Inter-city Express Gives Fast Service To District Riders

A new city express system went into operation late this month, with an enthusiastic send-off from the four cities now linked by fast, direct service.

The cities, Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro and Hayward, cooperated in launching the 55-mile network of express lines, first of its kind for the East Bay.

A fleet of special air-conditioned “Transit Liners” were put into service by AC Transit to handle the new express operation.

By traveling on freeways where possible, and with a limited number of stops, the express buses cut existing travel time by public transit in half.

The system is operating between Berkeley, Oakland, East Oakland, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Hayward and Fairway Park.

As far as the public was concerned, one of the most attractive features in connection with the start of service was the free rides given on the first day, March 20.

Merchants stood most of the treat, offering the free rides from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. as part of the program of introducing the new transportation achievement.

Several of the downtown Oakland stores also had window displays calling attention to the new service.

Newspaper ads, sponsored by merchants, were a big part of the all-out promotion.

Bill to Divert Bay Span Tolls Arouses Area-wide Opposition

Civic and business leaders of the East Bay joined AC Transit this month in all-out opposition against Senate Bill 499 which would divert Bay Bridge revenues from the improvement of transbay traffic facilities.

The proposed legislation would allow use of Bay Bridge tolls to remodel the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco for the accommodation of commuter buses from San Mateo and Marin counties.

The district, in mapping strong opposition to the measure, pointed out it would jam the terminal and bog down operations and future expansion plans of AC Transit into San Francisco.

The measure would give privately-owned transportation lines that do not pay any Bay Bridge tolls a “free ride” in using facilities that have been largely paid for by East Bay commuters.

Legislative representatives of the two East Bay counties serviced by AC Transit, city and county governments and civic groups, chambers of commerce and individual commuters were urged to join in protesting provisions of the bill before the State Senate.

In a resolution condemning the bill, the transit directors pointed out it would divert Bay Bridge toll revenues to construct...
Tequested them, in transit offices and on chambers of commerce, to merchants who...times from the billboard locations to downtown Oakland.

Posters were carried in district buses, urging the public to ride the new express. Timetables were distributed at city halls, chambers of commerce, to merchants who requested them, in transit offices and on the buses.

Announcements also were made on the district's John K. Chapel radio spots at 7:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

Coaches stops used by the express lines have been marked by large temporary posters. The timetable for the particular line also has been printed on posters to help acquaint the public with the new service. Permanent signs denoting the express stops will be installed on the top of coach stop poles.

The express service is operating during midday and commuter hours five days a week, Monday through Friday.

Because of parking problems faced by most drivers, the service is expected to compete with speed and convenience of private automobiles, plus providing a more economical and more relaxing ride.

Line 33 Berkeley-Oakland Express operates every 10 minutes during peak hours and every 15 minutes during midday.

Line 34 MacArthur Blvd. Express from 76th and MacArthur to Jack London Square, has the same headway.

Line 30 Oakland-Hayward Express serving San Leandro, runs every 15 minutes during commuter hours and 30 minutes during midday.

Line 32 Oakland-San Lorenzo-Hayward-Fairway Park Express follows the same frequency schedule.

Fares are the same as those charged on local lines.

Cities Proclaim Fast, Direct Service

(Continued from Page 1)

Everyone, the Oakland Shopping News and by the transit district, appeared in various publications before the express started.

Proclamations were issued by the mayors of the four cities during the week of March 13 and special stories also were carried in East Bay newspapers.

Eleven billboards along the express routes will be used by the district for the next two months to tell riders about the service and to give them average running times from the billboard locations to downtown Oakland.

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What the Editors Are Saying About Transit

Oakland Tribune:

Transit Robbery

THE Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District is quite justified in its opposition to a bill now before the State Senate which would work a distinct hardship on East Bay commuters using the Bay Bridge.

In terms that may escape the casual reader this measure seeks to appropriate Bay Bridge revenues for remodeling the bridge terminal in San Francisco—the old Key Terminal—to accommodate bus lines other than those now using the Bay Bridge.

The kicker in this proposal is that these other buses would not haul East Bay or San Francisco commuters back and forth daily across the bridge. They would be buses bound for San Mateo and Marin Counties.

Anyone with the slightest grasp of Bay Area geography will immediately realize that these other bus lines will not pay one cent in Bay Bridge tolls although they stand to benefit handsomely by renovation of a terminal paid for chiefly by EastBay commuters.

The AC Transit District says it intends to increase its rush hour service between Oakland and San Francisco and vice versa. And the AC District logically points out that the San Francisco Terminal is now near capacity and additional schedules for private transportation lines will bog down operations.

But even if the terminal would not be overloaded by San Mateo and Marin bound buses, why should these areas be given a free ride at the expense of EastBay commuters. This isn't a question of charity—it's one of equity.

We agree with the AC Transit general manager John R. Worthington when he says this bill is a "blank check" for privately-owned transportation systems to muscle in on a bonanza they are not morally entitled to—despite the pressure and propaganda handed out by San Francisco.

And we further feel that since the bill was actually introduced at the behest of the State Department of Public Works, its Marin and San Mateo County authors—along with works department spokesmen—are being less than honorable in denying this is the situation.

It is not our intention to play dog-in-the-manger and foreshadow on passenger carrying buses using the San Francisco Terminal. All we ask is that adequate charges be levied to carry out the physical job of remodeling the terminal without the use of Bay Bridge funds.

Protests to the State Senate on the present provisions of this unfair bill should be made by all Eastbay commuters, cities, counties, chambers of commerce and civic bodies.

Speakers Available to Report on Progress of Transit Improvements

Educational programs have been developed by the transit district to keep East Bay residents informed on the progress of transit improvement and future plans.

Speakers from the district are available free of charge for luncheon meetings as well as for groups holding their meetings during the morning, afternoon or evening hours.
SPARS IN THE SKY—Masts stand against the skyline as the salmon fishing fleet rides at its Estuary moorage, waiting to leave.

Transit Trails

Oakland Pier Picked For Trip of Month

Editor's note: This is the first of a series of monthly "discovery trips" by AC Transit, planned on the idea that it's fun to go adventuring by bus. For schedules, route maps and a reprint of the trip-of-the-month, riders should call Transit Information at OLympic 3-3535.

By Virginia Dennison

Tucked at the foot of Livingston Ave., a block past 19th Ave., is one of Oakland's most picturesque—and little known—wharves. And this is just the time to discover it, while a tremendous salmon fleet is getting ready to pull a silvery fortune from the sea.

It's just right for an adventure by bus and foot, for a spring-fever kind of a day when spars against the city skyline and the sight of men working on their boats is guaranteed to make you envious, a bit dissatisfied, but definitely enthralled.

The fishermen are getting their boats now for the opening of the commercial salmon fishing season April 15 and you'll find outriggers being checked, trolling gear inspected, boats painted. You'll also find 53 boats, big and small, sharing the picturesque Estuary moorage.

Now in its sixth year, the Evans Radio Dock is a one-stop marine station for the fishing fleet from Seattle and other points north and south and for Oakland's own growing fleet of 15 boats.

The fishermen can get fuel, ice, other supplies; pick up what they need from a marine store, get their laundry, mail and a shower, have a cup of coffee and a sandwich and still sell their fish, without moving their boat.

If you visit the dock before the fleet sails, you'll discover that wives also go down to the sea, standing like pioneer women, shoulder to shoulder with their men.

They take the wheel, keep house and put aside their crocheting (really!) when it's time to help drag in the fish. Like the men, they can also tell some harrowing experiences with storms and with last year's tidal wave—but there's no dimmer on their enthusiasm.

Now, on any day of the week, you'll find boats, but if it's fish you're after and the excitement of seeing a catch unloaded, you'll have to take your chances after the season starts.

The boats usually stay out five to 12 days and come in two at a time, with Thursday, Friday and Saturday a good bet. Then there's a great flurry, as the fish are hauled off, weighed on the dock and loaded on trucks.

An even larger fleet will be operating out of the dock when the albacore season starts on September 29. The search lasts through November, then most of the boats go into winter storage.

To find the pier, take the 83 bus, get off at 15th Ave., walk a short block to 16th and down 16th, over the overpass to 19th Ave., enjoying the view on the way. At 19th, a short block to the south will bring you to the dock. On week-days, you can ride the 80, 81 or 82 express, with a longer walk from the 12th or 19th Ave. stops. On Sundays, all stop at 15th.

Or, if more convenient, ride the 64 bus to East 7th and 23rd Aves., walk west to Kennedy, north on Kennedy to Dennison and down Dennison to 19th, turn right for a block to Livingston.

Either way, it's a pleasant walk of about half a mile.
New Uniforms Approved For Bus Drivers
To Match Streamlined Motor Coaches

Bus drivers can now take on a “new look” to match the sleek lines of the “Transit Liners” with the approval of trim, oyster gray gabardine uniforms. The uniforms feature a sleeve stripe of forest green and persimmon in keeping with the color scheme of the new equipment.

The fitted jackets are of modified military style, zipper up the front, and carry out a streamlined look. They will be waist length for women operators and a bit longer for the men, according to specifications.

A gray shirt, forest green tie and tailored trousers of the same gray gabardine match the jacket. Women operators can wear either a gray shirt or white blouse, with tailored skirts or slacks. The district emblem will be pinned on the jacket, or if the jacket is not being worn, on new forest green hats.

Leaders Join Fight
Against State Bill
(Continued from Page 1)

Informal Sessions Spark Safety Record

Informal weekly get-togethers, staged by Superintendent Nick Alevizos at the West Contra Costa Division, have not only helped the bus operators to beat their Bogie for February, but have given other divisions an idea to follow.

The gilley room gatherings were started by Nick in February, with the idea of meeting with the drivers, on a voluntary basis, to talk over accident prevention, road calls, and any problems that might be bothering the men.

After a month of meetings, the men could point proudly to one of their best safety records in some time. They went five days in a row without a single accident, to sneak under the Bogie number of 18. As a result, Safety Engineer Gordon Wadsworth recently routed himself out at 3:30 a.m. to have coffee and doughnuts ready for the entire crew.

Wadsworth was particularly impressed with the enthusiasm kindled by the sessions and said he thought they were partly responsible for the “wonderful reduction in accidents” at Division 3. The division had 29 accidents in February last year, 32 in January of this year and a whopping 58 in December.

The men also have the chance, during the Tuesday get-togethers, to chew over a lot of the things involved in operating a transit district—including the quirks of new equipment.

Other divisions plan to follow the idea, Wadsworth said, but probably not in the dinking department, because of the number of operators involved. If there hasn’t been an accident for a week, Nick stands treat for coffee and doughnuts. If there has been an accident, the driver or drivers involved do the buying. This is extra to the spread furnished by the safety boys.

Usually, the safety instructor takes part in the get-together, but the agenda covers all problems of operations.

In Memoriam

Alan Betzner, 92, who entered service in 1906 and had 34 years as a train motorman when he retired in 1940, died March 5. He lived at 939 Hearst Ave., Berkeley.

John Wylie, 75, Key trainman who went to work in 1918 and was pensioned Jan. 1, 1949, died Feb. 5. He lived at 15879 Hesperian Blvd., San Lorenzo.

Charles B. Duncan, operator pensioned Nov. 1, 1943, after 26 years, seven months service; died Jan. 26, 1961.

Joseph V. Clair, former trainman, pensioned Feb. 1, 1956, after 38 years service; died Jan. 10, 1981.

Sinclair A. Davis, operator, pensioned June 1, 1960, after 35 years service; died Dec. 31, 1980.

Selection of the new uniform was agreed upon after consultation with district employee representatives. The outfits are now being made by several clothing outlets. Purchase of the new uniforms is on a voluntary basis as existing uniforms wear out.

Supervisors’ uniforms will be cut in a three-button, single-breasted business-men’s style, of a lighter shade of gray gabardine. Supervisors will wear the same hats as operators, but with an added metallic band decoration.

Leaders Join Fight
Against State Bill

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Women Drivers Tops in Transit Field

Along with new buses and new uniforms, AC Transit can take a bow for its trim women operators, 70 of them, with a work record—and progeny—hard to match in any other transit district.

Topping the seniority list at Division 2 is the “grandma of the 18 line,” Mrs. Dorothy Torrenga, who started with Key System Transit Lines in September, 1942.

Seniority honors at Division 3 go to Mrs. Dorothy S. Faria, who came back to the fold in December, 1950, after previous service from 1942-46.

At Division 4, bumping Dorothy Torrenga for all-over top seniority is Kay Engelage, who went to work in December, 1942.

Right behind them, at each division, are a number of other veterans—too many to share the same story, but all part of the crew that has built a firm place in bus operations and a firm place in the hearts of the riding public.

Dorothy Torrenga made her start with Key System on the street cars and saw the last of them in 1948 before she switched to buses. Most of the time she has been on the same run; and, on the 18 line, she’s more than an institution. She’s the one they depend on for all information, for help with the small fry and for a brief exchange on developments like children or grandchildren.

Mrs. Torrenga, who lives in San Francisco at 701 Fell St., has one daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Dean of Novato, and six grandchildren, Dee-Dee, 14; Dorothy, 15, holding Douglas, 1-year-old twin of Donald.

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She has not only noticed an upswing in riders, but a greater interest among her passengers, who have found they can enjoy window shopping from the new buses. Even the school kids, she’s also found, are helping to keep the coaches clean, in pride over the equipment.

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From Ships to Buses, Transit Expert
Tallies History of Transportation

As the man who put both the ferry boats and the trains to bed, Fred Blatt is something of a historical figure in his own right.

In his 33 years with the East Bay's transit system, Blatt has known what it was to keep the ferries running—and to stop them forever. He had the same experience with trains. And now he has buses under his wing, old ones to keep running and new ones to get un-quirked.

Although he has had his feet on the ground in the business of public transportation for many a year, Fred hasn't quite lost the look of far horizons. His first love, his first job—and his heritage—was with the men who go down to sea.

Fred's father, Capt. Julius Blatt, made his first trip to sea when he was a lad of 8, on one of the sailing ships owned by his father, out of Hamburg, Germany. A noted figure in seafaring channels, Capt. Blatt was 79 when he died at the wheel of a tanker, after it was rammed by an American ammunitions ship in wartime.

Fred was born in San Francisco in 1899, in the "last house on Larkin St.," near the shore of the bay, while his father was building Mile Rock Lighthouse. Fred went to sea in 1917 and by 1925, had his chief engineer’s papers. Temporarily shorebound, he took a job with Key System in 1927, planning to stay three months. By that time he was foreman of the maintenance crew and shore leave looked pretty good.

Ferry boats were his province for the next 13 years and, in 1940, as manager of the marine department, he said the last farewells, staying with the boats until they were sold.

In 1942, Blatt was named assistant superintendent of shop and electric railway equipment and, in 1952, general superintendent. Again the handwriting was on the transportation wall and Fred saw his shops sold, then his trains.

In 1959, Fred switched to the bus division and, as mid-shift foreman, is one of the most well regarded men at Division 3.

When his sons, Fred, 30, and Gary, 25, were young, Blatt was active in Scouting, the Dads Club, the P.T.A. and Masonic order. But now he admits his greatest activity is garden work with his wife at their home, 23 Ramona Ave., Oakland. They also enjoy their grandchildren, Fred III, 4, Kathy, 2, and expectations of a new one, come April.

MORE INFORMATION

A note or phone call to the transit district—Olympic 3-3535—will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter.

Montclair Gets Downtown Extension

Residents of Montclair and Broadway Terrace got their first direct bus service to downtown Oakland and Jack London Square this month through extensions to the 59 and 76 lines.

Both lines were extended from their previous terminal at 41st St. and Piedmont Ave., down Piedmont to Broadway, then on to Jack London Square.

The routing gives riders from the hill area a fast, direct trip to main shopping areas and other downtown spots, as well as connections with additional transbay and other local lines.

Running time from the end of either line to 14th St. and Broadway was set at 30 minutes, without any time lost by waiting to transfer. The buses kept the same frequency and approximately the same schedule as previously operated.

Members of Montclair P.T.A. learned about the new service at their March meeting from district representatives.

AC Transit Badges Pinned on 25 Drivers

The AC Transit badge has been pinned on 25 bus operators who completed their training this month. New drivers and assignments include:

Division 2

H. C. Bedwell, 1625 7th St., Berkeley; Burton Williams, 1901 Vine St., Berkeley; B. E. Plympton, 3755 Emerson St., Oakland; H. E. McGee, 600 Page St., Apt. 304, San Francisco; R. C. Herring, 134 E. 16th St., Oakland; C. C. Sumler, 2057 University Ave., Berkeley; Sam Moore, 924 14th St., Oakland; J. A. Bruhn, 1023 45th St., Oakland; W. M. Scott, 1410 Magnolia St., Oakland.

Division 3

J. E. Loskot, 1847 Pullman St., Richmond; H. L. Kemmer, 1725 Ohio St., Richmond; E. R. Billie, 415 Mark Ave., Vallejo; C. A. Onsett, 438 11th St., Richmond; N. H. Helms, 203 Macdonald Ave., Richmond.

Members then made an inspection of one of the new "Transit Liners," which are similar to equipment ordered for hill service and due for delivery about May 1. For many of the women, it was their first preview of the ultramodern buses and their reaction was both "amazement" and "enthusiasm."

They were particularly pleased with the wide seats and aisles and the view provided by the large "picture windows."

The women also agreed the downtown service would lure many of them on their first bus ride.

The extensions operate Monday through Friday, holidays excepted, during main daytime hours. In the evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays the lines terminate as in the past at 41st St. and Piedmont Ave.

Until new equipment takes over basic service, operations will be handled by later model diesel coaches.

Residents of Montclair and Broadway Terrace got their first direct bus service to downtown Oakland and Jack London Square this month through extensions to the 59 and 76 lines.

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At an adjourned regular meeting February 20, 1961, the Board of Directors:
• Approved proposed legislative amendments to the Transit District Law, on motion of Director Barber.
• Approved purchase of 45-passenger "Transit Liners" for use on several neighborhood lines in place of 13 suburban models for transbay service, on motion of Vice President Copeland.
• Approved extension of Lines 59—Broadway Terrace and 76—Montclair to downtown Oakland and Jack London Square, effective March 6, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Agreed to final settlement of purchase price of Key System Transit Lines except for several miscellaneous items which the General Manager was instructed to negotiate toward conclusion, on motion of Director McDonnell.

* * *

At a regular meeting March 1, 1961, the Board of Directors:
• Referred to committee requests for extended school bus service in Kensington, an extension of Line 77—Piedmont Pines in Oakland, and a request of the Alameda City Council for special shopper fares and an all-day Sunday pass, by direction of President Bettencourt.
• Approved inauguration of four new express lines serving Berkeley, Hayward, Oakland, San Leandro and San Lorenzo, effective March 20, on motion of Director Coburn (Details, Page 1).
• Approved return of Line L—Richmond to regular route via Central Ave. upon completion of street repairs, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Established criteria for charter bus service fees and procedures for entering into agreements, on motion of Vice President Copeland.
• Opposed Senate Bill 499 which provides funds for additions to Transbay Transit Terminal, on motion of Vice President Copeland. (Details, Page 1).