



Teamsters Local 117

Teamster Talk

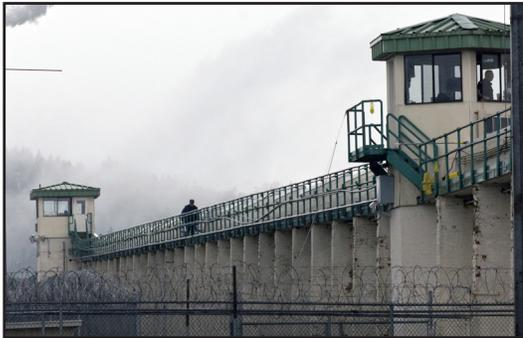


Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936

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ARBITRATOR ORDERS DOC TO REINSTATE FOUR CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES

Full Back Pay Award Issued After Arbitration Win



Officers patrol the perimeter of the Washington State Reformatory in Monroe.

An arbitrator has issued a stinging rebuke to the Department of Corrections (DOC) in a ruling that favors four correctional employees at the **Monroe Correctional Complex (MCC)**, who were disciplined by the DOC after Byron Scherf's murder of Officer Jayme Biendl in the prison chapel on January 29, 2011.

"The arbitrator's ruling clearly demonstrates that the DOC imposed unfair discipline on its employees in the wake of this terrible tragedy," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117.

In his July 7 award, Arbitrator Michael E. Cavanaugh, J.D. ruled that the DOC did not have just cause to terminate three correctional officers nor did the Department have just cause to demote one correctional sergeant.

Arbitrator Cavanaugh's ruling orders the

DOC to immediately reinstate and make whole the three discharged correctional officers for lost wages and benefits. The demoted correctional sergeant must be reinstated to his former position and be made whole.

TWO INDEPENDENT REPORTS BACK ARBITRATOR'S RULING

In reaching his conclusions, the arbitrator repeatedly referenced a **Washington State Labor & Industries** report of the incident that describes

a "culture of complacency" at the facility and a failure by the DOC management to enforce policies and procedures designed to keep its employees safe. The **National Institution of Corrections** had also issued a report making numerous recommendations to correct serious systemic safety problems.

"Instead of focusing on the underlying issues and the need for sweeping reform, DOC engaged in unfair finger pointing at the line corrections staff who risk their lives every day to keep our communities safe," Thompson said. "While some improvements have been made since Jayme's murder, staff safety remains an issue in our State's prison system. Until it is adequately addressed, the need to improve prison safety for staff must be DOC's number one priority." ●

LOCAL 117 MEMBERS ATTEND NATIONAL POLICE WEEK IN D.C.

A member expresses his gratitude



(l to r) Officer Roger Gale, Michelle Woodrow, and Officer Willie Bergin.

Two Local 117 Police Officers, **Roger Gale** of the City of Pacific and **William Bergin** from the University of Washington, attended National Police Week in Washington D.C. from May 12-18.

The two Shop Stewards were accompanied at the event by Michelle Woodrow, Local 117's Director of Corrections & Law Enforcement.

The annual event, which draws tens of thousands of law enforcement professionals from around the world, honors fallen heroes that have been killed in the line of duty. This year's event honored 321 American law enforcement heroes.

EMOTION AND GRATITUDE

After attending the event, Bergin sent the following letter thanking his Local:

To my fellow Teamsters at Local 117:

I want to say thank you for making it possible for me to experience one of the most memorable and significant events in my life. National Police Week in Washington D.C. had many moments that were awe inspiring, from the candlelight vigil that would bring a tear to the eye of even the most hardcore police officer, to the parade with the police marching bands with their bagpipes and drums that filled my heart with a sense of

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A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Tracey A. Thompson

Brothers and Sisters:

Starting this August, your Union's website will have an exciting, new look.

Local 117 is partnering with **C-Street Campaigns**, an organization that builds websites for unions and other non-profits, to develop a new website and online strategy that reflects Local 117's reputation

as a dynamic, powerful union that defends workers' rights and that won't back down from a fight.

The new site aims at engaging and mobilizing members to take action in support of working families; it will serve as a hub of information and resources for members of Local 117; and it will help the Union reach out and connect with non-union workers in key industries so that more working families can enjoy the benefits of having a strong union.

LEADING THE RESURGENCE OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Our overarching goal is to reinvigorate the labor movement in the Pacific Northwest. This new website will help us achieve that goal.

The new site will feature a contemporary design, simple, clear navigation, and it will integrate with new media tools such as Facebook and Twitter so that members can stay engaged, connect with fellow members, and take political and legislative action.

All Local 117 members will have a dedicated, industry-specific page where they can access information about benefits, worker rights, scholarships, community sponsorships, and steward resources.

The new website will enable members to easily join one of Local 117's caucuses, political action committees, or community action groups. The aim is for members to get more involved and take greater ownership of their union.

For more information about Local 117's new website redesign project, visit www.teamsters117.org.

In Solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson
Secretary-Treasurer

POLICE WEEK

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*pride. I am sure that while I was watching that parade I stood taller than I ever had before. One of my most moving moments though had nothing to do with the event but could not have happened had I not been in Washington D.C. Visiting the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** was an experience that will stay with me forever. I am fully aware that I got to attend this event because I am a Police Officer and a Teamster!*

*On May 12 when I boarded my flight, along with Michelle Woodrow and Roger Gale, I was excited and felt lucky to have "won" the chance to attend **National Police Week** in Washington D.C. On May 17 when I boarded my flight back home those feelings had changed to honored and proud.*

Honored to be a member of a fellowship of men and women who choose to serve and protect communities, counties, states, and country. Honored to stand shoulder to shoulder with members of that fellowship at a candlelight vigil where we paid respect to those fellow law enforcement officers who have fallen in the line of duty and their families whose sacrifice is never ending.

*Proud to be a member of **Teamsters Local Union 117**, a union that not only supports its officers through representation but by spending their time and money to send two of its members to such an important event. I am proud to be part of a Union that chose to send those members as officers in their uniforms representing their departments. You did not ask us to wear a Teamsters jacket, t-shirt or anything like that. The lack of self promotion by the Teamsters shows they understood the significance of this event as well how much they understand that a police officer's work is much more than a "job". I believe the Teamsters have set an example that every Union representing Police Officers should follow. In fact, every police department should take your lead and send at least one officer each year.*

With sincere appreciation I want to thank the individual member that spent their time making all the arrangements for me to go, the leadership that approved the monies to be spent as well as my fellow Teamsters.

Gratefully,

William Bergin
Union Steward
University of Washington Police Department

LOCAL 117 BIOLOGIST ACHIEVES SINGULAR FEAT

A Teamster's practical ingenuity leads to a startling success

The waters of Puget Sound are full of them – rat-like creatures with big wings, a long snout, and iridescent eyes. Their glow attracts divers at night, and they lay an abundance of eggs in the murky sediment, hundreds of feet deep on the coastal shelf. Yet despite their prevalence, *hydrolagus colliei*, or the spotted ratfish as they are called, are somewhat of a mystery.

"We don't know a lot about their development," said biologist Katie Metz, a Local 117 Teamster at the **Seattle Aquarium**. "They hatch at 200-300 feet deep, and it takes six to twelve months for a single embryo to develop inside its case, which is a really long time."

HATCHLINGS DEATHS, A MYSTERY

The Aquarium has displayed local ratfish for thirty years, but has never managed to raise the animals in captivity. In fact, it's possible that no one has ever accomplished this feat, until now. This year, Metz became the first recorded person worldwide to have reared the species into adulthood. Previous attempts in places such as Massachusetts and Portugal have not been nearly as successful.

Although ratfish will occasionally lay their eggs in an aquarium setting, the hatchlings die, usually within twenty-four hours. In Portugal, biologists managed to keep a specimen alive for twenty-four days, but for a fish with a lifespan of ten to fifteen years, that's a pretty short time.

"We don't know the reason they die," Metz said. "Whether it's a different pressure field 300 feet down - they have really big receptors in their snout, so we don't know if it's an electromagnetic mechanism that stops working."

Metz was intrigued by the animal and saw the failed attempts of others as a challenge. She did her own research and brought a proposal to her boss at the time. "I said, 'Let me

have a solid year of putting these egg cases in a dark environment, and let me try to rear them up to adulthood.'" Her boss, reluctant to give up precious space at the Aquarium, finally agreed. "I was persistent," Metz said.

A NOVEL IDEA LEADS TO SUCCESS

Metz gathered the eggs, and put them in a dark container. Every month, she held a flashlight underneath the tank so she could



Local 117 Biologist Katie Metz.

see their shadows and note their development inside the egg case. After nine months, some of the eggs started hatching. But, as they had done elsewhere, the fish died within one to two weeks. Metz attributed their inability to survive to fin and snout erosion, caused by the hatchlings bumping their noses into sides of the tank.

She puzzled over the problem and came up with a novel idea. "I thought, 'If I could only line the container with bubble wrap, it would give them some cushion when they knock against the side of the tank.'" Metz's pragmatic ingenuity led to a startling success. The last surviving fish, #20, lived beyond two weeks, and it continued to develop and grow. "In Portugal, they had trouble getting theirs to eat; mine ate like a champ," she said.

#20 survived for over ten months. Metz received recognition for her accomplishment, locally from her colleagues at the Aquarium, and she was invited to speak at a national

conference for accredited aquarists and biologists, but was unable to attend due to a shortage of funds.

Funding is a challenge for municipal aquariums. Indeed, changes are underway at the Seattle Aquarium that could impact its funding and possibly its status as a unionized workplace. For many years, the Aquarium was owned and operated by the City of Seattle. But now, the City wants out of the aquarium business, and Seattle's Pier 59 landmark is transitioning to a privately-held entity, a process that will be complete in December 2014.

SEATTLE AQUARIUM AT A CROSSROADS

During the privatization process, the eleven biologists at the Aquarium, who are represented by Local 117, will have to decide whether or not to remain Teamsters. If they go non-Union, employees stand to lose their seniority rights, their job security, and the just cause protections under their collective bargaining agreement. Their wages and benefits would also no longer be secure.

"I think it would be very unfortunate," Metz said.

Metz, who has been an employee at the Aquarium for three years, did not always understand the value of her Union, but she became an ardent supporter when her Business Representative helped her through a sticky situation at work.

"It was a circumstance that I couldn't handle myself," she said. "The Teamsters came in, and said, 'No, these rules have to be followed, and employees have to be treated with respect.' It's nice to have someone on your side looking out for your best interests. The Union has given us a voice. The Teamsters are our backbone."

Metz hopes that the group will remain Teamsters, and she plans to expand on her work raising ratfish at the Aquarium. She's writing a research paper on the species, and she's cultivating a new batch of eggs and photographing them to track their development. As for #20, which, after flourishing for over ten months, inexplicably weakened and died, she holds a special place for the fish in her heart. "You get attached even though you are not supposed to," she said. ●

117 CAR SHOW A SUMMER HIT!

Caucuses raise money for the Local 117 Solidarity Scholarship



Tom Sullivan shows off his 1929 Model A Ford coupe at the Local 117 Car and Bike Show.

Rods, customs, classics, and motorcycles were all on dazzling display at the first **Local 117 Car & Bike Show** held at the Teamsters Building in Tukwila on Saturday, June 22.

In all, 46 contestants entered the show, with dozens of Teamster families on hand to enjoy the festivities. A DJ served up a mix of party tunes, while people munched on *carne asada* tacos, burgers, and hot dogs.

Teamster t-shirts were raffled off each hour

and the 50/50 raffle awarded one lucky winner \$340 cash

Each participant received a goody bag with Teamster swag, and prizes were awarded for the best in show.

A GREAT UNION FAMILY EVENT

"This is a great way for Teamster families to get together, relax, and enjoy themselves," said Tracey A. Thompson, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer. "We hope to make this an annual event."

Tom Sullivan, a retired Local 174 member, placed first in the car category with his beautiful 1929 Model A Ford coupe, while **Kurt Wiebe**, a Local 117 driver with Praxair, won the best bike award with his custom Softail Harley Heritage Classic.

The Car Show was sponsored by the Local 117 caucuses to benefit your Union's **Solidarity Scholarship** for continuing education. The Solidarity Scholarship is open to all Local 117 members in good standing seeking to further their education. ●

JOIN FIGHT TO PASS PAID SICK DAYS IN TACOMA

Volunteers needed to pass City ordinance



Local 117 members attend Paid Sick Days kickoff on May 30.

You shouldn't have to choose between your health and your job.

It seems straightforward, but every day thousands of workers in restaurants, child care centers, and offices throughout Tacoma are faced with that very decision. Nearly half of Tacoma residents don't have the opportunity to earn paid sick days. Catching a simple cold means they must choose between making ends meet and coming to work sick.

We have a unique opportunity to fight for healthy communities and workers' rights. The **Tacoma City Council** is considering legislation that would enable workers to earn paid sick days. But if we're going to make sick leave a reality, it's going to take an outpouring of grassroots support from Teamster activists like us.

Opponents of sick leave say we can't afford to offer paid sick days. The truth is working families can't afford the broken system we have now.

Paid sick days reduce health care costs by allowing workers to seek preventative care and avoid illness before it starts. Employees who can recuperate and return to work healthy are more productive and creative. And parents who can stay home with a sick child without worrying about a lost paycheck or losing their jobs are integral to a stable economy.

To join Teamsters 117 in the fight to pass paid sick days in Tacoma, contact Political Action Coordinator Dustin Lambro at 206-441-4860 ext. 1262. ●

117 SOCCER TOURNAMENT

Sponsored by Comité Latino - Teamsters Local 117

SATURDAY, SEPT. 7, 2013

Tukwila Community Center
12424 42nd Ave S.
Tukwila, WA 98168

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For more info., call 206.441.4860 ext. 1269.

LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

July 27, 2013 – WWTCOA Annual Meeting - Teamster Taxis

September 7, 2013 – Local 117 Soccer Tournament

September 19, 2013 – Local 117 Quarterly Membership Meeting

November 16, 2013 - Local 117 Blood Drive

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at www.teamsters117.org.