Special bus carries 'Happy Holidays' Message to residents from District

The District rolled out a special greeting to all residents this month, with a decorated bus expressing "Happy Holidays" in languages from around the world.

It was the fourth year in a row that a bus has been transformed into a traveling Season's greeting to extend AC Transit's best wishes. The response was the biggest yet, with a record number of youngsters turning out for the introductory run of the "Santa Claus Express" and a chance to ride along with St. Nick.

They lined up at announced time points in different cities, loading the bus on the Saturday inaugural to see and talk to Santa and ride along with him on the special express.

The bus was painted a bright Christmas green and featured 21 red and white cut-outs of Santa, proclaiming "Happy Holidays" in almost as many different languages — appropriate to the heritage of area residents.

On its initial course, the Santa Claus Express operated from Richmond, via El Cerrito, Albany, West Berkeley to Oakland. It then proceeded from Oakland through East Oakland and San Leandro to Hayward. Returning to Alameda, it operated through Alameda, downtown Oakland and Berkeley.

On board for the first day was St. Nick himself, Nicholas P. Alevizos, superintendent of the Richmond Division, whose seniority as Santa Claus dates to 1939 when he first welcomed commuters.

Something new was added this year, with Santa setting up a workshop at the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco to bring free candy canes and a jolly greeting to the District's family of commuters. The ticket booth and the area leading up to the loading platforms was decorated to add holiday cheer.

Candy canes also were given to all passengers when St. Nick was aboard the Santa Express.

Two women operators, Neysa Harford and Adele Bosco, continued a three-year tradition by dressing up as Mrs. Santa Claus and riding buses to distribute free canes and bus information.

(Continued on Page 3)
New Pension plan becomes effective; Changes approved by Union, District

A new pension program, which lowers to 55 the minimum age at which employees can retire and receive benefits, was approved this month by the Board of Directors.

Under the new plan, an employee also can receive as much as a 27 percent increase in benefits — depending upon years worked, salary earned and age at retirement — as compared with the former retirement program.

The agreement permits normal retirement at age 60 to workers with 20 or more years of consecutive service. Previously, the age was 62.

Earlier Retirement

It permits earlier retirement, starting at age 55, to workers of the same seniority, but with reduced benefits.

For the first time, a worker with 15 years of service is guaranteed a pension if he leaves the district after reaching 50. The payments, at a reduced amount, would not become available until he is 65.

The pension agreement, endorsed earlier by Division 192 of the Carmen's Union, emerged from months of complex studies and meetings, underway since improved coverage was made part of an arbitration award in 1965.

The agreement, which is to remain in effect five years, has these other main points.

- Pension benefits will be based on a percentage of average top earnings for any 10 individual years. Previously, benefits were computed on a basis of 10 consecutive years.
- The amount of outside earnings is limited to $1500 per year for employees retiring prior to 62. Other income, such as dividends, interest, rent from property, is excluded.
- Veteran workers, 60 years of age or over as of last July 1 and with more than 25 years of experience, can take advantage of benefits under the old plan rather than the new plan — a condition generally advantageous to long-time workers.
- Improvements and modifications apply to any employee pensioned on or after July 1, 1966. There are no changes in benefits for employees pensioned before that date.
- Number of years to qualify for disability are reduced from 20 to 15 years of continuous service for employees 60 or over. The former disability benefit formula was retained, but benefits will be based on highest earnings for any 10 years.

The agreement allows the union to have an observer present at all meetings of the pension board when acting on union pension matters.

It also provides an actuary to periodically review the plan experience and disbursements from the viewpoint that if monies in the pension fund permit, application of the basic formula may be changed from average of highest 10 years of work to a lower number of years.

Funds Put Aside

Under terms of the arbitration decision, the District has, since March 1, 1966, been putting aside funds based on five percent of wages paid for hours worked.

This fund, to which the District alone contributes, is to be used to pay all pension benefits.

Information on the amount of pension benefits, calculated for various years worked and age at retirement, soon will be distributed to all employees.

Union pensions have been costing the District approximately $210,000 a year. New contributions will boost the annual cost to an estimated $390,000, based on current wage levels.

RIDE ALONG WITH SANTA - Happy youngsters find St. Nick as they board Express. Operators Neysa Harford and Adele Bosco, right, help in candy cane giving.

Youngsters greet Santa Claus

(Continued from Page 1)

Happy youngsters find St. Nick as they board Express. Operators Neysa Harford and Adele Bosco, right, help in candy cane giving.

Emeryville Division, with Jack Rutheiford and Ernie Passerella helping on the decoration and Carl Knutson making the cut-outs of Santa and holly leaves.

The Santas banded the bus on both sides, with each wearing glasses to better read the holiday message. The inside and outside of the bus was garlanded with holly and sprinkled with gold stars to twinkle in the background. Illuminated Santa heads gleamed on the front and rear.

The "Happy Holidays" message was expressed in Italian, Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, Hawaiian, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Russian, French, German, Mexican, Portuguese, Hindustani, Greek, Esperanto and English. Language departments at University of California aided in the interpretation.

WHO'S THIS? - Maintenance worker Jack Rutherford has on-the-job visit from Santa.
Supervisor Lloyd Weems Stricken by Death

Supervisor Lloyd L. Weems, 56, died suddenly this month at his home, 15520 Usher St., San Lorenzo.

His seniority dated back to July 23, 1946, when he went to work as a bus driver. He was appointed a student instructor in the safety department on Nov. 5, 1957 and a safety inspector Jan. 1, 1961, moving from that post to supervisor on Feb. 1, 1965.

At the time of his death, Supervisor Weems was assigned to the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco, working the night shift. Fellow supervisors served as pallbearers at his funeral, held Dec. 8.

New employees signed
To AC Transit jobs

New district workers include:

**Emeryville Division**


**Seminary Division**

Auto Maintenance: Charles W. Arnold of Vallejo, service employee.


BEAR WITH US — When formally-clad first-nighters boarded chartered buses at the Women's Athletic Club in Oakland for the benefit premier of "Holiday on Ice," they found a surprise — AC Transit operator H. F. Voge, dressed as a polar bear. Left, he gives a hand to Mr. and Mrs. E. R. B. Holdan. His delighted passengers above included, from left, Mrs. William Okker, Mr. and Mrs. Erwin F. Griffith. The District carried over 1,300 passengers to the show at Oakland Coliseum Arena in 28 buses chartered by social groups.

I have recently moved to Alameda . . . called your information operator to inquire about possibility of one of my children using bus transportation to and from high school. I was pleased to discover that very convenient and frequent bus service is available and I was very pleasantly surprised at the complete knowledge your operator had of bus stops, schedules, locations of schools, etc . . . Please accept my thanks for providing such service and please extend my congratulations to the young woman concerned for her competence, patience and tact.

Capt. R. P. Coogan, USN
Alameda

**.. the bus driver (E. C. Garcia) on this run was just about the most efficient and polite man I have ever seen . . . he has the kind of personality which makes it a pleasure to ride his bus and watches out for his passengers, particularly strangers such as I was . . .**

Julia Nichols
San Diego

* * *

This is simply to commend the driver of the H local bus (R. J. Holzner) . . . This man is the epitome of all that seems desirable in a person serving the public — courteous, warm, friendly, efficient, helpful and last, but certainly not least, a safe and skilled driver.

Edward Franklin
San Francisco

**.. I got on the bus, an "F," at north gate of the Cal campus . . . during the game I had spent all my change and therefore had only a one-dollar bill. When I held it out to him, he took his time getting it and then gave me a lecture on how to have the correct change when getting on the bus. This was embarrassing, but tolerable. What made me terribly unhappy was what this driver did after I got on . . . the bus being very crowded, I had to stand up . . . near the door. On the way up Euclid Ave., the driver had just let someone on . . . all of a sudden, he grabbed me by the shoulder and roughly pushed (shoved, actually) me back into the next person standing by. His reason, he wanted to see in the mirror, but he didn't even ask me first if I would move . . .**

(Unexcusable. — Ed.)

Steve Takakuwa
Berkeley

* * *

The Woman's Mission Society of the Lakeshore Ave. Baptist Church went by one of your chartered buses to tour the United Christian Centers in Sacramento. It was a full day trip for us and we found the bus service very comfortable and pleasant. Our driver was a David Scott. Besides being an excellent driver, we found him very considerate and friendly. Our ladies were very pleased with the service he gave us and suggested that I write and let you know how we feel.

Phyllis Collett
Oakland
Whistle finally blows for driver,
One of last of train-ferry veterans

One of the last of the bus drivers
whose service goes back over four
decades to train and ferry boat days
has "pulled the pin" on his work with
AC Transit.

Martin Flaherty, 65, with over 39½
years of service, will retire, effective
Jan. 1.

Along with Billy and Johnny Hahn,
he can count over 30 years of service
on the trains until buses put the skids
under rails in 1958.

Flaherty, who found it hard to
"wrap-up a lifetime" in transportation,
had a sentimental and appropriate re­
union with the Hahn brothers on an
old Key System "A" train, restored by
Pacific Coast Chapter, Railway and
Locomotive Historical Society.

Stored at the one-time Southern Pa­
cific shops near the Bay Bridge toll
plaza, the train served as a backdrop
for photographs and shared memories.

When Flaherty came here from Ire­
lard in 1925, he brought more than a
brogue—he brought a dream of stand­
ing at the throttle of a steam locomo­
tive as it tore along endless rails.

Waiting for Steam

He was waiting to get on a steam
road when he took a job "on a tempo­
rary basis" with Key System in 1927.
"I'm still waiting," Flaherty admits.
"The depression came along and I de­
cided half a loaf was better than no
bread."

After working on the street cars 13
months, Flaherty transferred to the
trains as a brakeman and finally "got
to at least hear the whistles blow."

Although he qualified as a motor­
man, he kept his seniority as a con­
ductor and it was as the last conductor
in charge of the last trains that he rode
the final A train into memory on April
20, 1958.

Flaherty, who maintains he didn't
know how to drive a car until he
learned to drive a bus, started out his
motor coach career on a neighborhood
hill run but soon found "it had too
high altitudes."

Subsequently he drove on Line 42-
Alameda-Piedmont, Line 59-76 Mont­
clair and Line 12-Grand Ave.

"I've always enjoyed the public. I've
enjoyed every minute and I hate to
leave," Flaherty said.

He and his wife just came back from
Ireland and he plans now to do a little
home painting at 350 Alcatraz Ave.,
Oakland.

IN MEMORY — The cord and Ohmer fare
register might be gone, but Martin Flaherty
hasn't forgotten how to ring up fares and
tickets. He spent 30 years on trains, 10
years driving.

Passenger revenue showed an increase in October, totaling $1,198,952, up
$70,989 or 6.29 per cent over revenue reached the same month a year ago.

The number of passengers carried totaled 4,574,832, a decrease of 1.18 per
cent over the year-ago figure of 4,629,404. Of the total, the rider count on East
Bay lines was down 3.33 cent per cent, while transbay service continued to show a
gain, with 5.59 per cent increase over passenger reports of October, 1965.

Transbay commute book sales were up, reaching $194,526, a boost of 6.5
per cent compared to last year.

The district operated 1,970,394 miles of service, up 23,156 miles or 1.19 per
cent over a year ago. Operational costs reached $1,252,734, an increase of
$81,743 or 6.98 per cent over the previous October.

Total income of $1,534,915 was sufficient to cover operational costs, deprecia-
tion and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of
0.7 per cent.
At an adjourned regular meeting Nov. 23, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized sale of a small parcel of Richmond Division land to Bay Area Rapid Transit District for use as BARTD right of way, on motion of Vice President McDonnell.

At a regular meeting Dec. 14, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized construction of passenger shelter on 14th St. at Broadway, Oakland, on motion of Vice President McDonnell.
- Approved modifications to employee pension plan, on motion of Director Copeland. (See story, Pg. 2).
- Authorized General Manager to explore feasibility of joint demonstration study with Federal government on use of two-way bus radio communications system, on motion of Director Copeland.
- Approved $15 increase in annual dues to Castro Valley Chamber of Commerce, on motion of Director Rinehart.

New president elected by Carmen's Union

L. F. Bone, bus driver at Emeryville Division, was elected president of Division 192 of the Carmen's Union this month after a run-off election. He defeated F. L. Huffman to take the presidency held for two years by Louis V. Bailey.

In another run-off, E. A. Cordeiro was elected business agent of the operating department, assuming the post held by J. L. Vinson.

W. L. (Bill) Bailey won out as maintenance business agent, taking over the office held by Emil Scala for the past 18 years.

W. F. McClure, not involved in the run-off, was elected financial secretary-treasurer.