Driver sign-up: meeting, greeting, making choices
Drivers and District sign contract

A new three-year labor agreement between AC Transit and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192 — the first in District history to fail to win the Board’s unanimous assent — was approved, five-to-two, by Directors August 24.

“It would be fair to state that this labor agreement is accepted by the Directors with some reluctance,” said Board President Michael H. Fajans.

“AC Transit will have to make further gains to remain competitive with the automobile in the coming years — and to be competitive also, in terms of operating costs, with others seeking to operate transit service in surrounding, outlying areas.

“Our budget situation remains critical today,” Fajans continued, “and the prospects for the future are not good. Only a limited amount of monies are available from regional, state and federal sources to supplement the riders’ contribution to the cost of transit operations.

“The provisions of this contract, which does freeze wages for the first year, are but another step in our urgent effort to hold down operating costs.”

Similar sentiments were voiced by other members of the Board, who stressed concerns about a lack of funding to cover operational costs at present and projected levels — and about the continued uncertainty of AC Transit’s financial supports.

Directors William E. Berk of Richmond and William J. Bettencourt of San Leandro cast the dissenting votes, with Bettencourt stating: “I’m voting ‘No’ to underscore the gravity of AC Transit’s financial situation. This pact, in its present form, means a deficit this year and in coming years; and, as I see it, neither side has won.”

The labor agreement was reached after nearly four months of negotiations. Its acceptance was recommended by the District’s negotiators, who noted that the union bargainers had made some concessions, indicating an initial awareness of the District’s need to hold down operating costs.

“We set out to hold the line on labor costs,” said Daniel P. Ready, Jr., management’s chief negotiator. “And we accomplished that to a considerable extent.”

The labor compact follows long-term efforts by the District to maximize use of every available transit dollar. These include:

- A reduction in force in mid-1982 to help balance an over-stretched budget by trimming nearly 150 employees, both management and union.
- A series of fare increases resulting in an adult rate of 60¢ — 140 percent higher than such fares in 1978.
- Consolidation of bus routes — and curtailment of some lightly-used trips — to maximize service levels without adding to operating costs.
- Acquisition of new coaches to achieve greater efficiency and reliability in the District’s aging bus fleet.

“Every District employee — salaried and union — has to understand that our continued survival and success depends on reducing costs,” Fajans said.

“We must achieve further gains in terms of productivity, in terms of realizing maximum benefit from the most modern technology, and in terms of exploring innovative concepts that will help hold overall labor costs down.”
RUCUS sounds funny, means much more

Beginning with the December Sign-up, all District employees involved in putting the service on the streets will become intimately familiar with RUCUS, the automated process of run-cutting and scheduling.

For months, schedulers have invested a significant portion of their efforts in entering Schedules Department data into the computer, while data processing experts have been refining computer programs that will replace the long-familiar, manual run-cutting process. The RUCUS system not only will produce the actual schedules of all District service, it also will apply the parameters of the labor agreement to ‘cut’ the scheduled service efficiently into units of work performed by individual drivers.

Some early products of AC Transit’s RUCUS operation are already in use — for example, current drivers’ paddles and working schedules. But at present, much of the work of designing bus service — particularly the statistical studies aimed at increasing productivity — is performed manually, as it has been for decades.

This month, schedulers and data processing personnel are preparing for an automated run-cut for the December sign-up that will parallel the manually-produced sign-up posted in the Divisions every quarter.

"In the automated version, there are some important differences which will prompt AC Transit to think in new ways," according to Bob Berry, administrator of RUCUS Scheduling/Transportation Management Information System.

Cut-and-piece

For example, up until now, schedulers have manually recut runs to accommodate service changes, recutting only that particular bus route and unit of work. The result of their effort was then ‘pieced’ into the existing schedules for the Division from which the run operated.

Using RUCUS, the schedulers will be recutting all runs on all bus lines in each Division for each sign-up — not just taking a ‘band-aid’ approach to service modification and updating. And, Berry notes, the schedulers are armed with the most sophisticated system available. It’s capable of computing the cost-per-driver-per-hour for each run (or projected run, if they’re just trying out an idea) and then extrapolating that information to generate actualized cost of the service — by type of run, by division, or even system-wide.

In a move to create a better climate of understanding between disabled persons and bus drivers, AC Transit has launched a series of joint meetings to exchange information and share ideas on "ACcessible Transit."

The first get-together under the new program was held during the summer, with additional meetings scheduled this fall and winter.

At the discussion sessions, handicapped riders explain their needs and expectations while drivers talk of their concerns and the capabilities of the bus system.

The meetings are held at AC Transit’s divisional yards, providing first-hand exposure to actual operations and day-to-day challenges of a public transit system which serves a huge, highly diverse urban and suburban populace.

The face-to-face meetings “have been very helpful in relieving anxieties of both the drivers and these special riders,” says Carol Weinstein, AC Transit’s coordinator for accessibility.

“In upcoming sessions we are including supervisors, instructors and other management personnel, as well as union representatives from maintenance and operations,” says Weinstein.

“This is part of our total package to make the service successful both in terms of the persons who need to use the equipment and of the driver who is responsible for providing access,” she stressed. “We feel this part of the whole program will help in creating a better understanding among all concerned.”

Computerized scheduling offers efficiency, better statistics

(Continued)

When a scheduler tests a possible run-cut in the system, it automatically weighs that proposal against hundreds of parameters — everything from drivers’ wages to operating days to overhead costs. This gives a clear picture of the impact on scheduled service and on total operating costs. In using this tool, of course, the scheduler’s goal is to maximize service while minimizing operating cost.

Maximizing benefits

“We’ve done a lot of work to develop a valuable new tool for AC Transit,” Berry states. “And now we’ll have to learn how to use it to best advantage.

“arap maximum benefit, RUCUS, Scheduling and Transportation are launching a massive internal educational effort,” Berry said. “Everyone — the drivers, the dispatchers and division clerks, the timekeepers, the planners, the schedulers — will have all the information they’re accustomed to, but it will be in new forms and formats.”

One example Berry noted is a new system for numbering runs: in RUCUS, all runs will be designated by four digits — the first indicating the Division from which it operates, and the other three indicating the number of that run only.

The only purpose of the new synopsis will be to tell the driver his route, his pay, and the time he goes to work and gets off work. Other current uses of the synopsis — particularly the time-consuming manual generation of statistical information — will be done automatically. And, Berry says, the quarterly Statistical Analysis of Service will be generated and printed before the sign-ups go into effect, not afterwards as at present.

“When we put our first automated run-cut on the street, it won’t be the best possible product,” Berry notes. “But it’ll be good — very good.

“We will have accurate, detailed information and, for the first time, the means of manipulating all that information to refine the service and make it even more productive in future sign-ups.”

Sessions air mutual concerns re access

(Continued on Page 5)

Revamping ‘runs’ by RUCUS

NEW TOOL — The job’s the same, but Senior Schedule Analyst Gary Ward (right) now uses a computer to generate schedules and other information required to operate and evaluate bus service.
WRAPPING-UP — Labor Relations Representative Andrew W. Phillips clears his desk before winding up 42 years of transit service, which began with Key System April 28, 1941. He served as motor coach operator, dispatcher, chief dispatcher and chief clerk before joining Personnel in 1977. Phillips and wife Evelyn were honored at a dinner.

Old farebox finds new role
Another surplus AC Transit farebox will assume a different role soon — as a donation-collection receptacle for a newly-created museum located in the old Niles Depot in Fremont.

As the surplus farebox undergoes its identity change, so does the entire 1904 depot, which has been saved from being demolished by a citizens group which acquired it for a museum of transportation and railroading. With aid from the City of Fremont the museum-backers moved the colorful old building to a city park.

Exhibits will center on transit matters associated with Southern Alameda County, particularly Niles itself.

Death claims three retirees
Three retired transportation veterans died during the summer months.
Charles W. McMillan, 60, who had been a driver for 19 years at the time of his retirement in 1978, died July 17 in Louisiana. Before completing his period of service, he worked out of Emeryville Division.

McMillan is survived by his widow, Thula.
Robert M. Detloff, 71, who closed his career as Seminary Division superintendent at retirement in 1973, died August 17. His period of service spanned 31 years.

A resident of El Cerrito, Detloff leaves his widow, Clara, and a daughter, Sandra Miller.
Louis O. Alward, 84, who was a schedule analyst at the time he retired after 39 years of service in 1965, died August 24 in Oakland. Survivors include a sister, Blanch I. Follrath.
At an adjourned regular meeting August 24, the Board of Directors:

- Approved donation of surplus farebox to Niles Depot Historical Foundation, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
- Convened public hearing to receive comment on three grant applications to be submitted to Urban Mass Transportation Administration.
- Approved agreement with Division 192, Amalgamated Transit Union, on motion of Director Rinehart (see story, pg. 3).

Retirement round-up

- Wayne J. Barker, Driver, Seminary Division, 31 years.
- Gerard P. Dutil, Driver, Newark Division, 21 years.
- Donald C. Grigsby, Driver, Newark Division, 20 years.
- Andrew E. Phillips, Labor Relations Representative, Personnel, 42 years.
- Manuel L. Ramos, Mechanic AA, Emeryville Division, 38 years.
- Lenore A. Williams, Driver, Seminary Division, 32 years.

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