. Really.

I was 19 years old and working my first real job as an adult. My union was holding a contract rally in New Jersey because our contract expired, and I decided to check it out. There were about 400 members there, marching in a circle, chanting chants. I joined in.

Then some management executive in a suit showed up. He started lecturing the crowd on why demonstrations weren't necessary. It didn't go over very well. All hell broke loose.

The crowd chased the executive down the street. Luckily, for everyone involved, a police officer hustled the guy into his squad car and got him out of there. It was the most awesome thing I had ever seen. I was just a teenager. To me, this was incredibly exciting.

A union veteran later heard me talking in the break room about what happened. He said I was getting a reputation as a kid who stood up for himself and was pretty sharp. (I didn't argue). He suggested I become a Shop Steward. I did – and never looked back.

I realized the union was the best way to protect and improve our wages and benefits, and push back against management attempts to make our daily work lives miserable. I enjoyed advocating for myself and my co-workers, and this was a good way to do that.

At the end of the day, we can only rely on each other, organized as TWU, to ensure we can take care of our families, put food on the table, pay the rent or mortgage, send our kids to college, take a family vacation, fight for safe working conditions and secure training for the next wave of jobs.

And that's our mindset in this intensifying election season. Candidates on the left and on the right, and the very few who are the middle, want our support. Their political party is irrelevant. We back candidates who are pro-union and pro-worker, candidates who show up and help us achieve our legislative and contract goals.

So, if a candidate supported the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, that's great. It provided billions of dollars for job creating projects – the largest ever federal investment in public transit, commuter railroads, and Amtrak. If a candidate supports legislation that aims to stop airlines from offshoring maintenance

"At the end of the day, we can only rely on each other, organized as TWU, to ensure we can take care of our families, put food on the table, pay the rent or mortgage, send our kids to college, take a family vacation, fight for safe working conditions and secure training for the next wave of jobs."

work and supports our efforts to protect Flight Attendants from assaults, that's someone worth some very serious consideration.

A candidate who endorses or tolerates Right to Work laws? That's a non-starter. Those laws are designed to destroy unions and take away our ability to negotiate contracts. You are either with us or against us when it comes to job-related concerns. That's what matters most. Everything else is secondary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerome Lafragola". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

After A Dark Past, A Miami Bus Operator Sees A Bright Future

After living through decades that were marked by poverty, pain, and despair, Lidia Reyes is finally in the driver's seat.

A dejected Reyes, 48, was staying in a Miami homeless shelter with her two youngest daughters early last year when she read a bulletin-board notice. A novel county program was offering women help obtaining a commercial driver's license. The program also provided a path toward employment at Miami-Dade Transit.

On June 2, after completing months of training, Reyes graduated and became a professional Bus Operator.

"It felt amazing," Reyes said. "That accomplishment meant everything to me. I never knew anything but struggle, anything but poverty and trying to figure out what I was going to do next. Working as hard as I did, and achieving a career, has given me a positive outlook on life. The future looks bright."

A major reason for Reyes' positivity, she said, is her membership in The Transport Workers Union and TWU Local 291. Union wages. Union benefits. And union-negotiated job protections.

She was fired from a previous job on her last day of probation. The boss said he didn't have to give a reason.

"The union gives me more security," she said. "I can't be fired for any little thing. I feel more secure."

A rough life

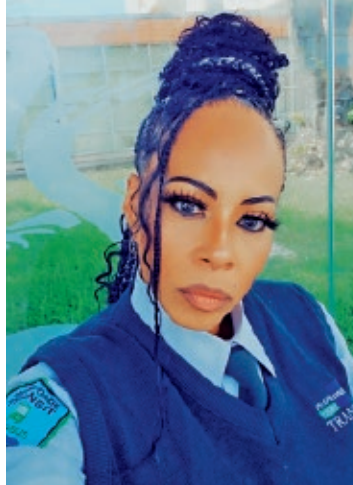
Reyes grew up in Chicago and Miami, and she describes a series of dark milestones. She was sexually abused by her father, abandoned by her drug-addicted mother, and turned over to foster care by her grandmother when she was 11 years old.

Reyes bounced from foster home to foster home, lived on the streets, got caught up in the gang scene and was sexually abused again. She started smoking crack cocaine and became addicted.

In 2010, Reyes kicked her drug habit with help she received at a women's shelter, Lotus House.

As a single mom, she tried to make ends meet with meager government assistance checks or low-wage jobs. She wound up back at Lotus House, however, after losing a job during the pandemic.

"I was scared," she recalled. "I felt defeated. I couldn't see a way out. I couldn't see myself doing any better."



A lifeline

Reyes said she was at her "wits end" and "on the verge of giving up." She then saw the bulletin-board posting and thought about her kids.

"I couldn't let them down," she said. "I'm all they have. I would want them to know that giving up isn't the answer."

Today, Reyes has a swing assignment and operates three different routes that include downtown Miami, Little Havana, and Miami International Airport. She lives with her kids in supportive housing. Apartment rents are based on income. That gives building residents a chance to get on solid financial ground and save to buy their own homes.

Reyes is also volunteering at the county program that helped her: Hope Driven. The program was established in 2021 to empower women and help fill a Bus Operator shortage that arose during the pandemic. Reyes, the first person to successfully complete the program, wants to inspire other women in dire situations to persevere and follow her path.

"I hope to touch someone's heart that may be going through what I went through and show them they are not alone," she said. "There is a way out of the struggle. If I could do it, anyone could."

TWU Members Give Back To Their Communities During The Holidays

Bringing joy, and food, to kids

Jason Priester, 44, a gas utility mechanic, has vivid and warm childhood memories of Christmas morning in his blue-collar Brooklyn home.

He'd wake up around dawn, as the sun was just starting to rise over East New York, and rush into the apartment living room with his three brothers. Under the tree, there would be brightly wrapped presents for all of them. Santa brought the gifts overnight, of course, but with a big assist from Priester's parents: Deborah, a public-school teacher, and Robert, a mail carrier. After the gifts were opened, the family would have a big breakfast feast, he said.

"It was exciting," Priester said of the holiday. "It was uplifting. I felt greatly loved."

Those memories motivated Priester to join with other TWU volunteers and give toys to hundreds of kids of military veterans at the Bronx Zoo in New York City on Dec. 16. He helped kids select one toy each from a long table of options, including: dolls, dinosaurs, battery-operated race cars, footballs, basketballs, bracelet-making kits and Power Rangers. The smiles on the children's faces were electric.

"It brings back memories of childhood," Priester said, adding he felt "fulfilled" being able to bring happiness to kids during the holidays, particularly to those who are less fortunate than he was growing up.

The toy giveaway was just one of several organized by Bronx Borough Vanessa Gibson at which The TWU NY-NJ State Conference played major roles, including co-sponsor. Dozens of members from the Air, Rail, and TUUS divisions helped by collecting \$8,200 in small donations from co-workers, setting up tents, stocking them with toys, and even traveling upstate to get a 30-foot Christmas tree, Local 106 General Recording Secretary Jose DeJesus said.

"We participated at every step of the way here," DeJesus said.

The events were special – but hardly unique – for The Transport Workers Union of America. Across the country, TWU Locals and individuals performed good works for children and families in need.



Local 101 member Jason Priester, background, volunteering at a toy giveaway in the Bronx, NY.



Local 525 gave toys to foster kids and helped host a breakfast party for them in Brevard County, Fla.



TWU Local 525 members doing good deeds in Florida.

TWU Local 525. Florida.

Local 525 helped give toys to nearly 200 foster children in Brevard County, Florida. Volunteers from the "Guided Missile Local" also treated the kids and host families to a breakfast with Santa.

"It was a magical morning with the Big Man dressed in red," Local 525 President Kevin Smith said. "The expressions of joy on these children's faces were the highlight of the weekend."

TWU Local 263. Texas.

In El Paso, Texas, the school district collected toys to be distributed to homeless shelters where some of its students are living because of poverty, domestic violence, or other circumstances. One shelter, housing battered women and their children, slipped through the cracks, and was left off the list.

MEMBERS IN ACTION



Local 208 packaged and distributed groceries to the needy in Columbus, Ohio.

Local 263 saved the day. While the kids were at school, the bus drivers, mechanics, and custodians gave shelter staff 20 stocking-like goody bags, handmade by a member, for the kids. Each bag contained a small toy, candy, and snacks.

“We stepped in and at the last minute pulled it together,” Local 263 President Ruth Villalobos said. “They were really happy to get them.”

TWU Local 208. Ohio.

Local 208 members helped distribute bags and boxes of groceries to more than 3,000 needy families, volunteering with the “Christmas Cares, Unions Share” program at St. Stephen’s Community House in Columbus, Ohio. Recipient families didn’t even have to get out of their cars. Cars pulled up to several different loading stations and volunteers put the food packages in the trunk.

Local 208 President Jarvis Williams said food insecurity is heightened during the holiday season because kids who usually get meals at school are at home.

“We try to ramp up the giving during the holidays to fill the void as much as we can,” he said. “TWU is dedicated to making a positive impact and fostering solidarity within our neighborhoods.”



Bags of groceries for the poor in Columbus.



NY/NJ State Conference. International President John Samuelsen, center, the Bronx.



A little girl deciding what toy she wants in the Bronx.



Members of TWU Local 263 gave bags with toys and candy to school kids living in homeless shelters in El Paso, Texas.



Honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Miami

The TWU's annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was held in Miami this year where members not only marched in the city's parade but also participated in activities reflecting the themes of the great leader's life: voting rights, community service, and faith.

The events started Friday, January 12, with a town hall panel discussion about the importance of voting. The next day, officers and members fed the needy. They went to church on Sunday and marched in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade on Monday.

"Our principles, what we stand for, actually mirror the work and fight of Dr. Martin Luther King: equality for everyone, giving back, service," TWU Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate said. "Look at us here at the parade today. We are Dr. King's dream in action. A truly diverse group of organized workers striving for a more just and equal society."

More than 100 TWU members participated in the events that also included a cookout hosted by TWU Local 291. Some highlights:

Town Hall

The TWU's MLK weekend kicked off with a Town Hall discussion on the importance of voting. TWU Local 513 President Greg Cosey served as moderator for the panelists: Fedrick Ingram, AFT Secretary-Treasurer; Andrew Washington, Second Vice President of the NAACP Ohio Conference; and Antonio White, First Vice President, United Teachers of Dade.

"Voting is everything," Ingram said. "It's what we eat. It's the car we



drive. It's the food at the grocery store. It's all controlled by politics. Gun violence. That's politics because it doesn't have to be that way. Diabetes. High blood pressure. That's politics because many people can't afford medicine. Voting is absolutely crucial."

The conversation naturally progressed to voter turnout and the need to encourage friends, family, and co-workers to participate in the next presidential election. Voter participation surged in the 2020 election, but many people didn't bother. While 71% of white voters cast ballots, only 58.4% of non-white voters did, including 62.6% of black voters, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

Antonio Wright said apathetic voters, particularly the young, need to be educated and motivated. They must know and appreciate the struggle and how much it took to secure the right to vote, he said.





“People were shot attempting to vote,” he said. “We have to bring people back to how this all began, and what the struggle was all about!”

Community Service

TWU volunteers helped package and distribute meals at the Greater Bethel AME Church in historic Overtown, a Miami neighborhood. The community was founded in 1896 by Blacks from the South and the Bahamas who came to work building the railroad. Once thriving, known as the Harlem of the South, Overtown fell on hard times in the mid 20th Century when it was literally fractured. The government built three highways right through the community.

Today, more than half of Overtown residents live below the federal poverty level. The median household income is \$28,000. Development in recent years has encroached to Overtown’s borders, raising rents and food insecurity.

“Unfortunately, people are hungry here in Overtown, and all over America,” Alberta Godfrey, AME’s education director said as TWU volunteers handed out bags of groceries. “It’s a blessing when others can come to help.”

Scott Fassett, 59, who is homeless and living on the street, picked up a bag of food. He worked 26 years as an assembler in a Buffalo factory that made beer taps. Then the company packed up and moved to another country about two years ago, leaving Fassett without the means to pay rent, he said.

He came to Florida because the climate is far better for somebody who can’t afford a home, he said.

“I had to get out of Buffalo,” he said. “The weather is the worst.”

Parade and The TWU-King Connection

The TWU had a big presence at Miami’s 47th Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade.

More than 100 members and officers marched behind a giant TWU banner. The contingent also came with four Miami-Dade buses, a historic 1954 bus, a TWU van, and a float adorned with a large photo of King and Mike Quill.

Quill founded The TWU in 1934, and from the start the union pledged “to unite in this industrial union, regardless of race, creed, color or nationality, all workers eligible for membership.”

He became a close associate of King as they shared many convictions, including the need to eradicate discrimination in the workplace and society at large. The TWU provided financial support to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which King led as president, and marched at his side at civil rights protests.

“We’re here to celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.,” said Shirley Duff, TWU Civil & Human Rights Committee Director. “He dedicated his life to serving the people, getting people voting rights, and working so they had opportunities for a good quality of life. We’re here to keep his legacy going.”

King spoke at The TWU’s 11th Constitutional Convention in 1961. He commended The TWU for organizing all workers and demanding Blacks be hired in all titles, not just Cleaner.

“When your union was born in strife during the turbulent thirties, it grew and developed in the pioneering, democratic tradition of a CIO Union with respect to racial equality,” he said. “It is pathetic that our nation did not begin decades ago, as you did, to deal with the evil of discrimination.”



For more photos, scan this QR code.

The Audacity to Fight

The TWU Issues A Call to Arms at Labor Summit About Job-Killing Tech



The TWU contingent at the labor summit.



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and TWU International President John Samuelsen

TWU leadership and staff converged in Las Vegas in January for a major labor summit about technology that's designed to replace workers – and generate huge profits for Big Tech and greedy corporations.

During two days of panel discussions, labor leaders and experts from across the country discussed strategies to protect workers from rapidly accelerating developments in artificial intelligence and automation. They included securing contract language that limits the use of technology, and establishing training programs so workers can learn additional skills for new roles.

But TWU International President John Samuelsen turned up the heat with a call for aggressive action, saying labor leaders must have “the audacity to fight.” No one should be deluded into thinking that elected officials, government regulators, or transportation executives will step up on their own and save the day,” he said at the AFL-CIO’s Labor Innovation and Technology Summit.

“There’s nobody else who can take on this fight,” Samuelsen said. “The trade union movement is the only institution that workers can rely on to defend them, to protect their families, and advance their livelihoods.”

Internal organizing is critical, Samuelsen said. Union members must realize that the threat from job-killing technology is real, he said. They must be engaged and motivated by the fact that “the enemy is at the gate. Winter is not only coming, it’s here.”

The transportation sector is facing a lot of change. Not only are there self-driving taxis but also fully autonomous full-size buses, new on-demand transportation services, aircraft inspection drones, air taxis, automated transportation maintenance, fully autonomous trains, and electrified transportation fleets.

“These technologies aren’t some pipe dream,” Samuelsen said. “They are emerging and all of them are already in place, in development, or being tested in pilot projects.”

The Labor Innovation and Technology Summit was co-founded and organized by the AFL-CIO, the Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists



International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate and other panelists on stage

(SAG-AFTRA), and the AFL-CIO Tech Institute. TWU was a co-sponsor. The summit was held Jan. 8 and 9 at the same time as the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), also in Las Vegas.

CES is the world’s biggest electronics trade show where corporations and tech developers showcase their latest gadgets, programs, and projects. Having the summit at the same time as CES was intentional. Labor leaders wanted to signal to big business that workers must be considered and involved when it comes to shaping the future of work and the world we live in, AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said.

Shuler said touring the show made her heart race as she confronted the enormity of change and challenges facing workers. But she said unions can exert influence and make a difference. She cited the strike by actors in Hollywood and the threatened strike by casino and hotel workers in Las Vegas, both last year.

The actors won contract language requiring studios to obtain permission before creating a digital replica of an actor’s voice or image, and pay for it. The casino, hotel culinary, and service workers won language requiring advance notice of job-impacting technology and training for new jobs.



Administrative VP Tate, Secretary-Treasurer Lafragola and International President Samuelsen check out a robobus.



Robotic bartender

TWU Goes to the Tech Front Line

Know your enemy.

TWU International President John Samuelsen, Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate, Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola, along with other officers and staff, toured an international trade show where job-killing technology was on display.

The Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January featured a robot bartender, a robotic DJ, and an autonomous lawnmower. The latter only needs to be driven on the lawn once. It then automatically duplicates the route that was taken.

Of particular interest to The TWU contingent was an automated six-seat Robobus. No driver needed, a representative of the software company showcasing the vehicle said. Sensors detect objects and pedestrians. Sophisticated computer programming tells the Robobus when to stop, turn, or accelerate.

“We’re here researching,” Samuelsen said. “Every good fightback starts with solid research, and here we are. We’ve come to this show in Las Vegas because this is the vanguard of technology, of the industry and its investors. This is their show. This is what they intend to replace us with, what they intend to destroy our livelihoods with. But we’re going to fight them and beat them.”

Vehicles like the Robobus on display are being tested in pilot programs in several U.S. cities. San Francisco, for example, launched a pilot program with automated shuttles in August. The vehicles can each carry a handful of riders. They don’t have drivers’ seats or steering wheels. Each shuttle has an attendant who is supposed to monitor the technology and take control with a handheld device if necessary.



Tate gives his view of a driverless bus



Automatic lawnmower

Pilot program proponents in San Francisco at the launch said the goal for such small, automated shuttles is to supplement existing transit service, not replace it. They will bring passengers short distances to traditional bus routes, subway stops, or commuter train stations. These “feeder service” vehicles would always have a human attendant, these proponents said.

The world’s first automated full-size bus service was launched in Scotland last year with two attendants.

But investors are pumping billions of dollars into research, hoping to reach a point where the only humans on board are the passengers.

“Many people use the analogy of the elevator when they first came out: they started out with having an attendant on board,” said Joe Moye, the CEO of autonomous shuttle company Beep. “People were apprehensive about being raised in the air by some little box car, and everyone wondered if that technology was safe. It’s very similar to where we are now with autonomous vehicles.”

Tate said The TWU isn’t against all technology. Sensors and LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology can be used to alert Bus Operators of potential hazards, like a pedestrian in the crosswalk or a vehicle that has suddenly stopped. But unions must be wary of technology being added to buses that could help set the stage for the eventual elimination of Bus Operator jobs.

“We have to stay on top of this,” he said. “We have to make sure we don’t let it (technology) get to the point where it’s taking us out of the seats.”



No Robots Need Apply

The Transport Workers Union has secured first-of-its kind contract language preventing a public transit agency from replacing Bus Operators with self-driving/autonomous vehicle technology.

The contract, between TWU Local 208 members and the Central Ohio Transit Authority in Columbus, was ratified on Jan. 29. It prohibits the authority from deploying autonomous vehicles without union approval. It also says Bus Operators and Mechanics cannot be laid off, or have their wages reduced, because of new or modified technology introduced by COTA.

“This is the first contract we have with language that specifically identifies and addresses the threat of self-driving buses,” International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate said. “It’s going to be, I believe, the template of what we want to see in most of our contracts going forward.”

The contract language was largely developed by The TWU Technology Task Force, which was formed to help protect TWU members from perils posed by technological advances, Tate said. Tate, International President John Samuelsen, and Transit Division Chair Willie Brown, congratulated Local 208 President Jarvis Williams and his officers for negotiating the tech provisions into the contract.

Embedding protections in collective bargaining agreements with employers like COTA is a critical part of the International’s multi-faceted strategy to confront the rapidly advancing technology being pushed by Big Tech and Wall Street. Self-driving cars and taxis are on the streets of San Francisco and other cities. Autonomous shuttles capable of carrying a handful of passengers are being pilot tested. The airline industry in Europe, meanwhile, is already taking steps to prepare for a future with fewer pilots in the cockpit, and drones are being used to conduct aircraft inspections. Driverless trains are also a reality all over the world.

“The term existential threat has been bandied about for a long time,” President Samuelsen said at the January joint meeting of the International Executive Council and Board. “This is really a time of existential crisis, one hundred percent. We are at a time where the very

real threat of robots taking over our work is at the gate. It’s crashing down the gate.”

The Local 208 contract also includes 16% raises over three years. Members ratified it with approval from 84% of voters.

“TWU members are the frontline workers of public transit in central Ohio,” Williams said. “They work hard for our community... and this contract recognizes their service to area residents, workers and businesses.”

The TWU is working on multiple fronts regarding emerging technology: advocating for worker protections with government regulators and legislators, supporting Locals with member education and internal organizing, and providing expertise in contract bargaining, Samuelsen said.

“These elements have to work synergistically until the smoke clears, until the dust settles, from this wave of technology that’s threatening to engulf us right now,” he said.

Columbus was the scene of a TWU battle against automation that started in late 2017. The city and state facilitated a pilot program of an autonomous six-person shuttle inside a sprawling public park. TWU rallied at City Hall, organized community forums, and held press conferences warning of the danger posed by the untested technology. The pilot was discontinued after one vehicle came to a sudden stop, throwing passengers to the floor.



IEC Council and Board Meet. New Members Join Board

The International Executive Council and Board convened in Florida in January. Division Directors and top officers gave reports on union activities and issues of importance, including contract agreements, ongoing contract fights, federal legislation, organizing drives, and union finances. New board members from seven Locals also were sworn in during the meeting.



Swearing In Group Photo: Left to right: International President John Samuelsen, Executive Vice President Alex Garcia, Jose DeJesus (Recording Sec. Local 106), Craig Holmes (Pres. Local 290), Moises Pawa (Pres. Local 571), International Admin. Vice President Mike Mayes, Anthony Ballester (Pres. Local 250A), Ed Flaherty (Pres. Local 2054), Robert Payne (Pres. Local 504), Dennis McCormick, (Track Div. Recording Sec. Local 100), International Admin. VP Curtis Tate, International Sec. Treas. Jerome Lafragola.

TWU International Announces Interns for 2024

TWU International is proud to announce six interns who will travel to Washington, DC for four weeks to learn more about TWU International's work and engage with key lawmakers and policy officials about crucial TWU initiatives.

The 2024 interns are Klarissa-Ann Principe, Local 577 Recording Secretary and Nevada State Conference Chair; Raul Deleon, Local 260 Executive Board-Maintenance and Texas State Conference Co-Chair; Delisa Brown, Local 171 President and International Vice President; Shannon Jones, Local 514; Maria Teresa Hank, Local 556 and Nevada State Conference Co-Chair and Richard Houde, Local 2055.

The internship program was relaunched this year to provide valuable training and insight into The TWU's political and legislative work. Ideally, the internship program will provide a launching pad for union activists to develop a set of skills that can propel their work within their locals and the larger union.

International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia said the internship aims to train the next generation of leaders throughout The TWU.

"They're going to learn so much," Garcia said, adding that an effort was made to bring people from different divisions together. The idea is to show how issues affecting aviation, transit, and rail are interconnected but also different in many ways, namely that the federal government plays the biggest role in aviation and rail while state and local governments play a larger role in transit.

"That's why we try to bring two people from different divisions together so they realize while they have the same fight they have to do it in different arenas," Garcia said.

Interns will work at the International headquarters in



TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia



TWU Legislative and Political Representative Heather Laverty.

Washington, DC, in the Government Affairs and COPE departments, along with potential work supporting the Communications, Research and Analysis, and Division Directors and IAC. Interns will learn to work with high-level decision makers, including members of Congress, staffers, and administration officials – providing a chance to meet and talk with key policymakers and see how The TWU works to make policy changes in our nation's capital.

Heather Laverty, TWU's Legislative and Political Representative, said interns will get a better understanding of the work done across different divisions.

"We're hoping over time they develop lots of skills of union activists who can better support political work within their Local, for the whole union as well and just get a general understanding of what happens in The TWU International office," Laverty said.

Garcia and Laverty encouraged applicants who might have not been picked for the 2024 program to apply again in the future.



Stronger Communities Through Better Transit

Nearly every transit agency in the country is currently facing a fiscal cliff as pandemic relief funds start to run out while ridership continues to recover. Without new sources of funding, these agencies face service cuts and threatened layoffs. At the same time, every agency in the country has received a 45% increase in federal funding for capital construction and infrastructure projects. In most cases, that would be more than enough to cover budget gaps. However, agencies are prohibited from using capital money for operating expenses – the day-to-day cost of providing service, like wages. The TWU is fighting to fix this ridiculous and arbitrary limit and restore stability to public transportation financing.

In conjunction with large agencies and riders' groups, The TWU drafted the Stronger Communities Through Better Transit Act (H.R. 7039), introduced in January by Congressman Hank Johnson (D-GA). This bill would establish federal operating support for public transportation. Operating costs account for 68% of transit costs nationally and in addition to wages include service frequency, and nearly every other line item that directly affects TWU members' livelihoods. This new federal revenue stream would ensure that agencies can afford to pay market wages to recruit operators and mechanics, can afford to add new service and expand their service

areas, and continue to maintain existing routes. It is long overdue.

The current federal financing system exacerbates operating deficits by incentivizing states and localities to chase matching funds for capital investments. Federal capital money is available if municipalities agree to also put money to specific capital projects. That encourages municipalities to move funding out of operating accounts and into capital accounts to earn those federal funds. This process only accelerates insolvency.

If our communities fail to adequately fund our public transportation systems, we will face a “transit death spiral.” Service cuts or increased fares drive people away from transit leading to an even greater decline in revenue. We’ve seen this kind of implosion in the past and we know the devastation it can cause; we will not allow that future to come about at any of our properties.

Federal support for transit operations, especially when tied to requirements that localities maintain at least their existing levels of funding, will immediately solve the current funding crises and allow public transportation to grow. The legislation being advanced by The TWU in Washington, DC will give not only stability, but a brighter future for the transit workforce for generations to come. The TWU is working to advance this legislation in the next three years.





FLORIDA

In the dynamic Week 5 of the Florida Legislative session, amid the Florida State Conference in Tallahassee, the collective strength of Local 291, 556, 570, and 579 echoed alongside the dedicated members of the Florida AFL-CIO Working Families Lobby Corps. Our purpose was clear - engaging in meaningful dialogues with elected leaders, both in support and opposition of bills, while actively participating in committee meetings.

The experience proved to be truly enlightening as we delved into the intricacies of bills that directly impact our livelihoods and wallets. This encounter further solidified our unwavering commitment to supporting candidates who passionately advocate for labor, shaping policies and decisions based on the genuine needs of their constituents.

In the embrace of our labor family, this encounter served as a profound wellspring of renewed energy and dedication to shaping a brighter future. We extend this call to action to each of you, urging active engagement with your elected officials. Inquire about their stance on labor issues and policies that foster a worker-friendly environment.

Let's collaboratively forge a future where our voices aren't merely heard but actively considered in the policies that shape our lives.



TEXAS

TWU Texas State Conference members actively engaged in the Texas AFL-CIO COPE Conference held on January 28 and 29 in Austin. Distinguished panels featuring union leaders from diverse unions convened to discuss effective strategies for unionizing Texas and mobilizing members to exercise their voting rights. Notably, the conference stood as the exclusive venue for the Texas U.S. Senate debate, candidate screening and endorsements.

The workshops encompassed a broad spectrum of themes, such as expanding organizational capacity, engaging volunteers, recruitment, and retention. Moreover, sessions delved into the development of electoral worksite programs, strategic communications, and issue-based campaigns.

In a moment of well-deserved recognition, the Texas AFL-CIO proudly inducted retired TWU 513 member Tom Carlin into the prestigious Texas AFL-CIO Hall of Fame, celebrating his significant contributions to the labor movement.

NEW YORK / NEW JERSEY

NY/NJ State Conference members understand the significance of active participation in their state's legislative sessions. Without hesitation, the Conference engaged with elected leaders to garner support for the four State Conference bills, and during their time in Albany, members of the State Conference dedicated several days to advocate for pro-worker legislation, visiting all 213 Assembly and Senate offices at the capital.





Q&A with TWU Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza

Q. You've been a member of TWU Local 501 for more than 30 years. Tell us about your career in the airline industry and your involvement with The TWU.

A. I started my career in the airline industry back in 1988 when I took a customer service position with Trans World Airlines (TWA). At the time, I was finishing up my degree at Brooklyn College. I enjoyed working and travelling for that once-great airline, but it was a nonunion environment. The bosses often made rash decisions that really made me feel that there had to be something better out there.

In early 1991, a family friend suggested I speak with their son, who was a very senior Crew Chief with American Airlines at JFK Airport. That gentleman, Tony Fama, helped me get a job with AA. After my six-month probation period, I was handed my TWU Local 501 union card, which I still proudly carry with me today.

It was many years later, after becoming a Fleet Service Crew Chief in 2003, that I became a Shop Steward for the Local. I lost my first officer election but ran again in the next cycle and won an executive board position. From there, I went on to hold the positions of Recording Secretary, Secretary Treasurer, 2nd Executive Vice President and 1st Executive Vice President. Toward the end of my elected tenure with Local 501, I was also responsible for the American Airlines Fleet Service Grievance/Arbitration docket for all fleet Locals. I also had the honor of succeeding International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate as Chair of The TWU New York State Conference for many years.

Q. What prompted you to become a Shop Steward and get involved in the union?

A. After the terror attacks of 9-11, there was a definite shift for the worse at my station, JFK. A new management team took over

operations. They brought in supervisors whose sole purpose was to beat down the workforce.

I had always been a supporter of the Local's leadership. Then one of my first mentors, Local 501 VP Pasquale (Pat) Albarella, said he was tired of me constantly complaining about how bad the bosses had become. So, he challenged me to start a petition to be a steward.

Pat taught me so much during those early days. He was always pushing me to take on more tasks and responsibilities. He never stopped believing in me. Not long after being appointed steward, an election for officers came up and I decided to throw my hat into the ring. In hindsight, it was a natural progression. Pat passed away last year, and I miss him terribly. I owe him so much.

Q. You became the Director of Organizing in the spring of 2020, just as the pandemic was starting. Tell us about the challenges you faced organizing workers during that unprecedented time and how you overcame those challenges.

A. Prior to being named Director of Organizing, I held a newly created position at TWU International: Special Projects Coordinator to The International President. I worked very closely with International President Samuelsen and saw just how passionate he is about internal and external organizing. President Samuelsen helped instill in me this passion for mobilizing our current membership – and growing The TWU across all three of our divisions.

Obviously, it was a bit of a challenge organizing new members when the entire world was pretty much at a standstill (except for our incredible members). During the early months of the pandemic, our major focus was taking care of our Locals' needs and helping get them as much PPE as we could. TWU leadership stepped up,



Cucuzza on a picket line.

and I was proud to help lead the procurement and distribution of these much-needed supplies.

Once again, those experiences and interactions with division leadership and Locals helped prepare me for all the external organizing that restarted once we were out of the woods. I pray, however, that we never have to go through such an internal organizing experience again!

Q. How does The TWU's organizing model differ from that of other, larger unions?

A. TWU's organizing model relies mainly on highly trained Member Organizers who come from our ranks. They have incredible skills they learned during training we arrange at the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute. Unlike some other service-oriented unions, we don't hire outside help to organize new workers. Assistant Director Sean Doyle and I utilize our own members to assist in organizing campaigns.

We have sent dozens of our own members to AFL-CIO training sessions over the last three years. As a result, we have assembled an incredible team of organizers who live and breathe TWU at their various worksites. They can easily communicate the strengths of our industrial union to workers seeking representation.

There is no doubt these incredible Member Organizers, who come from each of our divisions, will help keep TWU growing for years to come. In fact, our Member Organizers are so good, the AFL-CIO Organizing Institute is now consistently calling them to assist training members from other Unions!

Q. Working people today face unprecedented challenges, from the influence of automation to the ever-persistent threat of outsourcing. How does an organizing win, and a first TWU contract, protect workers from these threats?

A. We are seeing job-threatening automation being introduced in almost every one of the worksites where we have members. Last spring, my wife and I travelled to Munich, Germany. We used the public underground subway system to move around that city. During our four days there, the only public transit workers we saw were Train Operators. No Conductors or Station Agents. Fare purchasing was all app or kiosk based. Those once powerful German trade unions lost those job titles to automation/technology and privatization. Our Organizing Department is paying very close attention to these job-killing technologies. We make a point of



Cucuzza, Assistant Organizing Director Sean Doyle, International Representative Jose Cruz, and Local 260 Executive Board Member/Organizer Raul DeLeon

bringing forward all that we have learned from the initiatives that the TUUS Division has spearheaded so that these conversations are always a part of the equation when speaking to workers seeking TWU representation. We have no choice. I'm proud that we have such a wealth of information already prepared to rely on when we are talking to workers. And by explaining the power of a contract that protects job titles and scope, we are connecting the dots during those conversations before heading to the negotiating table once we have secured a representational victory.

Q. What is your vision for the future of TWU organizing?

A. Based on the direction given by leadership, we must grow. We cannot remain stagnant and hope that our current group of employers continues to hire new members. Inherent growth is great, and we are seeing a lot of that coming out of the pandemic. But we must take on the challenge of increasing our organization's numbers and strength. And I must say that the message coming from leadership is resonating with our Locals' leadership. We are getting more and more requests from Local officers who are finding organizing opportunities that perhaps they were not interested in pursuing in the past. It's incredibly exciting to visit with a Local executive board that seeks our department's assistance organizing new workers. Most of the new projects we are working on are these types of campaigns. Our Locals' officers and members are listening to what the international leadership is preaching. It keeps us busy, and every win helps us grow. I think we are making other unions nervous with all the great work everyone is doing!

Q. Is there anything else you want TWU members to know about you?

A. As the son of Italian immigrant parents, I'm a Brooklyn kid who landed a dream job with the greatest labor union in the United States. And as an avid traveler who travels across the pond frequently, I would venture to say that what we are doing here is the envy of many transportation-related unions in the world! TWU's aggressive campaigns and internal/external organizing efforts are being noticed. When you receive an email from a Canadian or European union asking for insight on how to approach an issue that we have worked on, you know TWU's efforts are working. I'm pretty darn proud of the work we all do at TWU International!

Women in Nontraditional Workplace Roles: Denise Andrade

From ticket agents who worked in the New York City Subway system in the 1930s to aircraft maintenance technicians, journeyman carmen, power cable maintainers, and more, The TWU has a long history of representing women who work in nontraditional workplace roles. In this issue of The Express, we are featuring Denise Andrade, an Aircraft Maintenance Crew Chief, and a member of Local 591. Denise has been a proud TWU member since 2014.

Q. What is your job title and where do you work?

A. I am an Aircraft Maintenance Crew Chief of Line Maintenance at LaGuardia Airport for American Airlines.

Q. How long have you been a TWU member?

A. Since 2014, when I began my aviation career with Envoy Air as an Aircraft Technician.

Q. What roles do you hold within the union?

A. As a proud member of The TWU Local 591, I'm always assisting my team members in any way I can. They usually have questions regarding our contract and ask for assistance in understanding what some of the language means.

Q. What does the Transport Workers Union mean to you and/or how has The TWU impacted your life?

A. Being part of the union means you feel like you have backup. As blue-collar workers, there's a sense of job security and protection for the 'little guy' against big corporations. They help negotiate our contract to get us fair pay and good benefits for our hard work and labor.

Q. Tell us about the job you perform and your roles/responsibilities.

A. As an Aircraft Maintenance Crew Chief, I'm in a leadership role. Part of my job is to evaluate and assign the scheduled workload for the technicians on shift. Along with the other crew chiefs, we are responsible for the Technicians, their safety, our aircraft, and basically the overall flow of the operation. Ensuring we get the scheduled and unscheduled maintenance completed so that our passengers can get to their destinations safely and on time. We also oversee and provide on-the-job training to junior Mechanics and provide technical support as needed.

Q. What made you decide to go into this craft?

A. I was first introduced to the field while attending Aviation High School in Queens, NY. Through their unique maintenance program, I was able to earn my Airframe & Powerplant license rating and high school diploma at the same time. The opportunities,



the people, and the experiences I've had since my career began have made this field very special to me. This is the best job I ever had.

Q. What challenges have you faced as a working woman?

A. Being the minority in a predominantly male work force has had its challenges. Working in old facilities that were not originally designed to house the female workforce is one example. Just getting access to restroom facilities and designated

locker room space was a struggle that was slowly mediated over time. Also, working with some older gentlemen that were not used to seeing females in the field and sometimes being openly vocal about how they felt having us around. It felt discouraging at times but also motivated me to be the best version of me as a mechanic.

Q. What advice would you give to other working women?

A. My advice to other working women would be to not doubt their own talent, their skills, and their knowledge. Wayne Gretzky once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." I would like to encourage more females to take up leadership roles and go for those promotions: Crew Chiefs, Tech Crew Chiefs, management, etc. And to be allies to other females in the field, look out for each other. I'm thankful I had the opportunity to work under some talented women early in my career, Sol Rodriguez and Veronica Lozada, for taking me under their wing and encouraging me to do the same for others.

Big Win Against Airlines Sending Repair Work Abroad

The TWU campaign to bring outsourced aircraft repair work back home to the United States scored a major victory late last year when the FAA proposed a new rule requiring mechanics in other countries be tested for drugs and alcohol just like workers in the U.S.

Airlines based in the United States have many repairs done in Asia, Central America, and South America because it's cheaper. This new rule, however, would make it more expensive for U.S. carriers to have repair work done in other countries. That would help level the playing field and make outsourcing less financially attractive to airline executives.

"This is a massive victory," TWU International President John Samuelsen said. "For decades, airlines have been allowed to cut corners and costs by sending jobs to lower-wage, lower-standard countries. This rule would help reverse that harmful practice and help bring jobs home."

While the FAA certifies foreign repair stations, it doesn't currently hold those facilities or workers to the same high safety standards – like drug and alcohol testing – in effect for mechanics here. The FAA said the proposed rule, which would affect 977 repair stations in 65 countries, would raise airlines' outsourcing costs by \$102 million over five years.

The TWU and other unions for years have urged the FAA to require the same standards regardless of where aircraft work is being performed for another equally important reason besides jobs: passenger safety. Just a week before the FAA announced its proposal, TWU Executive Director Gary Peterson testified forcefully before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation.

"It is at best disingenuous, and more often an outright lie, when



TWU Executive Director Gary Peterson testifying before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Aviation.

most airlines tell the FAA or the public that they maintain the highest maintenance standards," Peterson said. "The truth is that no one has any insight into the work performed at many facilities outside of the U.S."

In October, International President Samuelsen, and more than a dozen officers from TWU's Air Division, joined four members of the U.S. House at a press conference to demand universal safety standards and other changes. They called on Congress to pass the Global Aircraft Maintenance Safety Improvement Act. The bill was included in FAA reauthorization legislation the House passed over the summer but is pending in the Senate.

Like the FAA rule, the Global Aircraft Maintenance Safety Improvement Act also would require drug and alcohol screening for safety-sensitive personnel. In addition, it would close several other safety loopholes. Foreign repair stations certified by the FAA would have to adhere to these requirements that facilities in the U.S. comply with: background checks for workers at maintenance facilities, security threat assessments, unannounced inspections for maintenance operations, and minimum qualifications for aircraft mechanics.

These provisions "will return thousands of good jobs to the U.S. and raise the level of safety in our airspace," Peterson testified.

The number of foreign repair and maintenance shops used by the U.S. airline industry has grown 36% in the last 8 years. China has been the largest beneficiary of the outsourcing by carriers. It now employs nearly 22,000 workers at facilities repairing and overhauling U.S. aircraft.

"Those are jobs that absolutely should be done in the United States where they would be under union contracts," Samuelsen said. "Union contracts provide American workers with good wages, affordable health care, and pensions, so they can live out their retirements with comfort, dignity, and hopefully, pride in the careers that enabled them to take care of their families."

The TWU is "fully committed and engaged" in the effort to improve safety and bring as many outsourced jobs back to the U.S. as possible, Samuelsen added.

The FAA said it would solicit and review public comments for several months before releasing a final rule and deciding whether to formally adopt it.

TWU aviation mechanics are the best in world. Members at work in LA and Chicago.



Flight Attendants Day Of Action

TWU members at Locals 556, 577 and 579 rallied with Flight Attendants at more than 30 airports across the country to demand better contracts, better work rules, and livable wages. More than 100,000 Flight Attendants across the country are currently working without updated contracts.

The Day of Action united Flight Attendants across different airlines and unions, and TWU members representing Flight Attendants from Southwest Airlines, JetBlue Airways, and Allegiant Air joined their colleagues to march outside airports all over the country.

“Corporate greed plagues the industry,” said TWU International President John Samuelsen. “While airlines and their bosses are raking in record profits, hardworking Flight Attendants across the country are standing up for better pay and working conditions. Workers must always fight for every gain. The employers will never willingly share the profits. This Day of Action is super critical.”

The Day of Action was coordinated across different airports simultaneously to ensure maximum

impact, and multiple members of Congress stood alongside TWU members picketing in Washington and Orlando.

“The Day of Action is critically important to remind airlines that Flight Attendants are indispensable,” said TWU International Executive Vice President Alex Garcia. “We will continue to fight for better contracts and ensure more protections.”

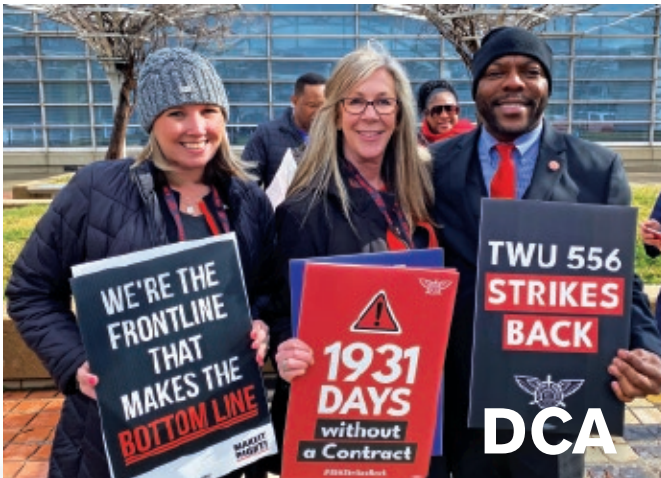
Melissa Grube, Baltimore Domicile Executive Board Member for TWU Local 556, led a group of Southwest Flight Attendants who gathered at

Washington National Airport. She said the Day of Action was intended to raise public awareness of ongoing contract talks.

“It’s imperative that we let the public know the purpose and situation we’re here for, and that’s because we haven’t had a contract for five years. We haven’t had



LAS



DCA



OAK





The TWU is taking flight at JetBlue.

The company's Flight Instructors emphatically opted in December to join America's Fighting Democratic Union. All ballots cast by eligible Flight Instructors were in favor of the move.

The TWU, meanwhile, has an ongoing organizing drive to represent aircraft maintenance and related workers at the airline. The company's Flight Attendants – now numbering about 6,700 – joined the union in 2018. They formed Local 579.

"It's all part of our effort to increase our footprint at JetBlue," Organizing Director Angelo Cucuzza said. "The more people we represent at a company, the more leverage we have at the property and in our dealings with the employer."

Strength in numbers is exactly what the Florida-based contingent needs because of the airline industry's history of mergers and acquisitions – moves that can leave some work groups vulnerable, according to Flight Instructor Steve Waltrip, who was the lead organizer inside the 35-person unit. JetBlue wanted to purchase Spirit Airlines but a federal judge blocked the proposed merger.

"If you're not in a union in this business, you don't stand a chance," Waltrip, a retired pilot, said.

Flight Instructors work at JetBlue University in Orlando. They provide prospective JetBlue pilots with more than 80 hours of instruction on aircraft systems, flight procedures, and maneuvers. Some of the instruction is in the classroom but most training takes place in full-motion flight simulators. The simulators are extremely realistic cockpit mock-ups with the look and feel of an aircraft in motion.

The Flight Instructors also work with JetBlue pilots returning to JetBlue University for their annual recertification training.

Waltrip approached TWU about starting an organizing drive because he viewed it as a "good, steady, honest union." He also was inspired by a YouTube video of TWU International President John Samuelson taking on American Airlines President Robert Isom at a gathering of workers at LaGuardia Airport in 2019. TWU and

"I was impressed by his ability to take on Robert Isom and hold his ground. I thought, that's the kind of person I'd like to lead my union."

– Steve Waltrip



AA were engaged in contract negotiations and the airline was looking to offshore a significant amount of maintenance work.

"You're not the first Ivy League guy that we've dealt with, and we've beaten," Samuelson said at one point in the exchange.

American Airlines later dropped its offshoring plan.

"I was impressed by his ability to take on Robert Isom and hold his ground," Waltrip said. "I thought, that's the kind of person I'd like to lead my union."

One Contract Down, Another Fight To Go for Locals 2001 and 2055

Commuter railroad workers in Connecticut and New York overwhelmingly ratified a long overdue retroactive contract late last year – only for Metro-North to turn around weeks later and slam workers with a draconian and offensive set of demands for the next contract.

The new demands would eliminate one vacation day, one personal day and multiple paid sick days, stop overtime payments after eight hours, more than double health care contributions, eliminate paid meal periods and allow Metro-North to unilaterally assign work tasks to outside contractors without consulting The TWU.

TWU International President John Samuelsen said the union will fight yet again to ensure a contract that betters the lives of the members at Metro-North.

“The MTA-MetroNorth has launched a vicious attack on its blue-collar workers in Locals 2001 and 2055 looking to cause serious economic damage with draconian contract demands,” Samuelsen said in a Tweet. “The TWU has seen this movie before and we will fight back against ALL who harm us.”

The TWU is firing back with a flyer distributed to members and, as of press time, is planning shop gates and other actions.

Metro-North’s latest action comes just weeks after commuter railroad workers in Connecticut and New York overwhelmingly ratified a new contract in December by a margin of 91% to 9%. Running from September 2019 through October 2023, the contract with the Metro-North Railroad features solid raises, big retro payments, and a \$500 increase in the annual tool allowance. Worker contributions toward health care remain unchanged.

The TWU also defeated an outrageous railroad demand for the right to re-open the contract at any time.

“I would describe this contract as a win for our brothers and sisters,” TWU Local 2001 President Patrick Howard said. “We were successful in attaining exactly what we set out to get.”

It was a “long-fought battle, but the end result was a fair contract, and the members were very happy with the outcome,” Local 2055 President Robert Cifarelli said.

The two Locals combined represent about 600 Mechanics, Cleaners, and Cabinetmakers at Metro-North.

During those negotiations, the railroad showed a complete lack of urgency in reaching a deal and its negotiators insisted the Locals accept a subpar 50-month package in line with what some other unions at Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road previously accepted. Both railroads are divisions of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



Congressman Pat Ryan and TWU International President John Samuelsen (center) with Local 2001 and Local 2055 officers after the retro contract ratification, including Local Presidents Pat Howard and Bob Cifarelli.



TWU Rail Director John Feltz leads a shopgate.

The turning point in the dispute came over the summer when The International jumped into the fray, providing strategic, organizational, and financial support, Howard and Cifarelli said.

The joint International-Local fight included: regularly communicating with the members and encouraging them to participate in contract activities; blasting management in targeted advertisements, social media posts, and union-generated news broadcasts; hounding MTA leadership at public events, and generating backing from elected officials, like Congressman Pat Ryan (D-NY).

“The impact that The International had on the negotiations was something I have never seen in my 15 years on the railroad,” Cifarelli said.

The contract also includes compounded raises of 9.84%. Most workers get a retro payment of about \$17,000.

As The TWU gears up for another contract fight, key backers like Ryan pledged continued support.

“I will stand proudly and strongly with TWU again,” Ryan said.



Amtrak President Roger Harris Visits Beech Grove Shops

Amtrak President Roger Harris, EVP of Service Delivery & Operations Gerry Williams, and Chief Mechanical Officer George Hull visited the Beech Grove Shop Facility in Indiana in October. This was President Harris's first trip to the Beech Grove Shops.

Upon his arrival, Harris was given an overview of the history of the facility and updated information about the operations. During the visit, he toured the facility and got an up-close and personal look at the equipment. He also met with TWU members face-to-face and was extremely impressed with the cleanliness and organization of the facility, especially for one of such massive proportions. The trip provided Harris an opportunity to see the fruits of the overall

performance improvements in safety and production that have been accomplished by all the crafts at Beech Grove working together.

After the visit, the following was posted on Amtrak's LinkedIn Page, "Their presence highlights the facility's vital role in delivering safe, efficient service. They are a shining example of our core value – excelling together – as they have improved in safety, quality, and efficiency."

Due to our ability to work together through recent changes, as well as prioritize customer needs, it is apparent that TWU members can and will continue to play a vital role in this organization. Harris applauded the achievements Beech Grove employees were able to accomplish together and mentioned he would like to see this model replicated throughout the Amtrak system.





Congress Needs to Act On Rail Safety

TWU leaders are calling on Congress to swiftly pass a rail safety bill drafted in response to last year's derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, that has so far failed to receive a vote in the House or Senate.

"The whole industry is a disastrous, dangerous mess with derailments every day, staff shortages and many other problems caused by terrible management and greedy owners," TWU Railroad Director John Feltz said.

"Congress must pass the Railway Safety Act as quickly as possible."

The Railway Safety Act would increase the maximum fines that the Department of Transportation can impose on freight railroads for safety violations, institute a two-person crew minimum for freight trains, issue new rail car inspection regulations and expand training for emergency personnel who are tasked with the immediate safety response following a derailment.

The Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-CIO counted more than 1,500 train accidents since last year's East Palestine derailment, and while both senators from Ohio are backing the bill, the measure currently sits a few votes short of Senate passage. The House has not taken any formal steps to pass the bill. Top Biden administration officials, including Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg,



"The whole industry is a disastrous, dangerous mess with derailments every day, staff shortages and many other problems caused by terrible management and greedy owners. Congress must pass the Railway Safety Act as quickly as possible."

– TWU Railroad Director John Feltz

have said the legislation will give the federal government more tools to regulate and punish freight railroads for bad safety behavior.

Despite an intense lobbying effort from the freight railroads, including Norfolk Southern, over the last year, 11 senators have joined lead sponsor Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) on the Senate bill while 17 representatives joined lead sponsor Rep. Chris Deluzio (D-Pa.) on the House bill. Feltz recently told WFMJ News in Youngstown, Ohio that a lack of manpower due to years of cost-cutting from the freight railroads has made life more dangerous for rail workers.

"If you are fatigued and your faculties are not there, you're not as alert as you would be if you had your proper rest," Feltz said. "Any place you go on the rail yard, death is your biggest fear."

CONTRACT VICTORIES Transit Division Secures Contracts

It was a good start to the year for the Transit Division with three groups of workers securing contracts containing economic and quality-of-life gains.

Transit Division Chair Willie Brown reports contracts were ratified by three work groups: Local 320 bikeshare workers, whose members are located in cities across the country; MV Transportation paratransit workers in Houston, now members of Local 260; and MV paratransit workers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



Paratransit Baton Rouge



Local 260



Local 320

TWU Local 1400 Swearing In

TWU Local 1400 President Patrick Reynolds, and other top officers of the Local, were sworn into their posts on Jan. 3 in Edgewater, N.J. They were joined by International Administrative Vice President Curtis Tate and International Secretary-Treasurer Jerome Lafragola.

From left to right, those pictured are: Tate; David Segarra, Local 1400 Recording-Secretary; Damon Massey, Aviation Division Chairman; James Denti, Secretary-Treasurer; Pres. Reynolds; Lafragola; Nick Natole, Tunnel & Bridge Agent Vice-Chairman; Carl Fales, Tunnel & Bridge Agent Chairman; and Matt Wright, Vice-President of the Local.



Trackworker Killed in On-the-Job Accident in New York City

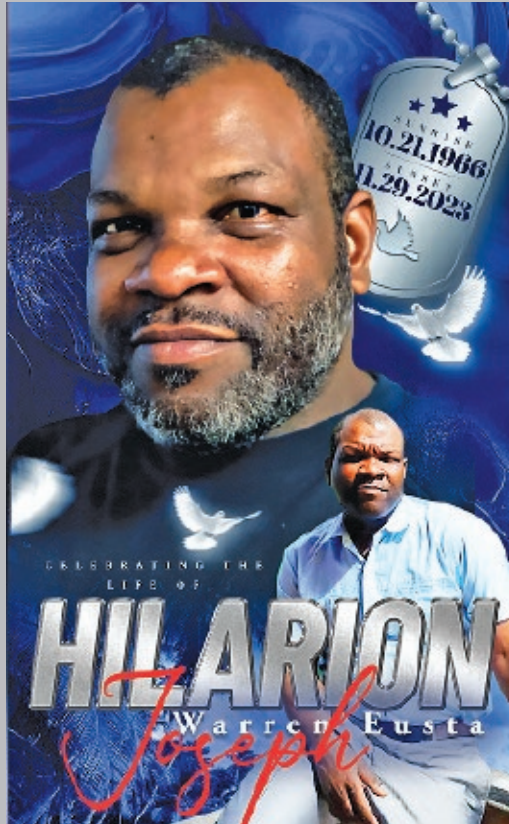
Tragedy rocked TWU Local 100 in November when a Trackworker was struck and killed by a subway train beneath Manhattan.

Hilarion Joseph, 57, was part of a crew cleaning trash from tracks at the Herald Square station when he was hit by an uptown D train. Joseph - a beloved father of six children and a U.S. Army veteran - was just days away from completing his first year on the job.

"This development has shaken our union," John Chiarello, Local 100 Secretary-Treasurer and Safety Director, said at a press conference after the Nov. 29 accident. "This incident serves as a stark reminder of the challenges our members face each and every day."

"Today we grieve the loss of one of our own, and it is crucial we come together in solidarity," Local 100 President Richard Davis said.

Maintenance of Way workers at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority routinely work under live traffic conditions. Trains continue to pass by, or even go through, work zones that often feature multiple sets of parallel local and express tracks.



The National Transportation Safety Board and a local Board of Inquiry are investigating the cause of the 12:20 a.m. accident and whether safety procedures were followed. Union representatives are participating in part to ensure management doesn't try to whitewash the series of events.

Joseph was posted on the roadbed about 150 feet south of the station as a flagger. Flaggers alert and halt trains at the edge of work zones until workers on the tracks up ahead can "clear up" to safe positions. They are equipped with hand-held lights, lanterns, and portable train-tripping devices that are placed on tracks to stop trains from entering a restricted area.

Joseph temporarily halted a D train on the edge of the work zone. He then removed his equipment in preparation of the train moving forward. Moments

later, he was struck before being able to reach the safety of a bench wall adjacent to the tracks.

Key to the investigation will be the communication between the foreman at the station, Joseph, and the Train Operator. Investigators also are reviewing whether all the safety positions for the job were staffed and properly deployed.

For the latest news & updates, visit www.twu.org



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

 @TWUFLOC

 @TWUFLOC

 /TWUFLOC

Union Saves Job of Assaulted Bus Operator Who Fought Back in Houston

A Houston Bus Operator who was fired after fighting back against a violent rider is back on the job, thanks to his TWU representatives.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County canned Dwayne James for what it viewed as very serious infractions. James left his partitioned seat and struck his assailant with a police-like baton outside the bus.

But TWU Local 260 challenged the decision through the grievance process and worked out a favorable deal: time served. After going three weeks without pay, James, 54, was restored to full service early in the New Year.

“My union fought for me, and I got my job back,” James said. “If the union wasn’t there to help defend me, I would have been unemployed and without my lifelong pension that I worked to build. I would have had to hire an attorney to help me regain my job, and I have a lot of household financial responsibilities.”

Local 260 President Horace Marves and Executive Board Member Eddie McGee said James actually showed some restraint. James was hit twice before he acted, and he acted in self-defense. James also had a “stellar” work record through his nearly 3-decade career.

“We prevailed in the case,” Marves said. “The punishment Houston Metro initially imposed was unwarranted and excessive. Bus Operator James was trying to protect himself so he could go home to his family in one piece.”

James’ assailant was not apprehended.

The violence erupted on Oct. 19 after the man and his girlfriend boarded without paying. Words were exchanged as the couple headed to seats in the back.



Pictured at left, Houston Bus Operator Dwayne James. Below: TWU Local 260 Executive Board Member Eddie McGee, President Horace Marves, and Vice President Fidel Minor.



“My union fought for me, and I got my job back. If the union wasn’t there to help defend me, I would have been unemployed and without my lifelong pension that I worked to build. I would have had to hire an attorney to help me regain my job, and I have a lot of household financial responsibilities.”

– Dwayne James

Minutes later, the man charged to the front, threatening to kill James.

Reaching around the partition, the man swung a bag containing a hard object, possibly a bottle, and hit James in the head. Then he did it again. James only struck back when the man, pulled off the bus by his girlfriend, was coming back toward the door to resume the attack.

“I felt like he was going to keep trying to hit me and he might knock me out,” James said. “I had to defend myself.”

James didn’t emerge unscathed. The man’s girlfriend unloaded a whole canister of pepper spray on him during the clash, he said,

“My eyes, ears, and the side of my head were swollen,” James said. “My skin was on fire for days after that.”

James remains bitter that Metro blamed him for the clash and tried to take away his livelihood. The fact that they failed is the one positive to emerge from the ordeal, he said.

“I am grateful that the union helped to defend me,” he said.

The 2024 Michael J. Quill Scholarship Applications

Deadline is May 3, 2024

The union has been honoring our founder with scholarships since 1969. Quill Scholarship awards have benefited hundreds of TWU families. Children of our members in transit, railroad and air transportation, universities, utilities, public employment, space installations, and allied industries, are among those who began their college educations with the help of The TWU's signature scholarship.

The 2024 Michael J. Quill Scholarship Fund offers fifteen (15) children who are current high school seniors of TWU members a scholarship worth \$4,800. This scholarship will be paid out, each year in the amount of \$1,200 to winners who continue to be eligible over their four (4) year course.

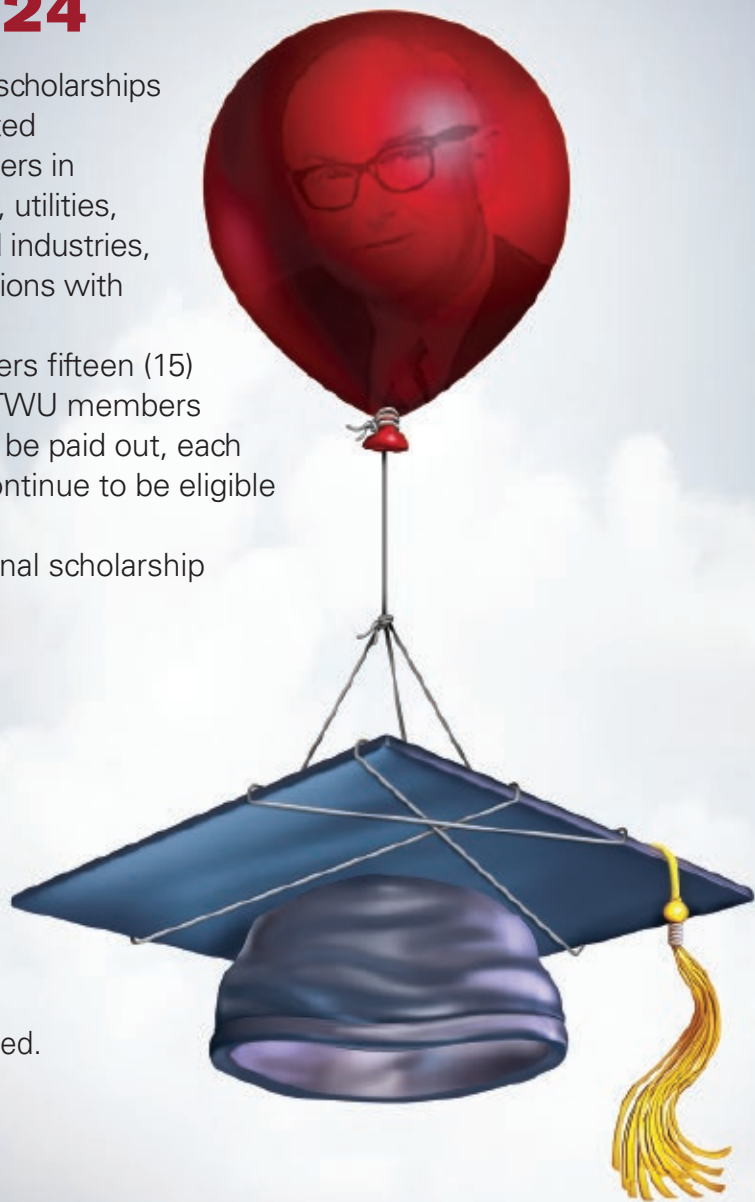
We are also grateful to again have four additional scholarship contributors:

- **Union Benefit Planners**
- **M3 Technology**
- **Pitta LLP**
- **Pitta Bishop & Del Giorno LLC**

All of the above sponsored scholarships will be paid out in the first year, as a single scholarship.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The deadline is May 3, 2024. Any applications sent after this date will be discarded.

Scan for application.





Veterans Committee Elects Officers

The Veterans Committee elected new leaders to two-year terms at its December meeting in Decatur, Georgia. In photo on right from Left to Right: Denmark Masumoto, from Local 513, was elected Vice Chairman. Brian Galarza, of Local 501, was selected Chairman. And Local 100's D'Artagnan Magaña was picked to be Recording Secretary. Committee members also helped fill 1,250 bags of groceries that were distributed to 250 veterans' families. The monthly assistance program is run by a nonprofit organization, Soldiers' Angels.





SEE YOU AT THE
TWU LEGISLATIVE &
COPE CONFERENCE
MAY 12-15, 2024

WASHINGTON HILTON, WASHINGTON, D.C.



**THE TRANSPORT WORKERS
UNION OF AMERICA, AFL-CIO**
1220 19th Street NW, 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 1028
LONG PRAIRIE, MN



JOIN

COPE



The TWU Committee on Political Education

Contribute to COPE today to make
sure your voice is heard in Washington.
For more information, contact COPE
Director Andrew Rangolan
at arangolan@twu.org

*“Getting involved in COPE allows
our union to effect change on a
different level, and it’s important
for our elected leaders to know
the needs of our members.”*

– Daniel Mendoza,
Communications Chair,
TWU Local 579



Contributions to The TWU PCC are not tax deductible. Contributions to The TWU PCC are voluntary and no TWU member will be advantaged or disadvantaged for their decision to contribute or not contribute. The TWU PCC is connected to The TWU and may use the money it receives for political purposes including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures for candidates for elected office.