AC Transit expands
In Eastern
Contra Costa County
JUDGE Robert A. Bancroft, right, administers oath of office to re-elected incumbent Board members during recent ceremonies. Sworn in from left with hands upraised are William E. Berk, Roy Nakadegawa and Ray Rinehart. Observing from left are Directors Kimi Fuji, John McDonnell, Chester C. McGuire Jr. and William J. Bettencourt.

Three directors take oath of office, President, Vice-President chosen

John McDonnell of Oakland, one of the veteran business leaders involved in the formation of AC Transit 20 years ago, will serve as president of the Board of Directors during the year.

Elected as vice-president was Roy Nakadegawa of Berkeley, a senior civil engineer for the City of Richmond, who first was elected to a directorship in November, 1972.

Election followed the swearing in of three incumbent directors elected to office in the last general election. Sworn in by Alameda County Superior Court Judge Robert A. Bancroft were Ray Rinehart of Oakland, certified public accountant, director at large; William E. Berk, well known plumbing contractor of Richmond, and Nakadegawa.

Judge Bancroft, at one time a member of the BART board, commented it was a pleasure to have officiated at the ceremonies as he and his daughter rode AC Transit and found the service fast, and efficient and the drivers friendly and courteous.

Directors praised

AC Transit operations are a tribute, he added, to management and to the Board of Directors.

"It's nice to see public servants so dedicated and so committed and who give so much to the community," Judge Bancroft said.

One of the men responsible for securing better transportation on the east side of San Francisco Bay, McDonnell has been a member of the Board since the District was created by voters in 1956.

McDonnell previously served as president in 1967-68.
Employees lead commuters in caroling

The Transbay Terminal in San Francisco came alive with a festive holiday spirit in December, as hundreds of homeward bound commuters joined voices in caroling led by AC Transit personnel.

The annual party, complete with music, Santa Claus and elfin beauties handing out candy canes, is the District's way of thanking transbay riders for their patronage and wishing the season's best.

Driver Ronald Freund led the band and crowd in a two-hour evening carol-sing-along, with such favorites as "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night."

The band was comprised of fellow bus drivers, including Chester B. Anderson, H. R. "Rocky" Shore, Joe H. Troutt, Ken C. Eline, Leon Pryor and A. J. Berner.

Their rendition of "Here Comes Santa Claus" proved prophetic as, much to the crowd's delight, Santa made his appearance while commuters joined in his lyrical welcome.

Youngsters, and even a few oldsters, sat on Santa's lap to make their Holiday Season wishes known.

This particular Santa is well accustomed to hearing such requests, as 1976 became the 43rd year Richmond Division Superintendent Nick Alevizos has played the role.

Assisting Santa and the band in spreading cheer were Florene Braneon and Evelyn Frese, Transit Information operators, who mingled as candy cane elves.

United Way donations drop

AC Transit employee contributions to the United Way Campaign dipped slightly during 1976, when compared to donations made the year previous.

Percentage of employees participating dropped 10 percent, from 62 percent who donated in 1975 to 52 percent in 1976.

Total donations amounted to $28,939.78 last year, a drop of 7 percent from the $21,104 contributed in 1975.

Facilities will be provided to insure continuous operation of present transbay bus services during construction.

Seek means of funding both capital and operation requirements which minimize the pressure to increase the "fare box" cost of public mass transit.

In financing the project, minimize the level of debt service which would need to be off-set by regional or local operating funds or which would need to rely on local tax.

Guidelines also cover facilities for the handicapped and for the comfort and convenience of patrons, and provide for the use of bicycles and other items to avoid congestion and provide pleasant surroundings.

As the next step, the San Francisco Bay Area Transportation Terminal Authority is scheduled to seek a consultant to do architectural and environmental studies, will pursue funding, and seek agreement with operators who will use the terminal.

These proceedings are expected to take two years.

Findings of a study by the Regional Plan Association of New York should be taken into consideration as the project of developing a new transit terminal in San Francisco moves along, in the opinion of AC Transit Directors.

The New York study concluded the solution to urban transit problems is in bringing about changes in land use policy and not in devising new forms of transit.

Concentrating jobs and services in compact downtown areas — especially around bus and rail stops — does more to encourage use of transit than does lowering fares and improving service, the study concluded.
Investigating charges of personal or property damage caused by AC Transit falls within the realm of the Claims Department, which is mandated to justly resolve such claims.

Ozro D. Gould, Claims Department manager since 1966, believes the esteem AC Transit holds with the public in part testified to by a high rate of amicably settled claims.

Whenever anyone feels he or she has been injured by the District, it is the Claims Department which steps in to investigate validity of the allegation.

In an average year, approximately 2,500 initial contacts are made by persons who feel AC Transit has wronged them. Complaints can vary from a scratched bumper to personal injuries which allegedly happened at the hands of AC Transit.

**Thorough investigation**

“A thorough investigation and honest analysis of the results are what the public demand. That’s precisely what we hold as our top priority,” Gould related.

“Only about 25 cases a year actually go to trial, and that includes both Superior and Municipal court. All the rest are settled solely between us and the individuals or their attorneys,” Gould continued.

Considering the scope of AC Transit contact with the public — carrying some 58,000,000 passenger trips last year in a 600 square mile service area — it’s a source of satisfaction to Gould that difficult cases are so few.

He attributes much of the success of the Claims and Legal Departments to the “excellence of AC Transit’s maintenance and safety programs.”

The Claims Department works closely with the Legal Department, supervised by Chief Trial Attorney Richard Meier, to assure compliance with state and federal statutes.

Just as the District is obligated to protect taxpayer interests in those cases which seek redress from AC Transit, the Claims Department also is quick to say “we were wrong” when the facts so indicate.

“We settle from 600 to 650 cases out of court every year in which the District has an obligation.”

Of those few cases which do go to trial, “we win about 50 percent outright with the remainder getting a judgement lower than the settlement offered. Only about two or three times a year is there a judgement higher than what we had offered,” Gould said.

Beyond defending the District against claims which the department concludes are unjustified, the department also collects an average of more than $100,000 annually for damage to AC Transit property and for Worker’s Compensation subrogations.

Assisting Gould in the department is Robert Gettys, assistant claims manager. Prior to joining AC Transit, both Gould and Gettys had a life-long background in claims investigation with insurance companies.

Immediately before coming to AC Transit, Gould served as the top claims executive for Greyhound Bus Lines, based in its New York headquarters.

Investigating claims are Frank Gardin, claims supervisor; Leon Maddox, senior adjuster; Bill Kelly, adjuster and Albert Turegano, adjuster.

A third major duty of the Claims Department is disposition of Worker’s Compensation claims filed by employees.

Gould strives for a harmonious relationship between employees who have filed and the investigation process.

**Prompt payment**

“Most of the time we’re in agreement with the employee. And we’re never late with that check — not many companies can say that,” Gould pointed out.

In fiscal 1974-75, some 712 such cases were reviewed with $256,000 in benefits paid. The following year, cases jumped to 877 with $373,000 in payments authorized.

“We’re happy with the job we’re doing in this area particularly because we have good people to do it, Carolyn Litster and Carol Twining,” Gould said.

Gould makes use of his former employer, Greyhound, to commute to his Sacramento home where he resides with his wife, whose interest in legal matters surpasses his own.

His wife, Frances Newell Carr, is a sitting jurist of the Sacramento County Superior Court.

And no, laughed Gould, AC Transit cases are never tried before his wife, the judge.
FUTURE PARK AND RIDE FACILITY—These two blocks under Highway 580 at Fruitvale Ave. in Oakland will provide parking for 160 vehicles when opened next year.

'Park and Ride' set for East Oakland

A new Park and Ride facility will be opened by CALTRANS under the Interstate 580/MacArthur Freeway overpass at Fruitvale Avenue in East Oakland as a convenience for AC Transit riders using various bus lines in the area.

With opening scheduled for Jan. 1, 1978, passengers will be able to park free all day and make use of bus service for the completion of their trip. The facility will provide convenient access to Line N—San Francisco, which provides a direct express commuter service between Fruitvale Avenue and San Francisco.

Cost of the project, including development, operation and maintenance as well as funding all utilities, will be born by CALTRANS.

The Diamond Merchants Association, which had worked with AC Transit and the City of Oakland for the project's implementation, will landscape the area.

Safe driving goal

Beaten in November

All divisions beat the safe driving goal for the month of November, in terms of miles driven per accident. With a goal of 13,250 miles per chargeable accident, the District-wide average for November was 16,870.

Newark Division tallied 61,496 miles while Richmond Division drivers scored 18,605.

During November, Emeryville Division achieved 16,319 miles and Seminary Division marked up 14,885 miles driven per chargeable accident.

SAFE driving for 25 years without a chargeable accident is applauded by Transportation Manager J. Dale Goodman as he presents the 25-year pin to Operator Leslie Butler.

Butler joins 25 year Safe Drivers

That elite group of drivers who have reached 25 years of driving without a chargeable accident has grown to 18, with the addition of Leslie R. Butler.

Butler, who began his career as a streetcar operator 35 years ago, was honored Dec. 6 at Seminary Division amid the congratulations of friends and co-workers.

J. Dale Goodman, transportation manager, pointed to Butler as one of the District's 'unsung heroes' who make AC Transit a success. Butler's record of safety and attendance provides operators with a guideline for excellence, Goodman said.

Key System veteran

Butler, a native of Sacramento, was born on Jan. 23, 1912. A year after going to work for Key System in 1939, he transferred to bus operations in Emeryville Division.

During World War II, Butler operated the Richmond Shipyard trains, but returned to buses after the conflict's end.

He transferred to Seminary Division when it opened in 1948 and has remained there ever since.

He has had only seven "misses" in his career.

Butler became a widower in February after the loss of his wife, Marie, following 40 years of marriage. A resident of Oakland, Butler has one son, Leslie, and is a grandfather.

FIRST SPAB BUS ROLLS — Gordon P. Dupree, Jr., Seminary Division, operates first special charter bus to roll under new State mandated Student Pupil Activity Bus (SPAB) requirements which became effective Jan. 1, 1977. The new law requires that charter coaches for school age children must meet strict safety requirements and both driver and bus must be certified by the California Highway Patrol.
On December 27, 1976 a letter of complaint was published in the Oakland Tribune against AC Transit drivers. That letter appears below — as do reaction from another Tribune letter writer and the Oakland Tribune itself.

EDITOR: What is wrong with the bus drivers in the East Bay? More than a dozen times, I and members of my family have come too close to being hit by one of the AC Transit buses.

They always use two lanes when driving down a street and they never seem to take into consideration that there are other drivers on the street with them.

Very seldom do they use signals when changing lanes and I don’t think they ever bother to look at traffic beforehand.

This state should either bring in stricter licensing requirements or get very small 10 passenger buses so that no one will be injured by inexperienced drivers.

PAULA YORK
Albany

(Commentary: Give the drivers a break. Most of them are good drivers. Have you ever tried to maneuver one of those behemoths through city streets?)

About those Drivers...

EDITOR: You published a letter in which a motorist berated AC Transit and the bus drivers. I believe that writer was completely in error about every issue mentioned.

I ride at least 20 buses each week. Not only has every driver been courteous and a careful pilot, many of them actually go out of their way to provide services above and beyond.

I think AC is great and a real bargain to boot. Clean, well maintained equipment and one heckuva lot of super and friendly drivers!

ERNIE ZICKRICK
San Leandro

(Commentary: AC drivers should be applauded for a hard and nerve-racking job.)

Three pensioners taken by death

Emil Scala, former mechanic and a past vice-president of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192, died Jan. 14. Scala, 74, had been in retirement since Feb. 1, 1967.

He joined AC Transit’s predecessor company on Jan. 6, 1944 and worked in the Maintenance Department as a mechanic until taking a leave of absence to serve as a union officer in 1947.

From 1947 until his retirement, Scala held the union position of vice-president/business agent for the Maintenance Department.

A resident of Newark, Scala is survived by his widow, Gertrude, and a son, David.

Retired mechanic Luther C. Brown died suddenly Nov. 11. Brown, 67, began his career on Oct. 23, 1946 and was stationed at Seminary.

He is survived by his widow, Evelyn; five sons, Phillip, Paul, Wayne, James and Timothy; and two daughters, Judy and Barbara.

Former store clerk Sydney Patton passed away Oct. 30.

Patton, 94, retired on April 1, 1947 after having worked from July 16, 1923.

He is survived by a son, Lawrence G., and a daughter, Mildred E. Tissot.
At an adjourned regular meeting December 29, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized General Manager to travel to Scottsdale, Arizona to attend Annual APTA Management Seminar and one management executive to travel to Washington, D.C. to attend Annual Meeting of Transportation Research Board, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Authorized General Manager to request proposals from consulting firms for analysis of needs of the elderly and handicapped and a cost/benefit analysis to assist in evaluation of alternatives, subject to MTC funding approval, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized selected trips on Line 18-Lakewide-Park Blvd., Line 53-Fruitvale Ave., Line 59/76-Montclair and Line 64-23rd Ave.-San Jose Ave.-Alameda be discontinued at earliest possible date, due to minimal patronage, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized supplementary service on Line 43A-Solano Ave. from University Village to Marin School to operate as regular service effective immediately and authorized on a trial basis a minor change in terminal layover of Lines 72 and Line L at Point Richmond, on motion of Director Berk.
- Authorized implementation of two additional Dial-A-Ride zones in Fremont/Newark, minor boundary changes in existing Dial-A-Ride zones and extension of Lines 211 and Line 212 to Ohlone College and frequency change from thirty minutes to hourly during weekday peak hours, on motion of Director Berk.
- Adopted policies for the future development of Transbay Terminal, on motion of Director Berk. (See story, Pg. 3)
- Authorized one new position and updating description of three existing positions in Purchases and Stores Dept., on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized Board members and management to attend Port of Oakland 50th Anniversary Dinner, on motion of Director McDonnell.