Buses-only lanes speed travel time
A GOOD DEAL—Players in one of the longest-running heart games anywhere contemplate their cards. Clockwise, from left, are: Larry Henderson, Pleasanton; Larry Lynch, Hayward; Sal Catena, Fred Geronzo and Arnold Soto, all of San Lorenzo. Not pictured is scorekeeper, Jerrene Zinnel.

The oldest, established, permanent Floating heart game in the East Bay

It may not make the Guinness Book of Records, but one of the longest-running card games known is played aboard an AC Transit bus every day.

A group of players, whose number varies depending on vacation schedules and job changes, has been playing Hearts on a Line 32-San Lorenzo Express every weekday morning, and most afternoons, for nearly 11 years.

Boarding the bus which leaves Fairway Park in Hayward at 6:32 a.m., different members join the group at stops along the way. The game usually starts in San Lorenzo and continues until the bus reaches downtown Oakland.

On the return trip, most of the players board the Line 32 bus which leaves 14th St. and Broadway at 4:23 p.m. and start a new game.

During the 11 years they have played approximately 5,500 games over a distance of roughly 68,000 miles.

They claim to be “pretty evenly matched” as players but Arnold Soto, one of the original members of the informal club, admits: “Some of us are more evenly matched than others.”

District operators establish new record

AC Transit drivers established an all-time high during July when they drove a record 16,258 safe-driving miles per accident.

All three operating divisions cooperated in establishing the record last month and all three exceeded the safety goal of 13,250 miles per accident.

Richmond drivers now have a string of 15 months of topping the goal and create a new record for individual divisions for each month they add to the mark. In July they averaged 18,075 miles per accident.

Emeryville drivers, now with a three-month string established, will try to keep their record unbroken. They drove 16,926 miles per accident last month.

Seminary Division operators bettered the goal during July with 15,213 miles per accident.

Whenever the monthly goal is bettered, drivers in that division are rewarded with free coffee and doughnuts.

Former transit worker Dies after short illness

Clyde A Meacham, a veteran street car operator, died in Kaiser Hospital, Oakland, on July 10 following a short illness. He suffered a stroke earlier in the month.

Meacham, 82, at his death, worked from Dec. 3, 1918, until his retirement July 1, 1955.

Livermore study

Bus service extension recommended

Bus service linking Livermore and the Amador Valley communities of Pleasanton, Dublin and San Ramon with the East Bay metropolitan area could become a reality as early as July 1, 1972.

An engineering report recommending creation of such a system has been accepted by the Livermore-Amador Valley Transportation Board. Recently, the Urban Mass Transportation Administration authorized printing of the report.

Once the report is printed, the Transportation Board can present it to city councils for implementation.

Prepared by consultants from DeLew, Cather and Co. of San Francisco, the report recommends express, local and subscription bus services.

The consultants outlined five different options for providing bus service. However, they recommended creation of a “county service area” with contracted operation by AC Transit.

After a trial period, the service area could be permanently annexed to AC Transit, engineers said.

Express buses, operating over two routes, would link the valley communities directly with the Hayward BART station. One of the routes would operate during weekday rush hours only.

The proposed local bus service would consist of small buses operating on fixed routes and a regular schedule, but with enough leeway in timetables to allow deviations from the route for doorstep pick-up or delivery at an extra charge.

Subscription buses

The third recommendation involves a subscription service between residential neighborhoods and major employers. This service would operate only during rush hours. Subscription buses then would be free for charter use or to carry students to local schools.

Assuming a two-thirds Federal grant to aid in purchase of small buses and other capital equipment, plus a BART subsidy for express buses connecting with BART stations, the proposed system would require local tax subsidy of about $173,000 per year. This would amount to 9.1 cents on the tax rate in the areas involved, but would have no effect on the tax rate in the areas currently served by AC Transit.

Driver cited for Role in capture

Wendell Stubbs, a 30-year-old driver with three years experience, was awarded the AC Transit Community Service Citation last month for chasing and capturing an alleged purse-snatcher.

Stubbs was operating his coach at Shattuck and University Aves. in Berkeley when he heard an elderly woman pleading with a young man to give back her wallet.

When the man ran off, Stubbs stopped the coach, ran after him and made a citizen’s arrest. Stubbs then brought the youth back to the coach and used an onboard radio to summon police.
Exclusive busways under study

Can exclusive bus lanes be used to good advantage in localities served by AC Transit?

Over 200 opinion leaders will have an opportunity to consider the question—and pursue the possibility—as result of information distributed this month by the transit system.

A concise progress report on exclusive busways, produced by the Truck and Coach Division of General Motors, has been made available by AC Transit to community leaders on state, county and city levels.

The report details success of experimental programs underway across the nation which give commuter buses their own lane in rush-hour traffic on streets and freeways.

The by-pass lane used by AC Transit to zip through congestion at the Bay Bridge toll plaza during morning commute hours remains an outstanding example of moving people rather than vehicles.

Other programs further illustrate effectiveness of express lanes for buses during rush hours.

The exclusive bus lane provided on Shirley Highway in a northern Virginia suburban area, combined with bus-only curb lanes on downtown Washington Streets, now makes it possible for commuters to board express buses as far away as 12 miles and travel non-stop to destinations in the nation’s capitol, at a time savings of up to 25 minutes.

In the New York City area, an exclusive bus lane on Interstate 495 on the New Jersey approach to the Lincoln Tunnel handles 500 buses carrying 21,000 passengers, each hour on inbound trips.

Seattle is making effective use of Interstate 5 and exclusive on-and-off ramps to reach the central business area.

In Los Angeles, initial engineering work is underway on an 11-mile exclusive busway to be built in the center of or alongside the San Bernardino Freeway, between the downtown area and El Monte. Supplanting the high speed service will be preferential curb lanes on downtown Los Angeles streets.

Some 12 miles of exclusive busway roads are planned for Pittsburgh, Pa., using railroad right-of-way, freeway and even a street car tunnel.

Milwaukee is looking at eight miles of express busway. Boston is testing the routing of buses on a zoned-off reverse lane on Southeast Freeway, to speed commuters to and from suburbs.

The Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District is planning express bus service between Marin County and San Francisco, with the use of the Golden Gate Bridge understructure for buses-only lanes.

Chicago has a variety of special lanes to speed the flow of buses, serving large concentrations of passengers.

Good mass transit can be—and is being provided by buses according to U.S. Highway Administrator F. C. Turner.

Exclusive busways can move people expeditiously and they can be provided relatively quickly and inexpensively, Turner pointed out in a recent address before the U.S. House of Representatives.

If there is interest in such a system, Turner said, the highway department stands ready to discuss details with state and city officials.

Further, all of the highway and roadbed facilities for a bus mass transit system can be provided from highway monies out of the Highway Trust Fund, Turner declared.

Mass transit, provided by buses on modern streets and freeways, is the real wave of the seventies, in the opinion of the highway administrator.
Master clock presented to District; Kept time in old Emeryville shops

The master clock that kept time for hundreds of workers at the old Key System shops is back ticking again, swinging off seconds in AC Transit executive offices in Oakland.

In its heyday, the master clock—located in the office of the master mechanic—ran all the time clocks at the Emeryville shops at 40th and Hollis Sts.

It was in those shops that street cars were built and repaired and trains kept in good running order. The men who worked there were craftsmen who reportedly could do anything—and proved it, in 1938, when they hand-built the first articulated train unit to run across the then new San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.

Although it wasn’t economical to repeat that task, the men continued to excel at “everything from turning train wheels and axles to winding armatures for horn motors,” according to Gordon G. Wadsworth, safety engineer and one of the veterans who remembers the shops.

The clock kept the record for mechanics, trainmen, welders, machinists, carpenters, storekeepers, foundrymen—even the blacksmiths who made up part of the crew.

During World War II, as many as 700 men in a 24 hour period punched in and out to the time of the clock as they made and rebuilt rolling stock for the East Bay’s extensive transit system.

After they punched out for the last time in 1957 and the shops were closed, the clock was given to Gordon M. Robertson, superintendent of signals and communications. Following his death last November, it was presented to AC Transit by his widow, Jennie.

Retirement begins for six workers

Six AC Transit employees with 162 years experience among them will have retired by the end of summer.

Already retired is bus driver Lee R. Thompson of 1211 Dwight Way, Berkeley. Thompson, 70, began his career May 16, 1944, and retired July 1.

Retiring Sept. 1 is Robert R. Bartlett, 65, a driver since Aug. 20, 1944. He lives at 4399 Adeline St., Emeryville.

Clemuel F. Sims, who will celebrate his 65th birthday later this month, also will retire effective Sept. 1. Sims, a bus driver, has nearly a third of a century with AC Transit and predecessor companies. His original employment date was Jan. 27, 1939. He lives at 734 Pomona St., El Cerrito.

Retirement will begin Oct. 1 for: Charles V. Ballard, 55, a mechanic, who had 30 years service on June 4. He lives at 1580 E. 14th St., San Leandro.

Wayne F. Dorothy, 64, who dates his service as a mechanic from Dec. 29, 1944, although he had worked for Key System prior to World War II. He lives at 339 Warwick Ave., Oakland.

Edythe M. Moore, a driver with 20 years of experience dating from April 18, 1931, who will take “early retirement.” She lives at 15929 Marcella St., San Leandro.

New line serves Watergate development

Tenants moving into the new Watergate development in Emeryville are discovering AC Transit was there before them.

An unusual agreement between the transit system and the real estate developers made bus service possible even as some of the earliest tenants began moving in. The developers are helping to underwrite costs of the new line.

The new service, Line 47, provides connections at San Pablo and Yerba Buena Aves. with transbay and East Bay routes. Transfer also can be made to express buses at Powell St. and Eastshore Freeway during morning peak, giving riders a fast 20-minute commute to San Francisco.
At an adjourned meeting July 28, the Board of Directors:
• Authorized Claims Manager to sign warrants, or warrant checks, up to $1000 in administering workmen's compensation insurance program, on motion of Vice-president Warren.
• Authorized attendance of two management employees at Urban Mass Transportation Management Seminar, on motion of Director Berk.
• Approved minor change in routing and layover point of lines 72 and "L," on motion of Director Bettencourt.

At a regular meeting Aug. 11, the Board of Directors:
• Referred bids for low sac needle injectors and tips to management for study, on motion of Director McDonnell.
• Approved amending joint exercise of powers agreement concerning local and feeder bus service in three outlying study areas so that ratio of local contributions can be modified, on motion of Director Daughtry.
• Approved agreement with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1245, for new contract covering two workers, on motion of Director Copeland.
• Approved serving of General Manager and Manager of Research and Planning as alternates on Board of Control for joint AC Transit, BART and Metropolitan Transportation Commission study of bus-rail services, on motion of Director Copeland.
• Authorized presentation at Purdue Conference on Research, on motion of Director Copeland.
• Authorized General Manager to renew five-year advertising franchise contract with Metro Transit Advertising, on motion of Director McDonnell.