Meet the Teamsters

A Closer Look

Reminder. Please discuss Teamster raid issues during breaks or off work hours.
Why?

A short time ago you and I received a letter from Teamsters Local 763 attempting to persuade our people to change unions. I found the letter unprofessional and lacking in specifics. It appeared to me to be a template with unfounded allegations used to support talking points.

If they have such tremendous resources, why not mail the information to the membership? And why a faceless unsigned letter with a makeshift Yahoo address?
My Personal Experience

I started working closely with the Union about a year and a half ago. The four years preceding my election to the E-Board I heard many opinions about our Union. They stretched the entire range as you might expect. Like I always do, I went in with a clean piece of paper and decided to develop my own opinion.

This first thing I discovered was I had no problem reaching Dustin and getting support from office staff. Most responses were within a day – sometimes in the evening after normal business hours or on a weekend.

With more involvement coming up from the ranks, Quarterly Labor Management meetings resumed and the pace of dealing with issues gained momentum.

I quickly realized I had big ideas and a strong motivation to improve the working conditions of the membership but I would need the help of Management, office staff, the PSEU Executive Board and most importantly the member’s themselves.
My Personal Experience

This was new territory for me. I needed Dustin’s skills and experience. He delivered then as he does now. In a very short period of time we formed a relationship that’s made dramatic progress.

First we improved staffing so people could go home at the end of their shift. Next, we identified areas that need work to reduce disciplinary issues. We started reviewing policies that put our member’s in a “catch 22.” Some policies were hurting the quality of life of all our members. We needed to develop a strategy that recognized the fine balance between the seniority of a member while at the same time making our job a good place to be from day one.

Now our members are involved in uniform changes, developing training manuals and working alongside Management to develop to policy. The difference is something all of us can take pride in.
We currently are in contract negotiations. It’s early but I’m pleased with what I’ve seen thus far. First of all it’s comfortable. I’ve worked with many of the people to solve problems in the last year. They’re good people who care about people. An adversarial approach is not necessary. It does not recognize the thirty plus years Dustin worked to build relationships with people that can make a difference. Change horses in the middle of a stream and all of that is gone. It’s hard to imagine tearing down such vital bridges of communication.

One major obstacle we were running into was the increasing demands put on Dustin and the front office by the national organization. They insisted on more time and energy from Dustin to support the national agenda. They also wanted more from you in the way of political action and increased dues. We left the national SEIU because it was not a good fit. Those same reasons would resurface if we went with the Teamsters.

So now you know a little bit more about me. Let’s review our history and take a look at the pedigree of Local 763.
PSEU 519 History

Public Safety Employees Union 519 was chartered in April of 1962 and it was the direct result of the efforts of a handful of employees of the King County Sheriff’s Office in Seattle, Washington. The Department in 1962 was a small rural Sheriff’s Department dependent upon individual funding within the County structure and directed by an elected Sheriff. Partisan politics was a definite factor in not only the size of the Department but an individual employee’s progression within the Department. Civil Service was created to correct that problem and was enacted by the voters in 1959. However, the effects of a well entrenched political patronage system was not eradicated immediately and there was an urgent need for collective bargaining and a group effort to improve the working conditions.
PSEU 519 History

At that time the Sheriff’s Department was very small, less than a hundred Deputies, and it was well below the number necessary to establish an independent Guild or bargaining organization. The dues that would have been required to sustain a full-time Business Representative and business office would have been prohibitive. Consequently, a group of Sheriff’s Deputies approached an existing International Union, titled Building Service Employees, and requested a Charter. The Charter was granted and the King County Sheriff’s Deputies Local Union 519 was officially born. Shortly after Local 519’s Charter, the International changed its name to Service Employees International Union.
PSEU 519 History

There have been many changes in Local 519 since 1962. Like Microsoft stock we have grown and “split.” In 1988, with a total membership of 1200, the Police Officers and Sergeants decertified to form a “Guild.” Our numbers were reduced to approximately 600 as a result. We began growing again and peaked at 850 members in 1996 when political infighting led to a Trusteeship and the Corrections Officers and Sergeants decided to leave and form a “Guild.” Their departure was actually beneficial because it created more balance in the organization and enfranchised the smaller bargaining units.
When Public Safety Employees was part of SEIU (Service Employees International Union) we had three bargaining units leave over a 45-year history – King County Police Officers, King County Corrections Officers and Bothell Police Officers. All three left to form an independent Guild because they did not want to be under the control of an International Union – the same reasons we left SEIU in January 1st of this year and became an independent Union.

The membership that was left was still passionate about maintaining Local 519 as a viable entity. Consequently, with a new President and Executive Board to provide leadership, the remaining 375 members waved a fond farewell to the Corrections Officers and began the rebuilding process with a new vision and renewed energy. Since returning to self-government in February of 1997, we have grown by over 50%.
A new chapter began in January, 2008 when PSEU Local 519 formally reorganized and disaffiliated from SEIU. We became an independent Union with a new name: Public Safety Employees Union 519. The separation was amicable and conducted pursuant to the Constitution & Bylaws of both Local 519 and SEIU and was deemed in the best interests of both organizations. The national and international strategic plan for SEIU was not fully embraced by PSEU members who wanted the Union to focus on service rather than organizing. Thus, both parties concluded that it was best to separate.
PSEU 519 History

PSEU 519 has a current membership of approximately 600 people, most of whom work in jobs directly related to law enforcement. We represent the following bargaining units:

- King County Civic Television (K-CTV), Executive’s Office
- Communications Center/911, King County Sheriff’s Office
- Superior Court Clerks, King County Dept. of Judicial Administration
- DAJD Management, King County Dept. of Adult & Juvenile Detention
- King County Fire Marshal’s Office, DDES/KCSO
- Legal Administrative Specialists, King County Dept. of Judicial Administration
- Non-Commissioned Personnel in the
- King County Sheriff’s Office, Dept. of Adult & Juvenile Detention and Dept. of Community & Human Services
- Bothell Police Captains, City of Bothell
- Kirkland Police Lieutenants, City of Kirkland
PSEU 519 History

The Union is much healthier now and better balanced in terms of member involvement. We are committed to providing our members with superior service in negotiating contracts. Ensuring ongoing improvement to their wages and working conditions by displaying professionalism in our actions characterized by the values of respect, equity and uncompromised integrity.
First Impressions

“To find out your real opinion of someone, judge the impression you have when you first see a letter from them.”

Arthur Schopenhauer
German Philosopher
1788-1860
Frederick is Impossible to Contact

- Office is open 9am to 5pm Mon thru Fri
- Dustin has a publicized cell phone with him. He’s accessible from 7am to 11pm seven days a week.
- Dustin is available via email seven days a week.
- Not happy with response? You have contacts for your E-Board Member and Shop Stewards.
Frederick is Impossible to Contact

- New website will provide communication information.
- New electronic newsletter to your work in-box.
- In the works: Reinforcing Shop Steward positions.
- Vanpooling to monthly meetings and alternate meeting sites.
Workers are discouraged from filing grievances

- Did you try to file a grievance and it was not resolved? I want to know about it.
- Most issues are settled in a different forum.
- Sometimes it’s a lack of understanding as to what is grievable.
- If you feel Dustin is not being responsive to your situation, talk to your rep.
- What we’re working on. Continued education of your rights under contract and labor laws.
Workers can’t get representation when called on the carpet.

- Did you ask for Union representation during a discipline process and you were ignored?
- Dustin is involved and attends Loudermill proceedings as reported in the monthly business manager report.
- What we’re working on. Increased education of your options and rights under the discipline process.
- Improved Shop Steward program.
Frederick allows non bargaining unit members to perform unit work

Do you know of a case where you wanted to work and you were refused and the work was done by an individual outside our Union? If yes, I want to know about it.

These rare cases are usually when there is little recourse, i.e. lack of staff.

What we’re working on. A visible system you can view from home or office that shows overtime needs such as a read only bulletin board. This option is in the early stages of exploration.
Frederick forces workers to not disclose conversations regarding grievances and or negotiations.

- Do you want your name listed on bulletin boards when possible disciplinary action may be taken?
- The nature of the grievance are published but individuals are not named.
- Negotiations typically have agreed upon ground rules which limit specific outside discussion to protect the sometimes fragile process. The members are informed of the general progression of the process and who is in attendance.
- What we’re working on. Our new website and electronic newsletter will enhance communication with our membership.
Frederick meets behind close doors with management.

- That’s what he’s paid to do. This is a surprise?
- Dustin meets frequently with Labor Negotiators, Managers, Council Members and individual elected officials to advance your interest.
- We also have member working groups meeting with supervisors and managers to keep the ball moving forward.
- The implication that meeting with Management is collaborating with the enemy is “We’re at War” mentality we do not subscribe to.
Frederick hides what he and his staff are paid.

- Each monthly meeting we review and approve the finance report.
- You can view the numbers by attending the meeting or calling the office.
- The numbers have little meaning without further explanation.
- Review the Local 763 website and let me know if you find their finance report. You will find notices to get your dues in on time.
- What we’re working on. Work to get members to at least one meeting to see what goes on. Vanpooling and alternate meeting sites are possible solutions.
- If you think Dustin just fell of the back of the turnip truck, read on.
Business Manager Dustin Frederick has thirty-two years of experience in public sector labor negotiations, grievance resolution and collaborative Labor/Management relations. He is a leading Labor representative in Metropolitan King County’s efforts to create an effective Labor/Management partnership receiving specialized training at Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. Mr. Frederick is a certified mediator and member mediator of the King County Inter-Local Conflict Resolution Group. He has been a guest lecturer on effective Labor relations at the University of Washington and Green River Community College.

Top This for Service to Our Membership

Mary, our Office Manager, has 28 years of experience with our union. Wow!
Dustin Fredrick
Cont.

Key appointments:

**Executive’s Labor/Management Partnership Committee**
Invited by King County Executive Ron Sims to participate on Oversight Committee responsible for implementing organizational change in King County government in order to meet the challenges and demands of a high performance regional government. 1998-present.

**King County Performance Measurement Oversight Committee**
Appointed by King County Executive Ron Sims and confirmed by Metro King County Council to provide oversight and direction to King County’s efforts in the area of performance measurements. 1999-present.

**Metro King County Joint Labor/Management Insurance Committee** - One of six Union officials elected by peers to represent Labor in the negotiation of changes to the County-wide benefits package. 1990-present.

**King County Union Coalition** - Elected Co-Chair by peers to represent Labor before the Metro King County Council Labor Policy Committee. 1990-present.

As a Labor official representing approximately 600 public employees, Dustin has special expertise in effective resolution of hostile work environment claims and internal employee disputes, particularly between supervisors and subordinates, in a law enforcement or governmental environment.

Dustin holds a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Puget Sound and a Bachelor of Commercial Science from Seattle University.

Public Safety Employees Union 519 is an independent Labor Union representing King County employees in: the KCSO, DAID, DJA, DCHS, DDES, Civic-TV as well as Kirkland Police Lieutenants and Bothell Police Captains. PSEU 519 is a “service” model Union whose primary mission is to represent its members in unparalleled fashion providing the highest quality service.
PSEU is small and Teamsters are Big.

- We were part of SEIU which has 1.5 million members (Teamsters have 1.4 million). Did that ever have an influence in our local negotiations?
- Ever heard of the phrase “Getting Lost in the Crowd?”
- Let’s take a brief history lesson - the Teamsters
Teamsters Union U.S. labor union formed in 1903 by the amalgamation of the Team Drivers International Union and the Teamsters National Union. Its full name is the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen, and Helpers of America (IBT). In 2005 the union had 1.4 million members; the majority of its members are truck drivers. The Teamsters has been one of the few unions to support Republican candidates, backing Richard Nixon in 1972 and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.
The strongest Teamster centers at the turn of the 19th cent. were Chicago, New York City, Boston, and St. Louis. Chicago, with about half the membership, was the scene of an unsuccessful 1905 strike against Montgomery Ward & Co., which resulted in a decline in union membership. In 1907, Daniel J. Tobin, a Boston Teamster unconnected with that strike, became president. He held the position until 1952, and his policy of avoiding sympathetic action on behalf of other unions and zealously guarding the expenditure of union funds helped the Teamsters to grow. In 1933, the union undertook the organization of the rapidly growing long-distance trucking industry. By threatening to stop deliveries to and from employers who refused to come to terms, the Teamsters were able to gain contracts not only in trucking but in related enterprises.
In the early 1940s Tobin successfully withstood a threat to his leadership from a Minneapolis local. But Tobin's successors ran into problems with corruption. The revelations of a Senate investigating committee led the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to expel the IBT in 1957. Dave Beck, Tobin's successor, was sent to prison in 1958 for larceny and income tax violations. The evasiveness of Beck and his successor, Jimmy Hoffa, before Senate committees was an important factor in the passage (1959) of the Landrum-Griffin Act.
In the 1970s and 80s, a number of Teamster leaders were convicted of irregularities in handling pension funds and of accepting bribes from employers to stop strikes or reduce labor costs. In 1977 allegations of control by organized crime forced the Teamsters to yield oversight of the Central States Pension fund to outsiders. Fitzsimmons died in 1981. His successor, Roy Williams, was convicted the same year of bribing a U.S. Senator. Jackie Presser, who became president in 1982, was indicted in 1985 for embezzling union funds and giving crime figures no-show jobs. The IBT reentered the AFL-CIO in 1988.

Jimmy Hoffa disappeared July 30, 1975
In 1989, with William McCarthy as union president, the Teamsters settled a federal racketeering suit that accused officials of allowing known crime figures to control and exploit the union. A court-appointed trustee supervised elections that resulted (1991) in the election of a reform candidate, Ronald R. Carey, a former New York parcel service driver and local president. (This was the first time the IBT membership was able to vote for union president; previously the national presidents were chosen by the IBT leadership.) In the 1990s the union faced tougher times. Deregulation in the trucking industry after 1980 created many low-cost nonunion firms and led to generally lower wages and benefits. Carey narrowly won reelection over James P. Hoffa, the son of Jimmy Hoffa, in 1996, but then lost office in 1997 over allegations of failing to stop illegal campaign fund-raising; he was later acquitted of lying to investigators about the scheme. Hoffa won a 1998 election to replace Carey and was reelected in 2001. In a split with AFL-CIO executives over union priorities, the Teamsters and two other large unions left the organization in 2005.
Think That’s Ancient History?

From their own membership Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

- What is the Teamsters for a Democratic Union?
- “Founded in 1976, Teamsters for a Democratic Union is grassroots, membership organization of Teamsters, working to build a stronger more democratic Teamsters Union. We are truck drivers, dock workers, warehouse workers, production workers, and clericals—every kind of Teamster, and spouses, too. We believe in returning our union to the membership and we are doing it.”

- “For more than 30 years, TDU has led the fight against organized crime and corruption in our union. TDU won our right to vote for International Union officers and other important democratic reforms, including majority rule on contracts.”

- Reference: http://www.tdu.org/
Seems Like Big and Powerful Has It’s Drawbacks

Based on their history, it’s ironic Local 763 is talking about where the money goes and being in management’s pockets.
But that’s the past. Maybe we can get more up to date information from Local 763’s website.

National Union Priority

Hoffa emphasized Obama’s commitment to rebuilding and strengthening the national transportation infrastructure, a key priority of the Teamsters Union.

“Senator Obama will fight to rebuild our transportation infrastructure,” Hoffa said. “He will work with us to address critical issues from our ports to our highways, rails and airports. We need a president who is focused on rebuilding America and Barack Obama will be that president.”

It’s clear their core interest is still with Truckers and Construction Jobs
Meet the Leadership of Local 763

**Secretary Treasurer** – David Grage (current Secretary-Treasurer)

**President** – Evelyn Gradilla (Lake Washington School District)

**Vice-President** – John McCue (The Seattle Times)

Does their background look like they would understand our issues?
Track Record

- They’ve been decertified (voted out) 10 times in the last 10 years. All were police or law related departments.

- Look at their recent news on their website. [http://www.teamsters763.org/newsjune08.htm](http://www.teamsters763.org/newsjune08.htm)

- You’ll notice a strong emphasis on getting more money into the pension plans. Not bad if you’re close to retirement. Not much mention of immediate pay raises.
The Bottom Line

- If you’re a trucker, newspaper employee, grave digger or work in a meat packing plant, and can Strike, this type of fit might be for you.

- If you have a state pension plan, excellent medical benefits and Management who responds to the “collaborative approach,” it doesn’t look like such a good fit.
Don’t Be Fooled

And Get Lost in a Crowd
Questions?

Contact the Union Office at 206-448-1050
Dustin’s Cell 425-444-1710
Your E-Board Rep or Shop Steward