Here is praise for your bus driver, Bob Kuebler. He thoughtfully helped a blind passenger around an obstruction right at the bus stop — a parked truck. He performed a good deed.

Charlotte Schoen
Berkeley

This is in reference to two drivers in your employ. The driver of my morning bus is the kindest and most considerate it has ever been my pleasure to ride with. He is a safe and careful driver — a perfect example of the type of employee you strive to provide. The driver of the evening bus is, without a doubt, the most rude and offensive person I have ever met. It might be possible to overlook his rudeness and belligerence were it not for the poor driving this man displays.

I wish my morning driver to have the highest possible commendation from one of his grateful riders. As for the attitude of the other driver, I can only hope that this matter will be investigated without delay. AC Transit provides a good and useful service, and I am sure you will agree a poor driver has no place in this company.

Ronda Lawson
San Ramon

I would like to know if it would be possible to give the Washington Manor area in San Leandro better access to Bay Fair now that that center is being enlarged. We have long been without direct transportation to Bay Fair or Southland, which I think is very unfair. I use my car a good deal, but with the gas situation I would indeed use the bus if it didn’t involve transferring.

The 81C is very convenient, but why doesn’t it go to Bay Fair instead of BART San Leandro? I realize that there can’t be a bus for everyone, but since this is so large an area (one-third of the population of San Leandro) I think it would be used a great deal.

Connie Salazar
San Leandro

(Ed. Note: The service that you suggest is one of the items on our transportation improvement list. However, such expansion cannot be implemented until our funding and manpower situation improve.)

I had been calling AC Transit only to receive a busy signal each time until I got through to Clerk 9 (Irene Davis), who was wonderful. Not only did she tell me the times for Oakland to SF, she took time to help me figure out how to get where I was going in SF.

As busy as you must have been, Clerk 9 was amazingly calm, courteous, and human. It didn’t take her long, but I got service I didn’t expect under such hurried conditions.

Clerk 9 deserves to be commended. I wish more people I dealt with over the phone were as efficient and helpful.

Judith McConnell
Oakland

Our 'Stockholders' Write

Nisbet outlines energy crisis role

Each AC Transit bus on the road during commute periods removes at least 35 automobiles from crowded East Bay highways, according to General Manager Robert E. Nisbet.

"And if East Bay employers and employees would implement just one of President Carter's recently voiced ideas — staggered working hours — we at AC Transit could get a great many more cars off the roads," Nisbet notes.

Speaking July 16 on behalf of the District and the California Association of Publicly Owned Transit Systems, Nisbet said President Carter assurance of "our wholehearted support for your energy program."

"AC Transit and our state and national associations are greatly encouraged by your support of increased assistance to mass transit," Nisbet's message said.

"With additional assistance for capital and operating needs, we stand ready to play a significant role in making your program a success."

In recent weeks, with the nation beset by gasoline shortages and skyrocketing fuel prices, ridership has risen substantially. Currently, the District provides about 240,000 passenger trips on an average weekday — up from about 200,000 daily trips registered a year ago.

And, Nisbet notes, AC Transit is moving to increase commute-hour capacity greatly by purchase of at least 175 new buses to be used within about a year.

Another current undertaking is a program of encouraging school districts and institutions of higher education throughout the East Bay to adjust school-day starting and ending times for more efficient distribution of buses during weekday school-use periods, which now almost coincide with peak commute hours.

Additionally, the District is taking other steps to make the bus system much easier to use, both for current riders and for commuters new to mass transit.

Board estimates 1979-1980 Finances: current levels Of service appear assured

A preliminary operating estimate adopted by the Board of Directors on June 27 virtually assures continuation of East Bay bus service at present levels during the 1979-1980 fiscal year.

In presenting the estimate to Directors, General Manager Robert E. Nisbet noted that more than one-third of the operating expenses would be covered by revenue from the fare box.

Most of the balance would be made up from federal and state operating assistance, augmented by a small amount from the property tax to cover principal and interest on bonded debt.

The financial projection does anticipate a deficit of about $4.2 million (not including depreciation), and the District is exploring alternatives for eliminating this, Nisbet said.

Operating expenses projected for 1979-80 amount to about $72.6 million (not including depreciation). Revenues are expected to be $78.2 million; property tax, $7.7 million; and federal and state operating assistance, $34.3 million.
Gamlen wins AC Transit Roadeo contest

AC Transit’s top three drivers, with Newark Division’s William G. Gamlen heading the list, were selected in the annual Bus Roadeo competition held June 30. Thus, Gamlen will represent AC Transit in the national Roadeo, sponsored by APTA, in New York this September.

Taking second and third place in the driving skills event were Rick Vierra, also Newark Division, and R. S. Dibble, Seminary Division. Vierra was the last District Roadeo winner, with Gamlen taking second place.

The Roadeo tests drivers’ skills in accelerating, turning and braking (forward and reverse), and their accuracy in maneuvering the 35- and 40-foot buses to within fractions of inches of course markers. Contestants also are evaluated on personal appearance and knowledge of safety procedures.

All three winners will compete in a regional competition to be held in San Jose August 25. They were among 18 AC Transit operators who competed in the Roadeo, vying for honors and prizes which included trophies, sleeve patches, and belt buckles.

Gamlen, the system’s champion, has been a driver for nearly a decade.

Three deaths occur among long-time transit retirees

Three deaths have been reported from among the ranks of transit retirees.

Oscar N. Sevage, 79, a retired driver, died June 6 in Oakland. At the time of his retirement in 1968, he had completed 30 years of transit service. Starting out in 1938 on the one-man streetcars, he switched to bus driving a decade later, working out of Seminary Division.

Survivors include his widow, Goldie, and a daughter, Marjorie Root. The family home is in Oakland.

Ira G. Baas, 78, who retired as a driver at Emeryville Division in 1967, died in Oregon June 13. His transit career spanned 38 years, beginning in 1929 when he joined Key System as a motorman on the trains. Making the switch to buses in 1945, he spent most subsequent years as a driver on the transbay C and E lines.

He is survived by his widow, Edith, also a retired driver (1965); a daughter, Marilyn Turner; and three stepchildren, John and Ronald Komar and Jerry Schaefer.

The family home is in Bandon, Oregon.

Benjamin C. Walden, 78, who retired from Central Dispatch in 1966 after 43 years of transit service, died May 1 in Livermore.

Joining Key System in 1923 as a streetcar operator, Walden served subsequently on the trains as motorman, train director, and train master. He was a bus supervisor for a time before moving to Central Dispatch in 1962.

He is survived by his widow, Evelyn, a son, Robert; three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Two operators begin leisure lives

Fred C. Bint, Jr., after 29 years of service as operator, dispatcher, and training instructor, is easing into the life of a retiree. He’ll wait until wife Margaret retires from her job next year, then they will schedule a long (8 to 10 months) auto trip across the United States and Canada, hauling their 23-foot trailer.

The couple has strong connections to Canada. Margaret was born there, and Fred served in the Canadian Army from 1940 to 1945. His military years included a long period overseas, capture in Italy, and 11 months in a prisoner-of-war camp inside Germany.

Before coming to the Bay Area in 1949, Bint had three years of experience on buses and streetcars in Toronto. After joining Key System in 1950, he served mainly as an operator at Seminary Division, with brief stints as a training instructor and dispatcher.

The Bints have lived in San Leandro since 1951. They are the parents of a daughter, Cheryl, 24.

Clarence Stansberry is enjoying “country living” in the Mother Lode region of Calaveras County after retiring as an operator at Newark Division. Stansberry, who completed 18 years of service with AC Transit, now occupies a home, set on two acres, that he built in his spare time over a two-year period. Joining him in the leisure life at Railroad Flat, whose attractions include a small lake stocked with fish, is wife Josephine. Location of the retirement retreat is about 22 miles from the town of San Andreas.

Stansberry joined AC Transit as a driver at Seminary Division in 1961. His prior job experience had included seven years as a driver in West Virginia, so he can be credited with a total of a quarter-century of transit service.

The Stansberrys have three sons, Michael, Jeffrey, and Rodney; and three granddaughters, Michelle, 4; Carrie, 2; and Jennifer, 1.

Newark operators win again

In safe-driving statistics

Once again leading in the monthly safe-driving statistics, Newark Division operators averaged 33,031 miles per chargeable accident in June. Second was Richmond Division with 16,940 miles per mishap.

Also achieving the month’s “safety bogy” were Seminary Division with 16,286 miles per accident and Emeryville Division with 15,985 miles. The safe-driving goal is 13,250 miles per accident.

During June, District operators drove a total of 2,462,987 miles.
Passenger Trips May, 1979 May, 1978 % Change
East Bay 4,017,645 3,984,607 0.8
Transbay 1,355,172 1,223,185 10.8
Fremont/Newark 136,669 116,281 17.5
Contract Services*
BART 200,672 108,127 85.6
Concord 75,119 68,881 9.9
Pleasant Hill 17,205 11,833 45.4
Moraga/Orinda 31,706 12,555 152.5
Pittsburg/Antioch/ Brentwood 20,038 10,854 82.9
Total 5,854,226 5,522,403 6.0

Fare Revenue
East Bay $1,087,616 $744,493 46.1
Transbay 924,402 640,489 44.3
Fremont/Newark 36,760 22,270 65.1
Contract Services*
BART 63,571 34,742 83.0
Concord 15,921 9,387 69.6
Pleasant Hill 2,513 1,754 41.0
Moraga/Orinda 7,353 2,017 224.6
Pittsburg/Antioch/ Brentwood 5,041 2,738 84.1
Total 2,143,277 1,457,890 47.0

Service Miles
East Bay 1,369,981 1,425,194 -3.9
Transbay 775,686 833,294 -6.9
Fremont/Newark 136,223 133,547 2.0
Contract Services*
BART 213,015 147,029 44.9
Concord 57,542 47,415 21.4
Pleasant Hill 10,193 10,384 -1.8
Moraga/Orinda 25,828 17,457 48.0
Pittsburg/Antioch/ Brentwood 35,398 35,376 .1
Total 2,623,866 2,649,696 -1.0

*Contract service to Pinole-Hercules-Rodeo-Crockett began Sept. 5, 1978. This service is extension of Line 78A; statistical data is included in East Bay.

3 year passenger trip comparison
At an adjourned regular meeting June 27, the Board of Directors:

- Approved, retroactively, travel of two District representatives to Pontiac, Mich., to study the GMC Advance Design bus, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Reconfirmed previous authorization for General Manager to cancel bid for purchase of Advance Design buses and to advertise and seek bids for purchase of standard 35- and 40-foot diesel buses, subject to UMTA approval, on motion of Director Holmes.
- Adopted resolutions authorizing General Manager to file applications with UMTA for operating assistance on behalf of the District and Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority, and scheduled public hearing in connection with these applications for Wednesday, Aug. 8, 1979, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted resolution authorizing the District to place certain funds derived from taxes and subsidies into reserve accounts previously established and approved by the Board, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Adopted revised Operating Estimate for Fiscal Year 1979-1980 (see story, Pg. 3), on motion of Director Rinehart.

* * *

At a regular meeting July 11, the Board of Directors:

- Awarded contract to Flyer Industries Ltd. for furnishing 35-foot and 40-foot diesel buses, subject to compliance with specifications, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Awarded contract to Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. for rental and service of bus tires, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized travel for Board members and five representatives of management to attend APTA Annual Meeting in New York Sept. 23-27, 1979, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Adopted AC Transit Five Year Plan for 1980-84, on motion of Director Holmes.
- Authorized extension of Line 21 North Fremont to downtown Hayward and BART Hayward to provide local connection between Service Districts 1 and 2, on motion of Director Holmes.
- Authorized study of T Line service between Treasure Island and San Francisco aimed at securing additional financial subsidy or an alternate operator to continue the service, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized appropriate action by the Pension Board in connection with pension claims, on motion of Director Rinehart.