Some people have been waiting for the bus all their lives. It's finally here.

Lift-equipped coaches Launch access program
These two are very outstanding. To my astonishment, they know their riders by name. They are a pleasure to ride on their buses. They are among the most courteous drivers in the Bay Area, as the saying goes, 'the riders are the drivers.'

When I was a passenger several weeks ago, I went to the terminal a few minutes early to board the F bus to San Francisco on May 4. I was a passenger during the first two weeks of operation last winter. I am a daily rider on the 17 buses on Alcatraz and Sacramento. I just thought you might like to know that you have two of the most courteous drivers in the Bay Area, J.R. Williams and B.W. Lankford. These two are very outstanding.

They seem to know the riders — children, maids, office workers, business men, college students. There is no pot smoking, no bad words. It is a pleasure to ride on their buses. They greet everyone with a warm "hello," and, to my astonishment, they know their riders by name.

I am writing this letter to express my gratitude and admiration for the bravery of your driver, Mr. Joseph Jones, who was driving the F bus to San Francisco on which I was a passenger several weeks ago.

Mr. Jones interceded in protection of the passengers when a man on the bus became irrational, verbally abusive, aggressively threatening, and clearly out of control and potentially violent. As passengers we were all indebted to Mr. Jones for his quick-thinking and wisdom in dealing with a frightening and ugly situation. He behaved with incredible calmness, self-control and bravery.

I am writing to commend one of your drivers (H.L. Hampton) for an act that all the passengers were grateful to see. My daughter and I boarded the bus at Pittsburg, on our way to Martinez. As we approached the stop light at Diablo Valley College, the driver and passengers saw a car at the stop light that was on fire. As the flames shot in the air, as the car's hood was raised, the driver put on his emergency brake, grabbed his fire extinguisher, ran to the burning car, and had the fire out within seconds. He thus saved a woman's car from being destroyed.

He got back on the bus and resumed his trip, and all the passengers on the bus praised him for his quick action.

Harry Gatts
Darlene Gatts
West Pittsburg

Improving the environment for public transportation in downtown Oakland is the target of an agreement between the City of Oakland and AC Transit signed May 4 by General Manager Robert E. Nisbet.

The agreement, followed by Metropolitan Transportation Commission approval, launched a $65,900 first-phase research project to identify transportation- and transit-related issues in the heart of Oakland.

The program will be carried out by City of Oakland staff with assistance from AC Transit, BART and MTC personnel.

Key issues which will come under scrutiny will be BART train access and service levels, AC Transit bus service, street traffic patterns, parking and the feasibility of a downtown transit-pedestrian mall.

"This first phase will be an information gathering project," Nisbet says. "All pertinent data, such as the fact that AC Transit has 2,600 bus trips through the intersection of 14th St. and Broadway each workday, will be collected."

Along with the information gathering over a three-to-four month period, the program will identify goals and objectives for improved transit.

The second phase of the project, which will cost an estimated additional $100,000 over about 18 months, will develop specific solutions leading to mass transit improvements.

"This is an excellent example of the city and transit agencies working together to find the best possible answer to transportation needs," Nisbet said.

Ridership increases show that more are tuning in to mini-bus convenience

The Downtown Oakland Shuttle, inaugurated in late-November, met a ridership target — 1,000 passengers per day — several months sooner than initially predicted, according to current figures. The mini-buses, noted for their bright musical-theme motif and melodic signature sound, recorded a ridership high on May 20 of 1,100 passengers after first achieving the 1,000-passenger mark on May 4.

These figures compare with average ridership of 400 during the first two weeks of operation last winter.

The six bus shuttle fleet with a 25-cent basic fare serves a route designed to tie together major focal points in the Downtown Oakland area: Kaiser Center, Jack London Square, and destinations along the Broadway and Madison-Oak corridors. Ten-minute headways are maintained during 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. service. In addition, limited service is offered, with 30-minute headways, during the peak commute periods (7 to 9:30 a.m., 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.).

Original projections called for reaching the 1,000-passenger goal after a year of service.
New service improvements planned

New public transportation links connecting downtown Oakland with major East Bay and airport terminals are among the improvements AC Transit has plans to put into operation the first weekend of June, following a June 3 public hearing on the matter.

Line 61, the latest addition to the AC Transit East Bay bus system, will connect the Kaiser Center and downtown Oakland directly with the Oakland Airport.

This new bus route, which will run Monday through Friday (beginning June 8) at 30- to 45-minute intervals, provides direct service from downtown to the airport's north field and main terminal via Broadway in Oakland, Buena Vista in Alameda and Doolittle Drive in East Oakland.

Beginning Sunday, June 7, the AMTRAK station in West Oakland will have better bus connections to downtown Oakland and the entire East Bay via rerouted Line 88 bus service.

All Line 88 buses will now operate to and from the downtown area to and from the AMTRAK terminal via BART/Oakland West, with buses operating every 12 minutes during the day and 20 to 30 minutes evenings and weekends.

Other Changes

Other service adjustments and improvements scheduled for implementation June 7 or 8 include:

* Extension of Line 40/43 in the Albany area to BART/El Cerrito Plaza Shopping Center;
* Extension of Line 43 in San Leandro to Bay Fair Shopping Center and BART/Bay Fair;
* Adjustment of all Line 40/43 schedules to substantially improve service in the Berkeley-Oakland-San Leandro corridor traveled by this route;
* New service in the Pinole-Rodeo-Crockett area of western Contra Costa County via Line 70 (operating from Hilltop Shopping Center via Tara Hills and Pinole to Hercules and Viewpoint) and Line 70A (replacing present Line 78A service from Hilltop via San Pablo Ave. to Crockett);
* Extension of Line 33A-Oakland-Alameda Express and Line W-1-San Francisco-Alameda Express bus service to Bay Farm Island.

Pocket timetables depicting the improved routes and schedules will be available from bus drivers beginning June 7th (or June 8th on those lines operating only Monday through Friday) or from AC Transit Customer Services, 508 16th St., Oakland, 94612, or by calling Transit Information.

Citizen hearings held

The Board of Directors held one public hearing in May and scheduled another for June 3.

A public hearing May 13 provided opportunity for interested citizens to comment on the exclusion of 295 acres from AC Transit's service area on the border of Union City and Fremont.

The parcel in question is an uninhabited area known as Lowry Road Annexation along the southwestern boundary of Union City.

It was transferred from the City of Fremont to Union City in 1978, and no AC Transit bus service is provided.

Proposed service changes was to be the topic for the June 3 hearing, after which the Board will take action regarding a series of planned re-routings, extensions, and new schedules or routes.

Such service adjustments require public review, according to an Urban Mass Transit Administration regulation.

Ward goes to training course

Schedule Analyst Gary Ward was selected to attend a 10-day course on "The Art of Schedule Development and Design" which was slated to begin June 5 at LaRoche College in Pittsburgh, PA.

The course is an offering of the Mass Transportation Management, Training and Research Institute.

Patrons to East Bay parks

AC Transit patrons will again be able to enjoy the sun and fun facilities of several East Bay Regional Parks this summer without the hassle and cost of going by automobile. June 13 will mark the start of bus service to Tilden, Roberts/Redwood, Don Castro, Lake Chabot, and Point Pinole Parks; and the schedules will continue through September 13.

Plans include:

* Daily service at hourly intervals to Tilden Regional Park from BART/ Berkeley, operating from about 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with coaches equipped to handle bicycles at an additional cost of 25 cents per bike.
* Daily service at hourly intervals to Roberts Recreation Area/Redwood Regional Park from BART/ Fruitvale, operating from about 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.
* Weekday service at 30-minute intervals from about 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; weekend/holiday service at hourly intervals from about 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. to Don Castro Park from BART/ Hayward via Line 95 (Kelly Street).
* Daily service at hourly intervals from about 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. from BART/Hayward and downtown Hayward to Lake Chabot Park via Line 91 (Hayward-Castro Valley).
* Weekend and Saturday service at hourly intervals from about 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to Point Pinole Park via Line 78 (13th Street-Parchester Village).
New equipment eliminates bus steps as barrier to boarding

When officially introduced June 7, AC Transit’s network of standard buses equipped with driver-controlled passenger lifts and front-end “kneeler” is expected to expand the mobility options of thousands of East Bay residents who, because of age or physical handicap, have previously found it difficult or impossible to use bus services.

Ceremonies marking implementation of the long-planned E&H access program are scheduled for June 5.

Lift-equipped buses will operate on major routes between Richmond and Fremont, and most urban East Bay BART stations will be served by at least one line with accessible coaches.

Potential users will find various resources available to help them identify routes offering special access. Transit Information operators will inform callers of their options in reaching destinations via accessible coaches serving the range of routes. The lift-equipped buses themselves will be distinctively marked: the blue and white international handicapped symbol will appear next to the front destination signs.

Bus poles and signs at stops will be helpful also, with a wide blue band on the pole, the handicapped symbol on the sign, plus blue and white route numbers indicating the lift-equipped lines serving that particular stop. Lifts will be activated only at boarding zones displaying these markings.

Printed resources for pin-pointing lines with lift-equipped coaches include the AC Transit Route Map’s “Basic Bus Service” chart and pocket timetables, which mark special-access trips by the handicapped symbol.

The lift is available for ease of boarding/exiting for a wide variety of passengers who cannot climb steps. This includes those using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids. It is designed also to help persons with less visible disabilities, such as arthritis, and those who can’t manage the steps because of heart or respiratory conditions.

As a bonus, lifts are expected to prove an aid to senior citizens with heavy shopping carts and to parents maneuvering baby strollers.

The “kneeler” feature, allowing the driver to lower the front end of the bus to bring the bottom step closer to sidewalk or street will help those who are ambulatory, yet can’t easily step up to board.

“Please lower the steps!” is the magic phrase that will alert drivers to waiting passengers needing the kneeler.

Each accessible bus will have space and securement devices for two wheelchairs. This space is created when the two farthest-forward seats on both sides of the aisle and the adjacent longitudinal seats are folded away. These seats are well marked to assure public understanding that they must be vacated if needed for wheelchair space and securement.

AC Transit’s pre-implementation informational program has been aimed both at potential users of the special access equipment and at the riding public in general, since the cooperation, patience, and understanding of all bus patrons is considered crucial in making expanded access the full success that it deserves to be.

AC Transit has won the “First Place, Gold Camera Award” from the United States Industrial Film Festival for “Riding Together”, a 20-minute film for bus drivers on serving the handicapped and elderly. The award was given May 8 in Chicago. The film was produced last fall in the Oakland area.

In an acceptance telegram, General Manager Robert E. Nisbet said, “Our total delight is only matched by our complete commitment to equal access for all citizens. It is especially gratifying to receive the award this year, which has been designated the International Year of Disabled Persons.” “Riding Together” is available to community groups through the Research & Planning Department.
Retiree roster

Young, Schrunk round out transit careers

Eugene Young

Wilmer Schrunk

Eugene Young, who completed 35 years of public transit service before retiring, is finding no lack of activities to keep him busy. The former Mechanic A at Richmond Division, who joined Key System in 1945 after working in the shipyards during the war years, finds that he has more time now for the work that he enjoys doing around his Richmond home, where he and wife Lillie Mae have lived for 25 years.

The Youngs returned from their first post-retirement trip—a three-week visit to Toronto and Montreal—just recently. They visited their daughter, Lili Marie, in Toronto. Another daughter, Tyrah Fao, lives in New Orleans—the Youngs’ next contemplated destination.

Seven other children—Eloise, Milton, Wilma Jean, Roland, Ronald, Ramona and Eugene—and 11 grandchildren round out the family roster. Eugene is a student at the University of Oregon with an eye on a possible law career.

Young remembers a lot of hard work in the Key System days when he performed maintenance chores for the trains. With their phase-out in 1958, he switched to servicing and maintaining buses, then began the series of steps through the mechanic ranks.

His only post-retirement problem so far, Young says, is adjusting his sleep-wake patterns after 16 years of working graveyard shift.

Wilmer (Will) Schrunk was a 20-year veteran of service as a streetcar operator and bus driver in Sioux City, Iowa, before he joined AC Transit as an operator in 1964. Adding it all up, Schrunk can be credited with a total of 37 years of serving public transit patrons.

A Bay Area visit to a son stationed here with the Navy convinced the Schrunks to pull up stakes and move west. A mailed-in application form for a driver position preceded the family move, so it wasn’t too long before Schrunk was behind the wheel again. He joined Emeryville Division but had been with Newark for a few years when he retired.

Schrunk is keeping busy working on maintenance/repair chores in connection with the apartments which wife Virginia manages. Also, since they have six children—Ron, Garry, Jim, Judy, John and Rick—and 18 grandchildren (mostly living out-of-state), the Schrunks are not lacking in destinations for trips. Schrunk says he doesn’t mind making such trips even after all those years behind the wheels of buses. He first learned to drive, he recalls, at age 9 (a 1914 Buick) and paid $40 for his first car (a 1925 Model-T Ford) when he was 15.

The Schrunks live in Fremont.

AC Transit retirees, about 100 strong, meet for luncheon the third Tuesday of each month at the Blue Dolphin, San Leandro. The group hears speakers, socializes, and sponsors excursions. Potential members are encouraged to call Frank Lauricella, president, 451-9788; Donald Goodman, 482-1487; or Lou Bailey, 462-1116, for information.

Transit trends and topics

Graffiti mars buses, adds to expense

With the yearly tab for vandalism repair currently averaging $600,000, AC Transit may be facing an even higher outlay if the trend of the last six or seven months continues, according to Dick Bertz, maintenance manager.

Though he was commenting mainly on graffiti, he sees it as part of an overall trend of increased marring/mutilation of public property.

“My Cleaners know it’s a growing problem; they take care of something one day and it’s back the next.”

Bertz feels that much of the willful damage is youth-related. The graffiti that his department’s coach cleaners struggle to remove frequently reflects gang messages, names, symbols, slurs, and challenges.

Bertz has yet to discover a miracle product for dealing with the pervasive graffiti problem because of the variety of both graffiti-vulnerable surfaces on buses and the range of writing instruments. It’s easier, for instance, to clean marks from felt-tip pens from fabric seat cushions than from vinyl.

“Felt pens act as a dye on vinyl,” Bertz says, and the only solution in totally removing such marks is actually painting over the vinyl with a water-based tint.

“That’s why we’ve gone to dark brown, variegated seat material,” comments Bertz. “Still, the cleaning is time-consuming, discouraging, and costly.”

Actions of the Board

(Continued from back cover)

- Authorized General Manager to renew contract with City of Fremont to provide van service for senior citizens during Fiscal Year 1981-82, on motion of Director Holmes.
- Authorized General Manager to solicit proposals for automated passenger data collection system, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized use of outside firm in selection of new Personnel Manager and placed Personnel function under Assistant General Manager for Administration, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
PUBLIC HEARING — On April 29 the Board of Directors (top left) and staff (including, top right, Don Larson, research and planning manager) heard citizen comment on the Five-Year Plan Update, representing guidelines for Fiscal Years 1982-86. Input from the meeting was to be considered before final changes were made and the revised document adopted by the Board in mid-May. Among those speaking at the hearing were John Christensen (top center), Manager of Economic Development, Oakland Chamber of Commerce.

Safe-driving statistics Indicate successful month

All divisions met the monthly safe driving goal during April.
Newark Division led again in the standings, with full-time drivers compiling an average of 33,258 miles per chargeable accident. Second was Richmond Division, whose drivers were responsible for a tally of 23,723 miles per mishap. Seminary Division’s score for the month was 17,066 miles per accident, and Emeryville’s was 15,731 miles.

The safe-driving statistic toward which System drivers strive is 13,250 miles per chargeable incident.

As a group, full-time drivers traveled 2,692,149 miles in serving AC Transit patrons throughout the District during the first full month of spring.

Young patrons apologize

Among recent patron letters were two from very young riders repenting previous acts of writing on bus seats with red marking pens.

The two, who attend Fruitvale School in Oakland, apologized for giving in to the graffiti impulse and each inquired as to ways in which to make amends for the damage.

Their teacher is Pamela Bouyer.

Roy Nakadegawa

Roy Nakadegawa, President of AC Transit’s Board of Directors, is author of an article in the May 1 issue of “Passenger Transport”, published in Washington, D.C., by the American Public Transit Association.

The article — “Learning from Hong Kong: Where Public Transport is Privately Owned and Operates Strictly in the Black” — is based on his observations of the administration and operations of the heavily-used, multi-mode transportation system in Britain’s island outpost.

Nakadegawa, a civil engineer, has been a Board member since 1972.

Article on Hong Kong Is published

Roy Nakadegawa

For the May 1 issue of “Passenger Transport”, published in Washington, D.C., by the American Public Transit Association, Roy Nakadegawa, President of AC Transit’s Board of Directors, discusses his observations of the administration and operations of the heavily-used, multi-mode transportation system in Britain’s island outpost.

Learning from Hong Kong

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Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting April 29, the Board of Directors:

• Approved contracts to Almac Plastics, Transparent Plastics, and California Plastic Supplies for furnishing glazing materials, in conjunction with Regional Transit Association joint procurement, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

• Awarded contract to Vapor Corporation, subject to compliance with specifications, for furnishing two wheelchair lifts, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Scheduled public hearing for June 3, 4 p.m., in conjunction with Project Development Committee meeting, to consider proposed service changes, on motion of Director Fajans (See story, Pg. 4).

• Approved five permanent training instructor positions, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

At a regular meeting May 13, the Board of Directors:

• Authorized solicitation of bids for servicing and repairing underground storage diesel fuel tanks, on motion of Director Fajans.

• Authorized participation by one schedule analyst in “Art of Schedule Development and Design” course at Mass Transportation Management, Training and Research Institute, Pittsburgh, to begin June 5, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Authorized re-routings of Lines 22 and 30, on motions of Director Holmes (Continued on page 9)