Our ‘Stockholders’ Write

Public transportation is the backbone of urban areas. It is one of the few services provided by government that everyone should be encouraged to use, and transit fares should be kept as low as possible to maximize ridership.

In addition to low fares, the attitude of transit operators is important in attracting people; and, in my opinion, AC Transit appears to have bus drivers with relatively high morale.

Manuel Gonzalez is the kind of driver that helps make public transportation work. Because he is always upbeat and concerned, he helps us start our work with a positive attitude every morning. AC Transit has a lot of good bus drivers, but Manuel is exceptional.

John van Heusden
San Francisco

I would like to compliment two fine employees of AC Transit: Transportation Supervisor Lloyd Hadden and Driver Yolanda Scruggs.

I find Yolanda handles the heavy morning traffic with a maximum of “cool!” and always shows a friendly and helpful attitude toward the customers. I must say that Lloyd Hadden has always been friendly and very positive toward his work (at Transbay Terminal), toward me as an individual, and toward the customers.

I hope you will let both know of my personal satisfaction with their on-the-job performance!

Thomas Testa
Alameda

While riding from BART Walnut Creek to Dublin, I apparently suffered a seizure. It was an incident which had never happened before; and I do not, according to the doctors, anticipate it happening again.

My reason for writing is to praise the quick, compassionate actions of Gary Wyke. Emergency equipment was there within a few minutes. The next day when I boarded the same bus, several fellow riders commented to me on how efficiently he handled a potentially dangerous situation.

Deborah Wood
East Bay

Driver Edmond DiTullio on the F Line is absolutely outstanding, emphatically first-rate. Having caught his buses for many months, I have become well acquainted with his special flair. Humor, skill and intelligence: these make (him) exceptional.

Moreover, he drives deftly and strategically; it’s clear that he’s constantly assessing traffic conditions and evaluating the most effective way to respond. He is also unusually alert to road conditions.

Bonnie Baskin
Berkeley

I want you to know that your bus driver, Vince Briganti, has been exceptionally courteous to me and other passengers on various occasions.

Dario Meniketti
Albany

New committee will track service status

A new committee of the Board of Directors convened this month to review a new format for comprehensive reports on bus service, and the maintenance, material-supply, and personnel activities which support operations.

Director Roy Nakadegawa chairs the new Operations and Maintenance Committee, which will meet regularly to discuss:

- The status of on-street service.
- Availability of personnel to operate and maintain bus service.
- Production levels at the new Central Maintenance (CMC) remanufacturing facility.
- Effectiveness of purchasing and warehousing activities, in support of fleet maintenance.

Operations Programming and Analysis Manager Diane Nygaard introduced to Directors a series of charts illustrating the current situation and recent progress — statistics such as miles between road calls, total bus availability, total driver and mechanic availability, and Central Stores performance. The tables summarize the role of detailed data now being tabulated and collated by the District’s management information systems.

“These charts show AC Transit’s current status in vital functional areas and they clearly indicate the ‘get well’ target dates for areas where we have problems,” noted Acting General Manager Nat Gage.

Two of the charts show subjects of particular interest and concern, according to Nygaard — the total pool of available buses (850 coaches under ideal conditions, but about 90 fewer now because of breakdowns) and the levels of bus and bus-component production achieved at CMC. “These are most critical,” she said. “They really tell the maintenance story, which largely governs the number of effective buses we can put into service.”

The statistics indicate a need for more effective bus maintenance and for increasing the available bus pool immediately toward the ultimate goal, a defect-free fleet sufficient to meet all pull-outs, plus providing 10 percent spares in the operating divisions. An additional small fleet of “Good Order” buses will be available at CMC, which also will rebuild the “Bad Order” coaches that require more than the level of preventive maintenance and servicing performed in the divisions.

Tracking trends

“This data, laid out in this manner, certainly shows where the progress is and where the problems are,” said Nakadegawa. “Isolating the important trends in this manner will make it easier for everybody, including the Directors, to understand our status and to address any weak points.”

Nakadegawa added that the new Operations and Maintenance Committee, which includes Directors Michael Fajans and Jerome G. “Jerry” Wiggins, will be reviewing the progress reports on a monthly basis.

COVER BOX — Among East Oakland District’s Maintenance people to compete in this year’s District Roadeo was Larry Holden (top) who, with wife Marianne, accepted congratulations on his first-place award from William J. Bettencourt, President of the Board of Directors. The title of top contender from the ranks of AC Transit drivers taking part in the August event was earned by Rick Vierra (below), accepting his trophy from Acting General Manager Nat Gage. Vierra qualified to represent the District at next month’s APTA Roadeo by scoring highest among two dozen drivers from all four operating facilities, accumulating 754 (of a possible 800) points for job and safety knowledge, appearance, and skill at wheeling full-sized coaches through a demanding obstacle course. In an unusual turn-of-events, East Oakland Division produced all six of the Roadeo winners.
Award recognizes Assistant GM’s work with East Bay youth

Assistant General Manager Robert J. Shamoon was among eight persons honored in San Francisco September 8 with “For Those Who Care Awards”. This year’s winners were selected from several hundred nominees received by KRON-TV, which hosted the event. Basis for nomination is individual effort in helping others, such as Shamoon’s work with Bay Area United Youth.

Roz Abrams, television newscaster, presented Shamoon’s official award, which included two $1000 checks — one for himself and one for donation to the organization of his choice. Shamoon directed that both checks go to Bay Area United Youth, for which he has been a prime mover in support of its efforts to land jobs and sponsor recreational opportunities for inner-city youths.

In presenting the winners, KRON-TV’s Vice President and General Manager James H. Smith said that the honorees represent “all the thousands of volunteers who give their time and energy to the service of others in the Bay Area...”. The proceedings were taped for TV and are scheduled for broadcast on Channel 4 October 9 at 9 p.m.

Directors meet with area group

Board members Linda Shepard, Roy Nakadegawa, and Jerry Wiggins joined the Fremont-Newark Transit Advisory Committee September 17 to review ridership and service. Since passenger surveys show that 51.1% of area riders are youths, the Directors and committee are exploring possible new locations for student monthly pass distribution.

Buses/BART back up Cal Bears

UC Berkeley football fans can get to Fall games the car-free, carefree, way by using AC Transit service — or a combination of bus and BART — to arrive at Memorial Stadium.

During home games, extra Line 51 buses will operate, making transfer connections in downtown Berkeley with BART and with mainline buses, including Line F transbay service. BART riders also may transfer to Line 51 (northbound to campus) from BART Rockridge (Concord-Daly City line).

Ad/info projects win awards

Two of this year’s AC Transit public information projects will be honored with awards during the October annual meeting of American Public Transit Association in Los Angeles. The projects were entered in APTA’s annual “Ad Wheel” competition.

First-place winner was the Marketing Department’s “Write Now or Walk Later” campaign of early 1985 — an eye-catching series of flyers and interior/exterior bus posters aimed at alerting passengers and the public to important mass transportation funding issues. An honorable-mention was earned in the newspaper/magazine advertisements category for the driver recruitment/institutional promotion project based on the theme “We’re Looking for People with Driving Ambition”.

Both winning entries were developed through Busse & Cummins, San Francisco, the District’s advertising agency.

FOCUS: Transit People and Projects

NEW HEADQUARTERS — Construction of AC Transit’s new General Offices is well underway at 1600 Franklin, downtown Oakland. The 10-story facility, scheduled to be completed in late 1986, is being developed and financed without public funds in a unique private capital joint venture. It will house some 300 District employees now working in crowded, outmoded offices in Oakland’s Latham Square Building.

PRC VISITORS — Transportation officials from the People’s Republic of China toured AC Transit facilities with David Yazhari (right) of Research and Planning. The guests, shown here in PBX/Information, General Office, were (from left) Zhou Yan Wen, Qi Bang Han and Jia Li Ming of Anhui Province in Northern China.

NEWARK IMPROVEMENT — Maintenance workers (from left) Stan Nusom, George Nagara, Mark Betita and Ben Martin, install a bus shelter at the Newark Community Center following request from City Councilman Al Nagy, who also chairs the Fremont-Newark Transit Advisory Committee to AC Transit. The structure also will serve residents of a senior housing complex, and others using Line 29.
Test-use will check small bus durability

A new little bus will be road-tested soon in selected neighborhoods throughout the East Bay to determine if they stand up to the rigors of regular transit service — unlike other types, tested in the past, which failed to survive the trials of transit usage.

The three 26-foot Neoplans incorporate many heavy duty transit features found in their larger counterparts, according to the manufacturer. Unique features which set them apart:

- Short overall length (compared to 35 or 40 feet for standard buses).
- Accommodation for up to 23 seated riders.
- Light 14,000 lb. curb weight (some 10,000 lbs. less than larger buses).
- A smaller drive train, with an 8.2 liter Detroit Diesel engine and four-speed automatic transmission, power steering and power brakes — including disc brakes on the front axles.

Riders and body-shop workers will appreciate the expansive windows — which, for ease of maintenance, are interchangeable in size and type with those found in the full-size coach. And the design has a very low floor for easy boarding and debarking.

Two former AC operators die

Deaths of two retired drivers have been reported recently.

Henry McPherson, 58, who retired in 1977 as an Emeryville Division driver, died September 4. At retirement, he had completed 13 years of service.

McPherson, whose home was in San Leandro, is survived by his widow, Mona Lisa, and stepson, Kenneth Mischa.

Anthony Costa, 82, who retired in 1968 after 23 years of transit service with AC Transit and its predecessor, died September 5 in San Jose. He began as an electrician in the Emeryville shop, then became a driver in 1958. He was working out of Seminary Division when he retired.

Costa is survived by his widow, Elsie.
Actions of the Board

At a regular meeting August 14, the Board of Directors:

• Adopted Final Draft Five-Year Plan Update for Fiscal Year 1986-90, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.
• Scheduled interviews with potential legislative representatives, financial consultants and set date for workshop on fares, on motion of Director Wiggins.

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At an adjourned regular meeting August 28, the Board of Directors:

• Approved new Standing Committee of the Board — Operations and Maintenance, on motion of Director Fajans (see story, Pg. 3).
• Authorized Acting General Manager to recruit for a number of approved personnel authorizations, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Approved one-year contract for legislative consultant services, with annual review, on motion of Director Wiggins.
• Approved contract for revenue sources consultants, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Approved a list of fare-adjustment alternatives, based on transbay fare increases, for discussion at scheduled September 10 public hearing on the subject, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Authorized Acting General Manager to issue Request for Proposal for repair of Cummins 903 engines, on motion of Director Rinehart.
• Approved resolution authorizing specified signatures on District warrants, on motion of Director Rinehart.

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

• Authorized specified attendance at American Public Transit Association annual meeting in Los Angeles October 6 - 10, on motion of Director Shepard.
• Approved further study in connection with the corridor assessment project; authorized Acting General Manager to solicit bids and to acquire equipment related to the Comprehensive Service Plan Analysis; and approved selected service reductions on Line C, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.