District, Union Sign New Contract; Other Employees Also Get Increases

Wage increases added a special touch of cheer this month to the 1388 employees of AC Transit.

A new labor contract, giving bus drivers a 32-cent hourly wage increase over the next two and a half years, went into effect Dec. 1 after approval by the board of directors and the Carmen's Union.

The agreement also boosted wages for other organized employees.

Some 175 supervisory personnel and office employees were voted a 4.46 per cent salary hike, effective Jan. 1, at the board meeting of Dec. 12.

The contract with the union, reached after nine weeks of bargaining, assures continuing labor peace in transit operations in the East Bay and was cited by district and union representatives as "fair and reasonable."

Liberal Fringe Benefits

Along with a three-step wage hike, it includes liberalized retirement provisions, increased health and welfare contributions and other benefits. (Principal provisions of the contract are itemized on Page 3.)

Under the agreement, the 950 bus drivers received a 4.46 per cent boost Dec. 1, raising their wages from $2.69 to $2.81 an hour. Another 3.56 per cent raise next Dec. 1 will increase wages 10 cents to $2.91. A third 10 cent boost will become effective Dec. 1, 1964.

Other union employees, with the exception of top mechanics, dispatchers and parts clerks, will get the same hourly increases.

Raise For Mechanics

Class A mechanics received 18 cents an hour hike Dec. 1, for an hourly wage of $3.32. They will get an additional 15 cents next year and 10 cents in Dec., 1964. Class B mechanics, parts clerks and dispatchers receive hourly increases of 17, 15 and 10 cents over the same period.

The contract with the union raises the district's costs by $1,819,500 over the life of the agreement, according to Kenneth F. Hensel, general manager. He said the added expense could be financed, however, out of current fares and taxes, at least during the remainder of the fiscal year.

Hensel cited the contract as "a major step in maintenance of good morale and harmonious relations." F. Vern Stambaugh, union head, and W. J. Bettencourt, board president, also praised "fairness and cooperation" on both sides.

Non-union workers also will receive a 3.56 per cent hike on Jan. 1, 1964 and another 3.44 per cent increase on Jan. 1, 1965.

In addition, the directors approved liberalized health and welfare and group life insurance benefits for supervisory personnel and office employees at an annual cost of $57,200.
Northbrae Tunnel Provides Fast Route

Riders on Berkeley transbay and inter­city express lines got faster and more direct service this month when the dis­trict started operating through historic Northbrae railroad tunnel.

Closed since 1958, the tunnel—repaved for vehicular traffic—opened with a "rail­splitting" ceremony, band music, the ap­pearance of dignitaries and a wheeled caravan.

One of the district’s new “Transit Lin­ers” took part in the ceremonies, sym­bolizing the third transportation phase involved in the tunnel.

Because the Key System had fran­chises on direct routes to the Thousand Oaks area, the Southern Pacific was forced to take a direct route back in 1910. They cut away the hill, laid a ce­ment tube for their trains, then piled the dirt back on top, to make the tunnel.

The tunnel was used by the S.F. from 1911 until 1941 and by the Key System from 1942 until 1958.

By operating the transbay F line and the S.S express through the tunnel, the district has cut two to three minutes from previous schedules. Use of a load­ing terminal on the roadway off The Alameda also has eliminated the neces­sity of buses parking on The Alameda at Solano.

Because of installation of traffic sig­nals at Solano and The Alameda, open­ing of the tunnel has caused the rerout­ing of northbound coaches on Line 43A, which now will travel via The Alameda, Marin Ave., Colusa Ave. to Solano Ave. Southbound buses maintained their pres­ent routing.

Holiday Guide, Cards Help to Extend Christmas Greetings to Passengers

A special “Merry Christmas” was ex­tended by the district again this year through distribution of a free holiday guide for things to see and do during the Yuletide season.

Bus drivers also dispensed their own personal “season’s greetings” to passen­gers through Christmas cards made avail­able by the district.

Some 20,000 cards were given to the drivers so they could extend their tra­ditional holiday message to patrons, par­ticularly the regular riders who had be­come familiar customers during the year.

The guide, entitled “Operation Sleigh Ride,” invited residents to plan their holi­day sightseeing by bus. It listed informa­tion on decorations, locations of Nativity scenes and other displays, where to find Santa Claus and where to see special Christmas trees.

The data was grouped by city and included information on how to reach the location by bus.

Printed on green paper, the guide fea­tured a drawing of an AC Transit bus, with Santa, his sleigh and reindeer “hitching” a ride on the top.

The guide was distributed to the pub­lic through the general offices and by various chambers of commerce and other agencies.

Hensel, Larson Elected To United Fund Board

K. F. Hensel, AC Transit general man­ager, and John F. Larson, treasurer-con­troller, have been elected to the board of governors of the Alameda County United Fund. Hensel was chairman of the Public Employees division in the recent 1962 appeal. Larson served as AC Transit campaign chairman for the 1961 and 1962 drives.

Here are some of the principal features of the new contract approved by AC Transit directors and union officials:

• A 12-cent hourly wage increase for bus drivers on Dec. 1, 1962, raising sal­aries from $2.69 to $2.81 an hour. An­other 10cent boost on Dec. 1, 1963, in­creasing wages to $2.91; a third increase of 10 cents an hour Dec. 1, 1964, to $3.01.

• Class A mechanics, 18 cents an hour increase on Dec. 1, 1962, boosting hourly wages to $3.32, plus an additional 15 cents next year and another 10 cents in Dec., 1964.

• Class B mechanics, parts clerks, dis­patchers; 17 cents an hour Dec. 1; 15 and 10 cent boosts over contract period.

• Other union employees get same hourly increases as bus operators, 32­cent wage hike over contract period.

• Provides for pension retirements at age 62, on reduced pension formula as provided by Federal Social Security Act. Also removes age restrictions for perma­nently disabled employee with 20 or more years of service.

• Grants increase in sick leave ac­cumulation from 30 to 40 work days. Provides for weekly sick leave pay.

• Increases the amount of payment to union medical plan in two steps from $9 to $11 per employee per month.

• Provides $1,500 of group life insur­ance by district for each union member.

• Increases amount of contribution to pension fund for union distribution to union members by 1½ cents per hour.
Record Increase Talled

October patronage on East Bay local and express lines showed the greatest single monthly increase since AC Transit went into operation two years ago.

East Bay riders increased by 11.2 per cent over October, 1961, while business on transbay lines was up 6.9 per cent. Total passengers carried for the month came to 4,802,000.

Transbay commute book sales also showed a healthy gain of 12.2 per cent over the same month a year ago.

For the nation's entire transit industry, riding experienced an increase of 0.8 per cent.

Passenger revenue for October of $1,126,000 plus other income of $80,200 was adequate to meet all operational costs, which were up 7.9 per cent over October, 1961. This income provided for amortization and depreciation, but was not sufficient for bonded debt requirements, leaving a deficit of $4,335 for the month.

Miles operated in October totaled 2,023,000, an increase of 110,168 or 5.8 per cent over October, 1961.

Santa on Wheels; St. Nick Rides Again

By Virginia Dennison

Santa Claus may visit most places in December, but AC Transit has him the year around—their own Nicholas P. Alevizos, who is probably the oldest practicing Santa in this area.

"St. Nick" officiates as superintendent of the Richmond division, but once the holiday season rolls around, he also becomes Santa, delighting kids at schools, hospitals, institutions and parties—including the division's own Christmas gathering.

Alevizos has been "ho, ho, ho-ing" for over 30 years, ever since fellow members of Aahmes Temple of the Shrine put the red and white "bee" on him to help their efforts in behalf of crippled children.

In the years since, Nick has worn out three Santa costumes and put considerable wear on a fourth. There's expense to this Santa business, too. He has his beard "washed and set" each year—the bill this Yuletide came to $17—just for whiskers.

Probably because he's a veteran in the transportation business, Nick fixed up an old Ford to resemble, in a "way-out" sort of way, Santa's sleigh. He climbs aboard and with great bell-ringing and whistle blowing, makes his appearance on wheels. The deer are there, though, jutting out from the headlights.

The district's Santa is probably one of the few to ever remember street car and bus riders. Back in the days of East Bay Transit Co. in 1939 he delighted and startled riders transferring to the Richmond bus at Ashby and San Pablo Aves. in Berkeley by putting up a tree and handing out token 'holders, balloons and candy.

He averages 20 or so volunteer appearances each holiday and takes care of as many requests as he can. But one date he wasn't able to keep last year.

The press of other Santa business kept him from accepting an invitation to let Effie, the elephant at the Knowland State Arboretum and Park, sit on his knee to ask for her Christmas wish—a boy elephant for company.
Central Dispatcher Taken by Death

Donald G. Bennett, 52, central dispatcher for the district for the past five years, died suddenly on Dec. 11 of a heart condition which had sent him to the hospital two weeks before.

One of five regular dispatchers, Mr. Bennett handled everything that might affect bus service, including fires, accidents, "stalls," bus breakdowns, occasional robberies and complaints.

He recently figured that the central dispatch office—nerve center of the district—handled 250 radio calls and 300 to the hospital two weeks before.

Mr. Bennett credited his calmness at the mike to "show biz." He played the theater circuit in a give-away program to work on the street cars in 1912 and was pensioned in 1948.

A. F. Valladao, 67, who died Nov. 20, entered service as a street car operator in 1920, switched to buses in 1948 and was pensioned in 1960. He lived with his wife, Maria, at 466 43rd St., Oakland.

Charles A. Perry, 77, former trainman, went to work in 1908 and left the company in 1953. He lived with his wife, Ruth, in Clovis and died Dec. 4.

Edward H. Baker, 55, died Dec. 4. He lived at 87 Linda St., Oakland, with his wife, Emma. Mr. Baker worked on the trains from 1917 until 1943.

Greece Remembers War Hero After Loss on Bus

When he lost a brief case on an AC Transit bus a year ago, Andreas Kasotakis, 79-year-old Greek war hero, also lost his only link with a past of courage and glory.

The little case contained two Greek war medals, a ribbon and photograph paying tribute to his heroism in Greece's bloody war with Turkey in 1912 and in Bulgaria in 1913.

The district was unable to find the case, but the Greek consulate in San Francisco and the Greek government remembered. This month Kasotakis received duplicate medals from his homeland through efforts of the Greek Army Department, Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Greek military attaché in Washington, D.C., and the local consulate.

He paid a visit to the district's general offices to display the medals and to weep happily and silently. Although he's affluent in seven languages, Kasotakis was left without a voice in 1945 by removal of a throat tumor. But he now has a new case and again is carrying his symbols of honor with him constantly: the medals and a new shoulder ribbon he made himself, with the years of his glory in gold lettering.

Andreas Kasotakis

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Check Writer Gives Up

The 'Woman Who Pays' Decides to Retire

A lot of time in transit—about 210 years worth—was represented when six women from the treasurer-controller's department got together this month to honor the gal who holds top seniority at the general offices.

Miss Ursul Havens will retire the end of December after 42 years of concern with what makes things run. She knows the answer—money.

Miss Havens is the one who writes the checks to pay the bills. As "accounts receivable and payable," she pays out over $1,000,000 each month and, over the years, has probably written checks totaling well over a billion.

She's also the rare woman who keeps her personal accounts straight, balances her own check book and even makes out her income tax returns.

The fellow workers who feted her at a retirement luncheon at the Athena Athletic Club also have veteran status.

The group included Mrs. Alyce Seright, who has worked 37 years; Miss Margaret Desmond, 36 years; Mrs. Thelma Lanthier, 31 years; Mrs. Alice Heywood, 27 1/2 years; Mrs. Mabel Fircow, 20 years, and Miss Catherine Metzner, 16 years.

John F. Larson, treasurer-controller, played host at the luncheon.

Miss Havens, who lives at 313 Broadmoor Blvd., San Leandro, likes to read and garden. She also expects to have time now for a real "busman's holiday"—to do some traveling on her own.
At an adjourned regular meeting November 28, 1962, the Board of Directors:

- Approved new contract with Division 192, Amalgamated Association of Street Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America (AFL-CIO), on motion of Director Coburn.

- Authorized rerouting of Lines 33, 43A and F in connection with opening of Northbrae Tunnel, and approved expenditure of $1850 for improvements to Berkeley Park & Ride Center, on motion of Director Coburn.

* * *

At the regular meeting December 12, 1962, the Board of Directors:

- Approved wage and salary adjustments for non-organized employees, on motion of Director Coburn.

- Established unrestricted policy on leasing either privately or publicly owned premises in connection with studies on relocation of general offices, on motion of Director Barber.

- Declared official results of election held November 6, 1962, for district directors, on motion of Director Coburn.

- Amended rules of procedure to allow election of President and Vice President at first regular meeting of Board of Directors in January, on motion of Director Coburn.

Seminary Division Wins Double Honors

Workers at the Seminary division basked under double honors in November, as operators won the safety "bogey" contest and the maintenance crew walked off with the road call trophy.

Safety honors were taken by the drivers with a record of 13,476 miles per accident—a figure that meant coffee and doughnuts for all hands on Dec. 14.

The maintenance trophy moved to the division for the first time with the record of 12,251 miles per road call.