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HEAD



WAY

Southern California Rapid Transit District

Volume 2 Number 4 June 11, 1975

RTD Achieves Another "First"

The Goal: Total Access to RTD Buses For All Passengers

The District achieved another national "first" on May 7 when the RTD Board of Directors passed a resolution requiring all new buses to meet rigorous, new accessibility standards. RTD now becomes the first major transit agency in U.S. history to require that all its new buses provide improved access for passengers by means of a wheel chair lift or ramp, a lower floor and wider doors.

"These new buses will be better for everyone, not just elderly and handicapped persons," says Byron E. Cook, RTD president. "Passengers carrying packages, pregnant women, small children, and everyone else will be able to board our buses more easily."

A unique innovative element in the RTD board decision is that the District is issuing performance specifications—not design specifications—since none of the major bus manufacturers in the United States is now tooled up to assemble such a bus.

"We have been assured by the federal government, however, that Urban Mass Transportation Administration will pick up

80 percent of the total purchase price of these buses if—and that's a big "if"—we can get them built," said Jack R. Gilstrap, RTD general manager. "Our current operating plan for the next fiscal year calls for the purchase of additional buses beyond those out to bid now, so it should be financially rewarding for any American bus manufacturer that meets our specifications."

The District's drive to eventually obtain a fleet of "accessible" buses gained momentum in October 1974 when its board of directors passed a resolution affecting all future bus purchases. Soon after, RTD appointed a full-time staff coordinator for the project and hired a consultant, Dennis Cannon, to advise the District in elderly and handicapped affairs—another first for a major bus operator.

After specifications for the buses are reviewed by UMTA, the bids will be opened for 45 days. According to sources, manufacturers have indicated that it will take 17 to 21 months to deliver the newly-designed buses.

After 44 Years in Public Transportation



The picture above makes it clear that men and women RTD management trainees are treated with complete equality. Management trainee Diane Moran is shown taking her turn at getting better acquainted with an RTD bus engine during her three-month stay at South Park Shops.

Like Baseball?

If you've answered "yes" to this question, you'll want to be sure to circle Sunday, July 6, on your calendar.

July 6 has been proclaimed "RTD Day" at Dodger Stadium and a group of seats have been reserved directly behind home plate for RTD employees, their families and friends.

Join your fellow employees for (some) beer, hot dogs and a great game between the Dodgers and the Giants beginning at 1:15 p.m. The gates at Dodger Stadium open at 11:30 a.m. and Dodger team members will be available for autographs in booths around the stadium from 12 noon to 12:30.

Parking is \$1, but for those wishing to avoid the parking hassle, RTD Line 177 will provide service from Eighth and Main streets in downtown L.A. directly to the stadium. Line 177 travels up Main Street to Macy Street, and on to the stadium via Sunset Boulevard and Elysian Park Avenue. Passengers may board at any bus stop along the route. Service will be provided at least every 20 minutes, and up to every six minutes for heavily-attended games.

Tickets for "RTD Day" will be on sale Friday, June 2 through Friday, June 27 in the Cashier's Office, Room 722, 1060 So. Broadway, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The price will be \$2.50 each (cash only, please).

Come early on Sunday, July 6, meet your favorite Dodgers, and visit with fellow RTD employees. It'll be a great afternoon and an exciting game!

John Curtis Retires as Chief of Surface Planning



Curtis was honored with a special resolution from the Board of Directors on April 16 at the RTD Board meeting, thanking him for his years of devoted service to RTD. RTD President Byron C. Cook presented the award.

Curtis was also feted with a retirement party at RTD headquarters on April 26.

"Transportation is an exciting, challenging business."

When John Curtis, former RTD manager of rapid transit and surface planning, retired on April 24, after 30 years of service with the District, he took with him a wealth of experience in public transportation.

Curtis was born in Vermont and studied at what is now the State University of New York. He began his long career in transportation in Albany in 1931 when he joined the United Traction Co., which later became the Capital Transit District. Starting as a mail clerk, he later joined the accounting department.

In 1943 he came to Los Angeles and worked as assistant research engineer for the Pacific Electric Railway and stayed to work for all of RTD's predecessor agencies.

At RTD he became director of planning and engineering in 1966, and three years later, Curtis was appointed manager of rapid transit and surface planning, responsible for planning all new and modified bus services and routes.

During his years of service, he has seen public transportation change from "dollars and cents operations where whether you added new services depended on how these services would increase revenue" to a public enterprise supported by public funds. He notes that while RTD has been a public agency since its inception, it was not until 1970 that the District received any external financial support—a six-month Los Angeles County subsidy from a half-cent transaction and use tax.

Curtis says that decisions on new transit services today involve considering new issues, such as how public transportation can help deal with specific community problems including the social needs of the communities and people it serves. He says new factors such as limiting congestion and pollution, and conserving energy must now be considered, as well as questions of land use. "It's a different ball game today," he points out.

"It's an exciting profession because you're in a business that functions around-the-clock, and it's a challenge to keep an operation going around-the-clock."

After 44 years in the transportation business, Curtis says his plans are "mainly to relax." However, he concludes, "Just keeping up with what's going on in the transportation business can be a full-time hobby."

RTD's Division 3-10: "Fast Lines, Good Runs, Nice People"



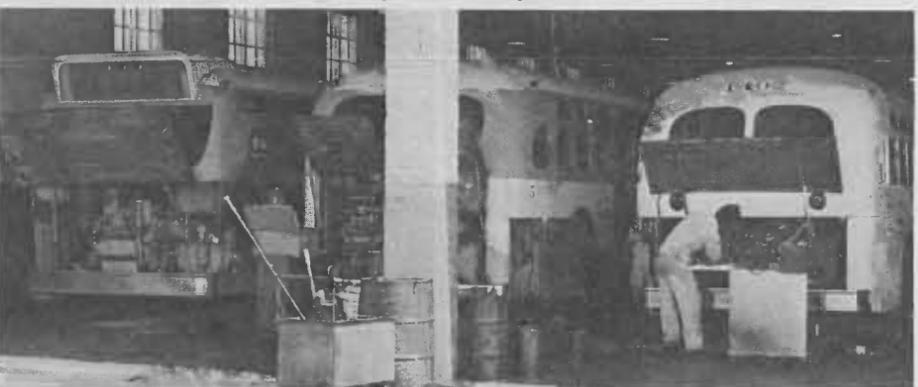
Operators Billy Unutoa and William Patterson strike up a happy pose in front of the main building. Unutoa has been at RTD since 1968. Patterson came to RTD in 1951, and has been at the division two years.



Operator Frank Hughes flips the grid sign as he gets ready for his run. Hughes has been at Division 3-10 and RTD since 1973.



Division 3-10's roomy trainroom is one of the largest in the RTD system.



Three buses await engine inspection at Division 3-10 maintenance building. Outside of South Park Shops, Division 3-10 has the largest maintenance facility.

This is the second in a series of articles profiling major RTD operating units. A major unit will be described in each forthcoming issue of *Headway* to inform readers of the interdependence among parts of RTD's total operation.

RTD's Highland Park facility houses Divisions 3 and 10. This important facility was the site of this year's general system shake-up. It is the District's most centrally-located division, and the largest in terms of size and facilities.

Located at 630 W. Avenue 28, the site was originally an old L.A. Railway division. It was converted to bus operation in 1955. In 1959, Divisions 3 and 10 became separate operating Divisions, and in 1962, Division 10 acquired several lines from the defunct Glendale City Lines. In 1967, when RTD acquired Pasadena City Lines, the Pasadena routes were given to Division 10.

The two Divisions share the same trainroom, maintenance facilities and bus fleet and are under the same manager. But the two divisions operate in totally distinct and separate geographic areas.

Division 10, one of RTD's largest, has 243 operators and 19 lines, serving the Pasadena area, and the north central suburban areas of Los Angeles.

Lines 70 and 71 go from Pasadena to

downtown Los Angeles via Fair Oaks Avenue and Oaknoll roads respectively. Within Pasadena, local RTD lines include 107, 109, 110 and 119, serving Alhambra, Arcadia and Altadena. Line 770 is the highly-successful Pasadena Park/Ride facility.

Line 80 covers Emery Park, line 79 serves the El Sereno area, line 87 goes from Ramona Gardens to East Los Angeles, and line 78 covers the Silver Lake District.

Lines 19, 20 and 22 cover the Glendale area to Pasadena and Burbank including La Canada and Montrose.

Several Division 10 lines serve the Hollywood area: line 31 goes from Pasadena via Hollywood Blvd. to La Brea; line 23 leaves from Vermont and Hollywood for the Griffith Park Zoo, and line 65 operates from Highland Park to Beverly Blvd. and Vermont Ave.

Two of the lines cover South Central Los Angeles, including line 26, which goes from Dozier and Rowan to Pico and Rimpau—the most heavily traveled line in the District. Line 50 goes to Florence and Crenshaw from Pasadena (Ave.) and Avenue 20.

Division 3, with 218 operators and seven lines serves Eagle Rock, Highland Park and the Central L.A. business district. Division 3 also provides the famous mini-bus service in the heart of busy downtown L.A.

Line 5 goes from Union Station and the L.A. County Jail to the South Bay Shopping

Center at Artesia and Hawthorne and serves Inglewood, Lennox and Hawthorne. Line 6 goes from Eagle Rock and York Boulevards to 120th Street and Vermont. Lines 7 and 25 start in Eagle Rock at Colorado and go to San Pedro and Rosecrans, and 8th and Vermont respectively.

Line 75 travels via Venice Blvd. from Echo Park to Ocean Park in Santa Monica. Line 24 carries passengers from Olive and 9th Streets to Sunset and Laurel Canyon.

Division 3 shares several of its lines with other divisions, but none with its housemate, Division 10. Line 75 is shared with Division 6, line 7 with Division 2 and line 5 and 6 with Division 5. Division 10 shares line 50 with Division 5.

George C. Michaels, a 36-year veteran with RTD, is manager of both Divisions 3 and 10. Before that, he was manager at Division 8. The Division is open 24 hours and has a crew of six dispatchers and one stenographer.

In addition to housing the two Divisions, the Highland Park facility is also headquarters for RTD's Chief Instructor, William L. Packard, and houses training facilities used by RTD's student-operators and supervisors.

The facility's fleet of 244 buses is kept in operation by a crew of 123 mechanics and utility people headed by Robert

Clenard—a 28-year veteran with RTD. Before coming to the facility a year-and-a-half ago, he had been at division 8 and before that, spent 26 years at Division 1.

According to Clenard, 216 buses are kept in full running order. At least half of the buses are "trippers" and 146 buses are kept out all day on base-runs.

The senior operator at division 10 is Walter C. Litzsinger, who has been at Division 10 since 1933. The senior operator at Division 3, Robert Loewing, has been there since 1944.

Larry Campbell, an operator who has been with RTD and at Division 10 for a year drives line 110 and says, "I like my run and I know all the people."

D. O. Voss, an operator out of Division 10 for seven years, drives line 26—the heaviest in the District—Doss says "Division 10 is close to home for me, and I like working Pico Boulevard. It's a fast line."

J. F. Veinot, at Division 3 for four years, says of his run—line 25—"It's a good line. I know the passengers and it goes through my neighborhood. For me, working line 25 is like being home."

George Herrera, out of Division 3 for one year and on the extra board adds: "There are a lot of different runs, I get a chance to put in a lot of hours on the extra board and," he adds, "I like the variety."

For Warren and Pat, Happiness is Being Married to Each Other—and Working for RTD

Two RTD bus operators recently got married—to each other.

Wedding bells rang for Warren Ray, operator at Division 9 and the former Patricia Hill, Division 3 operator, at the "Little Chapel of the Flowers" on Saturday, May 10 in Covina. Ray, who has been with RTD 2½ years is an operator on the extra board. Hill drives Line 5.

Warren and Pat met each other four years ago when Patricia worked as a groomer at a dog grooming parlor Warren operated, while also working for RTD. After Warren started working as an RTD bus operator, he persuaded Patricia to apply. Patricia agreed to apply, she says, "because I like to drive, but I didn't think my chances of getting hired were very good, because there were few women operators then. I applied mainly to keep Warren quiet. When RTD called me in October, I was really surprised, I started working that November."

The Rays both hope to eventually work out of the El Monte Division, although Patricia says that her seniority, at this point, is too low and will not permit her to transfer

to El Monte. The newlyweds, however, will live in Covina, which is closer to Division 9 than Division 3.

Patricia Hill Ray plans to "work for quite a while" after she is married, because she likes her job and enjoys working for RTD. There are disadvantages to having two bus operators in the family says Patricia, "The hours are long, and it's difficult to arrange to have the same hours off in the evening, since we both work long hours."

But working at the same job also makes them closer, according to Patricia "We understand each other's problems and pressures. If I wasn't an operator myself, I wouldn't understand why Warren isn't able to spend very much time at home. I wouldn't understand the hours he puts on the extra board."

Besides their work as bus drivers, the Rays also share interest in breeding and showing dogs. Currently, their "family" includes five canine members: a Welsh Corgi and two German Shepards—all three are currently show dogs—a Great Dane, a former show dog, and a toy poodle.



Patricia and Warren Ray came down to Transit Headquarters, 1060 So. Broadway, to pose for this picture two days before their wedding.

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RTD Appoints "Consultant on Handicapped"

RTD recently appointed its first handicapped consultant for handicapped programs as part of an effort to better serve the transportation needs of the elderly and handicapped.

The new consultant is Dennis Cannon, of Northridge, who himself, is confined to a wheelchair.

A native of Los Angeles, Cannon holds a bachelor of science degree in physics from California State University at Northridge, where he is completing graduate work in educational psychology.

He is president of the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the California Association of the Physically Handicapped, and a member of the transportation committee of the Mayor's San Fernando Valley Advisory Council. Cannon also belongs to the planning committee of the Los Angeles Advisory Council for the Handicapped and the Cal State Northridge Advisory Committee for the Handicapped.

Cannon will analyze all District facilities used by the public and RTD employees to make sure these facilities are easily usable by the handicapped and elderly. He also will advise the District technical and engineering staff on transportation needs and problems of the elderly and handicapped.

Cannon says: "I have become increasingly pleased with the District's response to the special needs of the handicapped and elderly persons." He points out that if RTD reaches its goal of having



Dennis Cannon

all new buses meet specifications to accommodate the elderly and handicapped. "It will be an extreme feather in the District's cap. Few other District's in the country are attempting to do this, and no other district has taken steps to make the transportation system usable by everybody."

Cannon says the goal is to give handicapped persons "total accessibility" to buses. This would include, among other modifications, lowering the floors of buses and widening bus doors.

AFTER 34 YEARS RTD Driver Locates His Mom



Albert McKnight, left, is pictured with his mother and 24-year old half-brother Kenny. During his two-week reunion with his mother, McKnight met all his maternal relatives and got a chance to spend this year's "Mother's Day" with his mother.

It took RTD Division 1 operator Albert McKnight a long time, but he achieved a life-long goal last March when he received a long-distance phone call from Ohio that ended a 34-year search for his mother.

That conversation with his mother ended years of searching, questioning, checking genealogical charts and following every lead or clue—no matter how slight—that came his way.

McKnight was born in Kentucky. When he was two years old, his mother took him to Ohio, following her separation from McKnight's father. However, he needed an operation his mother's family couldn't afford. His father's family could afford the medical expense and offered to keep Albert for a few months for the operation and recuperation period.

When Albert's mother returned for him a few months later, she learned that Albert's father had taken legal custody of him. Soon after that, Albert's father moved to Florida, and eventually, to California.

Over the years, McKnight wondered about his mother and what traits he might have inherited from her.

McKnight's wife, Lynette, encouraged him to continue his search. After trying other ways to find his mother, including tracing genealogical charts, he tried calling likely telephone numbers across the country. One such call was to a Wayne Riley in Brooksville, Indiana. Wayne Riley turned out to be McKnight's cousin. When McKnight asked him if he knew a Molly Jane Riley, his mother's maiden name, he said "Yes, she's my aunt." Riley's aunt was McKnight's mother!

Riley told him his mother had remarried. Hesitant to intrude into the new life his mother had made and uncertain about how she would receive him, McKnight left his telephone number with Riley. No sooner had he hung up than the phone rang, and he was finally talking with his mother.

McKnight flew to Ohio for a reunion on April 28 and was met at the airport by his mother and McKnight's 24-year old half-brother, Kenny (who says McKnight, "is just like me.")

His mother is now 55 years old, and, according to McKnight, "even more wonderful than I thought, plus being a good cook."

This August, McKnight's mother will fly to California to meet his wife and to see her first grandchild, McKnight's daughter, Toni.



Operator of the Month award for April, Bernie Varron was commended at the April 16 meeting of the RTD Board. Varron, a 17-year RTD veteran, drives Line 94 out of Division 7 and has an excellent safety record. Varron, center, received the certificate of Merit from RTD Director Peter K. Schabarum. Wes McCairns, Division 7 manager, is the pleased man on the right.

Division 8 Holds Golf Tourney

Division 8, which has a lot of golfers, recently held a golf tournament on April 26, the last Sunday in April. About 31 operators from Division 8 played the 18 holes at the Knollwood Country Club in Granada Hills.

Winners of the event were operator Rick Baker, who organized the event, Walt Belsey, who came in second and Pat Kiely, third place winner.



Dorothy Ford was selected Information Operator of the Month for April. Miss Ford, who has been with the RTD since June of 1974, received a Certificate of Merit and a savings bond at the April 16 RTD Board meeting. Director Peter K. Schabarum, left, presents the award while Robert Williams, manager of customer relations, looks on.

RTD Tour an "Eye Opener" for High School Seniors

"I always thought RTD was just a company that put buses on the streets. Today I learned what it takes to put one bus on the street."

That was a comment from Rich Alson, a senior at Los Angeles High School who was part of a group of four seniors who recently toured RTD as part of a "Boy's Day in Business".

During "Boy's Day," which is sponsored by the L.A. Jr. Chamber of Commerce, selected high school seniors with an interest in business administration are taken on personalized tours of major businesses in the area.

RTD salvage agent Jessie Varrie who is also a member of the board of directors of the Jr. Chamber of Commerce, took the boys around on their District tour, which included meetings with George W. Heinle, manager of operations, George Powell, general superintendent of maintenance and equipment, Roy Gregory, director of public relations and Sam Black, chief engineer, bus facilities. There was also a trip to Division 9, a tour of South Park Shops and a first-hand look at the PAX department. As would be expected, the highlight of the tour was RTD's doubledeck bus.

What's New?

Please let Headway know what is happening to you. Send your news to:

Editor
Headway—Room 500
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Eight RTD mini-buses were on hand Sunday, May 4, to help make this year's Cinco de Mayo celebration a success. Though buses don't normally run on Sundays, eight of them were deployed that day from 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. to help bring people to Cinco de Mayo celebrations at both Olvera Street and at the Music Center. A ninth mini-bus carried a Mariachi band which played on board the bus and serenaded passengers waiting to board the other mini-buses.

Driving mini-bus number 1111 that day, which carried the Mariachi band, was operator Ezekiel Torrez, who also helped act as translator since the musicians—despite their name, Mariachi America—spoke no English. Gloria Rivas, a secretary in the Community Relations Department, also came along to help interpret.

May 4, 1975

Drivers Wanted

RTD bus operators from Divisions 6, 7, 8 and 15 announce an annual 1975 Spring Dance to be held Saturday, June 14, and invite operators from other divisions to attend.

The dance will be held from 8-1 p.m., at Nob Hill, 8229 Van Nuys Blvd., Panorama City. Tickets are \$3.50 per person, \$7 per couple.

For further information and tickets, contact Bob Waxman or Tom Gleason at Division 8. The telephone number is 213 989-9619.

Division 9 operator L. R. (Randy) Mullins, reports that 31 Division 9 employees and wives had a successful fishing trip Saturday, May 17. The group chartered a boat and spent the day fishing off the Santa Cruz channel for rock cod.

The trip was so successful that the group is planning another one for September 27, and invite all interested RTD employees, families, relatives and friends to come along. Reservations must be made no later than June 27. The cost, \$20 per person, pays for the boat and bait.

For more information, call Mullins or Ben Whittington at the El Monte Division on extension 309.

Craft Workshops Offered This Summer

Crafts workshops for youth and adults will be offered this summer. The

"Lady Beware" Seminar Held at RTD

RTD's women employees, most of whom work downtown at Transit headquarters, recently attended a two-hour seminar called "Lady Beware," on self-defense given by the L.A. Police Department.

The session began with a 20-minute color film entitled "Nobody's Victim," and was followed by a question-and-answer period led by police officer Michael Middleton. The program focused mainly on how women can avoid getting into



Aloha! The smiling group above waved happy good byes on April 22 at L.A. Airport, an hour before leaving for a week-long vacation in Hawaii. Eleven RTD employees won Hawaiian vacations-for-two in the Please Corp Courtesy Program Prize Drawing. The group left on Western Airline's flight 501 to Honolulu from Gate 57 and landed 5 hours later in Honolulu.

workshops will be held at the following centers and interested RTD personnel are urged to contact the individual centers for more information.

Barnsdall Arts and Crafts Center
4800 Hollywood Blvd., 661-6369

Rustic Canyon Arts and Crafts Center
601 Latimer Road
Pacific Palisades, 454-9872

McGroarty Home
McGroarty Terrace, Tujunga, 352-5285

Making Headway

Division 2 operator Otis L. Knapper reports the addition of a third member to his family, Omar Lamont Knapper, who was born on April 18 weighing 5 lbs., 9 ounces. That makes three boys for Knapper and his wife, Loretta.

Pedro A. Castro, Division 3 operator, and his wife Cheryl, became the parents of twin girls on Monday, May 12. Marissa was born first and weighed 5 lbs., 14 ounces. Marie, born two minutes later, weighed 5 lbs. The Castros' son, Pedro, Jr., now has two sisters—all at once.

RTD Employees Are Winners

Two RTD employees recently struck it rich on television, winning money, prizes and vacations.

Toni Reynolds, an operator in the PAX department, won \$7,000, a Camarro and a microwave oven on the daytime television quiz show "Blank Check."

Toni won her prizes in an 8-hour stretch at the NBC studios in Burbank, but the program was taped in five half-hour segments which were shown daily for one week.

According to Toni, "It was exciting but hard. There was a lot of pressure because, in order to win, you had to come up with the answer first."

Toni and her husband will use most of the money for a house they recently bought, and they might treat themselves to a color television set. The rest of the money, however, will go into the bank.

Division 9 operator John D. Elliott didn't win money on a quiz show instead, he won a Hawaiian vacation for two as a result of being chosen to star in a television commercial promoting the "Diamondhead Show" on NBC.

It all started when Elliott sent in a post card and received a call three days later from NBC. The producers of the show wanted Elliott and his wife to go to Hawaii right away, and would pay Elliott for the time he would be off from work. After Elliott arranged his schedule with George Marsala, Division 9 Manager, Elliott and his wife left for their all-expense paid week in Hawaii.

When the Elliotts arrived in Hawaii, they were taped for a 60-second commercial which showed them coming into the Hotel, checking in at the desk, and then going to the hotel swimming pool where Elliott was instructed to "Just point out all the beautiful scenery and kiss your wife."

After that, the Elliotts had the rest of the week all to themselves. Hawaii, says Elliott, "was so beautiful. Everything was green and there was foliage all over the mountains. The weather was also fantastic."

The Elliotts found time to go bus riding, and, according to Elliott, the island has a flat fare system, like RTD: a person can ride all over the islands for a quarter.



RTD female employees listen attentively as Police Officer Michael Middleton explains various simple safety techniques used by police officers which can also serve to protect women.



Michele Smoot, assistant customer information representative, was recently feted at a wedding shower given by her former co-workers in the PAX department. Michele, who became Mrs. Gottfried Haug on April 26 at the Immanuel Kapella Church in Highland Park, was an information operator at RTD for 2½ years before becoming an assistant information representative.

Pictured with Michele above, second from left, are members of her family, including sister (with baby) Mrs. Jeri Thome and her mother, Mrs. Geraldine Smoot. At left is Brenda Miley, PAX operator.

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