Oakland’s Mayor Receives new Monthly Bus Pass
BAUTI broadens view
Of transit functions

TRANSIT TALK — Last month's ninth Bay Area Urban Transit Institute again gave an overview of public transit administrative, operational, and planning techniques. Offered three times yearly, BAUTI draws from the six major Bay Area transit operators, from properties across the nation, and from transit-related government agencies. Part of AC Transit's long-term policy of cooperation and expertise exchange with related organizations, BAUTI is coordinated by Donn Desboine (upper right). AC Transit people also shown are Billy Bishop and Don Morgan (upper left); Mary Hancock, Stan Pearce, and Lee Skilling (left rear in middle photo); and Rbert Shamoon (lower left).

Two of first Directors still serve

Looking back over more than 20 years of service on the Board of Directors, John McDonnell (newly-elected chairman of the American Public Transit Association) and William Bettencourt provided some informal thoughts on events and decisions which shaped AC Transit as it exists today.

The Board's most senior members agreed that the fledgling System was given an initial boost — in the all-important eyes of the public which had endorsed its creation and funding in the late-Fifties — by early acquisition of that first fleet of 300 new buses.

"Changing the image was important," McDonnell remarked, describing his contention that the appearance of the equipment (color scheme, cleanliness, logo design) — with a parallel concern for close supervision and neatly-uniformed personnel — were important factors in creating public confidence and eliciting support.

The two Directors also agreed that what Bettencourt called "the reliability factor" was another key to winning public support and increasing passenger numbers over the years. In this regard, the System's nationally-honored maintenance program won high praise from both men.

Acceptance, stability, and growth of AC Transit also was encouraged, Bettencourt believes, by the Board's consistent approach to governing the System: establishing policy but leaving day-to-day decisions and operations to a strong General Manager and management team.

In this regard, Bettencourt praised what he called "inspired and dedicated personnel under good management." Certain qualities of the Board itself, Bettencourt feels, such as stability in membership, policy, and procedures, have also served the System well.

An important factor in attracting and encouraging ridership, Bettencourt says, has been the long-standing policy of "keeping fares reasonable."

A corollary thought on encouraging ridership was offered by McDonnell, who stressed the importance of "selling the System, of educating the people to use it."

Both mentioned that adoption in 1968 of the then-innovative "Ready Fare" system proved to be a plus both in efficiency and security.

Planning, sound money management, and close monitoring of the political bodies which affect public transit are other key factors which Bettencourt listed as nurturing AC Transit.

As to the future, he sees a stronger need for "integration of service" — a concept whereby riders would have an ever-increasing number of choices within several separate but coordinating regional systems.

The gas crunch, plus people's changing habits of mobility will sharpen the System's need to "improve with the times," says McDonnell.

Unquestionably, he concludes, "As time goes on, we're going to carry more people."
Voters said ‘yes’ to funding

On October 20, voters approved a $16,500,000 bond issue to acquire Key System Transit Lines.

Buses began operating under the new public ownership. The first of 250 new “Transit Liners” went into service on Christmas Day.

A 55-mile network of intercity express lines linking Oakland, Berkeley, San Leandro and Hayward, went into operation, representing the first service of its kind in the East Bay.

An AC Transit bus left San Francisco for Oakland every 14 seconds in the afternoon peak period. There were 238 eastbound departures from the remodeled Transbay Terminal (converted from former train station status) between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. daily.

The District won the first of its long string of Fleet Owner Maintenance Efficiency awards.

The BART bond issue passed, with Directors deciding afterwards to commission a consulting firm to report on the financial impact the proposed rail system would have on bus operations.

Patronage (since operations began) showed a 12 percent increase despite a downward trend, nationwide, in transit use.

Headquarters of the System moved from its previous location at 1106 Broadway to the Latham Square Building.

Discussions began on coordinating operations with future BART service.

System in October, 1959

Selling new service with a new symbol

The 77-passenger articulated bus, refurbished and dubbed the “Freeway Train”, went into transbay service.

Taking advantage of 1964 legislationauthorizing federal aid to urban transit systems, AC Transit bought 30 new diesel buses.

A project to equip coaches with two-way radios was begun under a federally-assisted program.

Northbound bus service on Broadway was temporarily displaced to make way for excavating for the 12th and 19th St. BART stations.

An aged gas-burning Mack wheezed its last, and the fleet was all GMC diesel for the first time, marking the end of nearly 44 years of gas-powered bus service.

A 60-foot articulated bus was acquired for experimental use in revenue service.

A liberalized transfer system was adopted, with a “stop-off, go-again” feature.

A passenger-testing program was undertaken to carry patrons in more comfort has led to passenger-testing of many new types of equipment. Forerunner of the articulated buses acquired in 1978 was this coach tried in revenue service in 1966.

Testing new concepts

With federal aid, purchase of 45 new buses was planned. With these additions the fleet would number 693 (462 of which were “New Look” models).

Reporting a 70% increase in its transbay commute business in nine years of operations, the System studied ways to reduce delays due to congestion, including the exclusive bus lanes in use near Washington, D.C.

(Continued on pg.6)
20-year summary

Seventies saw growth, experimentation, challenge, change

1970
A 10-cent senior citizen fare was introduced.
Transbay buses began using an exclusive buses-only lane through the toll-plaza area during morning commute hours.

1971
A work stoppage lasted 19 days.
The first new buses equipped with antipollution kits were delivered.
Directors declared their intent to work closely with the newly-formed Metropolitan Transportation Commission on future regional transit planning.

1972
“Pedal hopper” service began to haul bicycle enthusiasts and their two-wheelers across the Bay Bridge.

1973
Figures released in February indicated that transbay bus commuting had risen 111% since 1960.
With the opening of six new BART stations to serve Berkeley, El Cerrito and Richmond, AC Transit launched coordinating service. This brought to 87 the number of bus lines providing connector service to a total of 16 stations on the BART line.
Richmond was selected as the site for the first Dial-A-Ride system to be operated in the East Bay.

1974
The System unveiled its prototype small bus, a cut-down, revamped luxury version of a standard coach developed by the Maintenance Department.
With voter approval of annexation, service began in Fremont and Newark.
Two European-made articulated buses were put to test in East Bay and transbay service to gauge rider reaction.
Service was interrupted by a two-month work stoppage.
Directors approved an agreement to operate express service from suburban sites in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties to BART stations.

1975
Service began in Concord and Pleasant Hill.
Plans were made to abandon the Richmond Dial-A-Ride operation because of cost-per-passenger.
The first Bay Region Transit Discount cards were issued, offering, in a single program, reduced fares for both elderly and handicapped.
Newark Division — the first completely new site to be built since 1947 — opened in November.

1976
Agreement was reached to begin contract service in Moraga/Orinda.
23 newly-designed small buses were ordered for use in suburban neighborhood service.
Two specially-decorated buses carried the System’s salute to the Bicentennial.
A zonal Dial-a-Ride system was inaugurated in Fremont and Newark, along with expanded commute service.
Drivers participated in the first APTA-sponsored ROADEO.

1977
Contract service, under the banner of “Tri-Delta Transit”, began in Pittsburg, Antioch, and Brentwood.
A planning program began to study transportation needs of East Bay elderly and handicapped.
Major Bay Area transit organizations joined to form the Regional Transit Association for mutual programs and promotion of the benefits of public transit.
What was to be a 68-day work stoppage began in November, idling all buses.

BUS-TRAIN COORDINATION — Beginning of BART train service in the East Bay in 1972 and launching of coordinating bus service was the culmination of years of planning and cooperative effort.

1978
A 15-month study began as the basis for a five-year operating plan.
In a demonstration project financed by an MTC grant, 16 coaches in Concord service were fitted with devices to trigger traffic signals, giving the buses priority.
Directors approved a contract to extend service to northwest Contra Costa County.
Passage by state voters of Proposition 13, the property tax limitation measure, forced Directors to seek fare box increases and greater state aid. The basic local fare, which had been 25 cents for a decade, was raised to 35 cents.
The first of 30 new German-design articulated buses, with seating for 69 riders, were delivered for use on heavily-patronized lines.

1979
The new articulated coaches proved helpful as the year opened when they were pressed into emergency transbay service following close-down of BART due to a tunnel fire.
A new bypass at the Bay Bridge Toll Plaza hastened the East-to-West bus commute.
Problems in procuring sufficient quantities of diesel fuel were eased when state guidelines mandated a set-aside supply for necessary services, including transit.
Public meetings were held on the System’s “Five Year Plan” (1980-84).
Directors awarded a contract for purchase of 175 new buses equipped with wheelchair lifts to Flyer Industries, Ltd.
A Monthly Pass was introduced, offering patrons the convenience of a month’s unlimited rides on local East Bay routes for $15.
Changes brighten suburban service

Suburban patrons in some areas are noting improvements in commute hour, weekend, and holiday service.

Improved service has been implemented on two lines serving the Fremont-Hayward area. Line 21, which previously provided weekday-only connections between Fremont and downtown Hayward, now offers weekend and holiday service. Saturday buses will run at half-hour service on Line 91B to Southland Shop-a.m. to 6 p.m.

On Sundays and holidays, service will be provided at hourly intervals from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Line 91-Castro Valley-Hayward now includes one additional weekday morning and afternoon trip to serve the Hayward Senior Citizens Center. Trips to the facility may now be made at 9:30 and 11:18 a.m. and 12:55 and 2:51 p.m.

Residents of New England Village in South Hayward now have twice-a-week service on Line 91B to Southland Shopping Center. On Tuesdays and Fridays, shoppers may catch a coach at 10:10 a.m. at the corner of Huntwood Avenue and New England Drive. Return trips from Southland on those days will be at noon and 1 p.m.

During peak hours, buses on Lines 350 and 351, which serve commuters in Moraga, Orinda, and Lafayette, are now operating at 15-minute intervals, rather than the previous 20-minute intervals. Midday service on those lines remains at 40-minute intervals.

Fremont and Newark riders may now take advantage of bargain travel fares for Sundays and holidays since AC Transit extended its special Excursion Fun Pass this month.

The special Sunday-holiday pass, obtained from drivers for 75 cents, allows an unlimited number of rides on any AC Transit line in the East Bay during the day of issuance. Senior citizens and handicapped persons with proper identification pay a discount fare of 30 cents.

The Excursion Fun Pass previously was offered only in the service area between Richmond and Hayward.

Hearing will feature data
On Fremont-Newark service

A public hearing to review the status of Fremont-Newark Dial-A-Ride service will be held by the Board of Directors Wednesday, November 14, at 7:30 p.m. at Newark City Hall.

The hearing, held in compliance with requirements of the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, will include a review of the District's proposal to substitute fixed route service for the existing Dial-A-Ride network.

Interested individuals or representatives of agencies will have opportunity to comment on the Dial-A-Ride vs. fixed route question, as well as any other matters relating to policy and service in the area. Comments, evidence, and recommendations may be presented orally or in writing.

The public also is invited to review District documents to be presented at the hearing. These are available for inspection in the office of the District Secretary, 508 - 16th St., Oakland, during regular office hours at any time prior to the hearing.

Three drivers begin retirement

Music, working out with weights, and travel are some of the activities on the leisure-years agenda of John H. Miller, retiring after 18 years as an operator at Richmond Division and looking forward soon to re-locating in Oregon.

Miller is a country/western guitarist who has performed, in his spare time, for years (including Bay Area “gigs” with two other AC Transit driver-musicians). When he leaves his San Pablo home to move north, he'll be taking along all his performing paraphernalia, plus the weight-training/exercise equipment he regularly uses for keeping in shape.

Miller’s total years of transit service actually amount to almost a quarter-century, since he had completed five years as a driver in Santa Monica before joining AC Transit. Before entering the transit field, he had spent three years as a police officer in the state of Washington.

Miller has two children, William and Diane, and one grandchild, Steven, 12. His years as a resident of the West Coast haven't succeeded in completely erasing the distinctive Massachusetts twang from the voice of Louis J. Fontaine, retiring after 16 years as an AC Transit operator. His career as an operator began in 1936 when he signed on with Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway.

With Emeryville Division at retirement, Fontaine particularly enjoyed driving in contract service. In fact, he liked the Concord area so much after being assigned there in 1975 that he became a member of one of the community’s senior activities groups, though his home is in San Francisco.

His positive attitude obviously came through to his suburban patrons, one of whom expressed the following in a letter to the system: “A special thank you for having Louis Fontaine as a driver on this bus route. He is a courteous and careful driver. And he’s especially nice to children and senior citizens.”

Another rider presented him with a long poem, concluding with “Wherever he'll go, I want him to know, I wish him health and happiness.”

A widower, Fontaine has two children, Carol and Robert.

Having retired to Tulsa, Oklahoma, after many years as a Californian, Joseph Poston, previously an operator at Emeryville Division, is contemplating the chilling challenge that winter is expected to bring—having to re-learn how to wield a snow shovel.

Long winter nights in Tulsa, however, will furnish Poston a fringe benefit—time to work on his unusual hobby of collecting match book covers advertising banks. There are, he reports, almost 50,000 banks and branches throughout the United States, and his collection of covers now numbers 13,000.

As to his other post-retirement pastimes, Poston is enthusiastic about the opportunity his new home and leisure status are providing for doing “plenty of fishing.”

Poston initially joined the Key System as a driver in 1952, but he left the organization in 1954. He rejoined the ranks of operators in 1967.
Operator’s conditioning plan pays off

You ought to see Tom Huey if you want to get your body in shape. But be prepared to make some changes in your life style if you plan to upgrade your physical condition.

Your diet should be altered to emphasize alfalfa, ginseng root, and kelp, with whole milk and a raw egg thrown in. Plus lots of vitamins.

This distinctly different menu produces “a natural steroid effect with no toxins and helps anyone who is interested in body building,” Huey says. You also can treat yourself to a meal of desiccated calves’ liver.

Along with the unusual food intake, you have to have a regimen of conditioning with weights, Huey claims. For him, that amounts to a minimum of two hours a day, five days a week.

The Emeryville Division driver is careful to point out the difference between simple weight lifting and his well-planned program of body building and conditioning.

His 180 pounds carefully distributed on a five-foot-ten-inch frame attest to the success of keeping himself in peak form. His relaxed, easygoing attitude indicates there are also mental benefits.

“It’s a personal thing,” he says of physical conditioning. “I get a sense of well-being. After a half-hour of body building, you forget about the problems you might have had during the day.”

Although he neither smokes nor drinks, he does not consider total abstinence necessary “as long as you are not excessive.”

Jogging is not recommended, but intensive speed sprints are, he says.

Huey, who recently placed second in the Mr. California contest in Sacramento and won top honors for Most Muscular over 40, says he has seen a lot of changes in the world of body conditioning since he began about 20 years ago when he weighed 140 pounds. “Today more people, especially women, are getting involved with conditioning. It’s part of the American idea of doing something good for yourself, I think.”

Aiello joins Richmond board

Louie Aiello, an operator since 1967 has been appointed to fill a vacancy on Richmond’s Planning Commission. Aiello will serve for two years, completing the term of a commissioner who died last month.

Now serving his third term as president of the 300-member Richmond Galileo Club, Aiello’s interest in planning stems from his 32 years as a resident and homeowner in Richmond, where he and his wife Helen reared their two children, Leo and Cindy, now grown.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting September 19, the Board of Directors:
- Adopted resolution authorizing purchase of property in central Contra Costa County for a maintenance facility and authorized preliminary engineering and environmental reports, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Declared surplus certain vehicles, vehicle accessories, and service equipment items and approved their sale to the highest responsive bidder or bidders, with specified minimums on the automobiles, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to advertise and seek bids for purchase of office furniture and equipment, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Granted travel authority for District representative to attend a training workshop at the University of Chicago during October, 1979, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Adopted Handicapped Lift Deployment Plan as an appendix to Five Year Plan on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Approved a series of service adjustments for Line A San Francisco; Line 7 Euclid-Grizzly Peak Boulevard; Line 22 Warm Springs; Line 91B New England Village; Line 69A Hilltop; Lines 65 and 73A Berkeley; Lines 32 and 36 Hayward, on motion of Director Holmes.

At a regular meeting October 10, the Board of Directors:
- Adopted resolution authorizing agents of the District to institute, prosecute, and defend small claims cases, on motion of Director Fajans.
- Authorized travel of District representative to attend National Safety Council Congress in Chicago October 15-18, on motion of Director Fajans.
- Authorized travel of District representative to attend APTA Risk Management Committee in New Orleans October 22-23, on motion of Director Fajans.