Our 'Stockholders' Write

I wish to commend Driver Earline Miles for her recent efforts on the 70 bus. I, a wheelchair patron, tried to get on the 70, southbound, at Contra Costa Community College in San Pablo. The lift and wheelchair placement seats did not work properly, and the driver spent 16 minutes of her schedule to get me aboard. She did not become flustered or let the other passengers get anxious. She encouraged all to wait and to help me to board the bus. She handled everyone with the utmost diplomacy.

Anne Kesti

I’ve had the pleasure of meeting and riding with an AC Transit bus driver by the name of Howard Biggs. He drives the 57 Line through Oakland Coliseum BART weekday mornings. Howard is always courteous, consistently careful behind the wheel, and regularly on time. It’s obvious he enjoys his work and doesn’t mind passing that good attitude on to others.

Ken Boone

I left my purse on the FX bus from San Francisco to my home in Berkeley, arriving at Sutter at approximately 7 p.m. By 8:30 or so your bus driver (Robert Seay) called my home to tell me it was found! I want to have this appreciation as part of this fine man’s record.

Belle Rainer

One day last week I boarded a bus driven by L. E. Young. At my stop, which was near the end of the line, I found that I was without my purse. I told the driver where I had left it on a bench. He took his last passenger to her destination and turned around and went back. The purse was not on the bench, so back we went and he started his run again.

This meant that he lost his rest-time at the end of the line. I am very grateful for this evidence of good will and would like to have some note of it made in his record.

P.S. Another kind man found the purse (and) returned it to me!

Catherine Parkinson

I am the one that threw oranges at your buses and I apologize for my actions because I know that they were wrong and I know I could have caused a accident or broke a window or gave a elderly person a heart attack and they could have even died, so I am sorry for my action because if I did hurt anyone I would feel bad and probably go to juvenile hall. So I am sorry and that’s why I write this letter to you and I hope you will forgive me but I know it’s going to be hard.

Shawn

I find Mr. Albert L. McClain an excellent bus driver.

Lydia L. Word

Fleet additions

Board gives big bus order to Gillig

AC Transit’s Board of Directors voted at its March 23 meeting to award a $20 million bus building contract to Gillig Corporation, of Hayward, the builders of new coaches now being incorporated into the District fleet.

The new contract calls for approximately 134 buses to be delivered to the District beginning later this year. AC Transit presently is receiving the last of 141 coaches ordered under a contract awarded to Gillig in 1982.

The Board’s decision is expected to continue a relationship which, under the 1982 contract award, proved to be a boon to AC Transit and to the East Bay community. Not only did the current bus building program allow District personnel to closely monitor assembly line activity here in Hayward, it also provided several hundred jobs during a severe recession period.

Studying bids

For weeks before the Board meeting, Directors and District staff had been studying the differences between a seemingly low bid from Flyer Industries of Manitoba, Canada, and what initially appeared to be a second-place bid submitted by Gillig Corporation, both received in December, 1982.

After careful examination of the two submittals, Richard W. Meier, the Attorney for the District, recommended the Gillig proposal, because, he said, Flyer Industries violated AC Transit’s bid specifications by bringing in additional principal suppliers, particularly a Minnesota firm which is not a major bus manufacturer — as is required by the District.

According to the attorney, this addition of new principals in the Canadian-based company’s bid had not been negotiated with and agreed to by the District, and therefore the Flyer Industries bid is not responsive to AC Transit’s original bid proposal.

Gillig submittal

That state of affairs made Gillig’s submittal — at $144,512 per coach — the responsive low bid for the contract, Meier said.

The attorney also advised the Board that there is a question as to whether Flyer’s bid proposal meets federal “Buy American” requirements, which state that a majority of the bus components must be from the United States, and a meaningful level of manufacture must take place in this country. This question, according to Meier, is being addressed by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA).

Under the circumstances, he told the Directors, the consummation of the contract will require federal UMTA concurrence with the Board’s decision to award it to the local East Bay bus builder.

THE COVER — This prototype Neoplan double-deck bus, big brother to standard 40-foot coaches now in District service, was on loan to AC Transit for road-testing in April. While the double-decker is only 40' long, it stands taller — at 13' 6" — than any other bus in the District fleet. The prototype’s internal configuration — a layout designed for long-distance touring service — includes 73 seats, with 53 of them on the upper level. When built for public transit use, the double-decker accommodates more than 80 seated passengers. Riders, as well as District personnel, were scheduled to assess the bus, which Neoplan thoughtfully fitted out with the AC Transit identity and color scheme.
Planners advised to “think transit”

Two new handbooks adopted by the Board of Directors late last month are designed to assist those planning tomorrow’s urban developments in including an effective public transportation element very early in their projects. The “Guide for Including Public Transit in Land Use Planning” describes ways to design new subdivisions or major facilities or to redevelop existing communities along lines that encourage, rather than inhibit, public transportation.

To city planners and those who establish planning and land-use policies, the guide suggests that transit and transportation-related factors be a key element in all stages of the planning and decision-making process.

For example, the publication urges developers of large new traffic generators — new subdivisions, large shopping centers, educational institutions, major transportation terminals, sports facilities and recreational areas — to include in their designs bus turn-outs and off-street transit access for pedestrians. This may seem routine, but the District’s experience has been that local land-use planning agencies often do not include a transit element in master designs.

As a result, difficulties can and do arise in implementing bus routes and installing bus stops — a problem evidenced by the complications the District currently faces in several suburban areas where arterial streets are designed so that buses can’t stop along the way; and where, in some places, walls or other obstacles separate streets and the bus stops from adjacent residential areas.

Good pedestrian access to public transit is one major element encouraged by the Land Use Planning Guide. Coupled with this concept is a recommendation that in new subdivisions, industrial parks and redevelopment areas, some number of arterial streets be built at regular intervals to accommodate not only bus riders, but the buses too. All too often, new streets are not adequate for the movement of larger vehicles, including buses.

The second document — “Transit Facilities Standards Manual” — is a guidebook on design of street-related transit improvements. It is geared primarily for application in areas where new transit services are proposed or where improvements to existing service are necessary.

In this document, engineers, planners, and builders/community-developers are afforded the information necessary to incorporate a transit element in their roadway and development plans. Included are coach characteristics, such as weights, turning radii, and the necessary design elements for lane width, curbside loading zones and intersection geometry.

The guidebooks were developed by the District’s Research and Planning Department.

System gets first gas tax funding

AC Transit has received the first grant awarded in California from federal funds created by the new 5-cent-a-gallon fuel tax which went into effect April 1.

The District’s proposal, described by Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) official Alan Steiner as “an excellent program”, will bring in $12 million for development of a division yard in Hayward and redevelopment of the existing Emeryville yard in connection with a comprehensive plan designed to upgrade and improve AC Transit facilities.

The creation of a major bus yard in Hayward at the site of the old Mack Truck plant off West Winton Ave., will relieve overcrowding at other yards and improve efficiency, according to Nat Gage, assistant general manager for finance, who oversees the facilities improvement program. An estimated work force of approximately 400 drivers, mechanics and training personnel are scheduled to work at the Hayward location.

“This is only part of the plan to improve our facilities and capabilities,” Gage said, noting that an additional $47 million in grant requests have been submitted.

The total renovation plan calls for improvements at AC Transit’s present bus yards in Emeryville, Richmond and Oakland, as well as development of the Hayward facility.

The approved $12 million in federal funds will be matched locally by another $3 million, Gage said. Actual construction in Hayward is expected to get underway later this Spring with bus operations at the site scheduled to commence in the Fall of 1984.

The way we were…March, 1944

Vignettes of the past, as gleaned from AC Transit historical files and sources.

The following memo was addressed “To All Key System Employees” by President Alfred J. Lundberg on March 16, 1944:

The American Red Cross in 1944 is asking that we all give more.
I recently read a letter dated February 15, 1944, written by one of our employees now on leave and who is a lieutenant in the Marines. His outfit had just taken Roi and Namur Islands in the Marshall group. He wrote as follows: “Every night after the first there were such things as tobacco, cigarettes, gum, soap and toothbrushes being given away by the Red Cross. They did a good job.”

We now have 328 employees in the armed forces. We can’t all go to the battle front — we can send our dollars to swell the Red Cross War Fund…”
Milestone moment

Kay Beneziano (Data Processing) is 1983's first winner of Oakland A's tickets in the program to reward exemplary job attendance. Newark Division Driver Jerry Johnson won the second pair of ducats.

Retirement round-up

- Theo H. Benjamins, Driver, Emeryville Division, 28 years.
- Andrew J. Foley, Driver, Newark Division, 20 years.
- George P. Nagatkin, Driver, Richmond Division, 15 years.
- George H. Phillips, Driver, Seminary Division, 32 years.

SAFETY KUDOS — Linda Shepard, AC Transit Board member, congratulates Bennie Williams on achieving the 25-year safe driving milestone. The 47th District driver to receive the honor, Williams has carried an estimated two million passengers while logging more than one million miles on-the-road during a transit career which began in 1953. As to tips which might be helpful in achieving the quarter-century safety mark, Williams says, “Keep a safe following distance, because if not only helps your driving, it saves your nerves.”

Operators Asp and Everson, Three from retiree list die

Harvey A. Asp, 64, an Emeryville Division driver, died March 20 in Albany. He is survived by his widow, Florence. Asp’s period of service to public transit spanned 37 years. He resided in Albany.

Elmer Frank Everson, 53, a driver at Newark Division, died March 17 in Hayward. He was a 13-year veteran of District transportation service.

Everson, who lived in Hayward, is survived by his sister, Marcella A. Minsterman.

Theodore S. Amongas, 85, who was a supervisor in Transportation Department prior to his retirement in 1960 after 42 years of service to AC Transit’s predecessor, died January 1 in Denver. He is survived by his widow, Cassandra.

Alonza Dickerson, 53, who retired as a Seminary Division driver in 1982 after 22 years of service to public transit, died March 4 in Oakland. He is survived by his widow, Grendetta, and children: Gregory, Gary, Brenda, Sherry and Deborah. Fred McKee, 70, who retired as a Seminary Division driver in 1974 after 32 years of transit service, died March 20. He is survived by his widow, Loretta.

PROMOTING TRANSIT — With very welcome sunshine assuring the presence of strolling crowds around Oakland's City Hall Plaza, April 5's “Transportation Day” offered East Bay citizens both a festival atmosphere and the availability of a wide variety of information on transportation alternatives. Public and private organizations participating were promoting a single concept: more efficient and economical means of mobility — everything from bicycles to buses. Manning AC Transit’s display were Billy Bishop and Doyle Dewberry, customer service representatives.
At a regular meeting March 9, the Board of Directors:
- Approved support for California SB-33, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized travel to attend California Trial Lawyers Association Seminar, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Approved Fremont-Newark service adjustment package, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Authorized Assistant General Manager for Finance to enter negotiations regarding issuance of tax anticipation notes and authorized travel in line with that purpose, on motion of Director McDonnell.
- Awarded contract for specified services to ATE Management and Service Company, on motion of Director Berk.

At an adjourned regular meeting March 23, the Board of Directors:
- Awarded contract to Gillig Corporation for furnishing buses, subject to compliance with specifications and bid documents and to approval by UMTA; on motion of Director Rinehart (see story, pg. 3).
- Scheduled public meeting for April 27 to receive comment on Five-Year Plan Update for Fiscal 1984-88, on motion of Director Nakadegawa (see box, pg. 4).
- Adopted resolutions authorizing filing of claims with Metropolitan Transportation Commission for half-cent sales tax revenues, net toll bridge revenues, Transportation Development Act funds and State Transit Assistance funds for Fiscal 1983-84, on motion of Director McDonnell.