**Our ‘Stockholders’ Write**

Many institutions retire the number worn by a star athlete. I am of the opinion AC Transit should immortalize the badge of its Greatest Asset in the AC Transit Hall of Fame — Badge 891 Driver Dorothy Torrenaga.

That badge number should be worn by no one else because no one could live up to that operator’s standards of years of service, of courtesy, of cheerfulness, and of the deserved admiration of her passengers.

We, her passengers, will miss her upon her retirement.

William Patterson
Oakland

(Ed. Note: See feature story on Mrs. Torrenaga in this issue)

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On Wednesday, my father again suffered a stroke just before boarding a 15A bus. When it became apparent that Dad could not get off the bus, (Driver) Cornelius Perry coordinated with a supervisor who phoned my husband to pick Dad up on the return run. The situation was handled most beautifully and we are grateful.

Jean Braun
Oakland

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A coach was proceeding northbound on Grove Street approaching Center Street in Berkeley. My son and I stepped off the curb preparing to cross. The bus was more than half a block away... having us in full view, the bus continued, slowing only to make the turn and slowing again when it became obvious to him he had to wait for us to step back on the curb to avoid being hit.

Generally, your drivers do a good job. Lately, they seem to be in more of a hurry.

Eugene Schneider
Berkeley

(Ed. Note: AC Transit operators undergo a very extensive training period and are required to rigidly abide by the rules of the road. When this policy is infringed, we do wish to be notified of the circumstances, including bus number, in order to take corrective action.)

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MTC’s new ‘fare guidelines’ proposal Could prove unfair to transit riders

The public is going to have to pay increased bus fares if the Metropolitan Transportation Commission requires that 35 percent of operating costs come from operating revenues.

A resolution adopted by the AC Transit Board of Directors last month opposes the establishment of fare guidelines by MTC for the nine Bay Area counties. It also asks the MTC to recognize the authority of the Directors to set fares as granted in the District enabling act.

Resolution No. 459 now pending before the MTC would result in a 20 percent increase in fares in the first year in the 11 cities from San Pablo to Hayward.

**Exorbitant effect**

Inflationary factors in future years would require additional fare increases to the point where it is expected present transbay and local fares would be doubled by 1980, hitting the low-income and minority resident in particular and discouraging use of public transit.

The 35 percent recovery requirement in the cities of Fremont and Newark and in central and eastern Contra Costa County would for all practical purposes result in a cessation of public transit services in those areas.

The proposal also infringes upon the ability of locally elected officials to determine fare structures at the local level and does not give sufficient recognition to the contributions made to public transit by local property taxpayers, the Directors concluded.

MTC’s Resolution No. 459 would establish fare guidelines for the entire nine-county San Francisco Bay region, requiring 35 percent of operating costs to be derived from operating revenues. The effect of the passage of the resolution would be to deny areas of Transit Development Act Funds (local one-fourth cent sales tax) and federal funds unless the requirement was met.

Ray Rinehart, Director at Large and chairman of the Board Finance Committee, appeared before the MTC Work Program/Plan Revision Committee to oppose the fare level guidelines and the action of the MTC in taking the setting of fare structures over from elected local public officials. Committee action on the measure was held up for a month.

**Transit systems propose regional media campaign**

A coordinated campaign to publicize the benefits of public transportation is proposed by the six-member Regional Transit Association of the Bay Area.

AC Transit joined in applying for a $990,000 CALTRANS grant to finance the novel regional information effort.

In a year long campaign, more than 140 media messages would be aimed at Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Planners estimate the effort would generate an additional 66,000 transit passenger trips daily during non-peak hours.
Steps are taken to Acquire a practical Rear bus route sign

Rear route signs, which tell would-be passengers the number of the bus they should run for — or maybe have just missed — have frequently been sought by the public but have presented technical problems.

Evaluation of two such signs has led to authorization by the Board of Directors to seek bids for 150 sign assemblies to equip all buses at the Richmond Division.

Cost of the 150 signs is estimated at $9,800, with 80 percent to be funded by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration under a current capital grant. Funds to equip the remaining buses in the fleet would be included in a current application for a new $17 million capital improvement grant.

The recommended sign has been developed by AC Transit, with specifications to include features which prevent tampering and vandalism.

Little bus becoming Big hit providing Service for seniors

While the Concorde jet remains a matter of controversy, the Concord Senior Citizens' bus is meeting with approval from residents in the Contra Costa County city where the coach went into service last month.

"We don't know much about the big Concorde plane," says Barry Maynard, transportation coordinator for the Concord Senior Citizens' Center, "but we do know our little bus is providing local residents with a way to get around and they really love it."

The little bus, which handles an average of up to 72 passengers each weekday — mostly senior citizens, but including some handicapped children — has been experiencing increasing ridership, according to Maynard. "We are getting more and more people, practically every day," he says.

The bus provides door-to-door transportation to medical, shopping or recreational facilities, as well as connecting with BART/Concord.

The service operates Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on one-day advance notice. Patrons may phone 687-2585 between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. the day before a trip is planned for pickup.

Former union head dies

Funeral services were held in Massachusetts August 10 for Edward A. Cordeiro, former head of the Amalgamated Transit Union Division 192, who died of lung cancer at the age of 44.

Cordeiro joined AC Transit as a bus driver in 1962. He was elected union business agent in 1966 and then served as president from 1968 to 1975.

He is survived by his widow, Mary, of San Leandro, and three children, six brothers and a sister, all of Massachusetts.

Bridge changed Bay pattern forever

The San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge was a product of controversy. From the early Twenties, everything about it raised doubts: location, feasibility, funding, and aesthetic qualities.

This visual record of that historic construction — preserved on glass photographic plates — was found recently in archives inherited from the Key System. The key-shaped ferry pier (at right) led to the name "Key Route," long used to describe the ferries and trains that carried millions of riders across the Bay and to their East Bay destinations.

The bridge opened to auto traffic Nov. 12, 1936, with an immediate impact on Bay transportation patterns. As predicted on dedication day, the bridge did "bring the cities of the bay district into closer union."

THE COVER — The structure that was to be called, in the 1936 dedication speech by former President Herbert Hoover, "the greatest bridge yet constructed in the world" was, in this mid-1930's photo, still thrusting out to close the watery distance between Oakland and San Francisco. The ferry boats that would eventually be phased out in the wake of changed transportation patterns resulting from the bridge's stimulus to auto traffic are represented here also, still serenely skimming Bay waters.
Veteran operator

Riders on route root for Torrenga

Like any other big league superstar, it would be fitting to retire her badge number, says one of her passengers (see “Our Stockholders Write,” Pg. 2).

And like the truly great performers, she accepts the accolade gracefully.

Operator Dorothy Torrenga also thinks the idea of retiring her bus line as well as her badge is interesting, “but it wouldn’t be fair for the people.”

For more than 25 years she has operated Line 18-Park Blvd.-Lakeshore Ave. in Oakland, and it is not uncommon for her to know three generations of a family. A little boy asked her recently, “Didn’t you used to drive my daddy?”

“He’s still living on Dolores Avenue,” she asked.

“No, the young man said, hesitantly.

“Then, I’m sure I did,” she replied, with a knowing smile.

Attitude counts

Her legendary success with bus riders on her line is the direct result of attitude, she believes. “You have to use a little forethought and not embarrass anybody. Everyone’s an individual and I try to treat them like one,” she says.

The loyalty of her passengers was recently demonstrated when a woman called and asked, “Is Dorothy driving the Line 18 today?” When informed it was Mrs. Torrenga’s day off, the woman commented, “Oh, well, I’ll wait to go to town tomorrow if Dorothy isn’t driving.”

Newer patrons, who are just beginning to know the cheery smile and strawberry blonde hair, find it surprising to learn she began her career in public transit Sept. 30, 1942, at the age of 38. She was responding to a radio advertisement for street car operators. “I was looking for a job,” she says, “and it has been a wonderful experience. At 73, I’m still working and I still love it.”

As one of the first women street car operators, she now holds top seniority among female employees at AC Transit with nearly 35 years experience.

When asked how she handles problems, she says simply, “I don’t have any problems. There’s an easy way to do it. You can’t put pressure on people. You have to try and not let people create arguments.”

But, don’t teenagers give her difficulty?

“Not at all. Their outlook may be a little different from yours, but you have to go along with the times. Besides, they’re no worse than the rest of us were when we were their age.”

She not only drives a bus, she rides a bus to work from San Francisco where she and her husband live.

A native of Memphis, Tenn., Mrs. Torrenga finds it easy to relate to people because of her diverse interests. Among other things, she says, “I love to dance. I don’t dance all that well, but I love to try. And I like horse racing. That’s fun.”

In assessing herself, she says, “I would say I’m very congenial when I get around people.”

Her passengers, undoubtedly, agree.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting July 27, the Board of Directors:

- Adopted an increase in Special Service fares, on motion of Director Godkin.
- Authorized General Manager to advertise and seek bids for purchase of office machines and equipment, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Adopted resolution authorizing filing application for federal capital improvement grant and set public hearing for Sept. 28, 1977, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved routing of Line L — Richmond — San Francisco, via Pierce St. to serve Gateview Development in Albany, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved extension of Line 78 — Parchester Village into Point Pinole Park for one-year trial, contingent upon subsidy by East Bay Regional Park District, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

Federal grant sought to finance purchase of New buses, other equipment through 1978-79

A $17 million federal grant is being sought by AC Transit to give East Bay riders continued dependable, top quality transportation.

The capital improvement grant would cover purchase of 75 new buses for use in the 11 urban cities from San Pablo south to Hayward, plus 22 buses for contract service in suburban areas of Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

The estimated budget includes funding for 106 wheelchair lifts for the new equipment, at an estimated cost of $1,060,000.

Other capital items sought include communications equipment, service vehicles, shelters, benches, tools, portable buildings, furniture, office machines and related equipment to satisfy the District's requirements through 1978-79 in East Bay cities, including Fremont and Newark.

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