

TURN OUT FOR THE ARBITRATION HEARINGS

Arbitration hearings for the new contract begin August 21 (today), 22, and 23. While the strike improved the union's position going into arbitration, it is necessary that the rank and file members attend these hearings in force and put the arbitrator on notice that we are determined that no arbitration take away anything in the current contract. Particularly important are the areas of the cost-of-living clause and part-time help.

Metro is entering arbitration hoping to modify the cost-of-living clause so that they would only pay us 1/2 of any cost-of-living increase and this would only be payable once a year. In addition, they hope to win a clause in the new contract which would give them the right to hire part-time help and pay them no benefits.

The effect of any reduction in the cost-of-living clause is clear- reduced purchasing power in the years to come. Part-time help will mean that many of us will lose our jobs to make room for part-timers- not through layoffs- but through increased harassment resulting in more firings. In addition, it will create more divisions within the union as part-timers receive less benefits than us for doing the same work as full-timers. It is our understanding that Metro would like for part-timers to be exempt from the union, although it is extremely doubtful they could win this.

Other points of contention are unclear since the current union leadership refused to make available to the membership copies of Metro's and the union's proposals, although they do say that copies of the union's proposals are available for inspection at the union office or through the shop stewards.

It is essential that we make a show of force at these hearings. Two years ago in arbitration, the "neutral" arbitrator made a remark to the effect that he thought out of 4,500 union members, more would show up at the hearings. Last arbitration we lost 1/4 of our cost-of-living increase. Let's show up in force and show him that we do give a damn about this contract.

9:00 AM - AUGUST 21, 22, 23

QUALITY INN - 415 NEW JERSEY AVE. NW

*** Rank and File Metro Workers Action Caucus