Coaches get pre-emp device
For Concord demonstration project
This afternoon my husband and I were in a crosswalk on E. 14th Street, one block before Fruitvale Avenue. Two cars had stopped for us, but an AC Transit bus did not even slow up to see why cars had stopped but raced right on through, on the inside lane.

Perhaps your drivers should review the safety laws.

Mrs. William Schwartz
Oakland

(Ed. Note: Your letter has been referred to the Transportation Department for investigation and corrective action, since you included sufficient information to identify the operator.)

* * *

Recently I happened to be a passenger on the bus and was very much impressed with one of your drivers, Bennie Williams. His efficiency and his courteous manner to a troubled passenger deserve to be commended.

May God bless him for his patience.

Josephine Immroth
Oakland

* * *

I am a passenger on Dial-A-Ride quite often and think your frequent and reliable service is just great. All your drivers are very courteous and make every attempt to be especially thoughtful.

I would like to make particular mention of your driver, Clarence Dunstan, whose interest and efforts made possible the return of an earring I had lost on his bus.

Anna G. Anthony
Allan G. Johnson
Fremont

The death of Operator Leo J. Sasges comes as a great emotional shock to those who knew him. Leo was an institution among the Berkeley-El Cerrito-Richmond bus riding public for his unwavering cheerfulness, professional driving ability, and the sheer longevity of his years behind the wheel. Many passengers depended on his extensive knowledge of AC Transit's routes and schedules.

Leo Sasges was the ideal bus driver. It was my privilege to know him for nearly 20 years (before I was in kindergarten), and during that time I never heard him utter a derogatory comment about anyone.

He will be remembered by his passengers for his constantly positive disposition and his concern for them.

And he will be remembered by this once pesky little kid for his warm smile, his friendly "how ya doin', Allan," and most of all I will remember Leo for never being greeted with anything less than genuine enthusiasm when I'd board his coach and say, "When I grow up, I wanna be a bus driver. Show me how."

Robbin Bowman
Fremont

(Ed. Note: Effective Feb. 19, Dial-A-Ride Zone 13 was extended to include the Kimber Park area.)

RTA sponsors marketing program

With the award of a $270,000 grant from CALTRANS, the Regional Transit Association of the Bay Area will soon begin a program to create higher public awareness about area public transit.

Each participant in the program is contributing proportionate matching funds to complete financing of the project. In its March 15 meeting, AC Transit's Board of Directors authorized the District's $30,000 share in the funding.

The plan will combine the efforts of AC Transit, BART, Muni, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Santa Clara Transit in an information campaign expected to reach over four million Bay Area residents. The program is aimed at increasing daily transit ridership, with accompanying benefits in such areas as air quality and energy saving.

It is expected to demonstrate how regional transit agencies can wage an effective media campaign in support of a joint goal — more riders. Improved coordination of effort in other areas is another benefit that project planners anticipate.

Robert E. Nisbet, acting general manager, who serves as RTA chairperson, stated that he viewed the project as "demonstrating how separate transit agencies can work in concert to benefit the community as a whole."

Radio system readied

THE COVER — Radio repairman Ed Shelden inspects a traffic control emitter, now installed on some District buses. In conjunction with receivers located at appropriate places in intersections, the bus-top device triggers traffic signals to give approaching buses priority. Designed for test in Concord, the system is intended to give buses green lights and riders faster trips to their destinations with minimal adverse impact on auto traffic. A total of 16 coaches — seven in local city service, nine BART Express buses — will carry the pre-emption devices. This demonstration project, financed by an MTC grant, is the first road test of a transit priority system on heavily-traveled West Coast city streets.

TALL TOWER — Two antennas on this newly-installed tower, stretching 100 feet above Newark Division, are recent additions to the District's radio net. These antennas provide two-way communication for buses in Fremont/Newark. Similar improvements at Emeryville Division, plus inter-connected transmitters around the Bay, will upgrade communication in other parts of the District's 600-square-mile service area. When the entire improved system is installed — scheduled for year's end — mini-computers will do much of the routine communicating.
Transit is a varied mix in PRC

(Ed. Note: Roy Nakadegawa, vice president of the Board of Directors, visited the People's Republic of China, where he observed, first-hand, the transit system. Some of his impressions are presented here.)

Virtually in the shadow of the Great Wall, visitors to the People's Republic of China will find public transportation. In the open countryside designated bus stops are a common sight, since buses are a major mode of transportation in the world's most populous country.

The cities of China present an interesting mix of traffic, particularly during commute-hour congestion. Pedestrians, bicyclists, an occasional automobile, utilitarian vehicles such as tractors, trucks, carts pulled by motorcycles join with the omnipresent buses in a varied blend.

Varied speeds

The different varieties of transit result in a basic problem — the wide range of operating speeds. A solution to the situation has been the construction of separate travelways — the primary street for faster moving vehicles, an intermediate travelway for bicycles and carts and a third for pedestrians.

Because residents of China's cities often live at or near their place of employment, they seldom make cross-city or intercity trips.

Traffic seems to move with relative ease — in part, because of the short nature of most trips.

Traffic flow in the cities, such as Peking, the capital, is regulated by signal lights we would find familiar, but they are not synchronized or computerized. Signals are operated by that most versatile of all controllers: a human being, usually stationed in a booth 12 feet above the street to observe and manage traffic.

In Peking, main line transit service is provided by articulated diesel-powered buses and articulated electric trolley coaches. These are usually manned by an operator and two conductors, and are generally packed with passengers.

Single-unit buses in assorted shapes and sizes also are plentiful. Many have coach-like trailers attached at the rear by elaborate protective hitches. The wide variety of buses are turned out by several different factories, although the articulated coaches operating are produced by six major manufacturers.

Subway expansion

Street cars are a rarity in most of the cities, with subways currently being introduced or expanding. Peking's single-line subway, for example, is being extended and supplemented with branch lines.

Street lane markings seem to be advisory. If there is a need to use more than half the street to move traffic during peak hours, more than half the street will be used.

On the streets of China's cities and in the countryside, an individual motorist in a vehicle which is not hauling other people or goods is a rarity.

Vehicle operators are repairmen, too. They can be seen performing emergency service out on the road.

China's drivers seem conservation-minded, using the highest gear possible, short of lugging the engine, to save fuel. Occasionally, they will turn off the ignition and coast with the transmission in neutral.

Bicycles, which cost the equivalent of $90 or about 35 percent of the average working man's annual income, seem to be the common man's vehicle in China, with practically every family owning one.

Differences exist, but China and the U.S. share the concern of providing transit for the people.

75th anniversary

East Bay gets first electric trains

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the introduction to East Bay commuters of electric-powered rapid transit.

The initial run of the San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose Railway carried a load of prominent citizens from Berkeley to the new Key Pier, where they boarded the Ferry Yerba Buena for San Francisco. It was Oct. 26, 1903.

The date was not noted with celebration at rival Southern Pacific, however. The speedy non-polluting electric trains with the distinctive, orange-painted wood cars were in direct competition with the SP's old, smoke-belching steam-powered trains which served ferry piers in Oakland and Alameda.

Other lines established in 1904, 1906, 1908, and 1911 added service and rolling stock until, by 1912, there were 91 of the unusual wooden coaches carrying passengers.

When the transportation empire of the line's founder — the fabled Francis Marion "Borax" Smith — toppled in 1913, however, the area's first electric trains seemed destined to end. But after a decade of operating under the clouds of bankruptcy and receivership, the line was taken over by Key System Transit Company.

The orange cars continued to be a familiar sight on East Bay streets for many years afterwards.
Road supervisors are on-the-scene when problems occur

Emergencies are an everyday occurrence to Transportation Department road supervisors—just something they take in stride.

Forty-two transit veterans earned the title and have front-line responsibility for all on-road operations.

Unusual incidents occupy much of their time: detours around fires or street construction, sudden transit demand at sports or theatrical events, even medical emergencies—such as assisting in the unexpected birth of babies.

More often, their time is occupied with the seemingly mundane things that make this transit system function smoothly.

They keep buses on—not ahead of or behind—schedule.

They also monitor bus drivers' habits behind the wheel—making sure they adhere to rules and regulations, discussing driving mistakes and appropriate corrective actions.

"It's a very demanding job," according to Chief Supervisor Biff Williams. "We often feel like the man in the middle—and the challenge is to work out problems leaving everyone involved satisfied."

The problems vary—from delivering spare transfers to seeing that disabled coaches are replaced promptly—and the supervisors are well equipped to handle them.

Their cars (and, sometimes, their memories) carry maps and complete synopses of every AC Transit bus line, schedule and fare. They carry spare forms, signs and transfers, simple tools, virtually everything that might be demanded unexpectedly.

Each and every supervisor also is trained to be intimately familiar with operations throughout the 600-square-mile service area. Each one can (and often does) assume supervision duties in virtually every section of the District's operation.

"HELPING HAND"—Sylvester Mosley rushed to the scene when operator Melvin Matthews reported his engine would not start. Mechanical problems prompt rapid reactions from supervisors, who must order buses rerouted or replaced to maintain service. When instant on-the-scene efforts fail to correct the problem, the supervisor calls for maintenance men and a replacement vehicle.

"INSTANT ASSISTANCE"—Veteran Supervisor Homer Metzger readily comes up with answers when drivers raise questions while on the road. All supervisors keep operators up to date on any adjustments in assigned routes or schedules. Also they pass along constructive critiques to help operators hone their driving skills.

"THE ANSWER MAN"—An inquiring traveler gets directions from Eugene Cola. While much of a supervisor's working day is spent in well-equipped cars helping bus drivers maintain scheduled service, he also finds time to assist transit patrons having problems.

"PROBLEM PARADE"—St. Patrick's Day and thousands parading in downtown Oakland. Gerald Pearce and a dozen fellow supervisors went into action, keeping buses on the move around the long column of celebrants. Supervisors routinely monitor transit routes and order temporary detours around unexpected obstacles.
Line consolidation goes into effect

Lines along the East 14th St. - Mission Blvd. corridor between Oakland and Hayward will be consolidated to provide more uniform local service as of April 2.

Line 82 - Oakland - San Leandro - Hayward will continue direct service between downtown Oakland and Hayward, replacing Line 80-81 service in Oakland, and will assume service between the San Leandro and Hayward BART stations previously provided by Line 60.

Lines 83 & 83A - East 14th St. - West Oakland will continue direct service between downtown and, respectively, Sobrante Park and Brookfield Village.

Line 83B will continue service from Brookfield Village to 90th Ave. and MacArthur Blvd. during weekday commute periods only; and will provide midday local connector service between 90th Ave./MacArthur Blvd. and 98th Ave./East 14th St. only.

Lines 80 & 81 will operate between the Hayward and San Leandro BART stations, with 80 routed via Castro Valley Blvd. and MacArthur Blvd. and 81, via Hesperian Blvd. and the San Lorenzo area.

Line 55A will provide service to Adams Industrial Park previously provided by Line 60.

Driver L. J. Sasges, Retiree A. P. Spann Meet deaths in March

Leo J. Sasges, 57, a driver at Richmond Division who had qualified last year for his 25-year safe driving award, died March 4 at his home in Pinole. Cause of death was a heart attack.

Sasges had been an operator at Richmond Division since 1951. At the time he received his quarter-century safe driving award, it was noted that, in 26 years, he had missed work only once because of illness.

Funeral services were March 8 at St. Joseph's Church, Pinole.

He is survived by his widow, Montry, and two children: a daughter, Judy, and a son, John.

Alfred P. Spann, 66, who retired as a driver at Seminary Division in 1974, died March 1, while hospitalized.

Funeral services and burial took place in Hayward, where Spann made his home.

Spann's employment dated from 1952, and he served at Seminary Division until his retirement.

He is survived by his widow, Lois; two children, Frank Spann and Lois Ferrera; and four grandchildren.
CALTRANS parking facility opens for riders

PARK 'N' RIDE — Acting General Manager Robert E. Nisbet voiced welcoming remarks, helped cut ribbon at mid-March opening of CALTRANS' Oakland 'Park-And-Ride' facility. Located under the MacArthur Freeway at Fruitvale Ave., the 160 spaces — plus 20 for bicycles — are available free-of-charge to bus-riding commuters and car-pool members. In cooperation with CALTRANS, AC Transit Line N-F-MacArthur Express buses now provide direct commute-hour service between the facility and the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco.

Directors, management To attend April APTA Convention in Canada

Five directors and five from management will attend the APTA Western Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, April 16-20

Board members scheduled to attend are President John McDonnell, Paul B. Godkin, Ray Rinehart, William E. Berk, and Jean A. Holmes. Representing management will be Robert E. Nisbet, acting general manager; J. Dale Goodman, transportation manager; Anthony R. Lucchesi, maintenance manager; Warren E. Robin- son, transportation engineer; and Robert J. Shamoons, personnel manager.

SURVEY SUBJECT — In the District's ongoing program to select equipment to meet particular needs of different service areas, this 17-passenger, air-conditioned Mercedes-Benz coach was road-tested this month in Eastern Contra Costa County. Riders are returning survey cards with comments on the 19 1/2-foot coach's noise level, riding quality, seating comfort, leg room, and boarding/disembarking convenience. During the same period, Tri Delta Transit passengers also were being surveyed in regard to the 25-passenger Minibus which AC Transit currently uses in some other suburban areas.

Line N-F serves Park/Ride

Bus patrons and carpool commuters are making use of the new CALTRANS Park and Ride facility which opened March 15.

Line N-F commute-hour only express buses stop on Montana Street at Fruitvale Avenue across the street from the new 160-space parking facility — during the San Francisco-bound morning trips.

On return trips in the weekday afternoon, the buses stop at "Park and Ride" on Fruitvale Avenue under the MacArthur Freeway overpass before continuing on the regular route.

Similar facilities are planned by CALTRANS in Marin County and Los Angeles.

Opening day festivities were coordinated by the Dimond Merchants Association.

Retirement round-up

Years of transit service total 94

Charles R. Bosted, Jr., is retiring April 1 with the distinction of having top seniority among the District's 1,463 drivers and of being the first operator to qualify for a 28-year safe driving award.

Bosted has completed 41 years behind a wheel, including two years of piloting Navy vehicles over coral-surfaced roads in the South Pacific.

His period of employment, plus that of his late father, who joined Key System in 1918, adds up to 75 years of Bosted family service to public transportation.

In retirement, Bosted hopes to find more time for a favorite pastime, fishing, and may turn his talents more toward art and wood-working. He and wife Maxine plan to stay in the Alameda home which they've occupied since 1941.

The Bosteds have one daughter, Patricia Vaughn, and three grandsons, Aaron, 17; Robert, 11; and K.C., 2. A post-retirement "present" they're anticipating is a fourth grandchild, due in June.

In the first months of his retirement, Roy W. Williams, Jr., is clearly reveling in the novel experience of being free of workday schedules and responsibilities.

His retirement February 1 ended a 23-year career as a driver which began when he joined Key System in 1955. Before that he had had a decade of experience in driving trucks and buses in a Civil Service position.

Williams' entire period of employment was at Emeryville Division. This included a dozen years on the same Alameda-San Francisco run.

His leisure interests are wide-ranging: golf, motorcycling, travel, and "standing on the corner whistling at girls." He looks forward to many years of enjoying such pastimes, since there's a family precedent in longevity: his father is 95.

Williams is the father of eight (four sons, four daughters) and the grandfather of three, including a grandson who is the fourth in the family to be named Roy.

A switch from looking after buses to looking after a 20-unit apartment house is the retirement plan of Clifton F. Teague, who completed 30 years of service as a mechanic at Emeryville Division. His retirement was official on March 1.

Teague joined Key System in 1946 after a previous seven-year period as a pipelift-er's-helper for Standard Oil. He spent about a year cleaning and fueling coaches before moving up to mechanic, proving his adaptability by working swing shift for 17 years, graveyard shift for 2 years, then readjusting to day shift.

In retirement, Teague and wife Donna plan to remain in the San Leandro apartment where they've lived for 13 years. The couple has two grown sons, Donald and Bobby, and two grand-children: Jana Louise, 14 months, and Bobby, 9.
At an adjourned regular meeting Feb. 22, the Board of Directors:

- Rejected all bids received for furnishing fluorescent lamps in conjunction with RTA joint procurement of automotive lamps and awarded contract to Universal Coach Parts for furnishing miniature and sealed beam lamps, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized travel for Board members and five management executives to attend APTA Western Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, April 16-20, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved nominating the late Alan L. Bingham and the people of Fremont-Newark for recognition through the MTC Awards Program, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized continuation of services of legislative representative, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized consolidation of Lines 80-82, Oakland-Hayward Express; Line 83, East 14th St.; and Line 60, East 14th St., on motion of Director Bettencourt.

Divisions achieve monthly safe-driving goal

Drivers at all divisions achieved the monthly safe driving goal during February, setting a District-wide average of 14,911 miles between accidents. The goal is 13,250 miles per chargeable accident.

Newark Division drivers bettered the mark by a comfortable margin, averaging 23,962 miles between mishaps. Seminary Division averaged 14,988. Operators at Emeryville Division drove 14,152 miles per accident; drivers at Richmond Division averaged 13,309 miles.