



transit-times



For the Good of Your Community

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A New Concept in Public Transit



AC Transit departed from accepted motor coach design this month and presented the first Freeway Train — an experimental articulated bus that can carry 77 passengers in unusual luxury and economical efficiency.

First model of its kind in the nation to be tested in public transit, the duobus has been assigned to transbay lines, where it is expected to provide increased satisfaction for present riders and attract new patrons to district service.

Shakedown Run

Before the experimental model took over a regular run, it was given a trial on the transbay Line N (MacArthur Blvd.) schedule March 14, with the public — including newspaper, radio and television representatives — invited aboard as first passengers.

The Freeway Train also was put on all-day exhibit at prominent locations in eight major East Bay cities and at the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco, with residents “welcomed aboard” for a personal look at the long, sleek and streamlined twin unit.

Among luxuries which attracted particular interest were:

- Padded bucket seats, finished in decorator colors of brown and orange.
- High-level viewing through picture windows, opening new vistas to even the most veteran of riders.
- An observation lounge, almost totally glass enclosed, with tables especially fitted to accommodate four-somes at cards.
- Subdued music from a hi fidelity system of 28 speakers — each individually volume-controlled.
- Newspaper vendor racks for the latest editions.
- Overhead storage racks for hats, coats and packages.
- Three-tiered lighting, and a mounted wall clock.

The bus driver and a district “stewardess” were on duty during the two-week exhibit period, to keep the public supplied with illustrated folders which describe the bus and its advantages, and to answer questions.

(Continued on page 2)



DELUXE TRANSIT — Luxuries offered by Freeway Train include storage racks, card tables. Coach bends in middle.

Experimental Freeway Train Unveiled

(Continued from Page 1)

As a welcome surprise, complimentary coffee was served to viewers in the different cities through the courtesy of Hills Bros. Coffee — carrying on a company hospitality tradition dating back to 1878.

Civic leaders, on a state, county and city level, as well as business representatives, received special invitations to view the bus in downtown Oakland or at prominent sites in their home cities.

First day riders on March 14 received a souvenir ticket, which recorded they were among inaugural passengers.

Most frequent question concerned how "it works."

The Freeway Train swivels in the middle, permitting relatively short turns and efficient maneuverability. It is powered by a new 262 horsepower Cummins diesel engine and has a new transmission, with a retarder that helps braking and improves safety. "Torsilastic" suspension for each wheel provides exceptional riding smoothness.

Because of the height — 10 feet, 10 inches — wheels are completely below the passenger compartment and no wheel housings interfere with comfortable seating.

A two-way radio system provides instant communication between the operator and the dispatch center, adding to service efficiency.

Purchased from Continental Trailways, the articulated unit was developed for district experimentation by the engineering firm of DeLeuw Cather & Co.

The re-designing included a "new look" for the outside, as well as the inside. The main exterior section of the 60-foot long bus is of gold anodized aluminum, set off by a white top. Green and persimmon were used to highlight the gleaming exterior. The bus carries the district's name, in large letters, and its own number: XMC77, signifying "experimental coach."

The front of the bus also was given a "face lifting," in streamlined design.

A Reluctant Hero

Operator Braves Fire to Help Others

How often does a man have to be tested by fire? Or prove he can "do what he has to do."

Bus driver I. W. Washington, 26, of 517 44th St., Oakland, might feel that he's faced fire — and been under fire — often enough.

But he didn't hesitate to pull a crippled man from a burning car and to put out the flames, a short time after he started to work for AC Transit.

He suffered blistered hands and some matching painful memories, adding to a dread of fire that nine years ago compelled him to risk his life.

Washington was awarded the Carnegie Medal for heroism and the National Court of Honor, highest award of the Boy Scouts of America, after he saved six children from suffocation in Houston, Tex., on June 15, 1957.

Compelling him, he believes, was a fear of fire dating back to childhood, when he watched helplessly as a truck driver burned to death.

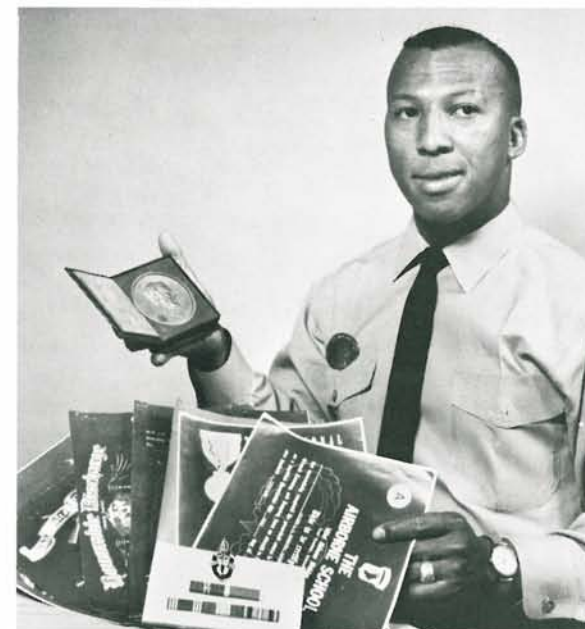
Driving home from a movie in Houston, Washington smelled smoke and found the rear of a building on fire. He knocked on doors to awaken inhabitants, and behind one locked door, "heard some kids inside,"

"They had been left alone and were too scared, I guess, to open the door. I went around to a window and smashed it with my fist and went in . . . they tried to hide from me and even threw things at me.

In all, Washington made three trips into the smoldering room, carrying out the six youngsters before he fell unconscious over the window sill and was pulled out himself, to be hospitalized with cuts and smoke inhalation.

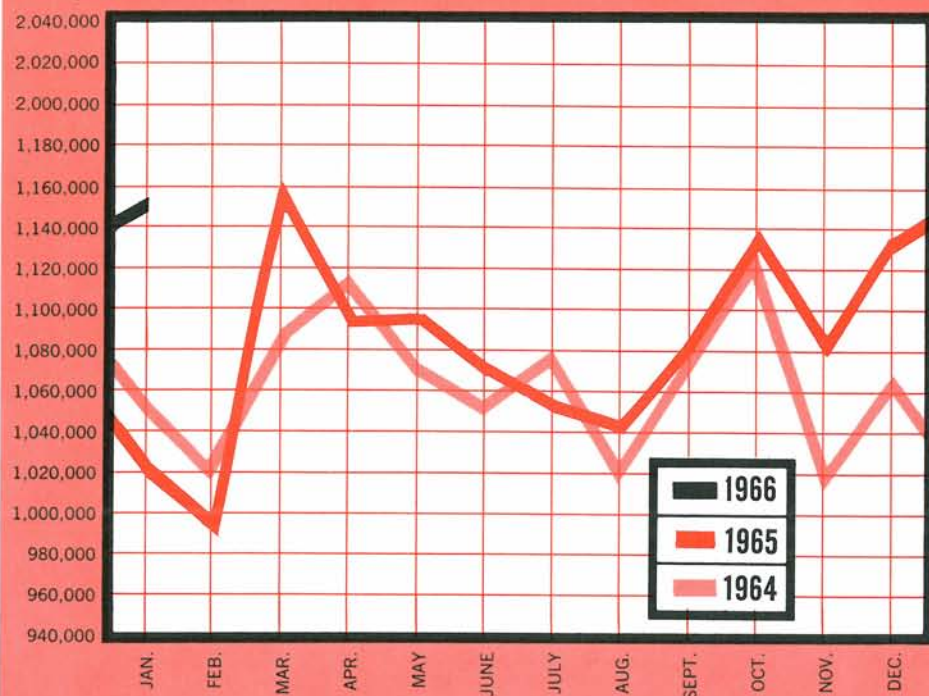
Similarly, Washington moved into action in Oakland recently when he saw a burning car at San Pablo and Stanford Aves. while he was between runs. Trapped in the car, with his wheel chair in the back, was W. J. Summers, 1015½ 47th St., a victim of arthritis and a heart condition.

Washington lifted Summers from the car, then put out the flames. According to the operator, he got well acquainted with fire of another kind in Vietnam, winning the Bronze Star, Silver Star and Purple Heart while serving with the 101st Airborne Division as a paratrooper. A staff sergeant in the reserve, Washington keeps "in" with things as a member of skydiving and skindiving clubs.



FOR VALOR—I. W. Washington adds "brass" of his new AC Transit badge to his Carnegie Medal and other tributes to past heroism.

AC/transit PASSENGER REVENUE...COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS YEAR



The district's financial stability showed a gain during January, boosted by an increase in riders and by a raise in fares for children and commuters.

Passenger revenue figures for the month totaled \$1,148,547, an increase of \$124,957 or 12.2 per cent over collection of \$1,023,590 reached during the first month of the year in 1965. Riders carried on East Bay and transbay lines totaled 4,416,066, up .84 per cent over the 4,379,141 who rode with the district in January, 1965. Commute book sales totaled \$186,559, an increase of 7.3 per cent compared to sales of 173,889 in the same month, a year ago.

The district operated 1,939,811 miles of scheduled service, an increase of 63,289 miles or 3.4 per cent over the year-ago figure of 1,876,522.

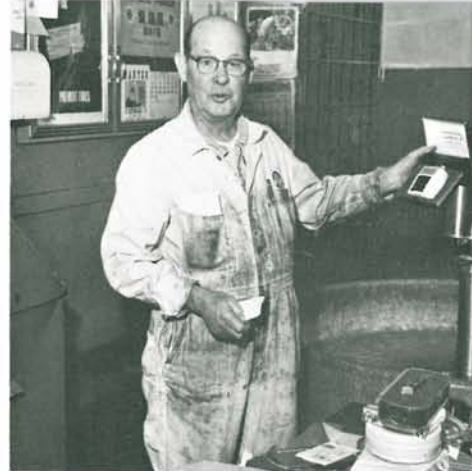
Total income of \$1,384,463 was sufficient to cover operational costs, which reached \$1,202,349; an increase of \$96,423 or 8.7 per cent, plus amortization and depreciation. It did not, however, provide for full bond debt requirements. Deficit for the month totaled \$4,667.

Nationally, the industry indicated a riding decrease in January of over 11 per cent.

Masonic Club Installs New Officers

New officers of the AC Transit Key Level Club were installed this month, with George A. Walden taking over as president. Others include G. L. Harrison, vice president; L. H. Minear,

secretary, and B. V. Brower, treasurer. The board of governors includes Melvin Young, Reginald Botell, Everett Towers, D. J. Potter, W. E. Holbrook, J. C. Chapman and H. K. Peterson.



WELL DONE — John Chapman celebrates retirement at maintenance department party. Bus driver Levurn Ferris receives pin from transportation superintendent J. D. Goodman, at right.



Retiring Workers End Transit Career

John C. Chapman, 65, turned in his tools for fishing gear this month, after over 48 years of transit service.

One of the district's real "old timers," Chapman went to work for the Key System in January, 1918, as an apprentice machinist at the shops, following the footsteps of his father, a veteran motorman and mechanic.

In 1930, Chapman became a foreman, heading up the machine shop, and electrical, air brake, truck and blacksmith shops at different times. He also was night foreman on the inspections pits at the Oakland yard, remaining there until the trains went off in 1958.

Before Chapman officially retired, the maintenance crew at Emeryville Division gave him a sendoff that included a number of gifts, enough cake for the gang and presentation of his retirement pin.

E. A. Towers, general superintendent of maintenance, presented the pin, while Frank Johnson acted as master of ceremonies for the farewell party.

Chapman plans to roll his trailer from 11408 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, to a mobile home park on the Sacra-

mento River near Corning, where he'll "home base" with Harold Hayden, former superintendent of the Oakland yard, and another fishing companion. Future plans depend on "where they're biting."

A pension also was approved for Levurn W. Ferris, 65, 1067 Evelyn Ave., Albany, who went to work as a street car motorman in 1945 and switched to bus driving in 1947. A veteran on Line 51 (College - Santa Clara), Ferris received a 12-year pin for his safe driving record, as well as a retirement pin from J. D. Goodman, transportation superintendent at Emeryville Division.

Miss Corrine Poe, 65, of 66 Albion St., San Francisco, concluded 21 years as a ticket seller, working at the Transbay Transit Terminal. She went to work in 1944 and spent her transportation career in San Francisco.

Treat Time for Drivers

Drivers from Emeryville Division won the safe driving contest in January with a tally of 12,689 miles per accident — 89 miles over the goal and enough for traditional treat, free coffee and doughnuts.



Our 'Stockholders' Write

... I would like to tell you about one of your drivers. His name is **Harvey Jackson**. He is so courteous to everyone, always says goodnight. So many drivers get complaints, but I have never run into one yet that hasn't been nice ...

Mrs. Blandina Logan
El Cerrito

* * *

... this is a register of "compliment" rather than one of complaint. As a fare of AC Transit many times a week, I would like to commend the drivers of your lines on their courtesy and good nature at all times ... I realize how trying the public can be at times, but your employees seem to handle the situation very well ... on many occasions, I have seen them do a kindness, or favor, to people ...

Al Howard
Oakland

* * *

... I would like to compliment you, and your staff, for the excellent service rendered me ... not only are your drivers extremely polite, very cautious and capable at the wheels of those huge buses, but they also are very intelligent in their manner of speech and choice of words ... They are most certainly well-trained and thoroughly qualified to meet the public half-way in the most harrowing, nerve-wracking job imaginable!

Judd Jorgensen
San Francisco

I wish to tell you of my gratitude for the honesty and integrity of some of your employees ... principally one driver, **J. W. Pryor**. I left my purse on the bus and he found it and turned it in to the office ... coupled with your efficient help in the office, I feel you are most fortunate in having such men in your employ ... My faith in humanity was indeed strengthened by this experience!

Mrs. M. Miller
Oakland

* * *

In a number of years of riding your buses, I have never come across so cheerful and pleasant a bus driver as one I had last night (**H. W. Gerlach**) ... Not only was he cheerful with the passengers, he also seemed to enjoy the driving very much. I happened to sit near the front and it was a joy to watch him ... he was not at all reckless, though ... I hope you will let him know how much I enjoyed riding with him.

Lesley Linebarger
Berkeley

* * *

Please put a gold star against your operator's name (**L. W. Davis**) ... he was most helpful and kind when I was on wrong Berkeley buses and this little old lady is appreciative ...

Mrs. M. Bernhard
San Francisco

Death Takes Toll Among Transit Veterans

Workers of many years standing, some of them on the job and some of them part of the transit past, were taken by death this month.

The group included bus driver **Lyle P. Hale**, 60, of 2538 Barclay Ave., Union City, who received his retirement pin from **T. P. McLean**, transportation superintendent at Seminary Division, a few days before his death on Feb. 24.

The operator, who started work in 1936, had been granted a disability

pension effective March 1. He worked on the one-man street cars for 12 years before becoming a driver in 1948.

Death also unexpectedly took **Mrs. Mabel Firchow**, senior account clerk, who as "accounts receivable and payable" had been writing the checks to

pay the bills in the treasurer-control-

ler's department for the past four years.

Mrs. Firchow, who died on Feb. 22, had been a member of the accounting department for 23 years. She made her home in Napa with her husband, **Fred**.

William R. Hill, 89, of 1315 95th Ave., Oakland, who was pensioned in Sept., 1947, died on Feb. 20.

He entered service in 1916 as a street car operator and in 1933 became a watchman, retiring from that position at Emeryville Division.

Dominick Marini, 78, of 2026 Dwight Way, Berkeley, pensioned June 1, 1939, died on Jan. 6. He spent nearly 21 years as a street car operator before retirement.

Two former workers died on Jan. 16—**Sheldon A. Dunbar**, of 16158 Yale Ave., San Lorenzo, a bus driver from May, 1946, until last August, and former Supervisor **Harry Fowler**, who worked for the Key System from 1948 through Feb., 1956.

E. L. Estacaille, 63, 1855 70th Ave., Oakland, who worked on the trains as a motorman and then as a ticket collector at the Transbay Transit Terminal, also died in January.



T. P. McLean, left, and Lyle Hale

District Grants First Military Leave

Memories of other wars took on actuality this month as the district granted its first military leave of the Vietnam conflict to **Roger McCluney**, 20, vault clerk at the General Offices.

McCluney, of 2405 Yaffey Dr., San Leandro, was accepted for the Army's officer candidate school and left for the initial part of his training early in March—but not before fellow workers in the treasury department staged a farewell party and cut a cake which bore two American flags and the message: "Good Luck, Roger."

A recent graduate in business administration at California State College at Hayward, **McCluney** decided

he wanted to fulfill his Army obligation—not as a draftee, but as an officer.

He had worked for the district for almost five years, dovetailing his hours to carry a full program at college. His next goal is "to support President Johnson's policy in Vietnam—my personal feelings are not important—I'm ready to obey orders," **McCluney** explained.

After that he intends to return to the district and to continue his studies to obtain a master's degree.



Roger McCluney



Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting Feb. 23, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized Public Information Manager to attend regional conference of American Transit Association, on motion of Director Rinehart.

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At the regular meeting March 9, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized preparation of specifications and advertising for bids to equip 300 buses with two-way radio communications system, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Authorized General Manager to apply to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a capital grant of matching funds to purchase 30 new buses, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Approved service extensions on Lines 55 (Dutton Ave.), 90 (Santa Clara St.) and 92 (Calaroga Ave.), and inauguration of service on Sequoia Rd.,

Federal Grant Sought to Buy New Buses

The district will seek federal funds to purchase another 30 new buses this year to keep pace with operational requirements.

Directors authorized General Manager K. F. Hensel to apply to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department for a capital grant of matching funds toward purchase of coaches.

Financial aid is essential to take advantage of an option to buy the coaches

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Oakland, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Authorized memorandum of understanding with Contra Costa County in connection with county land use and transportation planning study, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

at the same price paid for a like number of buses last year, Hensel pointed out.

Board action followed a report by the finance committee that reserve funds are available to cover only half of the purchase price.

Governmental aid would enable the district to add another 30 buses to the fleet. To date, the district has spent \$10,876,000 on new equipment.

Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District
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