

RTD Director Ruth Richter: A Lady In Transportation

Ruth Richter, RTD's newest board member, is a lady who has spent most of her life in the field of transportation and so, when appointed to the Board by L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley, she had an idea of what she was getting into.

For all her experience, however, she admits: "I didn't realize the magnitude of the District and its entire operation."

Like the other directors, Mrs. Richter found that being on the board "takes a lot more time than I anticipated," but, she adds, "there are a lot of things that need getting done."

Mrs. Richter got her early, first-hand transit experience as a girl growing up in Illinois where her parents owned a trucking company; now, she and her husband, Jay, are owners-operators of a cycle dealership in Winnetka in the San Fernando Valley.

One of the first things Mrs. Richter did was take a tour of the District operating and maintenance facilities and she liked what she saw. "I was amazed at the neatness and cleanliness of the shops," she said and adds, "I'm also very impressed by the dedication of all the employees from the men and women in the divisions to the executive staff."

As a lady who knows the nuts and bolts of the transportation business, Mrs. Richter also is familiar with dispatching and scheduling, having worked as a truck dispatcher in Illinois. She understands some of the operational problems involved, such as getting a steering

mechanism for the double deck buses. Mrs. Richter also comments that "there is a lot of similarity between trucking and bus driving. Similar problems, pressures and people."

Along with her transportation experience, Mrs. Richter brings to her seat on the board governmental, civic and other advisory experience.

As a board member who is also a resident of the San Fernando Valley, Mrs. Richter tries to follow up on complaints, and keep tabs on the plans for two more divisions in the east and west San Fernando Valley.

As a member of the Finance and Surface Operations and Advance Planning committees, she works to keep up with the voluminous information that is sent to the board members for their review and study.

Mrs. Richter is a strong advocate of public transportation and a strong supporter of the San Fernando Valley grid system. She is convinced that if people realized the convenience of public transportation, such as commuter bus lines to downtown L.A., they would become staunch supporters of public transportation. "If they used the bus for one week for their routine trips, they would realize the convenience and economy of public transportation." Speaking of transportation in the San Fernando Valley, she adds: "I think that the grid system in the Valley is fantastic. It is serving the people and ridership is continually going up."



RTD Director Ruth Richter applies a wrench to an RTD bus engine during a recent tour of District facilities.

Although she had resigned from two of her civic organizations, she still keeps her membership in the Associated Chambers of Commerce of the San Fernando Valley; the Valley-wide Committee on Streets

and Highways; the Mayor's Valley Transportation Advisory Committee and is an ex officio board member of the Industrial Association of the San Fernando Valley.

Diamond Lane Drivers (continued from page 1)



Division 6 operators, from left: Carl Haley, James Cain and Gurson Levitt are among the District's Diamond Lane Drivers.



The Diamond Lane has its share of lady operators, such as Beverly Huskey, center, and Mary Collins, second from right. With them are: Billie Hawkins, far left; Mary Charles, second from left; and Fannie Ellis, far right, all from Division 6.

Donald Barnes: Bus Operator and Filmmaker

Division 7 operator Donald Barnes is a busy man these days. Between his job as an operator during the week and his weekend stints as a movie projectionist, he is in the midst of winding up the filming of his first feature film which he hopes to enter in a USC Cinema workshop.

Barnes has been around films ever since he was a teenager when, with the urging of his teacher, he learned how to operate a projector. Now he belongs to two locals of the Motion Picture Projectionists Union in addition to being a bus operator. Barnes had previously done two 30-minute films of friends' weddings but this is his first feature length film and is an ambitious project.

The 70-minute color film is a detective murder mystery. Barnes adapted the script from a radio play and acted as producer, director, cameraman and casting director.

For his actors, Barnes used nine of his friends including several district operators who agreed to help him out, including Leilia Bailey, extra division dispatcher; Philmore Crawford, extra division dispatcher; Harold Kenneybrew, Division 6 operator; Jessie Davis, Division 7 operator; and Barnes himself, who plays the role of a detective. Briefly told, the story is about a young woman who murders her old, wealthy husband and then tries to pin the blame on the handyman. There is also another murder in the plot. Why did Barnes choose this theme for his movie which is entitled, "Greed"? "I wanted something that was a challenge and that was hard to do," he explains.

The locations used were Barnes' home in Baldwin Park; Inglewood; a scenic hill overlooking the city; inside a car and in front of a city hall.

Sounding typically like a director, Barnes says of his actors: "Everyone did a tremendous job and had more talent

than I thought. The directing was easy, the actors had talent they didn't know they had, and I had to bring it out."

Barnes found the editing to be the hardest and most complicated job, followed closely by the chore of getting everyone coordinated and organized. Also, the processing and the lighting were difficult.

Barnes credits his wife, Felecie, who gave some advice and acted as executive producer. In all, the film cost Barnes about \$1,000 out of his own pocket.

Though making films is a lot of work, Barnes is already making preliminary plans to do a feature film about a bus operator. He says of his experience on "Greed": "I thought it was a good experience and that I did well. I learned a lot — and the next film will be even better!"



Operator and Filmmaker Barnes on the 'Set'