New SAM group will analyze service

Five key bus routes have been earmarked for intensive analysis and improvement in coming months as part of a newly reorganized program of strict self-examination to strengthen service.

Lines 40/43, 51/51A, 57, 72 and 82/83 will undergo critical and close analysis. This will include consideration of rider needs as identified through customer comments and data to be garnered through an impending market survey.

“In addition to asking riders to help us identify potential improvements,” says General Manager L. A. Kimball, “we’re giving these five routes intensive internal re-examination ourselves.”

Immediate responsibility for launching this analysis rests with a newly established ad hoc task team — the Service Analysis Monitoring Task Force — just formed by Kimball. This SAM team has begun collating all available information relating to service performance on Line 57 service, including comments from drivers and riders, road supervision observations, and traffic checks.

This data collection effort will yield a valuable by-product: an inherent test of all current district procedures for assembling and analyzing service performance reports. The result may be further refinement of these procedures.

“I expect this SAM Task Force to work itself out of a job in a short time,” Kimball states. “It’s not our intention to establish yet another forum for lengthy, continuing discussion of problems. Our goal is to ensure that the procedures are in place so this District routinely handles problems swiftly and effectively, whenever they come up.”

The District offices directly involved in the SAM task force analysis of the five selected routes include: Research and Planning; Customer Relations (Marketing); Schedules; Supervision; and Transportation. Other departments, such as Safety and Maintenance, will be called on as needed.

And the information and recommendations generated will be communicated throughout the District, according to Kimball. Additionally, riders and the public at large will hear directly from AC Transit about those task team recommendations.

“It’s my sincere hope that all District employees — particularly the drivers and road supervisors — will participate by passing along observations and constructive suggestions.”

Bend-in-the-middle coaches

Get fresh paint for spring

GOOD HUES — Fresh color is appearing on articulated double-length buses currently getting a brighter face at Emeryville Division. The modification in color and design is presenting riders with a lighter, cleaner look in 1984. Repainting each of the 30 articulated coaches in the fleet takes approximately two weeks.
Management and supervisory training programs launched

Two management and supervisory training programs convened last month. Their aim — and that of future programs — is to provide management/administrative employees the means for continued education to enhance career potential.

An “Effective Writing Workshop” began in mid-month, offering 16 hours of training and exercises to improve practical skills in written communication. Positive response to this course has resulted in tentative plans for other sections in coming months.

A 13-week “Elements of Supervision” course also began in mid-January, offering credits, through Chabot College, applicable toward a certificate or degree program. Plans call for forming at least one other section of this class after completion of the first.

Other courses — also to be partially subsidized by UMTA grants — are being considered.

The retirement round-up

- Glen Ashmore, Maintenance Superintendent, Emeryville Division, 40 years.
- Jennie M. Hamilton, Chief Clerk, Maintenance, 36 years.
- Eileen L. Hunter, Ticket Seller, Transbay Terminal, 29 years.
- Richard R. Hustace, Driver, Seminary Division, 27 years.
- Robert R. Lendway, Mechanic AA, Maintenance, Seminary Division, 23 years.
- Lee F. Manning, Driver, Emeryville Division, 21 years.
- Joe Middleton, Transportation Supervisor, Emeryville Division, 19 years.
- Ernest Passarella, Mechanic AA/Relief Working Foreman, Maintenance, 38 years.
- Gerald G. Pitts, Driver, Emeryville Division, 28 years.
- Carlton F. Purvis, Driver, Seminary Division, 27 years.

Five die who completed varied transportation careers

May L. Souza, 95, whose 34-year career as a secretary for AC Transit’s predecessor organizations ended with her retirement in 1944, died January 25 in Oakland. She was the longest-term retiree on the System’s pension rolls.

Her career had begun in 1910 when she went to work as a stenographer for Oakland Traction Company (later, San Francisco-Oakland Terminal Railways), whose offices were at 22nd and Grove Sts. At retirement, she held the position of secretary to the controller. Her late husband, John Souza, served many years as an officer on Southern Pacific’s fleet of transbay ferries.

Mrs. Souza is survived by a godson, Francis Braia.

Four other transit retirees died during the December-January period.

Clifford E. Huny, 78, who had been a Line 51 driver for 22 years prior to his retirement in 1968, died December 4 in Walnut Creek. His retirement home was in Oroville.

Huny joined AC Transit’s predecessor in 1945. His entire service tenure with Emeryville Division was on Line 51.

He is survived by his widow, Keturah.

William Wheeler, 59, who had been a Maintenance Department utility employee at Richmond Division prior to his retirement in 1979, died January 22 in Pinole. He had completed 14 years of service before closing out his employment.

A former union shop steward, Wheeler is survived by his widow, Enid, and son, William. The family home is in Pinole.

John P. Donohue, 72, who had been a driver for 34 years prior to his retirement in 1980, died January 16 in Lakeside (southern California). He worked out of Emeryville Division at the time he retired from a period of transit service that began in 1946.

Donohue is survived by his widow, Eleanor.

Jacob A. Sneed, 66, a former Emeryville Division driver who retired early last year, died January 29 in Michigan. His District service record, spanning 30 years, was highlighted by his receipt, in 1981, of the 25-Year Safe Driving Award.

A resident of Indiana at the time of his death, Sneed is survived by a great-niece, Cozette Reese.

FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

PETALS OF PRAISE — PBX/Information Clerk Rita Wells accepted a bouquet of roses recently in recognition of earning the highest number of commendations (from patrons and the public) received in 1983 among those in her job-category. An employee for 11 years, Wells is the second PBX/Information Clerk to be recognized for positive public relations. Cynthia Watkins received the prior award.
This is a letter of praise for an extremely courteous driver (Lonnie Meredith).
He helped several people at various bus stops to find the buses they needed. On the bus he helped a young woman with two small children (one sleeping in her arms) to find the stop closest to her destination.
I have ridden with AC Transit for 20 years, and your drivers are usually very pleasant, but this one was exceptionally nice and a remarkably safe driver.

"...Mrs. Ulmar T. McKnight..."

I was very impressed by (Harold Crump’s) skillful driving and careful manner when I had occasion to take the bus to the airport on Saturday morning. He slowly proceeded until elderly and handicapped passengers were seated before accelerating to speed — no jerky starts. He also waited for running late passengers but also insisted that some young persons who cheated the farebox put in additional money.

"...Richard Hargreaves..."

We teachers at Amelia Earhart School would like to thank you for your friendly cooperation and consideration of our needs.
Our driver, Mr. E. A. White, was friendly, patient, and pleasant while working with the children. His promptness in such terrible weather was extremely appreciated.

Mr. Williams was a great help in scheduling the arrangements for the trip. Without the help of your employees our trip would not have been possible.

"...Mrs. D. Prosser..."
Actions of the Board

At a regular meeting January 11, the Board of Directors:

• Elected Ray Rinehart President and William J. Bettencourt Vice President, on nomination of Director McDonnell.

• Authorized travel of representatives to attend two specified American Public Transit Association meetings, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

• Authorized General Manager to continue contract with District Legislative Representative for one year, on motion of Director Shepard.

• Awarded contract to Ferma Corporation for site and building demolition at Hayward division location, on motion of Director McDonnell.

• Authorized General Manager to develop Request-for-Proposal for marketing analysis aimed at developing data of aid in increasing ridership, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

At an adjourned regular meeting January 25, the Board of Directors:

• Authorized travel of representative to attend specified APTA meeting, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

Gatherings honor Nisbet

A late January luncheon hosted by the MTC and Transit Operators Coordinating Council, and a March 2 retirement dinner sponsored by AC Transit have been aimed at honoring Robert E. Nisbet, former General Manager. Coverage of the latter event will be in the March issue.