

Speak Out Now at BART (8/29/2022)

Dirty Stations: The Blame Game

Everyone knows BART's reputation as a dirty and unhygienic public transit system. The media loves to sensationalize it. And there are real explanations for how the social problems of the Bay Area and broader society lead displaced people to have few other safe places to go than the stations and trains.

But why does management then choose to staff System Service consistently at a fraction of the level that they should? Many workers are assigned two stations. There is not enough staffing to cover when someone takes off, so someone gets stretched even further. Add to this the constantly increasing expectations and duties placed on workers with no considerations for the time required to do the work.

And who is blamed for dirty stations? HINT: not management.

Wheel of (Mis)Fortune

When a District-wide bid comes up, if you are not high seniority, it can be nerve-racking. And what high seniority means depends on the line you are on or your reporting location. Usually everyone knows who is bidding for what. But the unknown can be whether someone with high seniority, who is on another line or location, wants a certain bid.

So, for people in ATU, the choices narrow each day during the bid, as bids get taken. And then it is each hour. And then finally – your bid.

For SEIU, you put in your preferences, and wait to see what comes out.

For everyone, it's like spinning the wheel of fortune or playing roulette. But instead of just watching – you are ON the wheel.



BART's Wheel of Misfortune?

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For Maintenance, We Need Parts

From Rolling Stocks and Shops, both in Primary and Secondary Repairs, to Maintenance and Engineering, BART workers are finding out system-wide that parts and equipment are difficult to come by. This is nothing new. But how are things like collector shunts for the trains, or compressor service kits running so low? These revenue vehicles cannot run without them.

What about the parts Power and Mechanical needs to service lifts, lift tables, and to repair the ducks workers use to get into the yards? It's the same story in the Electrical, Tracks and Train Control departments.

Everywhere, parts seem to come from cannibalized equipment, secret stashes, or equipment is limping along with duct tape, RTV silicone, or whatever materials workers can get their hands on.

This is ridiculous. Riders and workers deserve better!

Ridership Up

Ridership is picking up. And some areas are feeling the staffing pressures. New classes are in progress, but is BART Management looking ahead to the retirements coming up? Publicity gimmicks, like the 50-year celebration, are one-time things.

People who ride BART don't need entertainment. They want a reliable and clean transit system.

Safety Meetings: Everything BUT Safety

When BART workers raise safety issues that need addressing, they often fall on deaf ears. Management claims to understand and then makes excuses for why the situation cannot be dealt with immediately.

In System Service, the meetings are just an excuse to reinforce rules that don't have anything to do with safety – things like “don't leave the station on your breaks, take them on time, sign the elevator log, wear your uniform,” and the list goes on...

In other departments as well, safety meetings are used by management to impose their policies.

But what if workers turned these into real safety meetings to make sure these issues really got resolved?

Join us for...

*Speak Out Now's next online townhall
Sunday, September 25 @ 4pm*

*on "The Abortion Struggle Today: Our Right and Our Fight" with author and activist Jenny Brown,
more info can be found at speakoutsocialists.org*