Charter Future of AC Transit Awaits Legislative Action

Whether AC Transit will continue to provide charter bus service—one of its special services to East Bay residents—hinged this month on action by the State Senate.

Assembly Bill 889, which would put the district out of the charter business, was passed by the State Assembly earlier in the month.

The Assembly vote came in the face of strong opposition from East Bay city councils, newspapers, chambers of commerce, labor groups, other organizations and the public itself.

Officials of the transit district summed up their opposition to the bill as follows:

If AC Transit is deprived of revenue from charter operations, the resulting deficit must be made up from the only source available—the public—either through a tax or a fare increase.

In the 1961-62 fiscal year, AC Transit took in nearly $250,000 from charter operations. Net revenue of $77,000 plus credit to the regular operation brought the district a net financial benefit of approximately $130,000.

At the same time, the district provided the public—who owns the system—with the opportunity to charter its own modern, comfortable buses for special trips.

The bill is sponsored by Eastshore Lines, a private charter firm in Berkeley.

Rider Gain Among Top In Nation, but Short Of Meeting All Costs

AC Transit maintained its role during the calendar year of 1962 as one of the few major transport properties in the nation to show a healthy and steady patronage gain.

Although the transport industry generally was showing a decrease in passenger revenue, AC Transit tallied up a 5 per cent increase in transbay patronage during 1962 over the year before. East Bay patronage was up 4.9 per cent for the same period.

Operating expenses, including labor costs, however, are increasing faster than the growth in passenger revenue, K. F. Hensel, general manager, told directors in a report on the year's revenue.

Only one other major transit property showed a similar impressive increase in 1962—the transit system in Seattle, where visitors to the World's Fair were credited with boosting patronage 10.9 per cent over the previous year.

Transit properties generally presented a dismal financial picture, with most showing a decrease in patronage. Chicago surface lines, as example, were down 0.1 per cent, while their rapid transit lines had a decrease of 1.2 per cent; Philadelphia surface lines had a decrease of 2.2 and rapid transit lines, a decrease of 5.2; Baltimore Transit, a decrease of 1.4 and Cincinnati, O., Transit, a decrease of 5.0.
Opposition to Charter Bill Mounting

Along with the public, which has sent its own letters urging defeat of the bill which would put AC Transit out of charter bus business, the following local groups have expressed their opposition to the measure:

City Councils
Berkeley, Alameda, Oakland, San Leandro, Emeryville.

Newspapers

Chambers of Commerce
Alameda, Oakland, Hayward, Castro Valley Community Services committee.

Organizations
Oakland YWCA board of directors, Oakland Downtown Property Owners Group.

Service Threatened by Anti-Charter Measure
(continued from Page 1)

and was authored by Assemblyman John T. Knox of Richmond.

Spokesmen for Eastshore lines, in urging passage of the bill, have claimed their charter income is down more than 25 per cent from prior years.

A recent inspection by district personnel of Eastshore financial statements officially on file with the California Public Utilities Commission, however, disclosed the charter firm’s revenue actually has increased 100 per cent over the last two reported years.

Association, Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal, Downtown Oakland, Inc.

Labor
Central Labor Councils, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties; Division 102, Carmen’s Union.

Outside District Area
City Councils of Bakersfield and Fresno.

City of Sacramento Transit Authority; San Diego Transit Lines, Central Labor Council of San Diego County, Montebello Municipal Bus Lines, Fresno Municipal Lines.

Sweet Adelines Add Note
Of ‘Catastrophe’ if Bill Sinks Convention Plans

The letter explained the local chapter won the bid for the 1963 convention, which will bring 5,000 “Sweet Adelines” to Oakland from all parts of the North American continent, on the basis of being able to handle the large assembly of women at both the hotel and the quartet competition site.

“We were able to submit a bid . . . because AC Transit could handle same . . . There was and is no other transportation company anywhere in the Bay Area that can handle this properly. We know, We look and looked and looked.”

“It is too late for some other city . . . to take over this convention. If this bill passes the name of California will be ‘undo’ to other 15,000 Sweet Adelines and their families in the United States and Canada.”

Everything Happened to Us
Lost and Found Gets Lost; ‘Top Cookie’ Crumbles; Time Vanishes, But Honor Pays

This has been a month to remember. Martha Nielsen, in charge of lost property, for instance, managed to get herself lost. And, of all things, by taking the wrong bus.

Dorothy Torrenga, the “grandma” of the 18 line, had to turn in her ticket as the district’s “Top Cookie.” A fall from a ladder put her in the hospital and as she puts it, the cookie is temporarily “crumbled.”

A young student made transit history by showing two hours off his transfer—and then complaining because the operator wouldn’t accept what was left.

And an elderly woman, with the heritage-sounding name of “Telestar Eagle,” gave proof and received proof as to faith and honesty.

Martha, in one of those incidents that result because you’re “a little too” early for work, switched her usual ride habits and instead got on an “F” bus to reach her lost and found desk at the Emeryville division. Naturally, it turned out to be an “F” express and Martha ended up in San Francisco.

She jumped off to check the time; operator Mary Ann Marr had to take off without her, leaving Martha to catch the next bus, a Line C coach.

It was a lovely day, Martha reports; it was a lovely day, she enjoyed her round-trip junket to San Francisco and landed, three rungs down, at her lost and found desk at the Emeryville station.

And an elderly woman, with the heritage-sounding name of “Telestar Eagle,” gave proof and received proof as to faith and honesty.

She arrived only 20 minutes late, to find her desk piled with umbrellas, an “Express” card taped to her name plate and a few other reminders—including the gift of a “compass” to prevent any further excursions into lost territories.

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It was a lovely day, Martha reports; she enjoyed her round-trip junket to San Francisco and recommends it to all fellow workers.

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Dorothy, who tops the seniority list and won the bid for the 1963 convention, which will bring 5,000 “Sweet Adelines” to Oakland from all parts of the North American continent, on the basis of being able to handle the large assembly of women at both the hotel and the quartet competition site.

“We were able to submit a bid . . . because AC Transit could handle same . . . There was and is no other transportation company anywhere in the Bay Area that can handle this properly. We know, We look and looked and looked.”

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Contract Awarded for Communication System
A contract was awarded this month to Motorola Communications and Electron- ics, Inc., for furnishing and installing a complete communications radio system for the district, in accordance with PCC regulations to convert old style wide band FM radio to narrow band FM.

The present base station at 1106 Broadway will be abandoned, as will satellite receivers at the Emeryville and Seminary divisions. Instead, a new base station will be installed on Round Top mountain in the Berkeley hills.
Total District Costs Surpass Revenue Despite Outstanding Passenger Growth

(Continued from Page 1)

In California, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority had a revenue passenger loss of 2.3 per cent; San Diego Transit System, a decrease of 10.3 per cent. San Francisco Municipal Railway showed a slight increase of 0.2 per cent.

Nation-wide, the decrease in revenue passengers averaged out at 1.66 per cent.

Hensel, in reporting on the financial results tallied during the first half of the 1962-63 fiscal year, said for the first time since the district commenced its pro-

gram of service expansion, revenue collected for each mile operated showed an increase over the same period a year ago.

During the six months period, which ended in December, the district had a net operating revenue of $693,000. Out of this, the district was able to provide $441,000 for new equipment and replacement, Hensel reported. However, the balance was short of meeting bond debt requirements of $608,000, leaving a deficit for the period of $59,000, a deficiency made up by surplus funds carried over from the previous year.

Workers Join Transportation Ranks

New employees who joined AC Transit during February included:

**Emeryville Division**

Maintenance: Richard E. Parker, 4045 Via Estrilla, Martinez; Abbe S. Lavallee,

**Changes Made, But Not In Information Quality**

Changes have been made in one of the district's most important contacts with the public—the telephone information bureau—but the voices and answers are still coming through with the same pleasant efficiency.

Mrs. Genevieve Parker, member of the department for 24 years and supervisor for the past several years, resigned due to ill health.

Her post as supervisor was taken over by Mrs. Zada Malinak, who has been answering transportation questions for 17 years. Rejoining the department was Mrs. Helen Smith, who had resigned after 13 years as an information clerk, but has now returned to fill in the vacancy.

JANUARY PASSENGERS Percentage Change from Previous Year

New customers continued to boost AC Transit's patronage figures during January, with 4,522,000 riders during the month, an increase of 4.3 per cent over January, 1962.

Passenger revenue for the month totaled $1,048,330, as compared to January, 1962, when revenue tallied $1,006,019. The revenue gain totaled $42,311, or an increase of 4.2 per cent.

Transbay commute book sales also were up for January, an increase of 6.1 per cent over a year ago.

The nation's entire transit industry showed a 3.3 per cent increase for the month. However, AC Transit revenue, plus other income of $67,000, was adequate to meet operational costs of $1,091,000, which were up 6 per cent over January, 1962. Revenues were not adequate, however, to provide for full amortization and depreciation and bond debt requirements, leaving a deficit for the month of $151,426.

Miles operated in January totaled 1,940,431, an increase of 55,373 or 2.9 per cent over miles operated during the same month a year ago.

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Bay Area Daily Newspapers State Opposition to Anti-Transit Charter Bill

**Berkeley Daily Gazette**

"A current bill before the State Legislature would seriously hamper the efficient and successful public transit operation in this area. The measure, if passed, would bar the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District from providing charter bus service. There will be serious problems for every taxpayer and bus patron in the transit district under this bill.

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**San Francisco Examiner**

"Moreover, charter operations have been a large factor in successful and efficient AC Management—one of the main reasons AC has been a sound public investment. A bill more damaging to public interest would be hard to conceive. The Legislature should reject it forthwith."

**Tribune Editorial Page**

"In setting up the transit district, the public paid for these charter operations as part and parcel of the district's purchase of Key System... Should the bill now pending become law, AC Transit would be paying more drivers for doing nothing outside commute hours. But more important than this added expense is the loss to the district of the revenue from charter operations... Either it would have to impose an additional penny on the district tax rate or it would be forced to increase bus fares..."

**News Call-Bulletin**

"A current bill before the Legislature... is a special interest measure which should be defeated... Passage would amount to confiscation of a part of the district's property, since the charter business was part of the package AC bought from the Key System for $7 million 1959 bond issue. The profitable charter operation helps make up for losses on other lines which it operates as a public service."

**The INDEPENDENT**

"Today the district is providing more and better service, it is expanding its lines... And the people, as a general rule, are satisfied. However, there is a fly in the ointment. And that fly is a bill which has been introduced in the Legislature of Sacramento by Assemblyman John Knox of Richmond. It would prevent the A-C District from chartering its buses to persons, groups or organizations... "The bill... would prohibit the district from handling of transportation for school children—if it did not completely eliminate the service. It would curtail activities of students... service groups, private organizations and religious groups which now depend on the A-C system for extensive charter moves..."

**The Morning News**

"A current bill before the State Legislature... is a special interest measure which should be defeated... Passage would amount to confiscation of a part of the district's property, since the charter business was part of the package AC bought from the Key System for $7 million 1959 bond issue. The profitable charter operation helps make up for losses on other lines which it operates as a public service."

**ALAMEDA COUNTY DEMOCRAT**

"Citizens in the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District stand to suffer considerably if a bill before the State Legislature is approved. The proposed legislation (Assembly Bill 889) would prohibit AC Transit from operating charter bus services. No other public transit agency is affected by the bill. It has been written specifically to bar AC Transit from handling charter business..."

**The Daily Review**

"The bill does not pretend to regulate public tax-supported transit districts in the state. It is aimed specifically at one district—AC Transit. The bill was introduced at the request of a private charter bus operation, whose activities are centered in the north part of the county... "East Bay taxpayers... should help AC Transit directors defeat this bill."

**Times-Star**

"It is highly discriminatory in that it calls for curtailing action against only one public transportation firm in the state... "Already a cross-section of citizen organizations has come out strongly against the bill. On record against the proposed legislation are the Alameda County Central Labor Council, the board of directors of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and Division 192 of Carmen's Union. The Times-Star adds its firm opposition."
Bus Driver Makes Run from Germany to United States--With Stops in Between
By Virginia Dennison

Name it and he’s just about done it, not only in a couple of languages but in far corners of the world.

But perhaps Hans Clahsen, 30, bus driver operating out of the Emeryville division, considers the fact that he was courteously nice to a passenger back in 1961 as one of his most rewarding accomplishments.

She was a secretary at University of California, the former Susan Grant of El Cerrito, but she’s now Mrs. Clahsen of 5498 Clavemont Ave., Oakland and mother of Mike, age 1.

Clahsen is a native of a town near Cologne in West Germany, and a graduate of a German college, with a degree in business administration. He also has quiet determination.

Hans can shrug off the problems of a young boy in wartime Germany. Hunger, for example, was an accepted condition.

After college, Hans joined a German engineer construction battalion organized by the U.S. Army. Except that the men retained a civilian status, they were all-out Army—uniforms, work and all. He learned about heavy equipment, the language and eventually, the problems of being a first sergeant.

After three years, in 1956, he decided to take a look at the United States, migrating the quick way via Canada. A year there and he applied for a visitor’s permit, enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, waited while waiting for his citizenship.

Back in California, he went to work for the Key System in 1959 as a bus driver and remained until 1961, when a job as stock control manager for the Union Oil Company in Anchorage, Alaska, lured him to northern lights.

Six months later, the high cost of living in Anchorage prompted his retreat to sunny Pasadena, where he drove cab while waiting for his citizenship.

Clahsen rejoined AC Transit in January and is back again on Line 51—the Berkeley-Alameda line where romance boarded two years ago.

A one-time soccer player and life guard, he has interests in amateur radio, painting pictures mostly in oils. And he has plans, too, for returning to college and a new degree in this country, probably in languages.

Buses to Operate into Treasure Island

AC Transit will expand its bus service on Line T starting March 31 to operate through the Treasure Island naval base.

The new route will provide civilian and military personnel direct transbay service from key points on the base to both San Francisco and Oakland.

The expansion, made possible by a change in Navy policy, will add 20,000 annual miles to the district’s Treasure Island service. It also will be the first time that public bus service is provided into and around the T.I. base.

Buses, which have been stopping at the entrance gate, will now continue into the island, observing nine stops before returning to the entrance and regular bay bridge routing. With this service, personnel will no longer have to walk to the gate or depend on Navy busses to reach AC Transit coaches.

With the expansion, a new fare structure also will become effective, bringing Treasure Island fares in conformity with the rest of the district.

The change, which will help pay for the additional miles of T.I. operation, calls for 25 cents cash or 20 cents token fare between the base and San Francisco or the central zone of the East Bay.

The uniform fare will eliminate the collection problems involved with differentiating between military and civilian personnel and destinations. It also will do away with the need of special tickets or identification cards.

Service will operate generally round-trip between T.I. and San Francisco and T.I. and the East Bay, where passengers will have the usual transfer privileges. A few schedules will provide through service between Oakland, T.I. and San Francisco.

Schedules will be arranged to coincide with working hours and also, with off-base activities of personnel. Stepped up service will be provided at night and on week-ends.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Ellen M. Enos, one of the veteran employees of the network and secretary to D. J. Potter, transportation manager, died on Feb. 27 after a brief illness.

Mrs. Enos, long one of the respected and expert workers at the Emeryville division, started with Key System in 1909 as a senior clerk in the operating department. Survivors include her husband, George, a Southern Pacific employee, of 1324 Devonshire Ct., El Cerrito.

The deaths of four pensioners also were reported during the month. They are Hector A. Brizard, 83, Edwin H. Arnold, 90, Mr. Brizard, who died Feb. 12, entered service in 1919 and was pensioned in 1944. He lived at 1053 Alcatraz Ave.

Mr. Arnold, former operator at Central carbarn and later a ticket collector at the San Francisco terminal, died March 9. He entered service in 1922 and was pensioned in 1947. Mr. Arnold lived at 754 Rand Ave., Apt. 3.

John Maranzano, 70, of 1319 Talbot Ave., Berkeley, died March 16. A one-time track walker, mechanic and maintenance man, he worked from 1921 until his retirement in 1958.

George Bussler, 67, who entered service in 1917, died March 18. Mr. Bussler, who lived at 4007 Mateo St., San Leandro, formerly was president and business agent of the maintenance union, Local 815. He also was a member of the executive board of the Carmen’s Union.

A veteran of World War I, Mr. Bussler entered service in 1917 and held various positions in a maintenance capacity before his retirement in 1957.
Early Electric Car Provided Special Privilege

There was a time, according to rail historians, when employees of Oakland's first electric street car line had a rare sort of privilege. They could make their final trip in fitting style, in a draped funeral car that served as a hearse for the last journey to St. Mary's Cemetery at the head of Howe Street.

The Oakland Consolidated Street Railway—which started as the Oakland and Berkeley Rapid Transit Company—apparently provided this service, however, only briefly.

The cemetery branch of the line was completed in October, 1892, about a year and a half after the railway gave amazed residents their first electric transit between Oakland and Berkeley, according to Frank Rigney, a street car historian.

After F. M. "Bora" Smith gained control of the "broomstick" line in 1898 and completed electrifying the cable railway on Piedmont Ave., the cemetery branch was abandoned and with it, the funeral parlor streetcars.

But Rigney is among the few who can recall the trolley, trimmed with flags and draped in black bunting, rolling into the Catholic cemetery on a private right-of-way which bordered the Mountain View Cemetery fence line.

Although the line evidently was used for a funeral from time to time, its main purpose was, of course, to take passengers to the cemetery—usually with their arms filled with flower bouquets.

Even after the Piedmont Cable provided a more direct route, people preferred the longer ride via Grove St. and the 40th St. branch to the cemetery—the electric idea had taken the public's fancy.

The cemetery branch, one of many on the Oakland Consolidated, ran from Grove on 40th to Opal, north to 41st, east to Howe and north into the cemetery on the private right-of-way, according to Rigney. The right-of-way is still discernable as a narrow driveway to the right of the main gate.

The iron railing which bordered the rails and separated St. Mary's Cemetery from Mountain View still remains today, as does a house, whose gingerbread detailing shows faintly in the background of a photograph taken of the funeral car on an unknown date.

The role of Car No. 4 on that day is something of a mystery. It could have been serving as a hearse for one of the departed employees of the line. But faint lettering on some of the flags, lapel ribbons and the lack of female mourners indicate another possibility—perhaps a Memorial Day pilgrimage.

In any case, it was a day of solemn faces, mustaches, derbies, watch chains and a type of transit no longer provided—with or without bunting.

John Waller, Transit Veteran, Takes Pension

John E. Waller, who came to work for the Key System in 1939 in the electrical department and switched over to motor coach operator in 1958, will retire from AC Transit effective April 1. Waller lives at 5007 Dover St., Oakland.

More Information

A note or phone call to the transit district—Oly, 3-2535—will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter.
At an adjourned regular meeting February 27, 1963, the Board of Directors:

- Referred bids to furnish diesel motor coaches to General Manager for analysis and recommendation, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Referred request for special college student fares to Project Development Committee for study, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Referred suggestions of North Richmond Neighborhood Council on revisions to Line 69 to Project Development Committee, on direction of President Copeland.
- Awarded contract to Motorola Communications & Electronics Inc., for furnishing and installing communications radio system, on motion of Vice President Copeland.
- Referred Oakland central area survey proposed by Central Business District Association to Finance Committee for recommendations, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved service changes on Lines 46, 68, 69, H and Treasure Island, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized plans and specifications for board of directors meeting room at new district offices, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

* * *

At the regular meeting March 13, 1963, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to prepare bid documents for bus fleet tire contract, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

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New District Look

General offices will take on its newest “new look” when it moves into the Latham Square Building at 16th St. and Telegraph Ave. about April 15.

The district will occupy the third and fourth floors after completion of extensive remodeling and redecoration.

On the third floor will be executive offices, public meeting room for the board of directors, and claims department offices.

The fourth floor will have customer services and ticket office, including lost and found, plus accounting, payroll, tabulating and treasury.