The gavel changes hands: Board elects new president
Waves of grief and puzzlement swept through AC Transit and throughout the communities it serves following the apparently motiveless murder of an on-duty bus driver this month.

John H. Thomas, a personable and popular man, was shot to death the night of January 18th while at the wheel of his Line 64 coach.

"It was a tragic and senseless act," said Board President Roy Nakadegawa. "There was just no explaining the untimely death of this fine driver, well-liked fellow worker and true servant of our public."

In an unprecedented tribute to Thomas, those fellow drivers not able to be among those at the funeral in Oakland stopped their buses to observe a moment of "In Memoriam" tribute. This District-wide observance was timed to coincide with the beginning of the Requiem Mass.

And at that moment, General Manager Robert E. Nisbet expressed the District’s officially condolences by addressing all drivers and riders by in-coach radio:

“All of us in management join with you in expressing our deepest sympathy to the family of John Thomas,” Nisbet said, pledging an urgent, top priority effort to join Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192 and local law enforcement “to make our buses safer for drivers and passengers.”

Following Thomas’ death, the Board of Directors made immediate offer of a $10,000 reward for information leading to arrest and conviction. And by month’s end, Oakland Police had a teen-aged suspect in custody.

Thomas, 38-years-old and a driver since 1974, is the second AC Transit bus driver to be killed while on duty in the District’s 20-year history. The first such fatality was in 1965.

He is survived by his widow Gloria and by daughters Cynthia and Theresa.

Employees who knew Thomas particularly well were in total agreement with that portion of the funeral eulogy written by family members: he was “a gentle man, with an easy-going, smiling nature... he never hassled people, but brought calm to situations filled with tension and turmoil.”

Director-at-Large Roy Nakadegawa has been elected to serve as President of AC Transit’s Board of Directors for the coming year.

He was selected by fellow Directors on January 14, during the Board’s first 1981 meeting. He succeeds Richmond resident William E. Berk, Board President the past two years.

Nakadegawa was first elected to the Board in 1972. As a resident of Berkeley, he also participates in that city’s civic and community groups, as well as in local, state and national transit organizations.

He serves as a senior civil engineer for the City of Richmond, and his professional activities include membership on the California State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers.

Named to serve as Board Vice President for the year was Jean Holmes, who has represented Fremont, Newark and portions of Hayward on AC Transit’s policy-making body since 1977. She is a resident of Fremont and operates a business there.

The election of board officers followed the official swearing-in of three directors returned to office in the general election last November.

Sworn in by the Honorable Frances Carr, Associate Justice of the 3rd District Court of Appeal, were William E. Berk, retired Richmond businessman, Ward II; Michael H. Fajans, Berkeley resident and an urban planner, Ward I; and Ray Rinehart, Oakland certified public accountant, Director-at-Large.
Employees move higher in organization

Three appointments to higher positions within the management organization were announced at year’s end.

Nathaniel A. “Nat” Gage, who joined AC Transit last May after serving nearly a decade with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, has been named assistant general manager for finance. Previously, he had functioned as executive assistant for financial management.

Before joining MTC, where he became deputy executive director, Gage served in the Army for 35 years, retiring as a colonel.

Richard A. Fratus, who served previously as AC Transit’s assistant treasurer-controller, now holds the post of controller.

Fratus joined the organization in 1977 after seven years with two Bay Area-based airlines - World Airways, where he was assistant controller, and Trans International Airlines, where he was director of accounting.

Loren A. Ball, a bus transportation veteran with more than 20 years of service with AC Transit and Key System, is the new transportation manager, succeeding Dale Goodman, who retired last year after 41 years in the transportation industry. Ball had been assistant transportation manager since 1975.

His previous positions included chief transportation supervisor, dispatcher, and driver.

More promotions

Other areas of the System reporting recent promotions include:

**Purchases and Stores**

Eddie M. Vigil is assuming the position of supervisor of stores after 12 years of experience in all phases of the stores function.

**Schedule**

Melvin N. Reece has been promoted to assistant superintendent of schedules after serving as supervisor of schedules since 1978. He joined AC Transit in 1963. Reece’s successor as supervisor of schedules is Tommy R. Malone.

**Maintenance**

Anthony R. Haile is now a foreman in Maintenance Department, where he previously worked as Mechanic A-Leadman.

**BART/Concord patrons Have new bus shuttle**

To aid BART/Concord passengers dislocated by a changeover to permit-only parking on neighborhood streets once used for train passenger parking, AC Transit has extended its BART Express service to shuttle commuters from a new parking lot on Bailey Road to the station.

The service, provided under AC Transit’s existing BART Express contract, utilizes three buses operating on 10-minute headways during morning and afternoon peak commute hours.

The January 5 changeover to permit-only parking adjacent to BART/Concord dislocated an estimated 300 automobiles, whose owners now have the option of using the new BART-developed parking area and the free shuttle to the station.

**RAIDER FEVER—Downtown Oakland was awash in heavy rains and hero worship January 27 for the parade honoring the Super Bowl victory. Four articulated buses aided parade logistics, shuttling participants from the Coliseum. Raiders (left) John Matuszak and Jim Plunkett checked signals with John Herrera, team Public Relations Director, and Robert J. Shamoon, AC Transit assistant general manager for operations.**

**Oakland rains praise During Raiders parade**

**Sneed, Christi enter 25-Year safety category**

SAFETY SALUTES — The 34th and 35th drivers to be honored for reaching the 25-year safe driving milestone received awards at divisional ceremonies as the year came to a close. Jacob A. Sneed, Emeryville Division (left) started his career in public transit as a streetcar operator in 1943. He left the field for a while but returned to it in 1952, joining Emeryville Division. Sneed lives in Oakland. Henry Christi (right) received his cake and kudos at Newark Division. He was aided in the cake-carving by wife Cherie. Christi’s service to transit dates from 1952. He is a Fremont resident. Statistically, the two are comparable in having provided safe rides to about two million passengers each.
Two Systems join in Monthly Pass

Are we headed for the day when a single fare will enable public transit users to travel on any and all Bay Area carriers?

A step in that direction has been taken as the District and San Francisco Municipal Railway make plans to offer, later this year, a single monthly pass usable on both systems.

Currently, AC Transit's Transbay Monthly Pass users pay $36, $45 or $54 depending on distance traveled. MUNI's "Fast Pass" costs $16. Buyers of the inter-system pass would pay $50, $59 or $68 -- $2 less than the combined cost for two passes purchased individually. A survey undertaken in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission reveals that about 3,000 riders regularly use both systems in combination.

If this pass is successful, it could lead to a three-system pass -- AC Transit/ MUNI/BART -- although that may be far in the future, according to Donald S. Larson, Research and Planning Manager.

"There are some technical difficulties because of BART's electronic fare collection machines, for example," Larson says. "But we are working on them."

In addition to the mechanical problems which might hamper a three-system pass project, Larson says accounting arrangements must also be established to insure fair and equitable allocation of revenues.

Downtown mini-buses

Ring bell with riders

Ridership on the new Downtown Oakland Shuttle has increased since its late-November launching to more than 600 passengers daily. This compares to the approximately 400 riders per day recorded during the first two weeks of operation.

The music motif mini-buses, which announce their approach with a muted musical signature, provide weekday connections in an area of Oakland bordered by Broadway, Embarcadero, Oak and Madison Streets, and 20th Street. They operate about 10 minutes apart middays and at half-hour intervals during commute periods.

Basic fare is 25 cents, with BART and AC Transit transfers accepted. No transfers are issued on the shuttle itself, however, an all-day "Shop-Around" shuttle pass (good on all buses in the central business district too) is available for only 50 cents.

After a slight decline in December, sales of AC Transit Local and Transbay Monthly Passes reached 10,094 in January. December's total was 9,453.

Local Passes were introduced in November, 1979, with Transbay Passes inaugurated in March, 1980. In that first month of combined sales, 6,265 patrons purchased Passes. Peak month was October, 1980, when 12,156 Passes were sold.

State Transit trends and topics

State Bill would cut bus funding

If Bay bridge tolls are reduced or eliminated, estimates indicate AC Transit could lose up to $3 million in funding each year, according to General Manager Robert E. Nisbet.

However, total impact on the System would be much greater, Nisbet says, because toll bridge money is used by AC Transit as the local 20 percent match to secure the additional 80 percent federal money for purchase of new equipment -- buses and other capital requirements.

In response to a bill introduced by Assemblyman Bill Lockyer (D-San Leandro) which would cut bridge tolls, AC Transit's Board of Directors registered unanimous opposition.

Lockyer's bill, AB 50, would limit the amounts of bridge tolls to cover annual operation and maintenance costs of the bridges alone, including redemption of bonds and interest charges on bonds.

The effect would be on funding for both State highway improvement and aid to public transit, Nisbet said.

"Because we are faced with a steady decrease of funding for public transit, it is imperative that we keep whatever sources we can at levels where they've been historically," he emphasized.

ON CAMERA -- An AC Transit bus played a prominent role in a public service television spot filmed last month in Oakland. The televisions ad, scheduled for broadcast early 1981, is a product of a Community Values Project in which AC Transit is cooperating.

"Commuters who use their cars efficiently -- those who have three or more passengers -- don't pay tolls now. Extending the same reduced toll to cars carrying only the driver seems to be a step backward in encouraging energy efficiency," Nisbet says.

Directors favor broadening MTC via current state bill

A proposal to increase the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) from 18 to 25 members has been endorsed by AC Transit Directors.

The Board has unanimously given support to a bill introduced by Assemblyman Elihu Harris (D-Oakland-Berkeley) -- AB 95, which would provide for an MTC representative from each of the nine counties in MTC's jurisdiction; one additional member from each county of larger population (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Mateo); one member each representing the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the federal Department of Transportation, and the State Department of Transportation.

Currently, the MTC is composed of 18 members appointed from the following:

one member each from the nine counties in MTC's jurisdiction; one additional member from each county of larger population (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Santa Clara and San Mateo); one member each representing the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Bay Area Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), the federal Department of Transportation, and the State Department of Transportation.

Currently, no representatives from these Boards serve on the MTC.

"Many jurisdictions, through their elected representatives, represent highway concerns," says AC Transit Board President Roy Nakadegawa, "but public transit does not have a similar voice to express its concerns. This bill will help correct that."

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It sounds funny but may save money

The name sounds like an Indian chant. And AC Transit is hoping the Jojoba (pronounced HO-HO-beh) will work its magic in maintenance.

The Jojoba is a bean which produces an oil that supporters claim will double, maybe triple, the life of mechanical parts. It is a substitute for such traditional lubricants as transmission fluid and motor oil.

To find out if Jojoba oil performs better, as proponents say, AC Transit is testing it in the transmissions of 36 buses. Because it costs about $750 to overhaul a transmission, the extension of the transmission's life to twice or three times normal duration would mean significant reductions in maintenance costs. The reduced maintenance costs, in turn, would reflect increased productivity—especially with buses staying in service longer.

"It's too early to tell," says AC Transit Maintenance Manager Richard H. Bertz in evaluating the mystical sounding oil. "We have records on only about 15,000 miles and to get a true test we will have to run the transmissions for, maybe, 100,000." This will take up to 12 months, he reports.

1980 United Way total Far exceeds 1979 mark

AC Transit employees nearly doubled their 1979 total of cash contributions and payroll deduction pledges in the 1980 campaign for United Way of the Bay Area. The November-December period of contributing to support United Way's 206 human service agencies netted $11,635, according to Donn DesBoine, assistant project coordinator, who served as the District's United Way chairman. Last year's total was $6,000.

In all, 333 employees made United Way contributions or authorized deductions from paychecks. Of this number, 31 employees gave $100 or more.

Sharing credit for the System's successful campaign were 20 sub-chairmen.

Horses, buses take off as Albany track season opens

Both the horses and the buses began running February 3 as AC Transit launched its seasonal service to Golden Gate Fields in Albany. Last year's "Pony Express" service averaged some 3,600 passenger trips to and from the track each racing day.

This year's fares remain unchanged — 50 cents each way via Line 94 between downtown Berkeley (including BART/ Berkeley and BART/North Berkeley) and the track. Transbay riders pay $1.75 each way between the track and the Transbay Terminal.

No transfers are issued or accepted on this special service. The buses start operating about two hours before post time on racing days.

Actions of the Board (Continued from back cover)

Enterprise Plan and authorized General Manager to submit the plan to UMTA, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved opposition to California Assembly Bills 50 and 105, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Authorized General Manager to renegotiate contract with Brinks Inc. to include processing, counting and accounting for f axle revenues, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Authorized General Manager to lease space on short-term basis in Fruitvale Canning Facility, Oakland, for bus storage, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Adopted resolution authorizing contribution of monies derived from taxes and subsidies into certain "restricted funds", on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved increase in Legislative Representative’s fee and established a ceiling on annual compensation, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Authorized staff to investigate possible locations for construction of General Offices building in downtown Oakland area and to renegotiate existing Latham Square Building lease to provide for interim space needs, on motion of Director McDonnell.

• Adopted resolution authorizing filing of two capital improvement grant applications and scheduled public hearing on the matter for February 25, 4 p.m., on motion of Director Fajans.

• Adopted amended AC Transit/ BART Richmond Corridor Coordination Study, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Scheduled public hearing for February 25, 3 p.m., on fare and service changes, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Approved a series of minor service adjustments, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Approved opposition to California Assembly Bill 95, on motion of Director Rinehart (see story, Pg. 7).

Crane performs in computer lift

COMPUTER MOVES — Workmen remove an older IBM 360-30 computer from the General Office in downtown Oakland as the District shifts the computer's functions to a Hewlett Packard 3000. The work required use of a giant crane to take out the now-­retired equipment through a fourth floor window on Telegraph Ave.
Our 'Stockholders' Write

My wife and I have just returned home after spending six weeks vacation at Bay Farm Island at our daughter's home. We would like to send our thanks to all the bus operators of AC Transit. We traveled on the buses many times while we were there and, of course, as strangers to America, we had to ask the drivers for information regarding departure times and what bus we needed for this route or that route — all the usual questions that strangers ask bus drivers.

We would like to say that we received courtesy and kindness the whole time we were there, and nothing was too much trouble for them!

L. E. Consadine
Lancashire, England

I hope you keep Operator Bennie Williams and the bus with plush, high-back seats on our line.

Also, Mr. J.R. Williams is so pleasant and considerate.

Mabel King
Oakland

Some letters to AC Transit have an unusually high human interest quotient. Such was the one received recently from an El Cerrito youth who enclosed a $10 bill as recompense to the District for damage he said he had done to a bus seat when he was a junior high school student five years ago.

"The damage was located in the back of the bus," the apparently conscious-stricken young rider wrote. "The damage was a seat I ripped putting my initials on."

The payment was accepted by the District with an official "Thanks, Michael."

We, the passengers on the #10 bus on the evening 34C Line traveling from downtown Oakland directly to Castro Valley wish to express our appreciation to our driver, Mr. C. B. Walker.

Mr. Walker always is courteous, friendly and amiable to his passengers in addition to being patient and conscientious. His driving is above reproach. We feel safe and relaxed while our lives are in his care, and we enjoy our ride.

Mr. Walker is especially helpful in making sure his "regulars" get to Castro Valley promptly so that some of us who need to catch connecting buses. We appreciate his obvious interest in his job and wish to say, "Thank you, Mr. Walker."

Signed by 39 riders
Line 34C

This is to thank the services of AC Transit Lost & Found. It is also to congratulate AC Transit on its efficient and well mannered personnel. I am referring in particular to Carmel Garcia for the help she offered and her success in getting my purse returned to me.

Karen Edwards
Kensington

I'd like to bring to your attention the superior performance of one of your bus drivers (Lee A. Rhodes).

I've ridden AC buses regularly for some months now, and I must say this woman is the best driver I've encountered. She operates smoothly without sacrificing speed.

Thank you!
Alexis Kurland Deeds
Albany

What the Press is saying about transit

Oakland Tribune
Making AC Transit safe

Loud radios, insults and marijuana-smoking may hardly sound like the stuff of a major social problem. But when this behavior takes place on AC Transit buses, the community has trouble.

And there is more. The rowdiness that has plagued the buses for months has degenerated into something far more serious.

On Jan. 18 a bus driver was shot and killed, apparently by a youth who was irate because he had been asked to stop smoking marijuana. Last Saturday a bus driver was shot by two robbers who took his wallet and his jewelry.

AC Transit faces two separate issues. One is how to eliminate the problems that fall into the nuisance category, to make unruly teen-agers respect the rights of their fellow citizens.

The other is what can be done to protect both drivers and passengers from violent crime.

It seems certain that the security budget for AC Transit must be increased if buses are to be made safe and pleasant.

More help from police forces in cities along AC Transit's routes also may be needed. Random visits by uniformed police officers, who see to it that all rules are followed, do a great deal toward removing the nuisances caused by unruly teen-agers as well as creating a more general climate of respect that should help prevent serious crimes.

Whether police forces have officers to do this frequently enough is another question. Indications are that Oakland, for example, has 20 percent fewer police officers than cities of comparable size.

But it is not feasible to put a guard on every bus any more than it is feasible to put a police officer on every street corner, even if we wished to live in such a society.

The Eastbay needs a bus system that is safe, as well as pleasant, to ride. Persons who have no other means of transportation obviously need it. Society as a whole needs it because of the energy crisis, which cannot be solved without adequate public transportation.

A citywide crime prevention program, which held its first public forum Saturday, originally was an outgrowth of concern about the deteriorating atmosphere on buses.

And therein lies a major question. What is the obligation of passengers to get involved in maintaining order — whether it is asking a teen-ager to turn off a radio or preventing a shooting? What is the responsibility of schools and parents to instill a respect for others in children? Where is the line between civic responsibility and vigilantism?

There is a reason that serious crimes occur less often in small towns. It is that neighbors watch out for each other. In cities, in contrast, there seems to be a belief that preventing crime is solely the responsibility of the police.

The most effective way to make buses safer is for all to recognize their stake in maintaining order — and for would-be rowdies and criminals to know that passengers will cooperate in wiping out their behavior.
At an adjourned regular meeting November 26, the Board of Directors:
- Awarded contract to Hausman Bus Sales and Parts for RTA joint procurement of automotive filters, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized General Manager to advertise and seek bids for 70 to 85 Advance Design buses (40-foot) with wheelchair lifts, electronic signs, and various options, subject to UMTA approval, on motion of Director Rinehart.

At a regular meeting December 10, the Board of Directors:
- Awarded contracts to Xerox, IBM, and Savin for a total of 12 copy machines, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved resolution declaring results of Nov. 4, 1980, election, on motion of Director Bettencourt (see story, Pg. 3).
- Referred all bids received for furnishing printed route maps to management for evaluation, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

At a regular meeting January 14, the Board of Directors:
- Approved Assistant General Manager for Finance as position title previously designated Assistant General Manager for Financial Management, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Elected Roy Nakadegawa President and Jean Holmes Vice-President, on motion of Director Rinehart (see story, Pg. 3).
- Granted travel authority to General Manager to attend the 1981 APTA Management Seminar in Houston, Texas, February 15-19, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Awarded contract to California Printing Company for route maps, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Awarded contract to Tele-Camera of Southern California for furnishing 60 on-board surveillance camera systems, subject to compliance with specifications, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved support of City of Newark's project to have the state enlarge the overpass at Mowry and Highway 17 to four lanes, on motion of Director Holmes.
- Adopted revised Minority Business (Continued on Page 9)