Action taken to eliminate bus crimes
End of holdups?

District moves to stop bus crimes

Entire efforts of the District were concentrated this month on implementing, quickly and decisively, action that hopefully will eliminate holdups and assaults against bus drivers.

Operators will stop carrying cash, tickets and tokens. Passengers will be asked to have exact fares. If change is necessary, drivers will issue refund tickets, which riders can redeem for cash at District offices.

New to nation

The program, a new approach for the transit industry in meeting the nationwide problem of crimes aboard buses, will take effect as soon as extensive details are completed, and no later than July 15, according to General Manager Alan L. Bingham.

Approval to go into action on the plan was given by the District's board of directors two days after the unprovoked shooting of Operator Ralph P. Livingston, 48, of 9959 Gibraltar Rd., Oakland, driving on Foothill Blvd., Line 40.

Livingston was robbed, and then senselessly shot three times by one of three assailants who had boarded his bus on Shattuck Ave. He had offered no resistance. After surgery, doctors at Kaiser Hospital reported his condition as “remarkably good.”

A driver since 1953, Livingston has worked at Richmond, then Seminary Division. A brother, Cecil, also is an operator, working out of Richmond.

Wishes for Livingston's speedy and complete recovery were extended personally to the driver and to his wife by the general manager a short time after the shooting. Directors also express their concern and sympathy.

The assault against Livingston came at a time when the District was encouraged by a decrease in robberies and was taking hope that a security program in cooperation with law enforcement agencies was beginning to pay off.

In recommending a plan that has not been tried elsewhere in the nation, Bingham said bold and immediate action was needed to eliminate the temptation which has led to holdups and assaults against drivers.

A $1,000 reward, leading to arrest and conviction of men who robbed and shot Operator R. P. Livingston, was authorized this month by the Board of Directors.

The program will require the cooperation of the community in meeting what is a community problem, he pointed out.

Business and financial concerns have been asked to provide outlets for the convenient sale of tickets and tokens.

The riding public will be asked to cooperate by boarding with exact fares, in cash or in tokens, and to support a plan which may at times cause inconvenience, Bingham said.

The program will be tried on a six months experimental basis and will be part of a study project already launched by the District, with financial assistance from the U.S. Government.

Study under way

With AC Transit as the pilot and the national Amalgamated Transit Union as cosponsors, the study is to develop the most promising means of reducing crimes on transit vehicles.

Approval of a federal grant of $206,000, to cover two thirds of the total project cost of $309,000, was announced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on May 27.

The national transit union is contributing $30,000. AC Transit and four other participating properties will make their contribution in direct services.
Latest in buses put in service

Fifteen new buses were in service on neighborhood and crosstown lines this month as the District juggled equipment to meet increases in riding.

The new buses, purchased at a total cost of $468,018.80, brings the District's total fleet to 694 coaches. Due to the increase in commuter travel and service to special events, the District was unable to retire any of its older coaches as result of the new arrivals.

Six buses, which a year ago had been considered for retirement, will remain in service for peak hour use, according to H. D. White, assistant general manager for operations. The increase in bridge traffic has required an additional 20 buses in the last one-and-a-half years, he pointed out, and the District now needs its total fleet to keep pace with riding needs and maintenance requirements.

The new buses have additional safety devices required by the Federal government, including back up lights, windshield washers, and additional roof lights. They also have electric head signs.

First to arrive by freight car were five smaller buses, seating 45 passengers each. They were assigned to Seminary Division for use on Line 72 and Express Line 33 schedules.

New employees join District ranks

Workers hired in April and May include:

Executive Office
Susan B. McKivergan, Oakland, secretary.

General Office
Claims: Ozro D. Gould, Davis, assistant general manager for claims.
Treasury: Donald O. Greene, Berkeley, cashier clerk.

Emeryville Division
Maintenance: Lester Donley, Jr., Richmond; Marshall L. Maze, Oakland; Richard D. Rhodes, Oakland, service employees.
Schedule: Charles R. Stephens, Oakland, traffic checker.
Building Maintenance: Guy Covert, Alameda, electrician.
Transportation: Donna L. Billings, Hayward, typist clerk.

Richmond Division
Maintenance: Gary F. Baker, San Pablo, service employee.

Seminary Division
Maintenance: George D. Meadows, Jr., San Pablo; Lewis R. McFall, San Francisco, service employees.

Driver wins Golden Wheel award for top Record of service

A forty-two year record as a dependable, safe and cheerful employee won the Golden Wheel Award for Distinguished Service this month for A. G. Leigh, 66, Richmond operator.

Leigh, who tops the seniority list at the Richmond Division, received the tribute for an excellent and long-standing work record. He was nominated for the award by one of his superiors, who said he was "better than average in everything."

Leigh, of 1057 Key Route Blvd., Albany, was presented with a special pin, a $50 U.S. Savings Bond and an award certificate by Alan L. Bingham, general manager.

In addition, his picture is being displayed in outside advertising frames on 10 District buses during June.

Along with having an outstanding record, Leigh is known for the smile he's kept beaming for thousands of riders over four decades.

He also thinks he's the only driver who ever filled his bus with a load of gravel. "It was a hot summer morning," he recalls, "I had all the windows open coming up from Fruitvale Ave. This truck was really barreling it out, coming toward me. Neither of us could stop.

"I goes left and he goes right. We came alongside swinging—and the whole load of gravel just poured through the windows—600 pounds. Nobody could believe how I managed that one."

Leigh also chased and caught a runaway street car back in 1927, catching the grab rail and swinging himself aboard in time to stop the car at a Spruce St. intersection in Berkeley.

The equipment was bad then, Leigh says, and "you had to work pretty good to drive them. You were supposed to be pretty good to last 10 years. That's all they gave a bus driver. But the equipment kept getting better, so I lasted all right."

When he isn't driving, Leigh is an active square dancer. He and his wife are members of the Mustang Square Dancing group of El Cerrito.
Scenic tour off to happy start

The summer sightseeing tour rolled off in high gear on Memorial Day, with a turnout of holiday riders inaugurating the "new adventure.

The tour was toasted on its way with coffee and doughnuts at a preview attended by news representatives, civic and business leaders from different Alameda County cities.

The guests gathered for the morning snack on the Mall at Jack London Square, then boarded the bus for the first "red carpet" ride.

Highlights included a sunny drive around the Mills College campus, a walk around the Mormon Temple roof garden and a busy noon time look at the Sather Gate area of University of California.

Planned in cooperation with the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, the scenic ride follows a 46-mile routing through Oakland, Alameda, Piedmont and Berkeley.

The tour bus loops Lake Merritt in its travels around downtown Oakland before rolling to Alameda for a look at the Victorian "Gold Coast" section, as well as South Shore beachside living.

After a drive past the Coliseum Complex, the bus visits Mill College and the hilltop churches, then winds through Piedmont. Viewers also receive a view of Bay Area Rapid Transit construction.

First response from question cards showed unanimous enthusiasm.

"The tour could not be improved," one rider wrote. "It was excellent."

The tour was routed to show a variety of attractions—proof that the east side of San Francisco Bay offers imaginative things to see, different from the rest of the bay area.

A hostess from the Chamber's Convention and Visitors Department wordsketches points of interest over a public address system on the bus during the trip.

The tours will be operated daily through Labor Day.

Wage hike boosts District costs

Labor costs for the District for the ensuing year will increase an estimated 8.14 percent as result of fatter paychecks taken home by 1459 employees.

The hike for 1361 union workers was the equivalent of 20 cents an hour. Non-union employees, extended the same benefits by the Board of Directors, received an equivalent increase of 5.7 percent. The increase was effective June 1.

Labor bill boosted

The wage package, plus added employee benefits, increases the District's labor bill for the next fiscal year by an estimated $1,106,990 over that estimated for the current year. Included in the figure are increased health and welfare payments, other fringe benefits and a cost of living adjustment which will become effective Jan. 1, 1969.

Also included is one month of another wage increase that will become effective June 1, 1969. Workers will receive an additional 20 cents an hour on that date, under terms of a three-year labor agreement approved a year ago.

Cost of contract

With the current increase, the District's annual labor costs due to the contract is estimated at $14,701,300.

The new scale boosted the hourly wage for 1014 bus drivers from $3.51 to $3.71. Wages will jump to $3.91 per hour next June 1.

AC Transit operators currently are the fifth highest paid in the nation.

The hourly rate for mechanics "A" increased from $4.20 to $4.40 an hour.

With employee benefits, including the cost of living provision, the wage hike is estimated to bring the District's total cost per driver to $5.80 per hour. Workers shared a $2 per employee increase in District paid medical plan coverage on March 1, boosting the District's payment per worker to $17 a month.

Under terms of the labor contract signed a year ago, workers will receive a cost of living allowance consisting of one cent per hour for each half point of change in the U.S. Consumer Price Index for the calendar year of 1968.
Retirement taken by old-timers

The fortunes of war—during the Russian Revolution—sent Vladimir I. Nichols to the United States, his new country, in 1923. He retires effective Aug. 1 as supervisor of the accounting department, but he doesn’t plan to retire into inactivity. Nichols, 67, of 1533 Grove St., Berkeley, will attend lectures at University of California, catch up on reading and do some deep sea fishing.

Born in Harbin, China, Nichols left his native city after the revolution, giving up three years of civil engineering studies. He landed in Seattle, but later moved to San Francisco and in 1935, graduated from Golden Gate College with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, with an accounting major.

Nichols went to work for Key System in 1946 as assistant valuation engineer. He worked as supervisor of time keeping and senior accountant before becoming manager of the department.

A son, Dr. Alex V. Nichols, is associate professor of biophysics at University of California.

He has three grandchildren, Robbie, Vya and Alex.

M. J. “Frenchy” Barrious will retire from his job as electrician at Emeryville Division August 1 for an active life on his own “little farm” in Groveland.

Barrious, 57, plans to entertain a lot of friends, do a little gardening, fix up a cottage, do some hunting and “try to develop some fishing.”

He went to work for Key System in 1930 as a welder’s helper and moved into the electrical department six or seven years later as a helper. He became an electrician several years later. Barrious served as acting foreman during World War II.

Last day of work for Leon Lagier, 63, leaderman at Seminary Division, resulted in a double party. He was given a sendoff by fellow workers and received his retirement pin from maintenance superintendent Joe Enos on the same day the crew collected a coffee and doughnut treat for having the most miles per road call—18,301.

Lagier, of 3820 Lincoln Ave., Oakland, went to work as a body man at Emeryville shops in June, 1942, and worked on street cars and trains before progressing to buses. He plans to see how he likes living on the Sonoma Coast at Sea Ranch, practicing a hobby of woodworking and “developing some new interests.”

Antonio Marcelino, 68, of 2006 Bradhoff Ave., San Leandro, who has been off work since March 30 as a utility service employee at Emeryville Division, received his retirement effective June 1. He entered service in 1951.

O. N. Seavey, 68, of 292 Lee St., Oakland, who took his retirement at the same time, started on the one-man street cars in 1938 and switched to bus driving 10 years later. He worked out of Seminary Division.

H. O. Sumpter, 63, who suffered a heart attack last November, retired July 1. Sumpter, of 5439 Princeton St., Oakland, entered service in 1943 on the one-man street cars and five months later became an instructor. He transferred to bus driving after five years on the cars, then became a conductor on the trains, working until the trains went off in 1958. He was among drivers who took the first buses across the Bay Bridge.

Sumpter worked out of Emeryville Division before moving to Seminary.

This evening we needed information on a schedule for a house guest . . . your very efficient operator, Mary Patrick, gave us reason to be glad we called. She is a gem! . . .

Mrs. Edward Smith
San Francisco

I certainly wish to thank you (J. A. Sneed) for the return of my 33mm Kiniea camera that I absentmindedly left on your bus . . . the various people with whom I spoke on the phone . . . were very helpful and courteous, even at the ungodly hour of 2 a.m. . . .

Charles A. Garber
Glen Mills, Pa.

The “H” line local buses which leave University and Sacramento Streets at 6:53 a.m. and 7:02 a.m. are running with standees every day—up to 13—and the service needs adjustment. Standing room only is getting to be the rule . . . This is getting tiresome for patrons who get on at the remaining stops . . .

John R. Tufveson
Berkeley

(As result of checks made by schedule department, an additional morning trip was added and headways adjusted—Ed.)

. . . Robert Dahlgren is one of the drivers who very often is assigned to charter bus operations, which we use frequently. Members of the staff have commented on his assistance in handling large groups and his outstanding courtesy at all times. It certainly is typical of the service and employees that AC Transit has.

B. F. Stokes
Bay Area Rapid Transit District

. . . I was unfortunately involved in an automobile accident while en route to work . . . Fred Clarrage, an employee of your organization, went out of his way to offer assistance. Mr. Clarrage is a credit to your organization and is to be complimented for his cooperation, which is a rarity . . .

Laura Tom
Castro Valley

Pete, you are the most wonderful, best bus driver I’ve had the pleasure of riding with. I sure am going to miss you boshels and peck. Be good on your next route and try to get back on ours again soon . . . (One of many messages to Driver Pete Baumgartner when he changed line assignments.)

Permit me to express notice of a very fine bus driver, Johnnie Paulding, on the San Francisco bus . . . specially non-ethnic, non- jerking, quiet, courteous, not an extra movement. The next day I was nearly sea sick with a bumptious driver, bumpy and no reason for it . . .

Clare R. Talbot
Oakland
J. W. "Joe" Enos, 69, put away the records on 48 years of work this month, retiring as superintendent of maintenance at Seminary Division.

Enos, of 2744 106th Ave., worked up from a car repairman to head division maintenance work. On his last day on the job fellow workers presented him with a wrist watch and electric razor and served coffee and doughnuts for the last time to a long-time boss. They also gave him a broom, dustpan and apron—for a clean sweep.

With retirement, Enos plans to do some traveling and move to his Santa Cruz home where he can practice his unusual hobby, diving through ocean breakers. He also reported he was going to "pick up this fishing business."

Enos went to work for Key System as a car repairman at Eastern Division in 1920, transferred to Central Division in 1932 when Eastern was closed. He became a serviceman on motor coaches at the Telegraph Ave. carbarns in 1935 and in 1938 went to Emeryville Division as a junior mechanic on the buses.

By 1942 Enos was a senior mechanic and acting foreman and in 1947 went to Richmond Division as superintendent of maintenance. He remained at Richmond until 1963, when he moved to Seminary.

Safety record topped
By Richmond drivers

Richmond bus operators racked up another win on a safe driving record—and had the coffee and doughnuts to prove it. For three out of four months, the drivers topped the safety goal of 12,900 miles per accident, missing only in April. Their May tally was 13,008 miles.

Emeryville drivers collected for the second month in a row with a record of 13,837 miles per accident.