What Newspapers Are Saying About Transit

Meany cites mass transit as necessity

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (UPI) – AFL-CIO President George Meany wants development of “accessible, safe and high-speed mass transit systems” as a means to solve the nation’s urban commuting jams, which he said lengthens the workday and reduces worker productivity.

“In the urban areas of the nation where 80 percent of the people live, driving to work or for pleasure is a fatiguing, slow-crawl war of nerves which adds from two to four hours to the average commuter’s workday,” Meany said in a report to the AFL-CIO’s biennial convention.

“Unions struggle to cut the hours of work on the job, but the hours spent commuting actually lengthen the workday,” the union leader said.

“The danger to driver’s health in this nerve-grinding ordeal is seldom talked about, but its cost must add millions of dollars to the nation’s health bill each year.

“The resulting loss of on-the-job efficiency, reduced productivity and lost worktime has never been properly calculated,” Meany added.

He also called for completion of the Interstate Highway system, more federal highway aid to state and local governments, tougher automobile safety standards and expansion and modernization of airports. His president’s report to the convention also urged action to solve the nation’s air and water pollution problems.

AC Transit could celebrate two anniversaries of transportation achievement this month—first for 100 candles on its birthday cake.

It’s been nine years since the District went into operation, taking over from Key System Transit Lines.

It’s been a century since the first horse car swept Oakland off its feet, starting an East Bay boom and inaugurating the street transit system that serves as ancestor of today’s bus network.

The horse car rolled “up town” from the foot of Broadway on Oct. 30, 1869—introducing a noiseless system that was easy to feed, steer and operate.

It also had turn-in value.

Automatic turn-in

When cars were operated to Berkeley for special events, the horse was turned loose at the end of the line to find his own way back to the barn. The car rolled home by gravity.

Transportation had its problems then, as now. It took five years to get the line started.

In his history of East Bay transit, the late W. E. Gardiner, Key System historian, said E. B. Walsworth had proposed a street car powered by horses as early as 1864. He wanted some way to get students to the Pacific Female College he had erected on a 30-acre campus of Academy Hill west of Broadway above 28th St.—the Pill Hill of today.

But the town charter dealt only with franchises for steam railroads and the way had to be cleared for inauguration of street railway service. In 1866, the needed franchise was granted by the State Legislature—which also set the fare at 10 cents or 16 rides for a dollar. The speed limit was to be no more than eight miles an hour.

HORSE POWER—Oakland Railroad Company employees show “power source” for first horse car’s power source, “Hard Luck.”

The Oakland Railroad Company laid its rails from the foot of Broadway up town to Telegraph and out Telegraph to 36th St. Later the line was extended to 40th St., then to Temescal Creek. When the College of California moved to Berkeley in 1873, the horse car went along.

But the trip was too long and slow for horses and in 1875, a steam engine was substituted, pulling a horse car over the tracks.

Oakland, meanwhile, had trotted into a new era. One horse car line after another appeared—many of them to get real estate on the market.

Franchises were dealt out like hot cakes and at one time, Broadway had six sets of tracks running down part of the street.

The lines that were built spread out to all sections of the East Bay and became the nucleus of a transportation system that later was electrified. Many of those same lines, laid out to get people where they wanted, are traveled today by District buses.

One activity is missing.

Once a year all the street car horses got clipped and while the artist was on the job, it was a great event for youngsters, who gathered to watch old Dobbin get a haircut.

There might be nostalgic regret, also, at the disappearance of a form of transportation you could pat on the nose, call by name and feed a carrot and which operated on oats, instead of diesel.

THE COVER—A rare photo from the collection of Louis L. Stein, East Bay historian, shows Oakland’s first horse car in 1869, in front of McClure’s Military Academy on Telegraph Ave. The school was the first military academy in state.
REMEMBER?—Last car built in Key System's own shops in 1927 intrigues viewers at AC Transit family excursion to California Railway Museum.

The "old and the new" in transportation's checkered past got together this month at "old Key System Days" at the California Railway Museum, at Rio Vista Junction in Solano County.

There was no lack of conversation or activity at the family excursion. Everybody talked to each other; everybody seemed to have a story that began: "I remember when . . ."

It was a time for warm meetings between old friends, some of whom hadn't seen each other since retirement.

For newer employees—and many were among the hundreds present—it was a chance to ride old street cars and trains and sample an era that ended before AC Transit went into operations Oct. 1, 1960. It was a great turn-out.

Members of the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association, who invited the District to the museum to commemorate its ninth anniversary, were out in full force. Some sported mustaches and old-time motorman caps and operated restored historic equipment with a flourish.

Some of the volunteers kept the tracks greased, but street cars and trains still squealed as they rounded curves—a sound that added to background music.

Youngsters joined with adults, taking free cars on cars and trains. The kids soon discovered a new activity, placing a penny on rails to let the car or train go by. The result—a beautiful flattened penny, to be showed and shared with other kids who have never known that experience.

Key System equipment, spruced up for the occasion, included car No. 271, acquired by Oakland Traction Company in 1904; Car No. 987, last car built in the Key's own shops in 1927; articulated bridge train No. 182, built in 1937 and familiar to most of those present. The other bridge unit, No. 186, was used as an "art gallery" and was posted with historical photographs put up by railway historians Vernon Sappers and Charles Smallwood.

Also paraded past the lawn picnic areas were No. 1001, electric freight locomotive built in the Emeryville shops in 1910. It pulled the last wooden reefer car in existence and a caboose from Central California Traction Company.

In the parade was No. 1201, overhead line and tower car, built at Newark in 1895 and used at one time to serve the Leona Heights hotel above Mills College before it burned in 1908.

No. 1011 wrecker car, built by Oakland Traction in 1906 at Emeryville, contained a complete shop. It was introduced as unique in having side rods attached to give better traction to each wheel, much like a steam locomotive.

The railroad association, formed in 1946, is operated by volunteer railfans who restore historic equipment and plan "fun" outings like the one chalked up by AC Transit employees as "top rate."

A set of train horns, retrieved from a bridge unit by Fred Blatt, one-time superintendent of rails, was presented to the association during the festivities by Alan L. Bingham, general manager. William Kluver, president of the association, handled welcoming ceremonies.

Visitors who rode by chartered bus were entertained by Tony Keyes, guitar player from Emeryville maintenance.
The District welcomed these new workers during August and September.

**NEW EMPLOYEES**

- R. J. BLACKBURN  
  Transportation Division 2

- D. W. BROWN  
  Transportation Division 2

- WILLIAM CALLAHAN  
  Transportation Division 4

- R. D. COBB  
  Transportation Division 4

- E. E. DAVIS  
  Transportation Division 2

- D. A. DIKES  
  Maintenance Division 2

- R. S. DONAIS  
  Transportation Division 4

- G. S. JACINTH  
  Transportation Division 4

- T. C. JUSTER  
  Transportation Division 3

- R. E. KARR  
  Transportation Division 2

- MEHDI KHASHABI  
  Transportation Division 3

- G. S. JACINTH  
  Transportation Division 4

- T. C. JUSTER  
  Transportation Division 3

- R. E. KARR  
  Transportation Division 2

- MEHDI KHASHABI  
  Transportation Division 3

- R. L. VIERRA  
  Transportation Division 4

- PRIMITIVO VILLARREAL, JR.  
  Maintenance Division 3

- R. D. WARREN  
  Transportation Division 2

- R. W. WEST  
  Treasury General Office

- C. W. WIGREN  
  Maintenance Division 2
Transit veteran appointed claims supervisor

Frank W. Gardin, newly-appointed supervisor of claims, can count his experience in the transit field on two hands—one for 27 years in the claims department and the other for time spent at the controls of one-man street cars and bridge trains.

Gardin, 80, of 543 Monticello Ave., Oakland, went to work on the cars in January, 1937, after years in the circulation department of the old Oakland Post Inquirer as a district manager. He had transit experience as a dispatcher and receiver before, in 1939, he “worked the front end on the trains. I couldn’t be a conductor,” Gardin explained, “I was so short I had to jump for the rod to tally up the fares.”

Always interested in claims, Gardin moved into that department in 1942. He worked for Key System as an investigator and remained on the job in various capacities when employees were switched to Transit Casualty Co., the claims representative of National City Lines, in July, 1952. He was welcomed back into the fold by AC Transit when they established a claims department in January, 1962.

“Frank and his wife, Cleone, swung a merry life out of the office for a number of years as folk-dancers and teachers of folk dancing. He still has a library of records, but has substituted golf for lively polkas.”

Men awarded citations for military duty

Two men have returned to work with the District after military service which took both of them to Korea—and to promotion as sergeants.

Both have been given handsome District plaques which feature an American flag in color, a military symbol and a citation of appreciation for service performed for their country.

Ronald S. Sunseri, 25, of 3408 Davis Street, Oakland, worked three months in the maintenance department before leaving for basic training at Fort Polk in July, 1966. Later he attended Micro Wave Radio School at Fort Mammoth, New Jersey, and in 1968 was sent to Korea as a radio repairman, with the rating of an E-5 platoon sergeant.

After returning in July, Sunseri took operator training and now is a driver, working out of Emeryville Division. He received five medals during his tour of duty.

Gradie V. Harris, 41, 1027 84th Ave., Oakland, started on the street cars in 1945 and switched to bus driving in 1948 after he drove the next to the last street car into Central carhouse.

“TOGETHER—Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Jensen have become first husband and wife team to retire as AC Transit bus drivers.”

A team affair

Driving couple turn in turn

A long “love affair” with bus driving ended this month as Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Jensen turned in their brass and became the first husband and wife team to retire from AC Transit.

Together they had worked almost half a century.

Mrs. Jensen, one of the District’s dwindling group of women operators, said she never tired of her job.

“I loved every trip across the bay bridge. I felt like “King of the Road.” I liked my passengers and I liked driving and I just hate to give it up.”

Both the Jensens worked out of Emeryville Division. They now have a home in Paradise, Calif., and plan to do more driving—this time in a travel trailer.

Mrs. Jensen started working with Key System in 1944. She was a conductor on the trains and spent several years at the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco before becoming a bus driver. Her husband started on the street cars in 1945 and switched to bus driving in 1948 after he drove the next to the last street car into Central carhouse.

Operation moon rock

AC Transit buses may not have made it to the moon, but they took thousands of people to see “the rock” at Lawrence Hall of Science, on the tip-top of the University of California Campus.

The chunk of moon rock drew over 55,000 visitors during its seven-day display.

Providing charter bus service to the steep site was considered a challenge appropriate to the subject, but all coaches made the trip without launching pads—or trouble.

Viewers were urged by U.C. to use regular buses to the campus, then ride by charter coaches from Student Union or Dana St. and Durant Ave. to the exhibit. Extra buses were rolled in to lift the crowds—biggest turnout yet to attend a campus display.

The rock weighed 25 ounces and was described as “walnut sized.”
**Workers give to United Crusade**

Bus operators, who already know about being “good neighbors,” responded along with other workers—this month to the United Crusade campaign for gifts and pledges to support 180 agencies serving thousands of people in the five counties of the bay area.

Pictures were taking the place of words at all divisions, with a new projector-recorder, loaned to each gilley room by the United Crusade, illustrating “there must be understanding and communication if we are to build.”

The production, similar to a color TV program, operated automatically and showed viewers there was much to pull people apart and make them different.

It also illustrated the work of the United Crusade and how people are not really divided when they come face to face with somebody who has needs.

The recorded message also showed where money goes after it is donated.

**Witness gets reward in driver shooting**

Bus passenger David Brannam, San Francisco machinist, will receive the reward posted in connection with the robbery and shooting of driver Ralph P. Livingston over a year ago.

Oakland Municipal Judge D. W. Brobst ordered the $2000 reward paid to Brannam for his part in arrest and conviction of Lawrence Mosley, 23, of Berkeley, now confined in San Quentin. Brannam witnessed the crime.

Livingston, who also filed a claim, withdrew from the case after hearing testimony. The reward was offered by the transit district and by Division 192, Amalgamated Transit Union.

As result of the shooting, the Readyfare plan of riding was inaugurated July 14, 1968.

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**3 year passenger revenue comparison**

*Based on 13 four-week periods per year*

![Graph showing passenger revenue trends for 3 years (1967-1969).]

**Passenger revenue on increase for August**

Fare box revenue continued to show an increase during August, boosted by a jump in East Bay and transbay income. The number of passengers carried showed a decline.

Passenger revenue for the month totaled $1,259,561, an increase of $90,566 or 7.75 percent over year-ago revenue of $1,169,125. Revenue on East Bay lines was $680,272, an increase of 4.93 percent compared to revenue of $648,287 in August, 1968. Transbay revenue totaled $579,419, up 11.25 percent over revenue of $520,838 in the same month last year.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 3,986,753, down 1.73 percent compared to last year’s total of 4,056,824. East Bay riding showed a decrease of 1.27 percent, while transbay riding was down 2.80 percent.

Commute book sales for August were $241,720, an increase of 12.1 percent over sales of $215,700 in August, a year ago.

Operation costs during the month totaled $1,557,556, up $111,436 or 7.71 percent over year-ago expenses of $1,446,120. The District operated 1,976,713 miles of service, a decrease of 8459 miles or .43 percent less than mileage of 1,986,172 in August, 1968.

Total revenue of $1,778,713 was sufficient to cover operational costs, depreciation and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of 5.40 percent.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting Sept. 24, the Board of Directors:
• Authorized advertising for bids on new fuel contract, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Approved new salary range for Assistant General Manager for Administration and created new position of News Bureau Editor, on motion of Director Copeland.

Death takes veterans
Of early transit days

William E. Reid, 61, who clocked 21 years behind the wheel of a bus before he turned in his brass Nov. 1, 1965, died Aug. 17 in Shelbyville, Tenn., where he made his home.

John F. Green, 57, 1225 81st Ave., Oakland, died May 19, six months after he retired from the maintenance department. He entered service Sept. 1, 1945.

Mary E. Petkovich, 86, 582 Warwick Ave., San Leandro, pensioned in 1948 as a secret service operator, died Sept. 24. She had worked for Key System 10 years.

J. H. Bennett, 80, 3606 Bickerstaff St., Lafayette, who retired in 1954 as a cashier in Treasury Department, died Sept. 11. He entered service in 1929.

O. S. Beran, 83, 196 Farrelly Dr., San Leandro, pensioned in 1956 as a trainman, died Sept. 9. He went to work in 1922.

Pleasant H. Wasson, 77, 1500 102nd Ave., Oakland, who entered service in 1935 and worked on street cars before becoming a bus driver in 1948, died July 2. He retired in March, 1958.


William D. Owens, 66, 5632 Pointsett Ave., El Cerrito, maintenance department veteran, died July 29. He worked from 1919 until 1957.

Award for credit union

The AC Transit Employees Federal Credit Union has received a thrift award from the Federal Credit Union Bureau for its growth and the responsive help of its members, according to Manuel Garcez, secretary. The District group was among five percent of all credit unions to be honored, Garcez said. Employees can join and share in benefits through a payroll deduction plan.