

113 Years of Solidarity

The History of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 – Toronto



Through good times and turbulent times, Local 113 has always been a shining example of the power of union solidarity. Our first elected leaders (above) established our traditions of democracy, public service and commitment to workplace justice for all not just for ourselves. Maintaining those traditions is our obligation to those who came before us and our gift to those who will follow.



ATU Local 113 Presidents & Business Agents: 1899–Present

James McDonald 1899–1907

Joseph Gibbons 1907–1926

Joseph Tompkins 1926–1948

John Lorimer 1948–1950

George Wilson 1950–1954

Frank G. Dyer 1954–1960

Edward McDermott 1960–1966

Leonard E. Moynehan 1967–1976

Charles B. Johnson 1977–1979

Dominic Bonazzo 1980–1982

Charles B. Johnson 1983–1988

Raymond L. Hutchinson 1989–1991

Arthur W. Patrick 1992–1997

Vince Casuti 1998–2003

Bob Kinnear 2004

Our Past is the Guide to Our Future

Our union was established 113 years ago, in 1899. But the first attempts to organize Toronto transit workers began 13 years before that, in 1886. As members of the Knights of Labor, our forebears staged the very first transit strike in Toronto. It was daring, it was exciting and, for a while, it looked like they might win. But the laws of the day and the power of the employer could not be overcome. They lost.

Six years later, in 1893, under the flag of the newly-created Amalgamated, they tried again. They lost again, through lack of solidarity. Some members joined the company union. Naturally, the employer had no trouble breaking a divided workforce.

In 1897, after the company had broken its promises (what a surprise!) an angered workforce organized again under the Amalgamated. But once again they lost because too many were faint-hearted. "It won't work. We've tried this and failed. We'll fail again." And they did, for the third time.

They say insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. But the transit workers in 1899 who tried to form a union for the fourth time in 13 years were quite sane. They learned from their past. Most of all, they realized that they would *never* improve their lives or make their work more secure without complete solidarity. It is the only power that workers have.

Where would we be today if those who came before us had not learned the awesome power of simply sticking together through thick and thin?

If we remember and act on this most basic lesson of our history, our future is bright. If we forget it, our future is dim. The choice is ours. I am confident we will make the right choice. Ultimately, we always have, which is why we are still here, 113 years later. Public transit is not going to go away. And neither are we.

In Solidarity,



Bob Kinnear
President/Business Agent



The first attempt at unionized transit workers ... and Toronto's first transit strike!

The mobile Toronto we know today — a bustling, thriving city connected by a network of buses, streetcars and subway trains — began its evolution in 1861 with the city's first streetcar service: the privately owned Toronto Street Railway Company, or TSR.

By the 1880s, TSR workers were labouring 14-hour days in bad working conditions and at very low wages, even for the times. After being forced by their employer to sign an "iron clad" agreement not to join any unions, angered TSR workers approached the Knights of Labor, the first major organization in North America to attempt to form a continent-wide labour movement. The Knights already had several locals in Ontario and the TSR employees were chartered as their first Canadian transit local on March 7, 1886.

The Good Old Days...

When Toronto's transit workers were first fighting for the right to a union, they worked 14 hours a day, 6 days a week, at 15 cents per hour with no vacations. They had to work whatever shift or task was arbitrarily assigned to them by the Company, and had no heat, windshields or even stools to sit on atop the open horse-cars. Until they were no longer used to pull trolleys, the horses were much better cared-for than the workers. It cost more to replace a horse than a worker.

Three days later, the TSR Company took action to quash this effort to organize, leaving the assignment board blank. Perhaps the Company believed the unionists would be turned upon by their fellow workers. The very opposite happened. All but a few of the TSR workforce walked out. Despite most Torontonians relying on the streetcars, public support for the striking workers was widespread and immediate. A crowd of 7000 fought mounted police and blocked streetcars from leaving the TSR stables, de-latching the horses and lifting the cars right off their tracks. After three days of striking, the workers were taken back and given the right to organize — a great victory for the Knights of Labor, inspiring other groups of workers in Toronto to organize.

But before long, the TSR began firing those who had joined the Knights, refusing to negotiate and even forcing workers to join a rival "company union." A month and a half later, the workers again went on strike, this time calling for a boycott of the TSR and setting up a temporary alternative form of transport: a Free

Bus Company. En masse, Torontonians began riding the free buses and donating to the strike effort.

Victory seemed to be on the horizon for a couple of weeks, but by the time a suspicious fire burned the makeshift stables of the Free Bus Company to the ground at the end of June, it was clear to everyone that the strike had already been lost. Despite the solidarity of working Torontonians and the inspiring acts of resistance that took place, the fight to organize the streetcar workers ended in failure.

This discouraging setback, however, paved the way for the events to come. Seven years after the summer of 1886, many of the same workers would come back to try once again to form a union.



Once a mass labour movement with hundreds of thousands of members, the Knights of Labor organized Toronto transit workers in 1886, but failed to get an agreement with the TSR.



Toronto transit maintenance workers in 1896. The children in front were actually workers as this was before the Ontario government enacted laws against child labour.

Hard-won victory at the turn of the century: the founding of ATU Local 113

When Toronto's transit workers first tried to unionize in the 1880s, they ultimately failed to get out from under the thumb of their employer, despite public opinion being on their side. But by the 1890s, the spark of change had started to take fire.

The international union we now call the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), began in Indianapolis in 1892 as the Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees of America. Cities across the continent began founding local unions and in 1893 Toronto was the first Canadian city to get an Amalgamated charter, under the name Division 30.

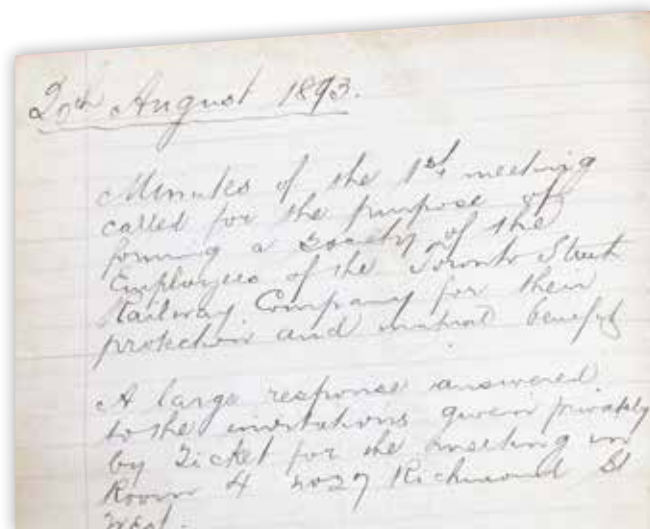
As with the previous attempt to make a lasting union, the forces of opposition were strong. Although the TSR franchise had expired, in its place came the Toronto Railway Company. The TRC was owned by Sir William Mackenzie, a founder of the Canadian Northern Railway. In 1894, union representatives approached Mackenzie himself to demand better wages and working conditions.

As in the previous decade, the Company once again refused to bargain with the union. And once again, a parallel "company union" was created and the workers relentlessly pressured by management to join it. All but a handful of the members of the legitimate union caved in to save their jobs, and as a result, the Toronto Division lost its charter from the Amalgamated. The company union caused so much dissatisfaction, however, that a second Amalgamated Association charter was granted to Division 30 in 1897, only to be withdrawn when negotiating again went nowhere. Mackenzie and the TRC had won the first and second rounds.

But with continued perseverance, the workers finally succeeded. Through the efforts of a core group of thirteen men who believed in the union, a third Amalgamated Association charter was granted in 1899 — and this time, it endured. Division 113 of the Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees of America was established for good. The workers were not to be intimidated again. Mackenzie and the TRC were forced into collective bargaining. At last, Toronto's transit workers had a legitimate union and became part of a mass movement of organized public transit workers in North America.



Owner of the Toronto Railway Company, the extremely wealthy Alexander Mackenzie defeated the union twice by dividing the workers against one another. When they refused to be split again in 1899, he was forced to negotiate with the new Division 113.

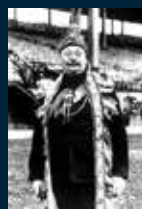


The first page of the first meeting minutes book of the union. "20th August 1893. Minutes of the 1st meeting called for the purpose of forming a Society of the Employees of the Toronto Street Railway Company for their protection and mutual benefit. A large response answered to the invitations given privately by ticket for the meeting in Room 4, No. 27 Richmond St. West." This book is preserved in a glass case on the third floor of the Local 113 office.

On September 12, 1892, the ATU was founded in this building in Indianapolis, Indiana and was immediately welcomed into the American Federation of Labor.



Private Transit Built Castle



Well before the founding of the publicly owned Ontario Hydro in 1907, Toronto Railway Company owner William Mackenzie teamed up with Henry Pellatt (left) to bring hydroelectric power from Niagara Falls to Toronto. The transit system was their best customer. Pellatt poured the enormous profits from the private monopoly into building Casa Loma, then the continent's largest private residence. With the arrival of public power and public transit, Pellatt lost everything, including his castle, which reverted to the City for unpaid taxes. He died penniless in 1939.



The 1902 Strike: Torontonians support Division 113's first walk-out

At the start of a new century, the increased cost of living in Toronto made it imperative that the city's thousand-plus transit workers obtain better wages for themselves. In 1902, Division 113 called its first strike. The TRC responded by refusing to recognize the union and calling in the militia to intimidate the strikers. They also brought in strikebreakers — commonly known as “scabs” — to provide service. Widespread public support and strong picket lines quickly won out, and three days into the strike, a wage raise was agreed to, bringing the hourly rate up to 20 cents — a 33 per cent increase!

Although brief, the 1902 strike was an exciting one. The population was on the side of the workers as thousands of people worked together to make their demands heard, strikers and non-strikers alike helping bring service to a halt. Moreover, it laid the groundwork for more gains in the future. One year later the union negotiated \$25 for pouch money as well as free uniforms, an expense for which workers had been paying themselves since 1892.



After a few fatalities and serious injuries of pedestrians being struck by trolleys, the Toronto Railway Company tried to reassure the public by putting nets on the front of their cars, not unlike the “cow catchers” on old railroad locomotives. The nets proved to be more of a hassle than a help as boys would take dares to throw themselves in the net as the trolley passed. The public safety measure quickly disappeared.

Hydro Replaces Horses

Electric trolley cars were in use in Toronto by 1892 and the last horsecars were retired in 1894. To keep up with the changing technology, the Amalgamated changed its name in 1903 to the Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America.



Toronto had never seen a strike like the 1902 ATU walkout. The transit workers were united but William Mackenzie refused to recognize or negotiate with the union. When he brought in scabs to run the trolleys, there were riots all over the city in support of the union. In Yorkville alone, over 10,000 citizens fought with the police to prevent the cars from moving. The Board of Trade intervened and mediated an end to the strike and recognition of the union at last.



Transit strikes were always front page news, even 110 years ago. When both the union and the company called a meeting for the same night, it was an embarrassment for management. Virtually every worker went to the union meeting and a great crowd gathered outside the hall to cheer the men on. The union won the short strike with a 33% wage increase.

The post-war “Year of the Strike” and Toronto’s switch from private to public transit ownership

World War I put to the brakes on the wage gains that were made over the first decade of Local 113’s existence. But when peacetime returned in late 1918, Toronto’s ATU Division was part of a movement to win recognition for the sacrifices that Canadian workers made at home and on the battlefield.

A four-day strike in 1917 had brought a three-cent increase to hourly wages, but by 1919, the steep postwar rise in the cost of living forced the union to call another strike. They were far from alone. 1919 saw global labour unrest, with thousands of strikes all over the world. Canada was no exception, with major strikes taking place in every large city, and many smaller ones. The most famous of these was the Winnipeg General Strike, which shut down the city for nearly six weeks.

In Toronto, strikes began even before Winnipeg’s and Division 113’s walkout inspired others. Once again, the company tried to bring in scabs, but once again, that tactic failed. The 12-day TRC strike ended with a tremendous victory for the union. Wages went up to 55 cents an hour (a 42% increase!) and Toronto transit workers became the first in North America to win the eight-hour day. The following year, a three-day strike resulted in a further increase of 5 cents an hour.

But the Year of the Strike in 1919 had another lasting effect on Toronto: it culminated in the city turning to a publicly owned transit system.

Despite their wage increases, conditions for TRC employees in 1919 were primitive. Shop workers’ lunches had to be hung up high to keep the rats from getting to



As in the past, the company tried to bring in scabs during the 1919 strike and, as in the past, the move was unsuccessful. Notice how the strikers dressed in their Sunday best to walk the picket line.

them. There was no heat and no washrooms in the sheet-metal barns. Drinking facilities consisted of an old rusty can chained to a tap. During the strike, the union exposed these conditions along with the maintenance shortcuts that management ordered the workers to make in order to save money: shortcuts which were making transit breakdowns and accidents — some fatal — all too common. Public indignation ran high as the truth came out about the private system’s primary and almost exclusive concern: not providing good or affordable service, but simply seeking maximum profits. There were other, smaller privately-operated streetcar routes in the City, as well as a couple that had been built with public funds, but the TRC was the largest operator by far and was the focus of union and general public anger.

A referendum to establish a public system passed by 90% in 1920 and the TTC began operating in 1921. The union had played a seminal role in the establishment of what was, for many decades, the largest publicly owned and operated transit in North America.



Massey Hall was filled to the rafters as Division 113 members convened at midnight on Sunday, June 22, 1919 to vote to strike. At 2 a.m. the vote was virtually unanimous to begin the strike immediately without public warning. The officers on stage urged that the union give three days’ notice of a strike but were shouted down by the men, who chanted “Strike now!” as they clapped hands and stomped their feet.



Pickup trucks known as “jitneys” did enormous business during the 12-day strike. There was little gallantry around these efforts to get rides.

Toronto's transit workers hold strong through the Depression Era

The Great Depression was a hard time for all workers, especially in the first half of the 1930s, when people across the continent were suffering from record unemployment and forgoing the expense of transit. By 1932, ridership in Toronto was down by 10%.

In a gesture of the solidarity that has always been a hallmark of the union, the members of Local 113 voted to set up a relief fund to keep out-of-work fellow workers and their families off public welfare rolls, agreeing to put 1% of their monthly earnings into the fund. They also voted to voluntarily take five extra days off *per month* to try and prevent hundreds of driver lay-offs by the TTC. And in 1934, when a conciliation case arose out of the TTC's attempt to reduce the hourly rate by 6 cents, the union held strong against concessions and was able to avoid the cut.

During these lean years, living standards for workers fell dramatically. The second half of the decade, however, saw an explosion of strikes and union organizing. Most of the big "industrial unions" that we are familiar with today — such as the Steelworkers, Autoworkers and Foodworkers — were formed at this time. Local 113 was part of this upsurge and was able to make up for lost time, finally winning one week's paid vacation for operators in 1938.

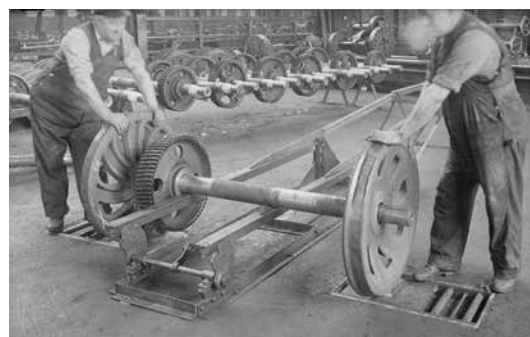


The Women's Auxiliary Committee in 1938. The predecessor to today's Recreation Committees, these volunteer spouses looked after laid-off or injured members and their families and held "socials" for older children of members, which led to many a romance staying inside the "TTC Family." They also sometimes attended ATU conferences and conventions.

On the Peter Witt cars the conductor collected fares leaving the Operator to tend to his driving. Notice that the above window ads haven't really changed since this picture was taken in 1928.



Wheel mounting was a precise job that also took a lot of strength. This picture was taken at Hillcrest Shops in 1935, the year that Elvis Presley and Canadian actor Donald Sutherland were born.



A Secure and Dignified Retirement

Although a pension plan for Toronto's transit employees had been first discussed back in 1926, it wasn't until 1939 that the first meeting was held with TTC management to get the plan off the ground. When the TTC Pension Fund Society began in 1940, TTC Chairman William C. McBrien addressed the first Board of Directors and 61 retirees with the words, "You can go amongst your fellow men with your head up, your shoulders back, look every man straight in the eye and be dependent on none. For this pension scheme is not a dole or gratuity but rather a bonus that you men have earned by faithful service."

A Transit Union Leader as Mayor

W.D. "Willie" Robbins first started working as an Operator for the Toronto Street Railway System in 1895, and by 1919, he was the Secretary of Division 113 and an elected City Official. "Willie" had great influence on how politicians reacted to the 1919 strike, and later became Mayor of Toronto.



Wartime gains and post-war boom

During World War II (1939-45) while many TTC workers left their relatively secure, living-wage jobs to heroically fight Fascism in Europe and Asia, the TTC continued to provide extensive transit services to the vast army of war workers on the home front. Not only did the number of transit riders increase by leaps and bounds — from 154 million in 1939 to 303 million in 1945 — the TTC shops were also manufacturing marine engine parts, gun mounts and gun carriages. Men from the administration and maintenance departments took up part-time work as trainmen, and, in 1943, women joined the TTC workforce as transit operators for the first time.

All wages were under government control, and it was impossible to make any sizeable gains through negotiations. But although wages remained stagnant, Local 113 saw other achievements, including bonuses for increased passengers and mileage travelled. And in 1940, after years of union pressure, the TTC finally agreed to set up a Sick Benefit Association and a Pension Fund Association.

Before this, employees had no provisions for old age, sickness or hospitalization. The new Associations collected special funds for the purposes of pensions, health care and partial wage replacement during sickness or disability. These plans, funded on the basis of fifty-fifty contributions from the Company and the workers, were among the greatest and most valuable achievements of Local 113. They were not



Pioneering sisters. On August 5, 1943, (L-R) Miss McCutcheon, Mrs. Wilkinson and Mrs. Martin took up their duties as the first women bus drivers in Toronto history.

gifts from the employer — no improvement in working conditions ever was. Every single advance was fought for, a fact which remains true to this day.

After 1945, the post-war boom and the determination of the members that their sacrifices should be rewarded led to numerous gains, including substantial wage raises on the base rate and vastly better benefits. Local 113 also won the dues check-off system at the end of 1946, ensuring that the union could stand on a firm financial footing going forward.



Although the first female Operators and Conductors wore skirts, these proved impractical and, frankly, cold. By 1944, women wore essentially the same uniform as the men except for the hats.



It's a long TTC tradition, as true in the 1940s as today: carefully inspecting every part of a vehicle before it leaves the shop. Passing down their skills from one generation to the next has made TTC maintenance workers the best in North America, as demonstrated by the numerous safety awards won by the TTC for several decades.

First strike against the TTC, and the birth of Rapid Transit

In 1952, Local 113 staged its first strike against the TTC. It was the longest strike-free period in Toronto transit history – 31 years. It was also the longest strike in the union’s history up to that point – 19 days. It was all about wages. It was also the beginning of the TTC’s long-standing labour relations approach: provoke the union to strike by avoiding talking directly to them as equals and “arousing the members’ feelings to an uncomfortable pitch.” Blame the union for fare increases, and attempt to do better at arbitration than at the bargaining table. Eventually, the TTC commissioners were instructed by the Board of Control and the Mayor to meet the union, and it was agreed to resume service.

After the strike came the biggest innovation in Toronto’s transit system, and one of the biggest challenges for the union: the opening of Canada’s first subway system on March 30, 1954. There was no doubt that introducing a subway would mean a vast improvement to the TTC and its riders. But what to do with the 221 bus Operators on the routes that would now be served by the subway?

Two years before the subway opened, a committee of executive board members of Division 113 began meeting with the Commission. The purpose was to ensure that no Operators were forced out of their jobs and to ensure proper training on the new equipment. By the time the subway opened, the union had reached an agreement with the TTC that reduced the surplus to 30 operators. These remaining were dealt with through the normal processes of retirement and opportunities to transfer to the maintenance department. Operators with failing health were guaranteed subway collector jobs.

The union’s pioneering expertise in negotiating agreement that allows members to “follow their work” with advancing technology became the model for ATU locals throughout Canada and the U.S.



Toronto had been talking about a subway since 1909 but nothing happened until the federal Liberal government of Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent splurged on one of the biggest vote-buying schemes in Canadian history and agreed to fund the subway from Union Station to Eglinton. When it opened in early 1954, it was a public sensation. Women dressed to look like airline flight attendants welcomed the dignitaries who made the first trip. The original “Red Rocket” cars were made in Scotland. At the union’s insistence, hundreds of TTC bus and streetcar Operators were trained as Subway Operators and Conductors. No one lost their job to this huge technological change.



The strike began on January 4 as if it were a replay of the 1919 strike. 3000 members jammed Massey Hall at midnight and shouted down their executive’s urging to give three days’ notice to the public. TTC General Manager W.C. McBrien said to the Commission: “We have to hold out or be forced to raise fares.” Traffic jams were the worst the city had ever seen. Arbitration was proposed and initially rejected by the union. Eventually, the TTC agreed to a ten-cent wage increase, two more stat holidays and other gains, with the final pay increase to be settled by arbitration. The arbitrator gave the union an extra three cents. Operators now made \$1.48 an hour.

An effective new tactic: “Slow Downs”

Although negotiations since 1952 were always tense, labour peace was held for the next few collective agreements. But in 1959, dissatisfied with the lack of progress to reach a contract agreement, Local 113 called a “Slow Down” on December 18, which resulted in the refusal of Operators to work overtime. Following the resumption of contract meetings, the “Slow Down” was called off and the Operators reported for work in the usual manner on December 23.

A “Slow Down” again took place from December 9-15, 1963, in which union members refused to report for any voluntary overtime work, but 1963 was a year for the labour-relations textbooks. There was a dispute about money, a job-action but no strike, good faith bargaining with some concessions from both sides, and a settlement. TTC was less inclined to take on a union that had proven to be a formidable, unified force.

A third “Slow Down” occurred from May 26 – June 16, 1966 during contract negotiations, with the operating staff again refusing to report for voluntary overtime. An agreement was made between the Local 113 Executive and the Commission, and as there was a feeling of discontent among the members present, it was decided to put the agreement to the entire membership in a closed ballot. When 79% of the membership voted in favour of the new agreement, service returned to normal.



The 1969-70 Local 113 Executive Board contained three presidents. The current president, Leonard Moynehan, sits with his arms crossed, in the middle. He served in that position for nine straight years, from 1967-76. In the second row, at right, is Charles B. (Charlie) Johnson, who succeeded Moynehan for two years, from 1977-79. He was followed by Dominic Bonazzo (second row, third from right) who was President from 1980-82. Johnson came back in 1983 to serve as President for five more years, until 1988.

The “ravages of inflation”

1968 saw another good settlement for the union, but this time, wages weren’t the matter at hand; it was an improvement in benefits that Local 113 fought for. There was lots of posturing and brinksmanship in the beginning, with the TTC using dire warnings, blame allocation, and extension of deadlines to try and weaken the union’s commitment.

The TTC wanted Local 113 to fall into the pattern of financial settlements for workers at Toronto and Metro. Local 113 conceded on this, as long as they were also to match Metro and Civic’s benefits — especially the health plan. At the time, there was a TTC-operated health care plan that Local 113 had wanted dropped for the last eight years, asking for a private plan such as Physicians Services Inc. (PSI), which other Civic and Metro employees had. A strike was averted when the TTC gave in on the medical plan and accepted the union’s demand for a PSI health plan with extended health and medical benefits. PSI and similar private plans were soon replaced by Canada’s universal Medicare plan, which had been pioneered in Saskatchewan in 1943 by Premier Tommy Douglas, later the first Leader of the New Democratic Party and, years after his death, voted “The Greatest Canadian.”

By 1972, in the words of provincial arbitrator R.W. Reville, “the ravages of inflation” had continued unabated. Annual double-digit cost of living jumps became the new normal. Local 113 members’ wages were dropping behind policemen, firemen and garbage collectors and they demanded a settlement that matched the outside workers. Other demands included improvements to the pension plan, an additional holiday to match City-Metro employees, elimination of waiting day before sick pay can be claimed, and time-and-a-half after 8 instead of 8.5 hours and for working on days off.

After marathon all-night bargaining, a settlement was reached to make ATU 113 members the highest paid transit workers in Canada. They also won retirement at 60, an increase in disability pension and sick benefits, and one additional holiday: the member’s birthday. It was a huge union victory all around. The agreement passed, with the approval of 57% of the union members.

The volatile 1970s

By August 1974, the Canadian inflation rate had risen to 10.8%. Workers were demanding catch-up wage increases and Cost of Living Adjustment protection. And because of the split shifts used to accommodate morning and afternoon rush hour, many drivers were putting in 13-hour days with a five-hour gap in the middle. In the words of Local 113 President Leonard Moynehan, “The days are over when men are willing to be away from their homes for 13 hours a day.”

At the 1974 contract negotiations, yet another impasse developed between the Commission and Local 113 — the TTC wanted to provoke the members, and succeeded. Union members went on strike on August 12, just as the annual Canadian National Exhibition was getting started. It was settled shortly after Labour Day, through provincial government intervention.

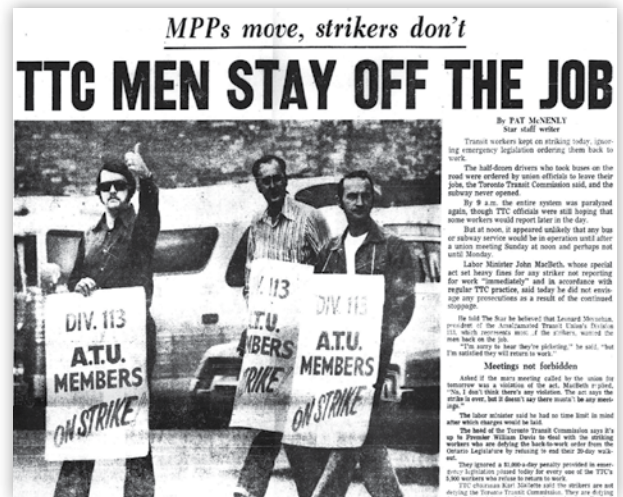
The great lesson of the 1974 strike, one that must be revisited every generation, is that union power comes from the members. Workers knew the strike was coming and worked a lot of overtime to build up savings, and they were determined.

On August 30, Conservative Premier William Davis convened the Legislature to end the strike and enforce arbitration. Although Davis was a minority Premier, the Liberals voted to force the workers back with threats of heavy fines. Only the NDP was opposed.

It was a wild and woolly time. Members defiantly ignored the back-to-work order on the first day, voting overwhelmingly to continue the strike. And while the TTC goaded the union, Local 113 tried to be co-operative, providing volunteer bus service for the elderly and for welfare recipients with urgent medical appointments.

Things eventually settled down and the strike ended on September 4, two days after Labour Day. Mayor David Crombie made a proposal to settle the strike based on wage parity with transit workers elsewhere in Canada and the abolition of split shifts on weekends. His third proposed point — that Local 113 accept part-timers, was a non-starter for the union, as it always has been. The union wasn't interested in letting the TTC “casualize” the workforce to its members' financial detriment.

In the end, it wasn't just the union that was critical of the TTC. Premier Davis and others spoke out about the TTC's tactics. In the words of Labour Minister John Macbeth, “If we believe in the right to strike, we can't immediately change our minds when we're inconvenienced.” And yet he did. The back-to-work legislation was drafted in his office.



As it did in 1919, the 1974 summer strike came at a time when increases in the cost of living were soaring into double digits. And like in 1919, it was a year of many strikes across Canada. The Ontario Conservative minority government of Bill Davis legislated TTC workers back to work “immediately” or face individual fines of \$1,000 per day. Lieutenant-Governor Pauline McGibbon was woken at 1:30 a.m. to give the bill “Royal Assent” with her signature. The response of the workers was more anger and defiance of the law. Three days later they returned to work with a 12 per cent wage increase and arbitration for more complex issues, such as split shifts. It was the longest strike in TTC history and the first time the province had become involved in a TTC labour dispute.

Liberals show their anti-union roots with wage controls

In October 1975, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau went on national television to announce a new system of “wage and price controls” which would be enshrined in law by the *Anti-Inflation Act*. Price controls did not work for reasons well-understood. People cannot be forced to sell their goods — oil, for example — at less than the prevailing market price. But wages can be easily constrained by law. And they were. Canadian workers lost billions in purchasing power through the Trudeau program, and have never fully recovered.



“Just watch me!”
Pierre Trudeau
effectively restrained
wages while prices
continued to rise.

The Pope, the Queen and the Union

In the long, hot summer of 1984, the threat of a TTC strike could not have come at a more dramatic time. The CNE was on, Pope John Paul II was coming to town, and Queen Elizabeth was scheduled to visit two weeks after that. To make matters worse, the Gardiner Expressway was closed for repairs. The Conservative government of Bill Davis had declared that public sector wage settlements must be capped at 5% per year, but the members of Local 113 wanted 7% to match the inflation rate. With 52% of the union's members voting to reject the TTC's final offer, a strike date was set for September 12, just two days before the much-anticipated Papal visit.



"Taxi, Taxi!" Her Majesty practices for her visit to Toronto during a threatened TTC strike.



"All those who believe in the right to collective bargaining, stand up!" Get off your knees. Better to bargain than beg

In an unprecedented move, Ontario's Minister of Labour Russell Ramsay demanded that a second vote be taken, arguing that due to a turnout of only 75% of members, only about 37% of the entire Local 113 membership actually voted to reject the contract.

With intense pressure from the Premier and Toronto's Cardinal Carter, who was appealing to avoid the worldwide embarrassment that would result from a transit strike during the Papal visit, Local 113 President Charlie Johnson publicly declared that "this is not the year for a showdown." Johnson knew that Davis would not hesitate to end the strike with legislation and feared that an arbitrated settlement might be worse than what they had. He also worried about public anger if the union disrupted the two special visits. The members did not agree, though, and the second vote, on August 22, saw exactly the same result: 52% against.

Rather than wait for the strike, Premier Davis recalled the Legislature, outlawed a strike and forced the dispute to binding arbitration. The arbitration award was nearly identical to the rejected settlement. The following year, from September 6-11, 1985, a work-to-rule program came into effect, and during this period the Operators did not wear their required uniforms and did not volunteer for overtime.

No part-time drivers!

Under the 1987 agreement, ATU 113 members received a 14% wage increase over two years, making TTC Operators and Maintenance workers the highest paid in North America. Contract negotiations in 1989 should have gone smoothly, but TTC management wanted the union to accept 450 part-time drivers. This was an undeniable strike issue. But rather than walk out, the union instituted a job action to keep transit service running in order to avoid back-to-work legislation and to buy time to convince the public — and the city's politicians — that part-time drivers in Toronto was not the way to go.

This job action was unique in that it requested members to drop to a four-day workweek, making the transit system slower than usual, but still running. Members stopped their voluntary overtime, and some wore street clothes instead of TTC uniforms. Management announced that those working 4-day weeks as part of the protest were to be put on official 4-day schedules and that their vacations were cancelled, but members agreed to ignore both these orders.

During the job action, 450 members of the union who held supervisory positions were forced by the TTC to take the place of other union members who were effectively on strike. The result was that they were expelled from holding Union membership. Local 113 members were now reluctant to apply for these positions as they would forfeit their seniority at the completion of a six-month trial period. After forty-five days, Local 113 members were back to work but the union ultimately prevailed in the ensuing legal and political battles over part-timers.



Baseball fans were on edge during the slowdown over part-time drivers. The TTC was threatening a lockout as the American League Championship series between the Blue Jays and Oakland approached, which would have made getting to the Skydome chaotic. The dispute was settled in time but the Jays lost in five games.

No casual workforce for the TTC!

In the summer of 1991, the union was negotiating over the recommendations in Fact Finder Kevin Burkett's report. The report permitted a "triggering formula" that allowed the hiring of part-time drivers under certain specific circumstances, and the TTC wanted to act on this.

But just like two years earlier, the members were in no mood to compromise on the issue. The Company's first offer at the end of July was rejected by a vote of 96%. By September 3, the TTC withdrew its demand for the triggering formula. On September 5, after thirty hours of non-stop bargaining, they came up with a deal that made nobody happy, but which the union executive could recommend to the members. The agreement included a 4.95% wage increase in first year and 4.75% in second.

But the deal the bargaining committee took back to the membership still contained a provision for a summer relief Operator (TTC retirees). On September 12, the membership rejected this offer as well. Local 113 President Ray Hutchinson interpreted the rejection of the settlement as a call for an immediate strike rather than for a return to bargaining. Some, including the TTC, disagreed with this decision.

And so the strike began. Meanwhile, it was election season in Toronto. Mayoralty candidates Susan Fish, Betty Disero and June Rowlands wanted the province to order an immediate end to the strike, whereas candidate (and future federal NDP leader) Jack Layton defended Local 113's right to strike. The recently-elected NDP provincial government under Premier Bob Rae was under pressure to find an alternative to back-to-work legislation.

After four days on strike, the union was called back to the table by the Minister of Labour. The TTC backed off further, changing the agreement by reducing the summer maintenance vacation quotas. The Commission revised the offer again to provide for the position of Maintenance Operator, a deal that was ultimately ratified. The part-time issue was put to rest.

Part-time workers popular with employers

Resisting the introduction of part-time Operators to the TTC is one of the most important, though largely unnoticed, ongoing victories of Local 113. Over the last quarter century, the number of part-time workers in Canada has more than tripled and the trend continues. Part-time workers earn less, most have few, if any benefits, and they are easier to intimidate by threatening to give them fewer hours if they don't make themselves available when the employer wants them. Part-time work is good for students and stay-at-home parents who want to earn some income but it is bad for those who want and need full-time jobs. The operational "efficiencies" of a part-time work force benefit employers, not workers.



The most stable Executive Board position was Secretary-Treasurer. Harvey C. Ward, Peter Clarke and Les Moore served in that post for a total of nearly 40 years.

Jack Layton was a Toronto Councillor before he moved on to the federal scene. In 1991, he ran for Mayor of Toronto. He was advised not to publicly support the right of ATU workers to strike that year but he did so anyway. Some said that lost him the close race but he replied: "What good are principles if you change them when they are politically inconvenient?"



The Strike That Ended the Millennium

When the slash-and-burn Mike Harris Conservatives came into power in 1995, they eliminated provincial funding to municipalities for welfare, public health, housing and public transit. Under the Premier's so-called "Common Sense Revolution," the province cut the subsidies and downloaded TTC costs to the city to the point where Toronto's bill for the TTC jumped from \$164 million to \$400 million.

Although the province was unwilling to help the TTC, the union had done its best. In 1996, the union helped out a cash-strapped TTC by making \$72 million in concessions. From 1992–1999, ATU members had only a 1% pay increase. Almost 10% of their salaries had been lost to inflation. Enough was enough.

After a decade of cutbacks and concessions, the ATU approached the end of the millennium knowing that negotiations were going to be very tough. But going in, Local 113 worked hard to educate the public through an unprecedented awareness campaign.

Between September 1998 and March 1999, the union spent \$250,000 on publicity to highlight the work of the membership and the importance of public transit to the City of Toronto. The campaign was funded with a special Defence Fund, supported by a \$5-per-week dues increase. It was to be used for legal services, forensic accounting services, public relations advice and an advertising campaign. In the case of a strike, it would also be used to fund strike pay. The union's public campaign urged people to call Premier Harris and Mayor Lastman to give them the message that "Public transit deserves public support." position as they entered into negotiations with the TTC.

At the bargaining table, things were not moving forward in the spring of 1999. The union was determined to achieve its goal of a three-year contract with increases of three percent in each year. The Commission would only offer two percent. They gambled that they could sideswipe the bargaining committee by using the Ontario Labour Relations Act to force a vote, but this plan backfired on them. The membership responded by voting 78% against the TTC's final offer.



Premier Mike Harris (1995-2002) cut transit funding, sold Hwy 407 to a Spanish company, revoked the NDP's anti-scab law and made it more difficult for unions to organize. It was only Common Sense.

A two-day strike began on April 19. The Tories, in discussion with the Mayor's office and the TTC, moved to recall the Legislature in order to pass back-to-work legislation. After much back and forth, including a private meeting between the union, the TTC chair and NDP Leader Howard Hampton, an agreement was reached. The deal proposed that the members must return to work immediately with a 2% immediate increase, and that a mutually agreed upon arbitrator would determine the final settlement. The membership ratified the deal by 67%. Provincial arbitrator Judge George Adams went on to rule that the workers get a 7.75% increase over three years. It was the shortest strike in Toronto transit history since 1917.

Quick end to strike stalled by the NDP

Harris wanted to recall Legislature and order TTC workers back but NDP refused

Once again, only the NDP stood up for the workers' right to withdraw their labour as part of the collective bargaining process.

When Cutbacks Kill

When government treats public transit as a cost to be cut instead of the vital service that it is, the results can be literally fatal.

Tragedy struck on August 11, 1995, as a subway collision on the Spadina Line killed three people and injured more than 30. A 28-day inquest concluded that "underfunding since the mid-1980s has contributed to the deterioration of the system and has jeopardized the safety of the TTC." The jury argued that the government should be required to commit to "a long-term policy of fully funding the capital and operating needs" of the TTC. Just over two years later, the Conservative Ontario government of Mike Harris completely eliminated transit funding. The present Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty has not restored operational funding for the TTC but has instead opted for privatization as a way of expanding transit, ignoring evidence from around the world that private transit doesn't work.



Keeping Toronto moving, even in the dark

On August 14, 2003, a cascading power failure left Toronto, along with most of the eastern seaboard, without power. Up to 50 million people were affected.

The lights were out, air conditioners were off, gas pumps didn't work, and the subways and streetcars were stopped in their tracks.

But the members of Local 113 weren't sitting idle. In a time of panic, they were keeping the city running. Extra buses were put on the road to replace the electrical streetcars and subways. Almost 100 buses were able to provide a scheduled 4-5 minute mid-day service within 24 hours.


And that wasn't all. Radio communications were lost when the CN Tower's generator ran out of fuel, and members drove diesel fuel supplies around the city to refuel generators along the subway lines and at the TTC's main offices — as well as at the CN Tower.

Members went out of their way to deliver emergency fuel supplies to two chronic care facilities. They used incredible ingenuity to provide lighting for Dispatchers, CIS Control and Traffic Offices, attaching bus headlamps to batteries.

This work was recognized by the Canadian Urban Transit Association in July 2004, when CUTA awarded the TTC its Corporate Recognition Exceptional Performance/ Outstanding Achievement Award. Even during one of the largest blackouts in North American history, Local 113 kept Toronto moving.

2005 Campaign: We Move Toronto

We Move Toronto was the very first major public awareness campaign to showcase the diversity of ATU 113 members and the value of their work to the city. The campaign, an initiative spurred by new Local 113 President Bob Kinnear, ran during contract negotiations. It comprised newspaper ads along with posters in TTC vehicles, station platforms and transit shelters. The posters featured 28 different ATU members; each showed the member on the job and had a short, personalized statement on how they felt about their job. As public opinion polls showed, the campaign had a positive effect on the image TTC users had of TTC workers. That was also the year of one of the best-ever contract settlements in decades.



WIN A METROPASS!
Visit WeMoveToronto.ca for details


KIM RODWAY
Upholstery Shop

"Offer your seat to someone. I'll make you another."

If you're a transit user, chances are you've sat on one of the 26,000 seats we reupholster here in our shop last year. Making a seat that is durable, economical, easily cleaned and comfortable may not come to mind when you think about transit. But it's all part of moving Toronto.

TORONTO TRANSIT WORKERS
AFFILIATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

Read more at > WeMoveToronto.ca



WIN A METROPASS!
Visit WeMoveToronto.ca for details

HENRIQUES LUE
Coach Technician

"Our buses last longer because we take good care of them."

This bus over 20 years old but it is in better shape than the average 10-year-old city bus in the United States. In our shop alone, we save passengers and taxpayers millions of dollars a year in capital costs by greatly extending the life of the vehicles that move Toronto.

TORONTO TRANSIT WORKERS
AFFILIATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

Read more at > WeMoveToronto.ca

Thousands of images of ATU 113 members on the job were displayed for weeks on every TTC vehicle, every subway platform and many bus shelters in the *We Move Toronto* campaign. It was the most ambitious public awareness campaign ever by any ATU local in North America.



LOUISE STEWART
Bus Operator

"I've seen kids run into the street without looking, which is frightening. The winter months are the worst because they pay less attention to traffic when it's cold, dark and snowy. They need me to watch out for them, and I do."

TORONTO TRANSIT WORKERS
AFFILIATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

Read more at > WeMoveToronto.ca

"To hear this message again..."

As the 2005 negotiations came down to the wire on an April Sunday afternoon, every media outlet in the GTA was camped out at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Markham waiting for word of the outcome. Neither side — the TTC nor the union — knew whether there would be a strike or a settlement. Whatever happened, Local 113 President Bob Kinnear did not want the members to learn the news from the media. So he did what no other union leader anywhere had done before. He recorded two "robo-call" messages: 1) "We've got a settlement" and 2) "We're on strike." A last-minute concession by the TTC led to a closed door settlement. As the media waited outside the room, Kinnear sent a text message to Union Calling, the telecom company that was poised to immediately send out the appropriate call. Within seconds, phones were ringing all over Toronto. Members heard from Kinnear about the settlement well before the first news reports were broadcast.

"No more fare disputes with our customers"

Despite the good 2005 contract settlement, TTC worker morale was in freefall in 2006. Management kept coming up with disorienting and often unworkable schemes to save money. One example was the hugely disruptive change in shifts for over eight hundred janitors to nights, on the unproven theory that it would make the system cleaner. It didn't. There was also a lot of anger among Operators about the lack of concern by management over the growing number of assaults, which had risen 31 per cent between 1999 and 2003. In October 2005, Jaime Perreira was shot in the face and blinded in one eye while trying to break up a gang fight on his bus.

At a press conference in May 2006, Kinnear announced that the union was advising vehicle Operators to protect themselves by "not engaging in fare disputes with our customers. It will be up to the travelling public whether they want to contribute to the box," said Kinnear.

Official reaction was swift and hard. TTC Chair Howard Moscoe warned that Operators refusing to collect fares could be disciplined. Mayor David Miller snapped to the media: "They're required to do their jobs." When pressed, however, neither man would say that the job of an Operator included engaging in fare disputes with customers. Confusion reigned in the standoff over both the janitors' and operators' issues.

On Monday, May 29, 2006, the anger and frustration finally boiled over. Spontaneous picket lines were assembled early in the morning by hundreds of mechanical and janitorial workers across many of the TTC's yards and garages. Operators who showed up for their morning shift joined their co-workers in a sign of solidarity. Transit service was halted. It was the first (and still only) system wide mid-contract shutdown of TTC service in history.

The Ontario Labour Relations Board quickly issued a cease and desist order requiring workers to report back to work. It had no effect. By early afternoon, the Ontario Superior Court ordered the union to return to work or face contempt of court charges and massive fines. Satisfied that the members' legitimate grievances had finally come out into the public arena and could no longer be swept under the carpet, Kinnear called his members and asked them to return to work "for the sake of the travelling public, not TTC Management."

Bobby Lowe's DILEMMA

One afternoon, an hour before his shift ended, 16-year veteran TTC Bus Operator Bobby Lowe politely said to a boarding passenger: "Excuse me sir, this transfer is invalid." Moments later, he was repeatedly punched in the face, dragged off the bus feet first and stomped on by two men while the passengers fled. He spent five days in hospital. The surgery on his knee could not prevent a permanent disability. Because he was forced to go on WSIB benefits, his income dropped significantly. Months later, even though the TTC's own doctor said he could not return to work, Bobby was cut off WSIB benefits.



With no income for months, he and his family were evicted from their apartment. His life fell apart in several painful and permanent ways. Eventually, because his union went to bat for him, Bobby got his job back.

Bobby Lowe could not possibly have predicted that his polite fare enforcement would lead to a vicious and disabling assault. He now thinks, as do the other men and women who help move Toronto on the TTC, that it's no longer worth the risk to engage in fare disputes with customers.

What Do Bobby's Bosses And His Mayor Think?



TTC Chair Howard Moscoe has threatened that there will be "consequences" for drivers, like Bobby, who do not enforce fares. But he refuses to say whether it is a requirement of Bobby's job that he engage customers in fare disputes — such as politely mentioning an invalid transfer.



Mayor David Miller says that Operators like Bobby should "do their jobs." But like fellow politician Moscoe, Miller refuses to say that Bobby's job includes, as a condition of his employment, that he must engage customers in fare disputes. Why can't the Mayor be more specific? Exactly what is Bobby's job?



TTC Chief General Manager Rick Ducharme, whose \$260,000 salary is 45% higher than in 2000, doesn't think assaulted Operators like Bobby are entitled to full pay during their recovery. Yet TTC management staff, Ducharme included, get full pay if they're off sick for any reason, a bad cold, for example.



"We are tired of being assaulted, insulted and abused by a small but growing number of passengers, just for doing our jobs. We will no longer engage in fare disputes with customers. We will no longer risk being punching bags for \$2.75. And it is outrageous to financially penalize TTC workers (and their families) who are attacked on the job. We ask the people of Toronto for their support in this."

Bob Kinnear, President, Transit Workers Union Local 113

WeMoveToronto.ca

The union ran full-page ads in Toronto newspapers to tell the story of Bus Operator Bobby Lowe, who had been viciously attacked by drunk passengers for (politely) not accepting an invalid transfer. Hospitalized and permanently disabled, Lowe's life fell apart as both the TTC and the WSIB abandoned him. The ad, which galvanized public opinion and was widely reported in the news, was highly critical of TTC Chair Howard Moscoe, Mayor David Miller and Chief General Manager Rick Ducharme, who resigned from his \$260,000 job. "We will no longer be punching bags for \$2.75," said Kinnear in the ad. "It is outrageous to financially penalize TTC workers who are attacked on the job."

A blustering Mayor Miller introduced the idea of prosecuting Local 113. It was also suggested that Bob Kinnear be incarcerated. Kinnear responded that he would be proud to go to prison to stand up for his members' safety and job rights. "They won't have to escort me. I'll walk in without hesitation."

The power struggle ended a week later with TTC Chief General Manager Rick Ducharme's resignation on June 6. The TTC sued the union for \$3 million, but the suit was settled before going to court. The union paid nothing and the walkout was officially called an "incident."

In the end, the TTC promised to accelerate the development of protective plastic shields on streetcars and buses and to install security cameras on surface vehicles. As a result of that single day of inconvenience to the City, TTC Operators are now better protected.

An unexpected strike fuelled by confusion, rumours and blunders by politicians

By 2008, Local 113 members had lived through years and years of budget crises, cuts to services, threats to wages and threats of the contracting out of their jobs. But that year, for the first time since the creation of the amalgamated City of Toronto in 1997, the City came forward with a balanced budget. Councillors associated with the NDP dominated many of the key positions in the City including in the mayor's office. And with the threat of a budget deficit finally removed from over the heads of the city's workers, there was a sense in the union that now was the time to make up more of the ground lost in the difficult years of the 1990s. The feeling was: it was time to make some progress.

Tense negotiations had resulted in a tentative agreement between the TTC and ATU Local 113 that most saw initially as a victory for the union. TTC drivers won a wage increase of 3 per cent a year in each year of a three-year deal. On top of that, in what became known as the "GTA clause," Operators won the right to remain the highest-paid transit drivers in the Greater Toronto Area. If, for instance, Toronto transit drivers were earning less than transit drivers in Mississauga or any other GTA municipality, they would get an increase of 5 cents an hour above the other drivers' wages.

As well, the union finally won what City workers had enjoyed for years. When losing time from work because of a job injury, a TTC worker gets only 85% of his or her regular pay from the Workers' Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). For City workers, a WSIB "top up" paid by the employer raised the benefit to 100% of pay, ensuring that workers were not financially penalized for being injured at work. The penalty had been particularly unjust when the injury resulted from an assault. Now this basic fairness was to become a TTC worker's right.

Overall, the settlement was very good, even better than the 2005 one, and ratification was expected. Politics, however, intervened. Within the union, long-simmering tensions between the Transportation and Maintenance Board members came out into the open when the latter refused to sign and recommend the settlement, defying President Bob Kinnear's warning that a strike might prove disastrous to the union. A tsunami of false rumours confused the membership as to what they might be voting on. Those who wanted to scuttle the settlement claimed that the union would allow many jobs to be contracted out.

To complicate matters, TTC Chair Adam Giambrone,

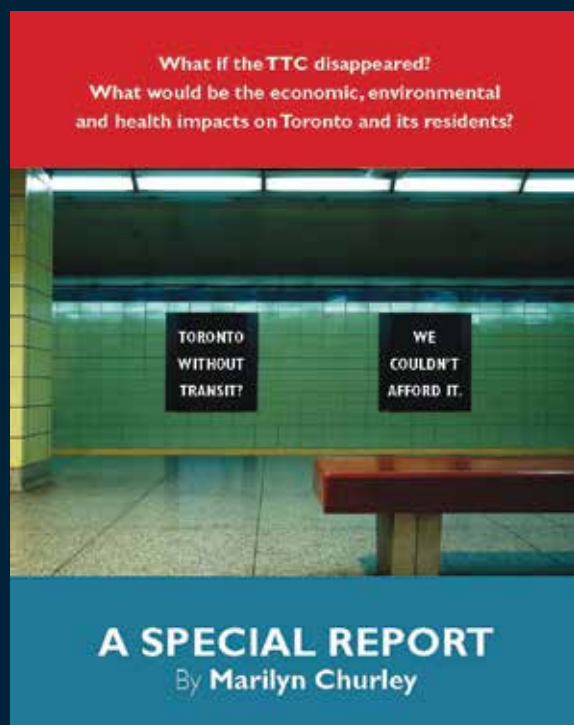
2008 Campaign: Worth a Million

In 2008, union President Bob Kinnear commissioned an in-depth study of the value of the TTC to Toronto's economy and environment. Conducted by former Ontario Cabinet Minister Marilyn Churley and a team of transit economists, it found that the TTC was worth at least \$12 billion to Toronto, or one million dollars per TTC employee. The resultant "Worth a Million" campaign ran during collective bargaining that year. It featured a dozen members on TTC vehicle ads and, for the first time, in television ads, which aired over 1,000 times. The TV ads were translated into five languages for OMNI multicultural TV. An informative and entertaining documentary video titled *"What if the TTC Disappeared?"* was made to explain the Churley Report to the public. It still is available on YouTube, along with the "Worth a Million" TV ads.



A dozen ATU members were selected from across the property to represent the skill and dedication of TTC workers. Some had saved lives or rescued accident or crime victims; others were simply great at their jobs and deserved recognition. L-R, front: Kim Marshall, Sameer Arora, Leslie Boyes, Sultana Gagnon; L-R, back: Barbara Richards, Jerry Cuzzo, Bob Kinnear, Pino Parato, Scott Griffiths, Diane Crnojevic, Eric Mak. Most were featured in a series of evocative TV ads that ran for several weeks, as well as on TTC ads in every vehicle. Public opinion research polling by the union found that those who took the TTC almost daily were most affected by the campaign. Most poll respondents remembered the TV ads and rated them "effective" or "very effective."

Former Ontario Cabinet Minister Marilyn Churley, now a Justice of the Peace, authored the report finding the TTC worth at least \$12 billion a year to Toronto's economy and environment. A video on the report "What if the TTC Just Disappeared?" can be found on YouTube.



Former Ontario Cabinet Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and avid environmentalist Marilyn Churley authored a comprehensive report of the economic, environmental and social value of the TTC to the City of Toronto. With hard numbers and acute analysis, Churley concluded that if the TTC disappeared, it would cost the City at least 12 billion dollars a year in economic activity and health care costs. "We would not want to live in a Toronto without the TTC." The \$12 billion works out to about one million dollars per TTC employee (including management), hence the campaign slogan: "Worth a Million."



The Worth A Million T-shirts and buttons became collector's items for many people not part of ATU. Guys gave them to their wives and girlfriends as expressions of their feelings about them; others wore them to advertise what they thought of themselves.

who was angling to succeed David Miller as Mayor, blithely told the media that if the settlement was rejected, "We'll go back to the bargaining table" – a clear signal to the members that there was more to be had, that a better deal was available to a more aggressive union. Further adding to the problem was Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's public announcement that he "would seriously consider" a City Council request to legislate the ATU back to work in the event of a strike. McGuinty's message to ATU members: "A strike won't last long." Giambrone and McGuinty all but guaranteed that the settlement would be rejected and it was, by 65%.

The strike began shortly after the vote was finally counted the evening of April 26, 2008. Ninety minutes' advance notice was given to protect the members, in the words of President Kinnear, from "angry and irrational members of the public." Subway station doors were locked at midnight, causing consternation throughout much of the city, especially downtown, where the bars and nightclubs were packed with Friday night revelers. All the goodwill generated by the "Worth a Million" campaign evaporated in minutes.

For once true to his word, McGuinty responded to Miller's request for back-to-work legislation. It took an unprecedented Sunday sitting of the Legislature less than two hours to pass the law. Service resumed by early evening and the eventual arbitration award issued by Kevin Burkett mirrored the settlement. The strike had achieved nothing but public animosity.

Talk of outlawing transit strikes flowed freely at City Hall and Queen's Park but nothing came of it. A study by the right-leaning C.D. Howe Institute warned that arbitrated transit settlements were more expensive than those that were freely negotiated. The occasional strike was an economic check against runaway labour costs. At Queen's Park, the Liberal government voted solidly against a Conservative private members' bill to declare the TTC an "essential service," forbidding strikes. Three years later, for crass political reasons, the Liberals changed their mind.

Fighting transit privatization: the 2010 campaign

During the 2010 municipal election campaign, there was much talk of TTC privatization and so-called “public-private partnerships” or “P3s.” The media, however, did no investigation of the claims by candidates that privatization or P3s involving the TTC would be good for either taxpayers or transit riders. They were more interested in snoozing collectors than the bankruptcy of our entire transit system. So the union stepped to fill the information void. To make it a front-burner campaign issue, Local 113 commissioned a study of the effects of transit privatization and P3s in London, England, Melbourne, Australia, Auckland, New Zealand, and Vancouver, B.C. The results were shocking in their implications for Toronto.

The study was made into a video called “Keep TTC Public,” which was narrated by Canadian television and stage icon, Eric Peterson (*Corner Gas*, *Street Legal*, *Billy Bishop Goes to War*). The video has been shown to acclaim at transit industry conferences around the world and is on YouTube. As well, a dynamic 30-second TV ad (also available on YouTube), powerfully summarizing the disasters of transit privatization, was produced by Local

113 and aired over a thousand times during the closing weeks of the municipal election campaign, Transit system ads also drove the point home.

The union campaign had an instantaneous effect. The day after it was launched, every mayoralty candidate, even the eventual winner, Rob Ford, stopped talking about TTC privatization.

In 2012, however, privatization reared its head again. First the McGuinty Liberal government gave the green light to the provincial transit agency Metrolinx taking over not just the building of the four new LRT lines planned for Toronto but also their operation and maintenance with a private sector partner - P3. And in late 2012, the Toronto Transit Commission voted narrowly to contract out TTC bus cleaning services to a private firm that would pay workers half what ATU members were being paid. The struggle to retain a public system, which the union helped establish in 1920, will continue.

PRIVATIZING PUBLIC TRANSIT HAS FAILED EVERYWHERE

Some people think turning over all or part of the TTC to private, for profit companies would make it run more efficiently and at a lower cost. They should do their homework. Transit privatization and so-called “public-private partnerships” have been tried around the world. It’s never worked, anywhere.

Get the facts at KeepTTCPublic.ca

**PUBLIC
TRANSIT
COALITION**

Sponsored by the Public Transit Coalition, a non-partisan organization devoted to safe, reliable and affordable public transit for all Torontonians.



LONDON: DISASTER
In London, England, a public-private partnership to refurbish the subway system was a financial disaster for taxpayers.



MELBOURNE: NIGHTMARE
In Melbourne, Australia, a city much like Toronto, private operation of the transit system has been a nightmare for commuters.



VANCOUVER: HUGE SUBSIDIES
In Vancouver, Canada, a public-private partnership on a new transit line failed to deliver as promised and still requires huge taxpayer subsidies.

WIN A FREE MONTHLY METROPASS!

We're giving away a free Monthly TTC Metropass every day until November 1, 2010.

To enter the contest, go to KeepTTCPublic.ca



The 2010 campaign against TTC privatization was meant to bring the issue out into the open in the municipal election campaign and have it publicly debated, particularly as part of the mayoralty race. The campaign was so good, however, that it had the opposite effect. None of the candidates could refute the strong body of evidence marshalled by the union against transit privatization so they stopped talking about it. But the issue has raised its head again. Metrolinx, the provincial transit agency, says it will build four new LRT lines in Toronto as a public-private partnership. The union may revive its campaign as a result.

TTC workers meet their riders at three Town Halls

It started with a tweet. One cold January night in 2010 a passenger walked into the deserted McCowan station and nabbed a phone picture of Collector George Robitaille, who appeared to be taking a little shut eye in the overheated booth. The photographer tweeted the picture, which was picked up by the Toronto Sun and splashed on its front page with the headline: TTZZZZzzzz.

Media madness ensued. Overnight, George became the biggest TTC story in years. "Citizen journalists" with phone cameras snapped madly away at Operators and Collectors and flooded news desks with photos and videos of Operators stopping for coffee or a washroom break. In fact, the amount of time it should take a TTC Operator to urinate became a matter of public discussion. Then accusations of rudeness from TTC



Hundreds of listeners showed up for the Scarborough meeting, including mayoralty candidate Rob Ford, who ducked out early after talking with a couple of reporters.

workers took over as the story, with people lined up to give testimonials about how this or that bus driver wasn't nice to them. One TV news station sent a young woman equipped with a pen camera into the subway to see if she could get a Collector to be rude to her by asking stupid questions. (It didn't work but that didn't stop the reporter from talking on air about "all the complaints about TTC workers" she had heard from people.)

It was a tough time for ATU members. The insults and assaults spiked. President Kinnear held a press conference and told the media to back off. "Stop it!" he nearly shouted, saying the media was promoting abusive behaviour and being grossly unfair to people just trying to do their jobs.

To calm things down, the union held three town halls around the city, one in Downsview, one in Scarborough and a third one downtown. At each meeting,

TTC RIDERS & WORKERS LET'S TALK

Public Town Hall Meeting with Toronto Transit Workers

How can we work together to improve customer service on the TTC?



**SUNDAY
APRIL 11
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
DOWNSVIEW
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Your Town Hall Moderator

John Tory
 Moderator, Newstalk 1010
 Chair, Toronto City Summit Alliance

Toronto's transit workers want to hear directly from TTC riders

The quality of service on the TTC is a hot topic these days. As transit workers, we see this as an opportunity. We want the best possible working relationships with our riders. Open discussion and a constructive exchange of views is the way to go to make that happen.

Join us at one of our three Town Hall meetings. Or watch them on our live webcasts or on Rogers Cable TV. Let's start the conversation.

Bob Kinnear, President ATU Local 113

Ask the Audience!

As seen on TV, Town Hall participants will be given hand-held devices allowing them to electronically (and anonymously) vote on questions posed by the Moderator.

Can't make the meeting? Watch it on TV.

LIVE on Rogers Cable 10
 This Sunday, April 11
 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

For more details visit:
WeMoveToronto.ca

We're also on [facebook](#)

LET'S TALK: TTC Riders & Workers

FREE SHUTTLE BUSES!

From the WILSON subway station directly to the Town Hall meeting from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Buses begin returning to WILSON at end of meeting.

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2010
 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
 DOWNSVIEW SECONDARY SCHOOL
 7 Hawkdale Road (North of Wilson, East of Keele)



Seating is limited to 300. Come early.
 Admission is FREE. All Welcome!

FUTURE MEETINGS
 April 18 – Scarborough – Stephen Leacock Collegiate
 May 2 – Downtown – Ryerson University Library

Full-page ads in the commuter papers were taken out three days before each event.

four rank and file TTC workers, along with Kinnear, took questions from the audience and won praise for being upfront and honest about the whole range of problems passengers and workers experience. Most of the complaints were about things the workers had no control over: crowded vehicles, rising fares, not enough service, traffic jams and so on. Over a thousand people showed up at the meetings, which succeeded in bringing riders and passengers together, if only for a Sunday afternoon.



The first town hall was held at Downsview Secondary. Newstalk 1010 talk show host and former politician John Tory was the Moderator.

The Political Theft of Collective Bargaining Rights

Throughout the ages, workers with grievances about their treatment have resorted countless times to the withdrawal of their labour. Only in modern times, a bit more than a century ago, have strikes been considered “legal.” And even today, not in every country. There are dozens of countries where union leaders who call for strikes are imprisoned. More than a few are murdered.

In December 2010, Rob Ford surfed into the Toronto Mayor’s office on a promise to “Stop the Gravy Train” At City Hall and get these pesky unions under control by contracting out their work and, if necessary, taking away their collective bargaining rights.

Canada is a signatory to an international treaty — *International Labour Organization Convention 87* — where limits on the right to strike are only justifiable where the interruption of the service would “endanger the life, personal safety or health of the whole or part of the population.” The ILO has consistently found that transit strikes do not fall into this category. And despite the public perception that “the TTC is always on strike,” since its founding, the in-service rate of Toronto’s publicly-owned transit system has been 99.8%. [See box]

None of this mattered to Ford. A City Council motion asking Premier McGuinty to declare the TTC an “essential service” passed with a comfortable majority. Since the McGuinty Liberals at Queen’s Park were facing an election only months later and Toronto seats were up for grabs, they voted for Bill 150, which could have been written in the Mayor’s office. Ironically, the same Liberal MPPs had voted *against* a post-strike 2008 Conservative private member’s bill to declare the TTC an essential service. To Liberals, the fundamental right to withdraw one’s labour was a political football, not a matter of political principle.

Only the NDP, faithful to its principles, voted against Bill 150. It passed on March 30, 2011, one day before the expiry of the 2008 agreement. Despite President Bob Kinnear’s public pledge to arbitrate the next collective agreement to give the Legislature the normal amount of time to debate and consult the public on such a serious matter as taking away a treaty and Charter right, the Liberals rushed through the process — three readings and committee hearings — in a total of less than eight hours. They didn’t even devote one working day to this issue.



“Got it all under control, eh Dalton?” Only a year earlier, McGuinty had voted against a Tory bill to take away Local 113’s right to strike. But when Mayor Ford threatened to unleash the mythical “Ford Nation” on the Liberals during the upcoming 2011 provincial election, the Premier discovered a new set of principles.



Despite the general popularity of forbidding ATU strikes, Andrea Horwath’s NDP caucus stood up in the Legislature to oppose Bill 150. They went on to take seats away from the Liberals in Toronto in the 2011 election.

Always on strike? History begs to differ.

After the founding of the TTC in 1921, it was 31 years before the first strike in 1952 (19 days). Another 18 years went by before the second strike in 1970 (12 days). The 1974 strike lasted 23 days, the 1978 strike 8 days. Thirteen years passed before the 1991 strike (8 days). There was a two-day strike in 1999, a half-day “incident” in 2006 and a two-day strike in 2008. Since the founding of the TTC 91 years ago, we have been on strike a total of 75 days, an in-service rate of 99.8 per cent.



The York Region Transit Strike – Our Longest Ever

The sprawling York Region, just north of Toronto, has Canada's only fully-privatized transit system, with three private contractors providing service to about 70 million passengers per year. One of those contractors, Paris, France-based Veolia Transportation (operating in York Region as Viva) has a global reputation for tough bargaining. That proved to be true here in Canada in 2011 when months of talks with ATU Local 113 went nowhere. Finally, in late October, Viva workers voted unanimously to strike and on October 24, 2011, the 220 operations and maintenance workers walked off the job.



Strike rallies at York Region Headquarters were well-attended and well-covered by the Toronto media because many people who work in Toronto live in York Region and relied on transit to get them to the TTC.

At the same time, over 250 ATU Local 1587 members at Miller Transit and First Student Canada — the other two York Region Transit (YRT) contractors — had voted to reject their offers as well, by 85% and 95%, respectively. They too struck on the 24th.

The big issue was money. YRT workers were the lowest-paid transit workers in the Greater Toronto Area, with an average wage an astonishing seven dollars less than those who performed the same work in surrounding municipalities.

The challenges to the union were great. Less than 25 per cent of York Region residents used transit and the Regional Council, chaired by an unelected privatization hawk Bill Fisch, pretended it had nothing to do with labour relations at YRT. To cap it all off, Veolia, a \$50 billion a year company, could take a relatively small strike forever.

To break the impasse, the union proposed to end the strike immediately and go to binding arbitration. A poll showed that 71 per cent of York Region residents favoured this solution but Fisch rejected it out of hand, preferring to inconvenience his residents with a winter transit strike rather than face an arbitrator.

The strike wore on. The picket lines were solid and there

were multiple large rallies in front of the castle-like York Regional headquarters. In January, 2012, both Veolia and Miller asked for Labour Board-supervised votes on their final offers. Both were rejected by large margins by the members. When it became clear that the union was not going to break, the companies significantly improved their offers and the strikes ended by ratification votes, three months after they had begun.

It was the longest strike, by far, in Local 113's history.



International President Larry Hanley came to a large rally at York Region Headquarters and was cheered by the strikers when he congratulated them for their "incredible solidarity." He also appeared on the Toronto news that day, pledging that the International Union was behind the strike "one thousand percent."



The union publicly offered to end the strike and go to binding arbitration through newspaper ads. A poll showed 71% of York Region residents in favour of this but it was rejected by Regional Chairman Bill Fisch.



Veolia operated some buses with scabs during the strike but were often thwarted when strikers, taking a cue from the "Occupy Wall Street" movement, bought tickets en masse and crowded the buses for hours. A judge ruled that this was a legal strike tactic.



Members from Local 113 and 1587 walked the picket lines together in solidarity.

A Caring Union

If your knowledge of ATU Local 113 came strictly from the media you could be forgiven for not knowing that ours is one of Canada's most generous unions, on a per-member basis. On this page are just a small sample of the acts of giving back to the community that has made Local 113 well-respected and admired by those who know how much we care.



Since 2005, Local 113 has been a major supporter of the Children's Breakfast Clubs, which serve a hot, nutritious breakfast to children from financially disadvantaged homes. Most are children of "working poor" parents. In 2011, the Local committed to at least three years of funding for an entire kitchen at Toronto's Africentric school. The kitchen will serve many thousands of breakfasts in that school alone.



Other charities supported by ATU Local 113 in recent years

Care Canada
Doctors Without Borders
Habitat for Humanity
Italian Earthquake Relief
Pakistan Flood Relief
Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

...and many more small but effective charitable organizations you probably don't even know exist.

The ATU Community Event Tent has travelled around the city a lot in recent years, appearing at many local events and neighbourhood get-togethers and fundraisers, many sponsored by the local City Councillor. There are always refreshments available and often little gifts for the kids, who love the cardboard streetcar models they have to assemble. There is typically a donation as well to the cause for which fundraisers are held. Our members live everywhere in the city. So we support the entire city. In 2010, Bob Kinnear and several 113 members attended and helped out at Councillor Ana Bailão's 2010 fund-raiser for a community kitchen in Dovercourt. Councillor Bailão was a building cleaner for several years, so she understands the reality of that work, and how hard and undercompensated it is.



Since 1986, ATU Local 113 has donated over one million dollars to help fund research into Multiple Sclerosis at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Toronto. Each year's big event for this cause is a hockey match between the NHL Alumni team and the ATU All-Stars. The All-Stars always lose, of course, but recent breakthroughs in the treatment of multiple sclerosis take the sting out of the annual defeat.



The Toronto Argonauts Foundation's "Stop the Violence" program set up recreation and education programs for kids from "at-risk" areas. Many of the Argos players generously donated their time – and more – to these early intervention programs. So did Local 113. We were a significant donor, along with other unions and corporations, to this ground-breaking effort. Our participation was recognized at an Argos game at the Rogers Centre on the Jumbotron.

The Maintenance Campaign

Although past Local 113 public campaigns had included both Transportation and Maintenance members, the biggest threat to union jobs in 2012 was in the maintenance area. The Executive Board, backed by the membership, approved mounting a campaign aimed at informing Toronto of the “hidden asset” of TTC Maintenance workers, who “Take Care of the Details That Take Care of You.”

The campaign was the union’s most ambitious ever, with a dedicated website named ProtectingWhatMatters.ca, three 30-second television ads that ran for more than a month on several stations, thousands of TTC vehicle ads featuring two dozen different Maintenance workers from all over the property and newspaper ads.

An additional feature of the campaign was something no union had ever done. An electrifying 90-second ad featuring many ATU Maintenance members was played in every Cineplex theatre in Toronto before the feature film, a total of more than 14,000 times.

The Maintenance Campaign was a cornerstone of the looming battle over greater privatization of the TTC, a fight that will challenge all the resources and historical unity of our great union.

The first collective agreement of the new era

The first TTC/ATU agreement to be arbitrated under the Bill 150 “Essential Service” legislation was finally settled in early June, 2012, more than a year after the expiry of the last agreement. The arbitrator, Kevin Burkett, gave the union wage increases of two per cent per year for three years but took away the five sick days without a doctor’s note provision. Not much else in the former agreement was changed.

Soon afterward, the TTC Commissioners accepted a motion by new top guy Andy Byford to give the same increases to management, even though Byford had claimed during arbitration that the TTC “has no money” to pay any increase to the hourly-rated workers. Where he would find the \$13 million per year for these management raises was a mystery until the Commission voted to increase fares by five cents, just enough to cover the management raises.



24 images of ATU 113 Maintenance members were displayed by the thousands in TTC subway, streetcar and bus vehicles.



Several members in the campaign worked in various areas of the system doing cleaning. Resisting contracting out of their work was an important objective of the campaign.

Each TV ad and the 90-second theatrical ends with the scene of a young girl looking out of a subway window, smiling in wonder at the landscape below, while the narrator says: “We take care of the details that take care of you.”



A full-page, full-colour ad in the Toronto Star was a vivid start to the largest-ever public campaign by Local 113.



Notable Local 113 Members

No one knows how many transit workers in Toronto have been members of ATU Local 113 since 1899. A best guess would put it at well over 100,000. Among those have been an uncounted number who did things worthy of note. Lives were saved. Children and abused women were rescued off the street. Emergency services were called in time to make a difference. And many charities and community organizations were enriched by the volunteer efforts of our members throughout the last eleven-plus decades. Almost all of their names have been lost to history. So let these four recent notable members (chosen from among many still in our ranks who also deserve recognition) be a reminder that we were always dedicated to the city we serve.



George Robitaille. George gained international infamy in January 2010 as the “Sleeping Collector” whose picture of him dozing off late on a Saturday night in a deserted McCowan station touched off a media frenzy. The fact that George was on heavy medication for a heart condition and that he had quite literally, all by himself, saved a passenger’s life when

he was a Wheel-Trans driver did nothing to stop the tide of anti-TTC worker sentiment. George took it all with good grace and felt bad that his short nap had caused so many problems for his fellow workers. He died of heart failure in December, 2010.



Scott Griffiths. Scott was driving his Weston Road bus on an icy February morning in 2007 when he saw a car slide off the road and flip over into a creek. As freezing water rushed into the overturned care, Scott rushed to the scene and pulled the soaked young female driver out of the car window, gave her his coat and waited until EMS arrived. He was hailed on the front page of the Sun with the headline: “Great Scott!”



Joyce Williams. It takes more than a little guts for a woman to drive a TTC bus on largely deserted streets in the middle of the night but **Joyce Williams** was up for the job and the members of the Scarborough Mahavihara Buddhist Temple on Kingston

Road are glad she was. In the early morning hours of November 27, 2009, Joyce spotted some smoke coming from the temple. She stopped, called 911 and waited for emergency vehicles to arrive. Turns out the fire had been started by an arsonist with gasoline but her call was in time to save the temple, a haven for Sri Lankan Buddhists. In a moving ceremony a few weeks later, Joyce was honoured with a plaque and gifts for her and her family and was profusely thanked by 300 temple-goers, including the Sri Lankan Consul to Toronto.



Karen Bass. If Andy Byford and Karen Stintz had been around in 2006, they might well have contracted out Karen Bass’s job as a Station Janitor to a low wage non-union employer. But the mother of the boy Karen saved will always be grateful that there are dedicated career



TTC workers on the job who know what to do in a crisis situation. She would not object to them making a living wage.

Labour Day: The Annual Renewal of the Spirit of Solidarity

To long-time Local 113 members, the memories of Toronto's Annual Labour Day parade all merge together in their minds. The same route, the same destination, the same smiling members from other unions – even your own – who you see but once a year. The kids, the banners and the Exhibition, the images of all those parades are somehow interwoven into one event. And yet each year's parade feels, to those who are there, somehow unique and renewing. Every first Monday in September, Toronto union members come together in a spirit of pride in their own union but also pride in being part of a larger movement that is a force for fairness, equity and social progress. Even the occasional rain that soaks the marchers or

high winds that turn banners into sails do not take away from the essential feeling that “We are One!”

Local 113 can always be counted on for a good turnout, and more often than not an impressive one. Though records of our early years are scarce, it is certain that transit workers marched in every parade, even before 1899. We're a part of this city and its labour movement. We are respected and supported by other unions and we do so in return. Labour Day brings us all together. Our goal as a movement must be to keep the spirit of this day alive throughout the year. What a different and better city we would have with a union solidarity we could all rely on.



The Maple Leaf logo of Local 113 was adopted in 2005.



Bob Kinnear greets Federal NDP Leader Jack Layton at the reviewing stand.



How many kid-sized We Move Toronto t-shirts are stuffed away in.



TTC Idol Winner Ernie Grimes and his band were the hit of the 2006 parade.



Labour Day on Queen Street around 1905 waiting for the parade.



It's always a mad scramble for the kids to get a seat on the old Peter Witt.



Inside the old streetcar, out of the sun or the rain.



President Charlie Johnson led the parade many times in the 1980s.



The Executive Board with then-TTC Chair Adam Giambrone.



They've been to a lot of parades and each one is a special memory.



Volunteers make a huge difference to the success of ATU's parade.



Thousands of Local 113 members showed up in 2007 winning the Best Turnout Award easily.

From Our History...To Our Future

The union's past is a history of hard work — and it is also a history of hard-won advances in workers' rights, not just for ourselves, but for all working people and their families.

Our challenges today are daunting. Never before has there been such stress on Toronto's transit system. But no matter how difficult it is sometimes to put in a hard day's work in the face of media antagonism and public misunderstanding, we have been here before as a union. Those who came before us had even greater struggles that they faced and greater challenges that they overcame. We are made of strong stuff. And we have the resilience to stand up for ourselves when necessary while still serving the city we care so much for.

One hundred and thirteen years since ATU Local 113 was founded, the fight that it carries forward is the same as when we began: Public Transit Deserves Public Support.

And our history goes on.



1919



2012