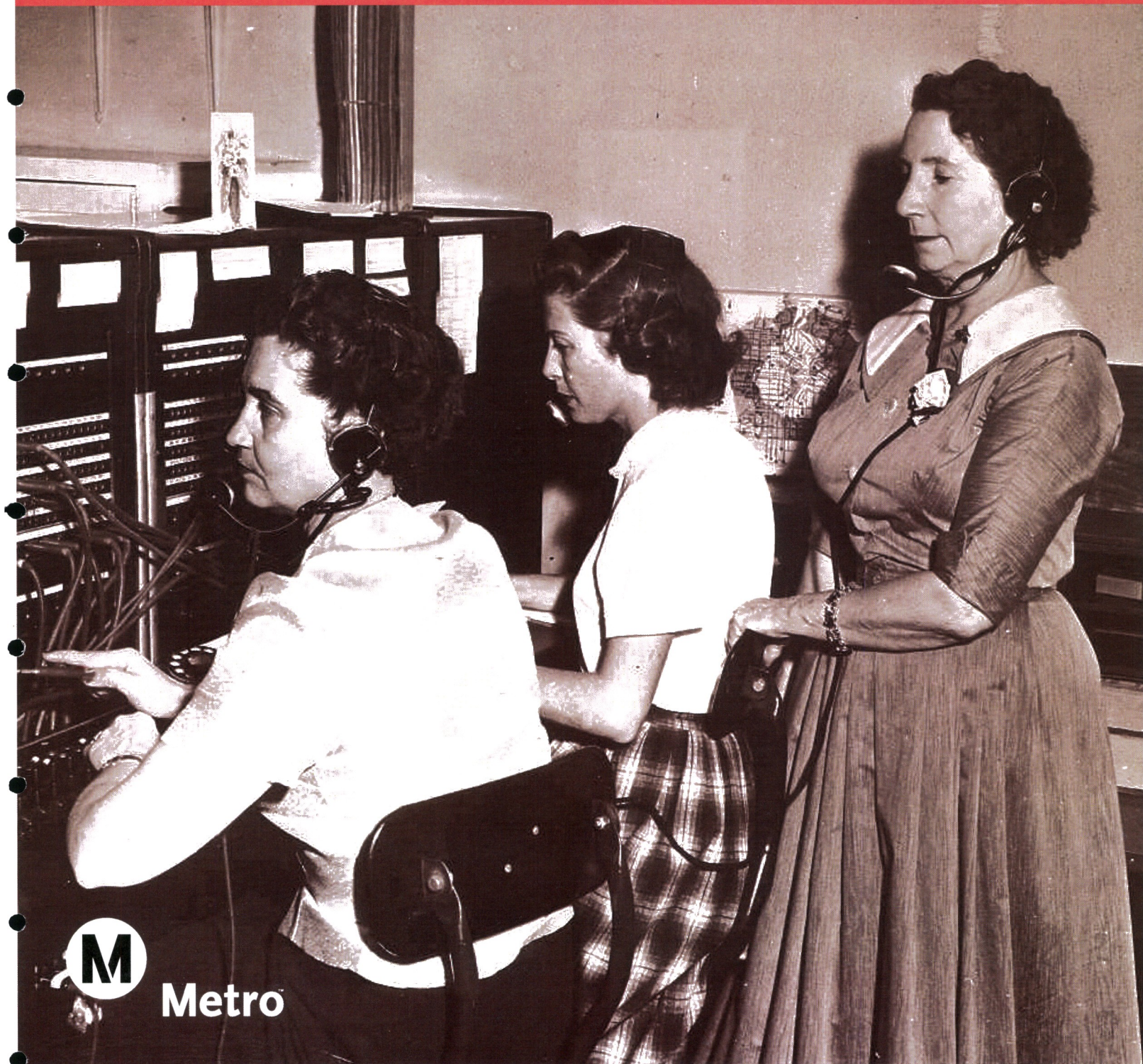
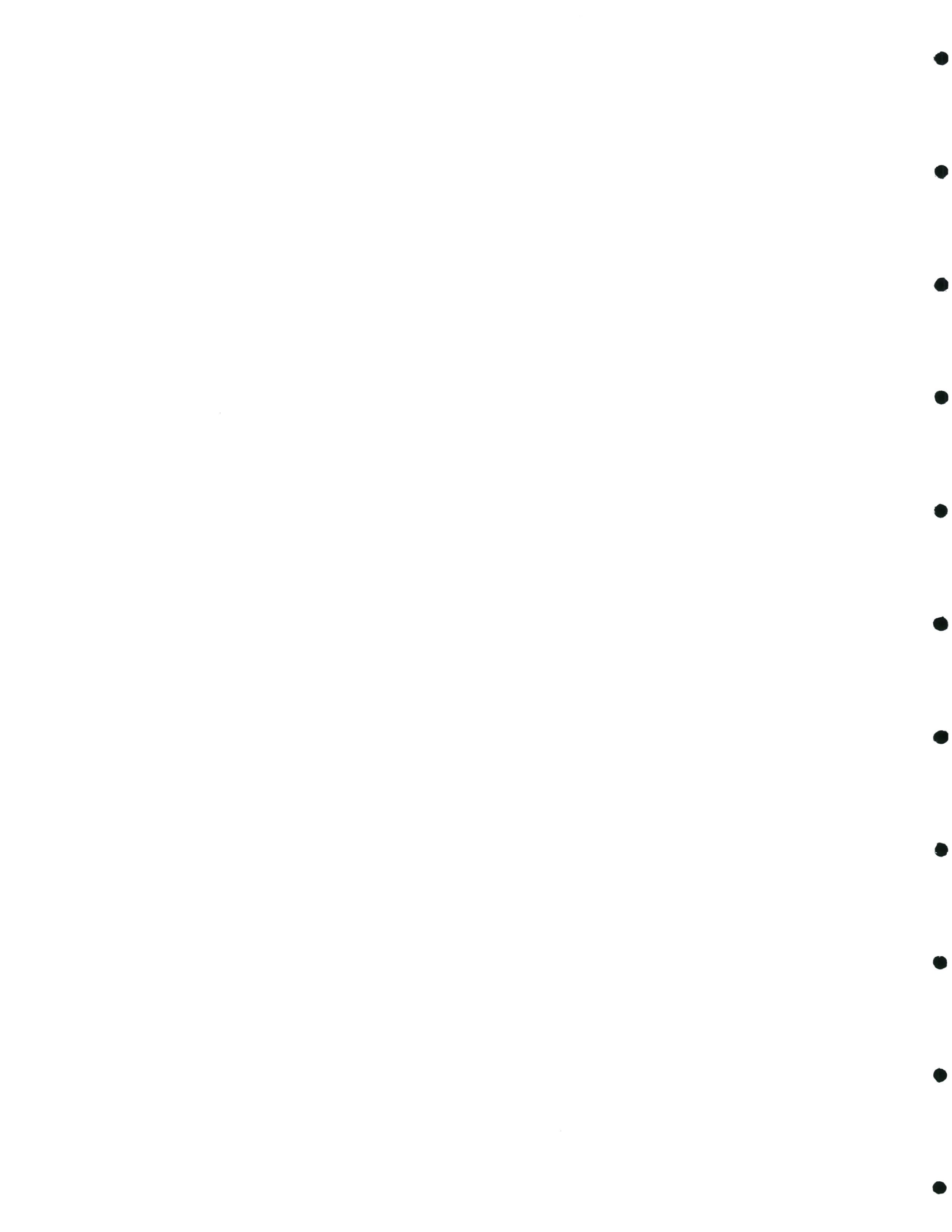


CUSTOMER INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

100th Anniversary: August 1, 2006

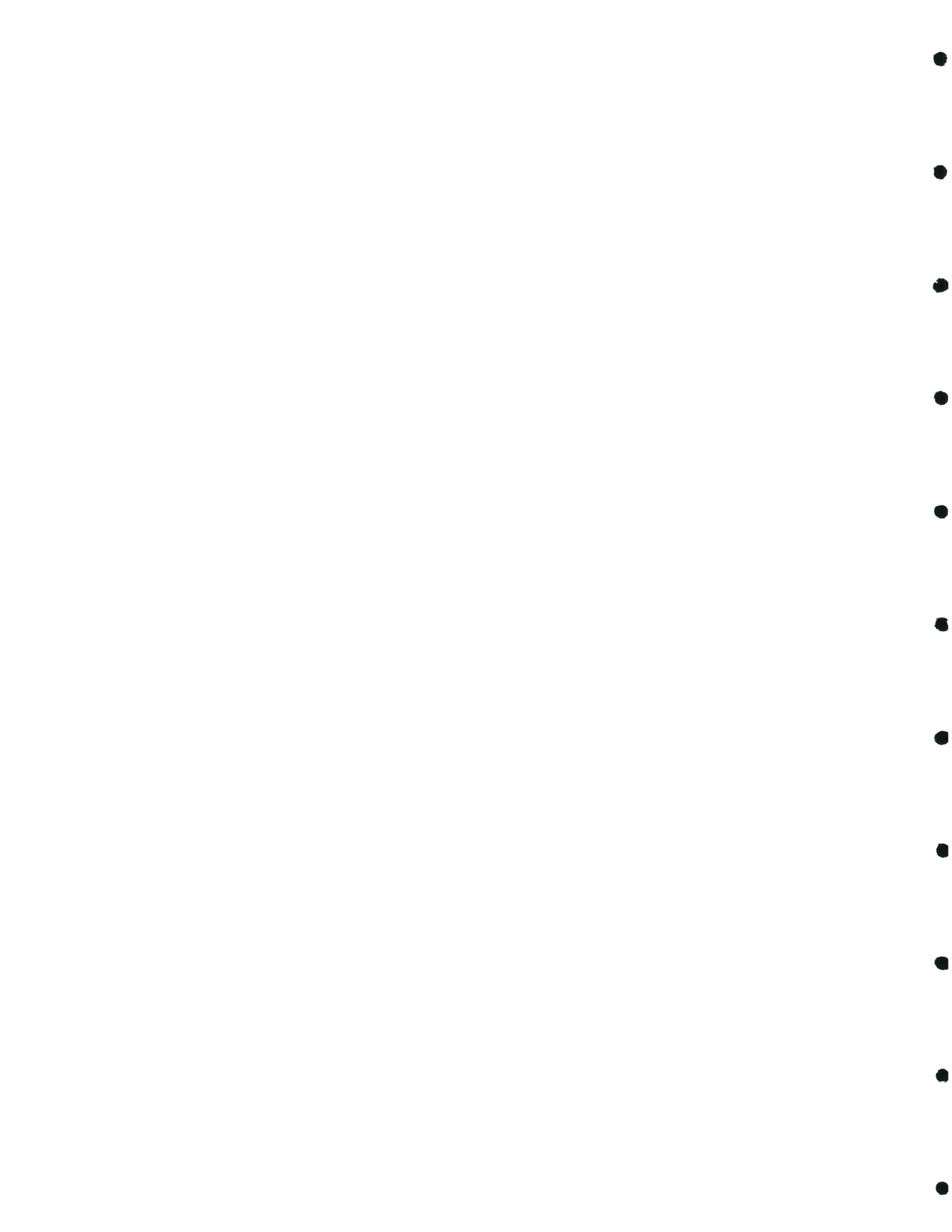


Metro



**“METRO INFORMATION REFLECTIONS”
CENTENNIAL**

August 1, 1906 - August 1, 2006



“METRO INFORMATION REFLECTIONS”

On August 1, 1906 the Information Bureau for Pacific Electric hired Ms. Sybil Mather as its first Information Clerk. On that day, Ms. Mather immediately went to work passing out brochures and answering questions at the Pacific Electric building on the corner of 6th Street and Main Street in Downtown Los Angeles. In order to put this into perspective, let me share with you a few other facts about the year 1906.

Theodore Roosevelt was President of The United States, only 8% of U.S. homes had a telephone, the maximum speed limit was 10 miles per hour and our own Arthur Winston was born.

Over the years the Information Bureau, now called Metro Information has grown from one full-time Information Clerk to a number as high as 125. At its peak, Metro Information was open 24 hours 7 days a week. A lot has changed since those days, however, providing quality route, schedule and fare information to the general public are still priority one.

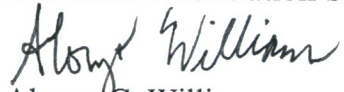
This dedicated group of men and woman has been known by such names as - The Information Bureau, Private Automatic Exchange (PAX), Customer Information and Metro Information. We have a long and distinguished history of providing quality customer service. Over the years our customer base has grown geographically from the City of Los Angeles in 1906 to a regional audience that includes the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura.

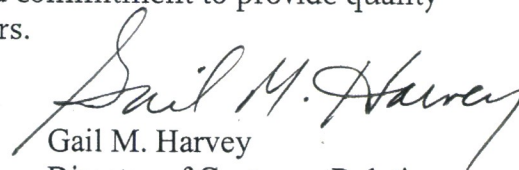
We have put together a compilation of articles and photographs on the Department. These articles can be found in former company magazines through the years. For some of you these articles will bring back fond memories, for others they will provide a source of information.

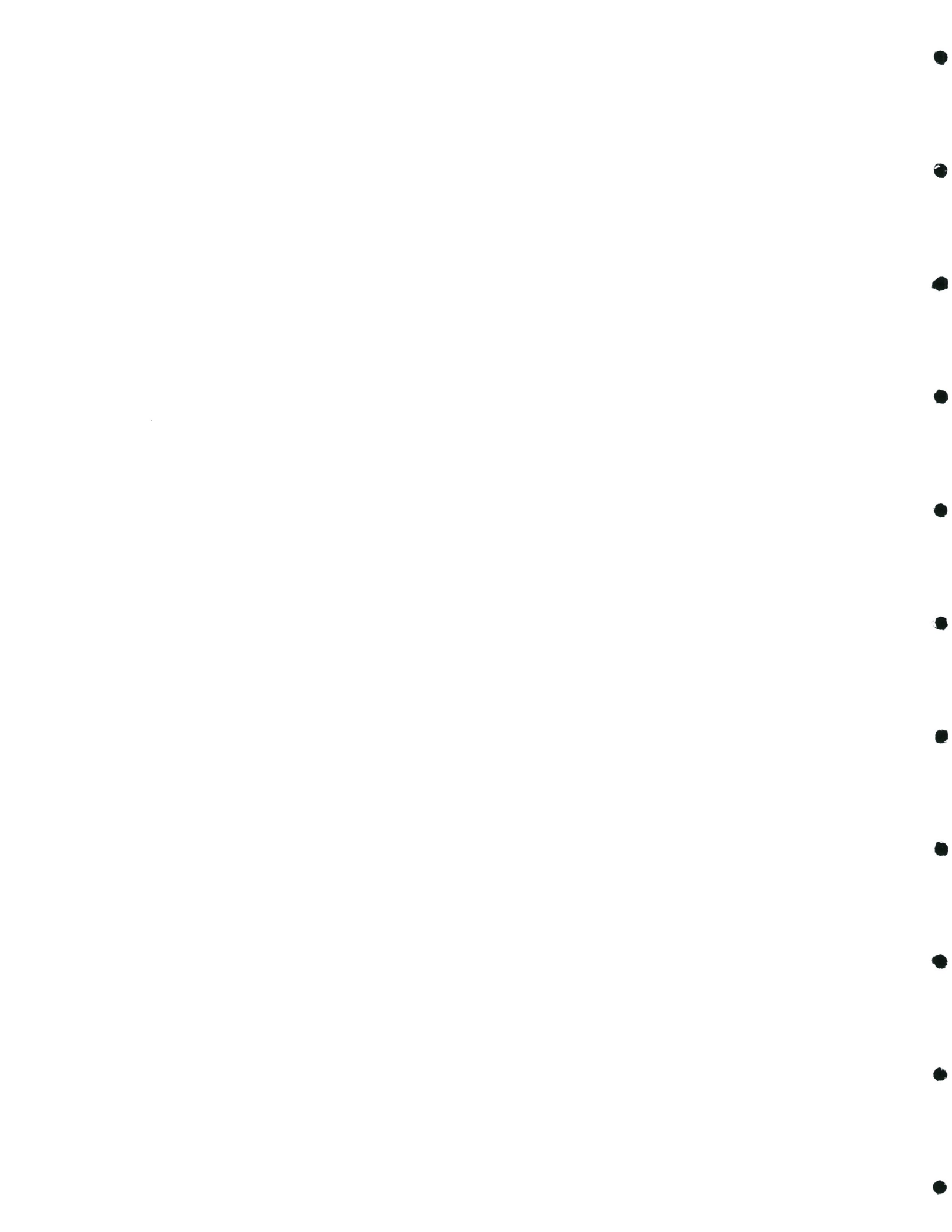
During the 1984 Olympics, we assisted locals and tourists alike getting around the city; we manned the phones during the 1987 Whittier Narrows earthquake to help people travel to stay with a loved one; we were available during the Civil Unrest to assist the community with their travel needs and we were available during an occasional work stoppage to provide alternative route, fare and schedule information to those who were in need.

We are sure many of you have similar stories to share and it is our hope this book will provide inspiration to those who follow as they lead the way towards the next 100 years. By the way, earlier we spoke about the very first Information Agent, Ms. Sybil Mather. We forgot to mention that when she retired after 39 years of service, she was the Chief Information Clerk and we were told that was a pretty big deal in those days.

On behalf of those who came before, present and those to follow, we dedicate this collection of memories to you with a continued commitment to provide quality Customer Information Service to our customers.


Alonzo C. Williams
Communications Manager
Metro Information


Gail M. Harvey
Director of Customer Relations
Customer Relations



**Pacific Electric Railway
&
Metropolitan Coach Lines**

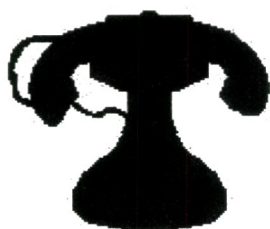
6th & Main St. Station

1906-1958



NEED METRO INFORMATION?

Direct
Wire



Pick
Me Up

Use this phone
for Metropolitan Coach Lines
Passenger Service
Information

Lift Receiver-No Dialing

for Your Convenience
up to 12o'clock Midnight

Pacific Electric Magazine



Vol. 14

LOS ANGELES, CAL., AUGUST 10, 1929

No. 3

A large collage of various destination signs for the Pacific Electric Railway. The signs are arranged in a circular pattern around a central image of a train passing through a trestle. The signs include: "REDONDO BEACH BATH HOUSE", "RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA", "NEWPORT BALBOA", "OVER-SCENIC BEVERLY BOULEVARD", "MT. LOWE TAVERN and Cottages", "LAGUNA BEACH", "POMONA CALIFORNIA", "HUNTINGTON BEACH", "LONG BEACH PLUNGE", "Glendale", "Pasadena", "Santa Ana The Ideal City", "Venice", "San Bernardino CALIFORNIA", "SANTA MONICA OCEAN PARK CALIFORNIA", and "CATALINA ISLAND CALIFORNIA'S MAGIC ISLE". The central image shows a train on a trestle with overhead power lines. Several Pacific Electric logos are scattered throughout the collage.

The Better Way to Charming Scenes.

HOW? WHEN? WHERE?



If for 23 years you had answered some 1500 questions daily, could you still do it with a smile? Neither could we, but Miss Sybil Mather can and does. On August 1st, she concluded her 23rd year in the Information Bureau Services.

CHEER up girls with the blonde locks! There is nothing to the claim that "blondes are beautiful, but dumb." This extraordinary opinion is all the more heartening to the flaxen-haired hordes coming as it does from one whose business it has been for 23 years to answer questions.

The foregoing conclusion is that of our own Sibyl Mather. Head of the Information Bureau who on August 1st concluded her 23rd year of service,

during which time she has answered some 10,537,000 questions. Incidentally the latter figure is not a myth, but is a reasonable estimate based upon her having answered an average of only 1500 questions per day during said time in public service.

"It's an unanswerable question as to which ask the most intelligent or silliest questions blondes or brunettes" states Miss Mather, who has had an opportunity to study human nature at it's best and worst. She adds that

there is no mannerism of either that is outstanding as compared with the other.

As to "Stronger Sex"

As to the gents our authority generates an opinion that is contrary to that held by "the friend wife." "Taken as a whole," she says, "men ask their questions more intelligently, and have a keener sense of understanding then women."

"The female are not to be denied, however, for when they want information they fire a series of questions until they understand what it is they want to know," says Miss Mather (This is probably due to their cross-examination experience of friend husband.)

In spite of their "intelligence complex," Miss Mather is dubious as to whether Mr. Husband is head of the house. "If such is the case." She asks "how do you account for the fact that when a couple are together the woman always asks the question?"

As to the questions asked most and the peculiarities of the inquiring public she has the following to say:

"Naturally now all our questions have to do with travel, either the time of departure or the point of getting there. "The most frequent query is "what time does the next train leave." which is followed closely by questions as to street locations with the location of lower-tower office buildings ranking third on the list.

"In making a reply we inevitably have to repeat the answer two or three times before it is comprehended while it is not an uncommon practice for us to write the answer out on a small piece of paper which we always have handy for use in such cases. "Los Angeles being a means for tourists, a large portion of all questions are asked by strangers. The one thing that is hardest to make them understand is the Spanish accents of our streets and towns. Invariably when Figueroa Street is involved it is necessary to write it out before they comprehend.

A Misconception

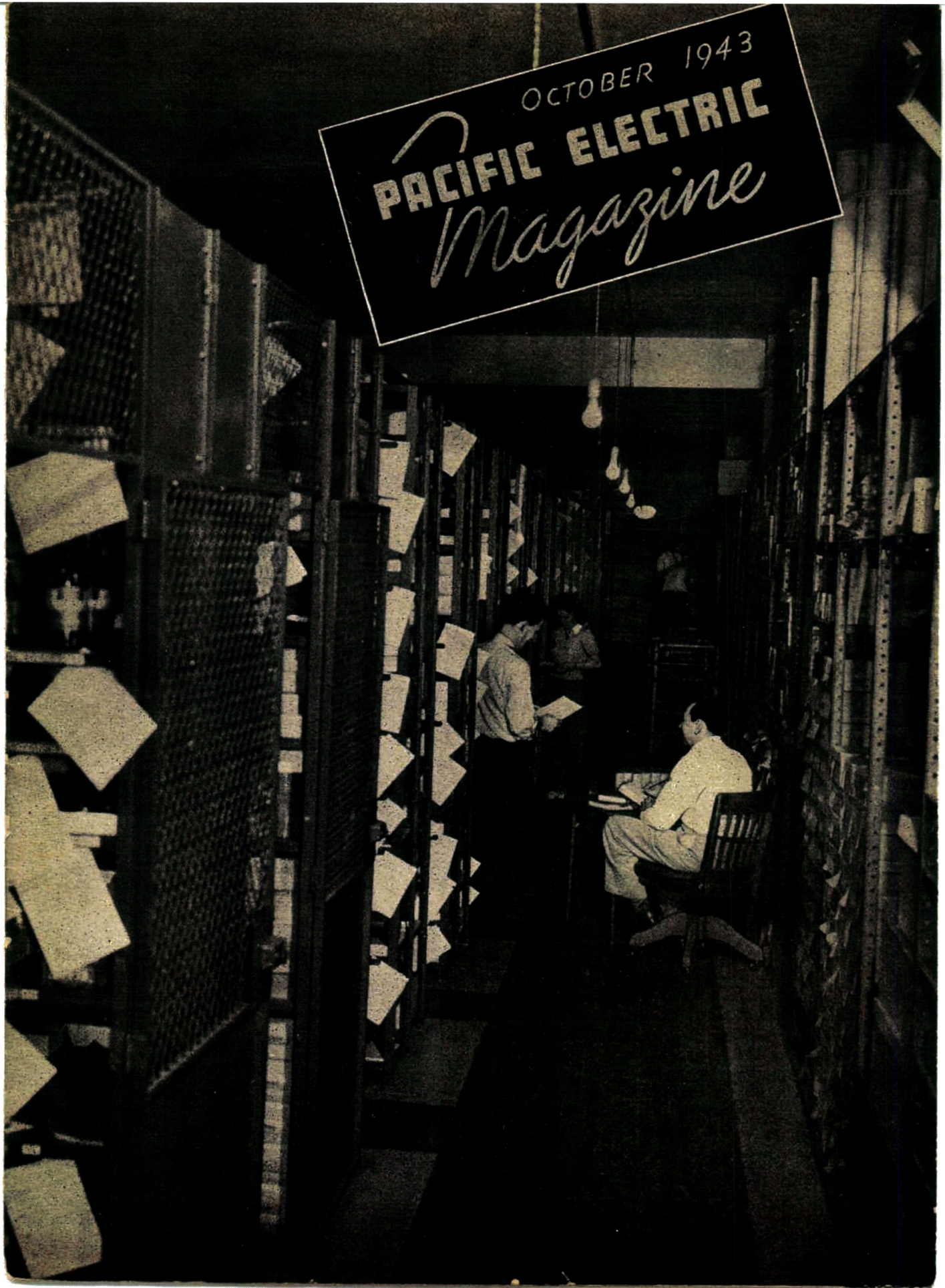
"Eastern people have no conception of distance as it applies to the far West. Almost every day we encounter persons who are surprised to find they cannot make the trip between Los Angeles and San Francisco in two or three hours. Likewise, the average Easterner visualizes San Diego as a suburb of Los Angeles with people going back and forth to work each day."

As head of the Pacific Electric Railway Information Bureau at 6th and Main Streets, Los Angeles, Miss Mather is in charge of the busiest information desk in Southern California. A force of eight capable persons are engaged in that bureau, which is open to the public from 6:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. daily, supplying individuals with desired information and sending them merrily on their way.

OCTOBER 1943

PACIFIC ELECTRIC

Magazine





CLIMBS SKYWARD—The Information Switchboard has moved from the fourth to the seventh floor of the P. E. Building. Left to right: Catherine Rebold (Mrs. Ed Haldeman), Edna Tilley, Doris Burden, Deane Aspelmeier, and Chief Sybil Mather. Note the huge wall map of the city.

INFORMATION QUI VIVE

By
Deane H.
Aspelmeier



After giving the dear public a month's respite, do you mind reading of the many, many things that have happened around the Information Department? Well, if you don't want to read these, there is always the waste basket.

Strange as it may seem, we have had two calls from Dan Cupid. He first came in the merry month of May, calling on Florence Chapman. His emissary was James Spaulding, a tall, dark and handsome man and a very jolly, likeable chap. All of the rest of us ladies in waiting are trying to get the recipe from Florence, but she is so secretive!

As for Danny's second call! Well, that gives us a little more hope. You see, Catherine Rebold has married her sweetheart of former years, illustrating the persistence of old Danny Boy. Catherine is now Mrs. Charles Haldeman, and Charles, who is known as "Bud," is a brother of Cynthia Hornek of Information and of Florence Haldeman, who is in charge of the Conductors' Accounts Dept. Mr. and Mrs. Haldeman have purchased a

home near Ventura Blvd., North Hollywood. Both couples have our best wishes.

The Information Department is "coming up in the world." Our telephone room has been moved from the 4th to the 7th floor. Reason: the Southern Pacific has expanded so that they needed more room on the 4th floor. Our new quarters are smaller and the telephone board has been enlarged to twice the former size. The "Can you tell me" and "Do you know" are increasing so that more girls are being added very frequently. Our latest recruits are Louise O'Conner, Hazel Ralph, and Lenore Tepley.

Evelyn Cook has been away on three months' leave of absence, but is to be back in another week. Helen Drew has been spending her vacation at Glen Ranch. We all know the pictures she sent were only of her by proxy.

We were glad to hear from Private Lila Underwood, who is stationed at Ft. Des Moines. She tells us she has been accepted for Non-Com School. Hopes she may be transferred to California. So do we, Lila, and all good wishes to you.

Two of our girls not only gave out information, but also gave their life's blood to the Red Cross—Doris Burden and Hazel Ralph.

Wonder if we can give you a smile

or two. People are so funny, you know, and sometimes they are funnier.

One party wanted to go to the end of Broadway, and when asked which end said "Oh, I don't care. The East end will be O.K."

A man wanted to go to Five Corners and when asked if he meant Five Points replied, "Either one; it makes no difference."

At one time an inquiry, "Are your trains crowded?" came over the wire. Wonder where that lady lives!

On another occasion a mother got off a train leaving her two small children of two and four years behind. A frantic call came to Information for help to locate them and get them back. In due time the children were found and after another round trip, landed safely in the station.

When you tell a person what busses go to the Norwalk State Hospital and are asked the admission, what would your reaction be?

There are still nice people in the world, for one person called to ask, "Can a young lady and her chaperon ride to Santa Ana with a Cadet?"

A clerk standing at the counter on a hot day, using an old style palm leaf fan, was accosted with the greeting—"That looks like the Gay Nineties." We are wondering even now whether he was referring to the girl or the fan.

JANUARY 1946
PACIFIC ELECTRIC

Magazine



Mrs. F. P. (Sibyl Mather) Raymer Retires as Information Chief

Considerable sadness is felt among Pacific Electric employes, especially among the old-timers, who know that Chief Information Clerk Sibyl Mather (old-timers find it hard to say "Mrs. F. P. Raymer") has announced her retirement on January 20, following a vacation period which began January 5.

Always charming and full of life, she added so much to whatever gathering she happened to be with that her absence will leave a large void. For her own sake, of course, everybody is glad. Mrs. Raymer had worked hard and long, and often under difficult conditions, to make the Information Bureau what it is today—a mine of information about practically anything tourists want to know about Southern California. She deserved a rest from her labors of the last 39 years.

FAREWELL TEA

At an open house tea served Friday, January 4, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., in the Tea Room on the eighth floor of the Pacific Electric Building, a large number of employes came and said farewell to Mrs. Raymer. Invitations were issued to all PE employes and other friends of the guest of honor.

STARTED IN 1906

When she started to work for Pacific Electric as a beautiful young girl of approximately 21 summers, she had just fought off the effects of a heart condition which had brought her on a stretcher to Los Angeles with her widowed mother. When she first (1906) applied for work with Pacific Electric, Los Angeles had only some 300,000 inhabitants, the Pacific Electric Building—in which she has worked ever since—was a year old, and Joseph MacMillan was Passenger Traffic Manager. She had answered a blind newspaper ad for an Information Clerk, because, after taking many rides on Pacific Electric lines with her mother just for the sake of



MRS. F. P. RAYMER

travel, she had thought how fine it would be if she could only tell people about the beautiful scenery and interesting places which could be visited after only a relatively short journey over Pacific Electric lines.

The man she was to see in answer to the ad told her she was too young for the job, but Mr. MacMillan, to whom she was directed after she kept on insisting, wasted no time. "All right, young lady," he said. "You asked for it. Take off your hat and go to work!" That, at least, was the substance, if not the exact language, of his reply.

GROWTH OF BUREAU

So she went downstairs, took off her hat, and at once began to sell magazines and give out information on the side. Pay: a dollar a day, seven days a week!

It wasn't long before she had proved herself so capable that Mr. MacMillan raised her salary to \$45 a month and made her a full-time Information Clerk—the first PE had ever had. As Los Angeles grew, and people found out that they could get from Pacific Electric accurate and

RETIREMENT PLANS

After her retirement—and, incidentally, she says she had planned to retire for some time before she thought of getting married—Mrs. Raymer plans to take some long-deferred trips with her husband, who will also retire in June. She wants to visit Alaska, Mexico, and other distant climes, though her chief interest, she says, is in her home, where she loves to cook, keep house, and entertain. Reading, too, she loves, especially good travel books—and railroad timetables, for which she has long had a sort of mania. She admits to being a railfan.

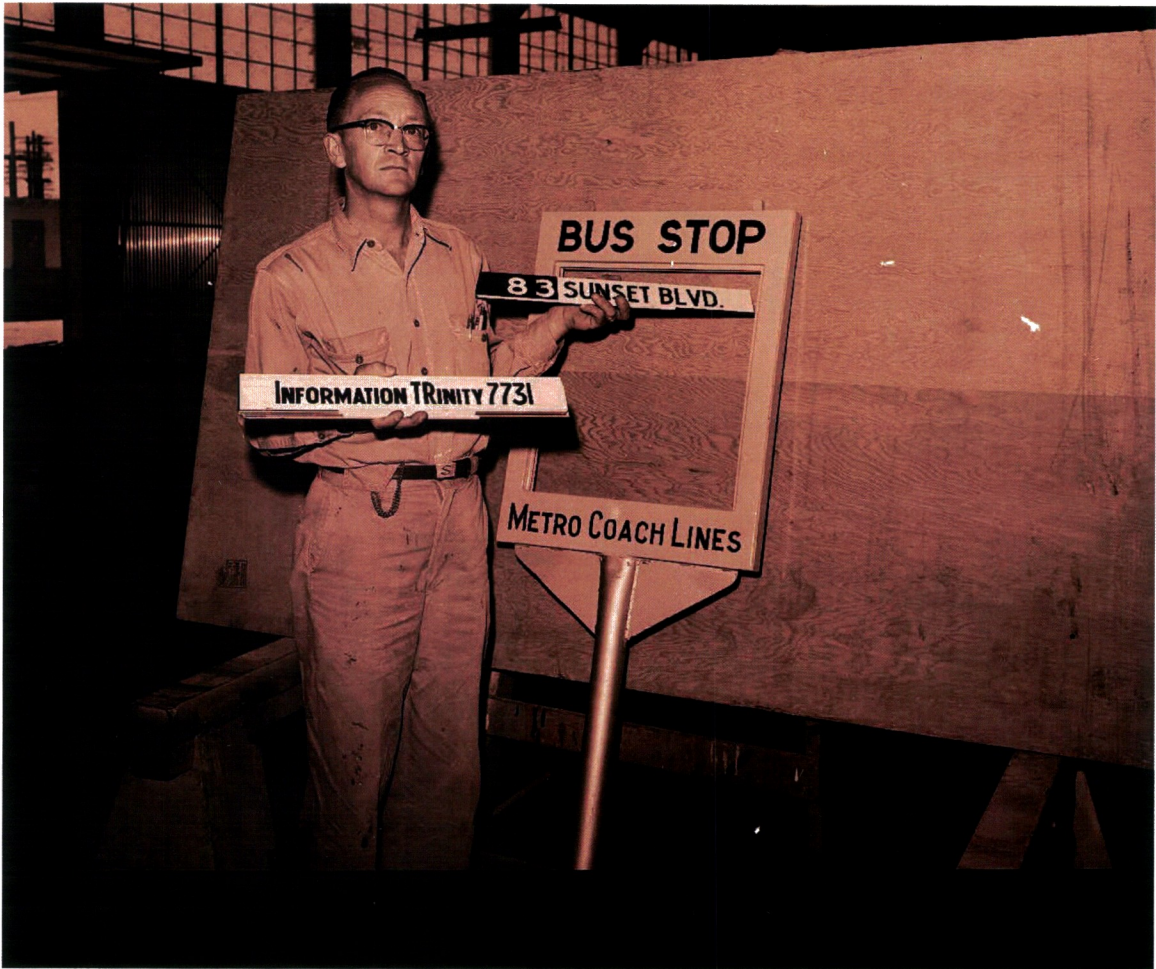
LOVED HER WORK

In all the years of her service, Mrs. Raymer says she has never dreaded coming to work. She has never arisen in the morning with a feeling of foreboding, a fear of what the day might bring forth, in spite of the fact that at one time she had to work from 7:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m. seven days a week. One of the reasons for her pleasure in her work has been those with whom she has been associated.

"I have had the loyal support of all my co-workers," she says, "and that has been wonderful."

Looking back over the course of her highly successful endeavors to improve and enlarge her bureau, she gives this parting word of advice:

"Never do a halfway job. Always do your best."



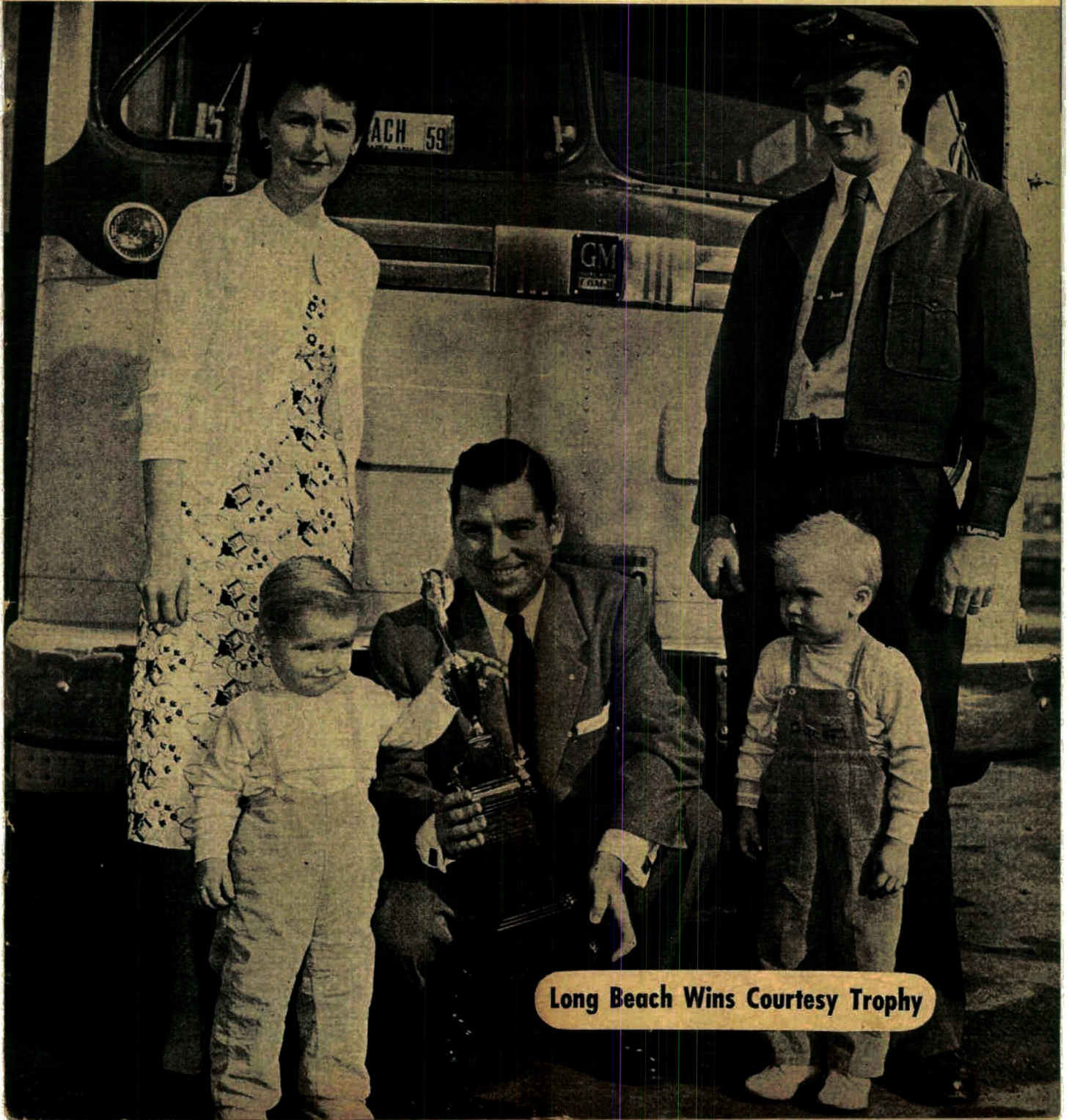
METRO COACH



News

FEBRUARY, 1957

Telephone TRinity 2792



Long Beach Wins Courtesy Trophy

INFORMATION, P

WIDELY RECOGNIZED as one of the outstanding organizations of its kind in Los Angeles, the Metro information bureau has a history which began in 1905, when it was founded under the PE regime by Miss Sibyl Mather, who was at first the sole member of the bureau.

As the city grew, so did the bureau, and it now has 16 information clerks and four PBX girls.

Originally a part of the PE passenger traffic department, the information bureau, as well as the PBX switchboard, was placed under the transportation department when Metro was organized, and remains under the jurisdiction of Superintendent of Transportation J. D. Puffer.

Eleven girls work daily, and there are four relief clerks for days off, plus two extra clerks to be called in case of the absence of a regular clerk.

The counter in the Sixth and Main Streets station is kept open from 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., with one girl constantly on duty to handle the inquiries. The information switchboard, adjoining the terminal

foreman's office on the mezzanine floor, is open daily from 6:30 a.m. to midnight, with one to four clerks on duty between 6:30 and 10:30 a.m.; five to seven between 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., when the greatest volume of telephone calls is experienced; four to two between 7:00 and 11:30 p.m., and one from 11:30 p.m. to midnight.

The PBX switchboard is kept open from 5:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., with one operator per shift. PBX operators ordinarily do not try to answer information calls themselves, but transfer any which come in over TRinity 2792 to the information switchboard. Calls which come in over TRinity 7731 bypass the PBX board and are received directly by the information board.

Although an information clerk is not required to become a PBX operator, nor a PBX operator to become an information clerk, both are on the same service roster and have the privilege of breaking in and bidding on either PBX or information jobs.

Patience, tact, a liking for and an understanding of people, and a de-

sire to help the public are the primary requisites of an information clerk, in the opinion of the experienced Catharine Haldeman. Some familiarity with Los Angeles and its suburbs, as well as of Metro



↑ INFORMATION DESK, in the lobby of the Metro Coach Depot, Sixth and Main Streets, Los Angeles, with Marie Fulkman behind the counter and a typical group of information seekers waiting to be helped. —KEY to the successful operation of the bureau is Catharine D. Haldeman, chief.



◁ PBX GIRLS—Behind that cheery voice answering "Metropolitan Coach Lines" when you dial TRinity 2792 is just what you suspected—a lovely face. Here's proof. From left, seated, Helen Appleby and Katherine McCann; standing, Betty Smith and Betty Embree. Recent changes have made Mmes. McCann and Embree part time information clerks, as well as operators on the PBX switchboard.

FEBRUARY, 1957

LEASE!

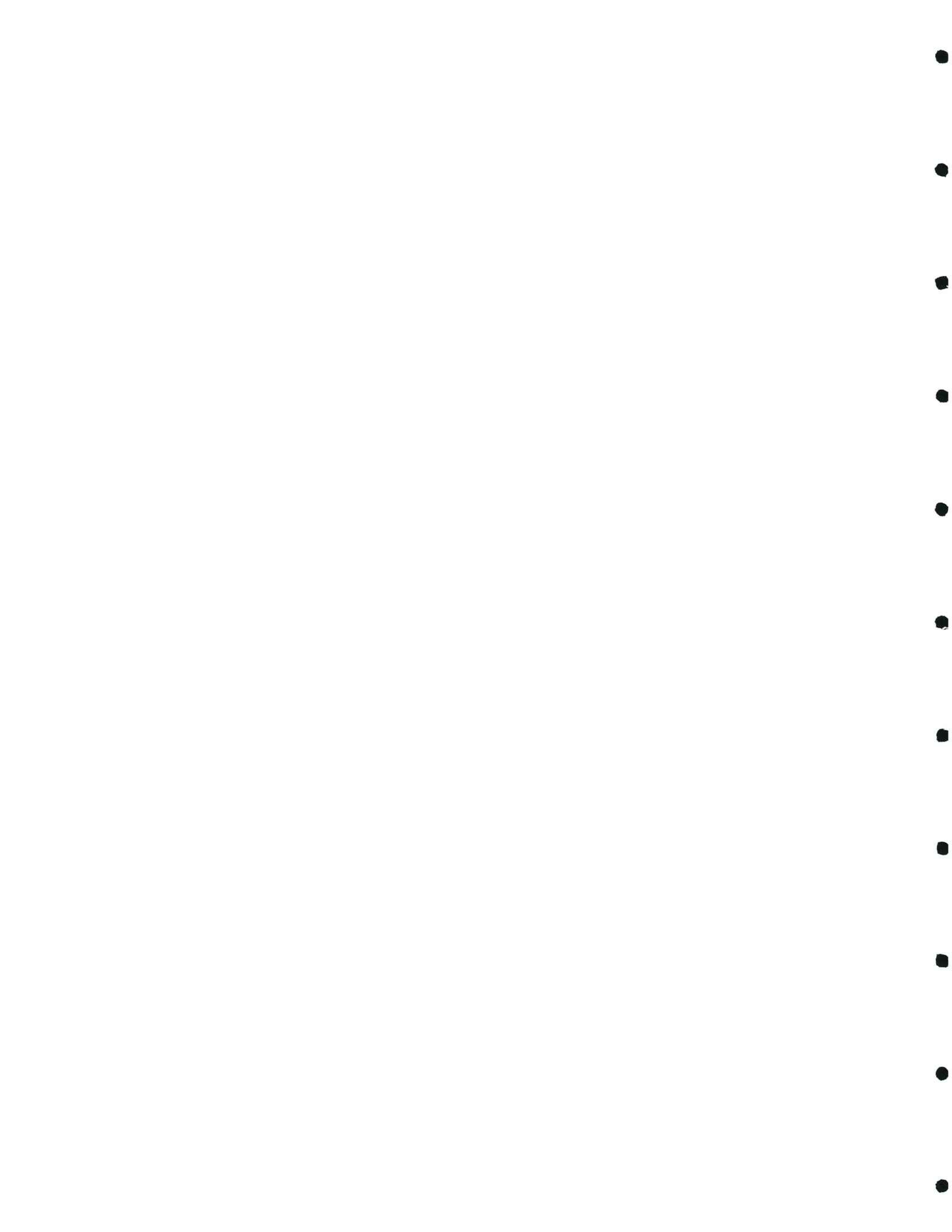
routes, fares, and transfers is also expected of applicants. On the job training under the guidance of the more experienced clerks soon familiarizes the new clerk with answers to questions most commonly asked.



AT THE INFORMATION SWITCHBOARDS on the mezzanine floor are the girls in photos (1), (2), and (3). From left in each photo: (1) Elsie Thomas, Jackie Monikean, Louise O'Connor, Cora Wilson (standing), and Adeline Lofton. (2) Deane H. Koch, Evelyn Cook, Maxine Nelson, and Isabel Ash. (3) Helen Spafford, Florence Spaulding, Hazel Hyatt, and Barbara Hagen. (4) AT THE COUNTER, Gela Hutton and inquirer appear to be enjoying a joke.

(Since photos were taken, Mrs. Nelson has become a PBX telephone operator)



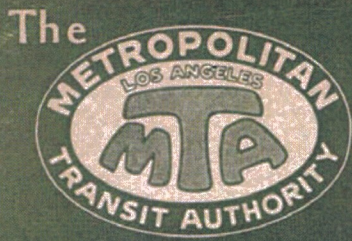


Old “MTA”

1060 So. Broadway

1958 - 1963





Emblem

76-90

APRIL, 1962



(Cover story, page 15)

- A Visit with Information's "Lulu Belle"
- "Wonderful Men"—Operators Save Babies
- Big Folks, Little Folks Tour MTA

Automatic Call Distributor Speeds Information Service

**New Type Information Board, Automatic Answering Set,
Stepped Up Training Program, Increase in Personnel,
Also Ease Strain of Processing 10,000 Calls a Day**

TEN THOUSAND information calls a day!

That's the approximate number received each weekday by a force of 50 MTA Information Operators divided into round-the-clock shifts seven days a week under Supervising Telephone Operator Betty Wood at the newly-installed information center on the seventh floor of the Transit Authority Building.

It's an average of 415 calls an hour.

It's almost *seven times* the number of such calls received by the Chicago Transit Authority in the nation's third largest city,* accord-

*1960 U.S. Census figures show the population of the metropolitan area of Los Angeles as 6,742,966; of that of Chicago as 6,649,971.

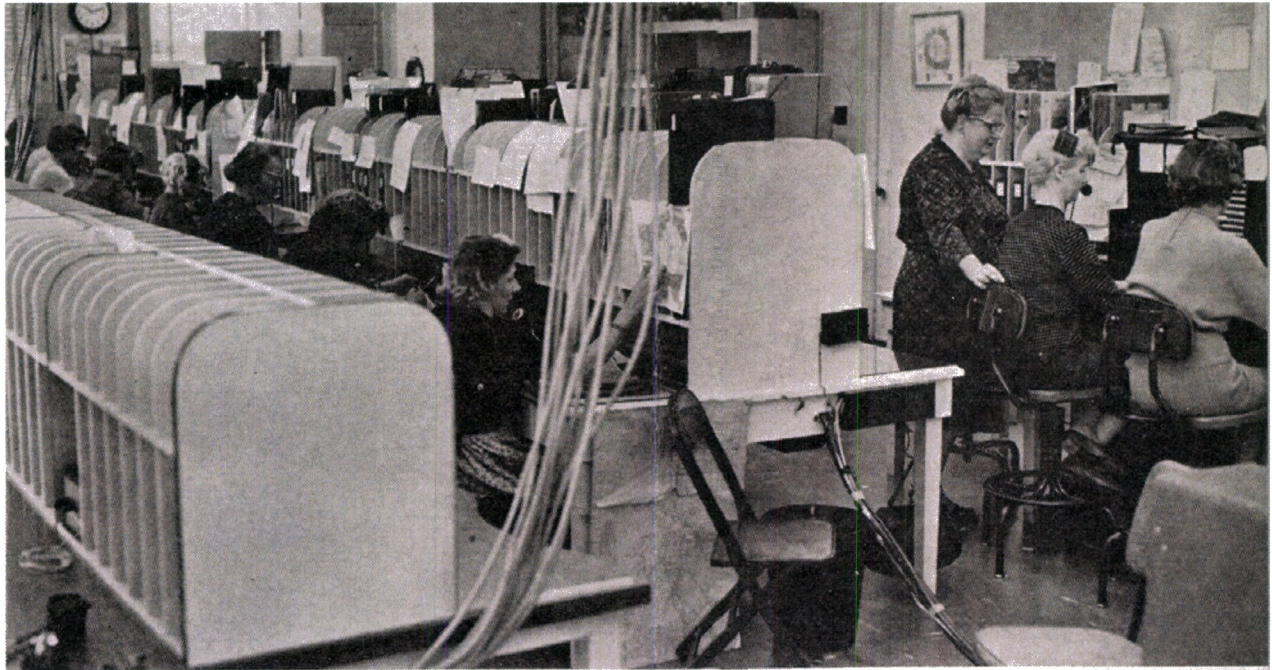
ing to the MTA's Real Property Manager, Charles E. Haudenschild, who made a recent investigation of methods of handling information calls by other large transportation companies throughout the U. S. The telephone and information department of MTA is under his jurisdiction.

MORE EFFICIENT METHODS SOUGHT

Mr. Haudenschild was seeking more efficient methods of handling the continuously growing volume of information calls MTA has been receiving ever since the establishment of the Authority and since last year's arrangement to provide information service throughout the entire Los Angeles extended area on a local call basis. ("Local if you

AFTER THE CHANGEOVER—Information Operators work in relative comfort at the new board. Note the black box on wall in background. It is part of the new call distributor system. The number of white lights glowing on the box is the number of information calls waiting.





WORKING UNDER DIFFICULTIES—The crowded Information Department room shortly before the changeover to the new 28-position board partly shown in left foreground. Eight Information Clerks are shown working at the old 16-place board. At right, Assistant Supervising Telephone Operator Mae Ruffner, standing, observes girls working at the PBX switchboard.

call the information number listed in your area telephone directory," Mr. Haudenschild pointed out.)

IMPROVED CENTER INSTALLED

His labors bore fruit when a new 28-position information center, approved by the Authority in April, 1961, replaced the old 16-position center, and an automatic call distributor with automatic answering device was installed. Moreover, an additional Assistant Supervising Telephone Operator and an additional Supervisor - Instructor were put on to supervise and teach MTA information facts and procedures to an increased number of trainees and Information Operators.

Use of the new information facilities began Friday evening, March 2, 1962.

AUTOMATIC CALL DISTRIBUTOR

The new automatic call distributor system provides for the handling of calls in the order in which

they are received. When all the Information Operators are busy, incoming calls are answered by a recording device — immediately christened "Lulu Belle" by the Information Operators—on which a pre-recorded voice tells the information seeker: "Transit Authority Information. The information lines are busy but your call will be automatically given to the first available Operator. Please hold the line. We regret the delay and will take your call as quickly as possible."

TRAINING PROGRAM STEPPED UP

The training of new Information Operators has assumed new importance as Los Angeles, MTA, and the volume of information calls keep growing. There are always from four to six students in training under the direction of two experienced Supervisor - Instructors, Dorothy Styffe and Ethel Grush.

Each instructor works independently of the other with from one

(Text continued on page 6)



ABOVE—Information Operator Maxine Nelson looks for her coat in the old coat closet inconveniently located close behind a desk, and always open to the gaze of visitors. **RIGHT**—Information Operator Veda Bowman in new locker room closed off from public view and equipped with the latest in coat racks, shelving—even umbrella racks.



Automatic Call Distributor

(Text continued from page 3)

to three students eight hours a day, five days a week, for about three months, or until she is satisfied that the trainee is qualified to give correct information to the public. Instruction is on an individualized basis, with each student learning at her own rate of speed.

QUALITIES OF A GOOD OPERATOR

“A good Information Operator must possess an excellent memory and above average ability to think clearly,” pointed out the instructors.

A student is generally required to have lived in the Los Angeles

NO CHANGES have occurred in the PBX switchboard, which handles long distance calls. Some information calls from long distance coming through other than information numbers are transferred to the information center. Helen Appleby, left, and Hazel Hyatt are two of several girls who work on both the telephone and the information switchboards.





CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION in MTA routes, fares, transfer points, and points of interest along MTA lines is given all applicants. Here Dorothy Styffe, one of two Supervisor-Instructors, is using a map of former Cross Town lines to explain fare zones on those lines to students: Joan Colvin, seated, front; Raquel Reyes, standing; and Selpha Massingale.

area for a year or more and to demonstrate a general knowledge of the downtown Los Angeles area. She must also be a qualified tele-

phone operator unless she has unusual knowledge or mental ability.

Training, which is carried on in two special classrooms on the

PRACTICE in answering actual information calls is given students as soon as the instructor feels they are ready. Here Supervisor-Instructor Ethel Grush, left, observes two students, Joan Colvin, left, and Selpha Massingale, at the four-position practice board.





"KEEP 'EM BUZZING—THANKS—MTA"—That's the message on the cake in foreground. Left to right are Supervising Telephone Operator Betty Wood, Real Property Manager Charles E. Haudenschild, Assistant Supervising Telephone Operator Jean Betty Craven, and Assistant General Manager M. Edwin Wright. All Information Operators received a big portion. Cake was given in appreciation of the patience and good work of girls during the several months when new call distributor system was being installed and room was being remodeled.

Automatic Call Distributor

seventh floor of the Transit Authority Building, proceeds by means of problems assigned by the Supervisor-Instructors. A typical problem might be, "How would I get from Valley and San Gabriel Boulevards to New International Airport? What is the fare and what are the schedules?"

REGULAR WORK BEGINS

When the Supervisor-Instructor feels that a trainee is ready to take her place at the information center, Miss Wood, the Supervising Telephone Operator, arranges daily sick and vacation relief assignments from the extra board. "A new Information Clerk will still have to work under close supervision for some time before she can take her

place with the 'pros,'" Miss Wood commented.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS

At the present time, assignments in the PBX-Information Department include 20 telephone information shift assignments, seven assignments involving partial service as PBX Telephone Operators and partial service as Telephone Information Clerks; and five assignments involving partial service as Telephone Information Clerks and partial service as Public Information Clerks at the Sixth and Main Depot Information counter. There are also 10 regular relief shift assignments with combination duties. All positions are filled by bidding on a seniority basis.

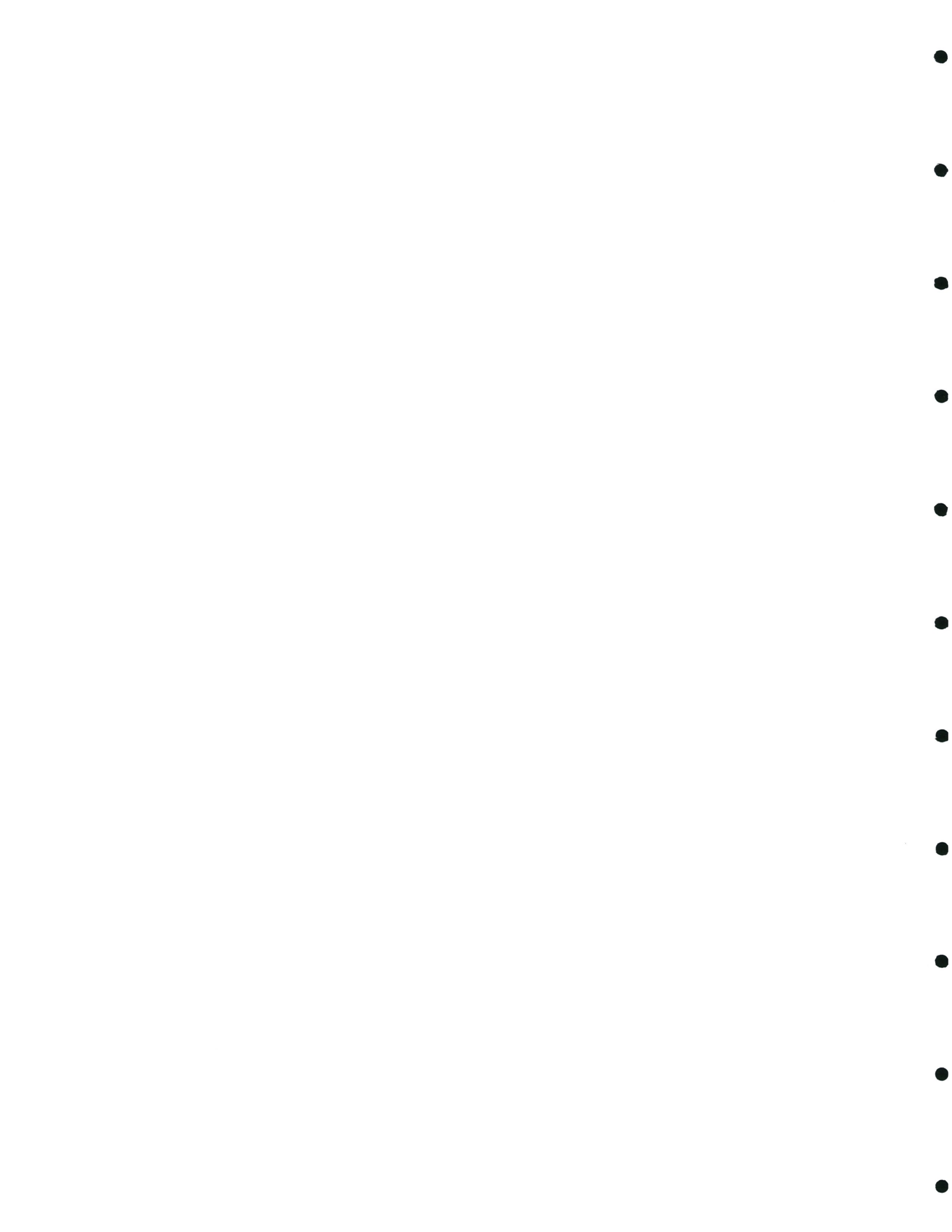




**Southern California Rapid
Transit District
“SCRTD”**

425 So. Main St.

1963 - 1993



HEADWAY

In This Issue

Joe Swift Wins Rodeo

CMF Grand Opening

Welcome Back Division 1

The Pope's Visit



Telephone Information Goes Hawaiian after Serving 3 Million



Leilia Bailey Feted by COMTO

Leilia Bailey was honored at a reception acknowledging her recent appointment to RTD Director of Transportation by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials held July 15 at the Boardroom Restaurant in the Design Center.

Cherri Williams, COMTO president—Los Angeles Chapter, extended the welcome to attendees and introduced Assistant General Manager—Equal Opportunity

Walter Norwood who served as the program moderator.

Presentations of resolutions were made to Ms. Bailey by representatives from State Senator Diane Watson, the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles, and the Office of the Mayor of Pasadena.

Paul Toliver, the deputy general manager of Transportation from San Francisco's MUNI and the National President of COMTO, presented Ms. Bailey with a special plaque. "Leilia Bailey is an outstanding example of what COMTO is all about," said Toliver. "Second only to Carmen Turner [general manager of the Washington D.C. Metro Area Transit Authority], Leilia Bailey is the most powerful woman

continued on page 7...



Director of Transportation Leilia Bailey was honored at a reception hosted by the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials—Los Angeles Chapter (COMTO) on July 15. Front row, from left to right: RTD Director Joseph Dunning, Ms. Bailey, COMTO-LA Chapter President Cherrie Williams, and RTD Inspector General Ernesto Fuentes. Back row, from left to right: Lois Hale (representative for State Senator Diane Watson), Assistant General Manager—Equal Opportunity Walter Norwood, and Deputy General Manager of Municipal Railways—San Francisco Paul Toliver.

Cover Story

Telephone Information Makes It over the Top

The Telephone Information Department set a goal for themselves in the past fiscal year—to answer 3 million information calls. They achieved their goal handily; hitting a total of 3,164,526 on June 26 at

Lahaina for lunch.

Staff Assistant Rhonda Garcia said the luau was a reward to the employees for reaching the fiscal year goal. Funded by the department's budget, Garcia said it was



Telephone Information clerks and invited guests enjoy the celebration luau in a Polynesian atmosphere.

10:51 p.m.

Meeting the goal, the department decided to party in style, Hawaiian-style, that is, with a luau on July 1. All employees were encouraged to wear their island attire so as not to clash with the leis handed out by Administrative Supervisor Genelle McOwen. A scrumptious feast of barbecued ribs and chicken was offered the employees and invited guests who enjoyed their meal in a Polynesian ambience so impressive that only the missing trade-winds were a clue that you had not bilocated to

a gesture of appreciation from the District to the clerks. The luau culminates a year of intense effort on the part of the staff to meet and at times surpass the goals they set for themselves.

It was a little over a year ago when Garcia opened up discussions among the six supervisors [Wil Beard, Vikie Young, David Coffey, Rose Mays, John Cohen, and Nadine Triche] who manage the 100 telephone information clerks. After the initial brainstorming session, the supervisors came up

continued on page 7...



Supervisors and clerks experienced the thrill of achievement and pride from the recognition they received from Director of Customer Relations Robert Williams and General Manager John A. Dyer. Front row, from left to right: Nadine Triche, John Cohen, Vikie Young, and Rose Mays. Back row, from left to right: Telephone Information Manager Elfriede Becker, Wil Beard, General Manager John A. Dyer, and Director of Customer Relations Robert Williams.

...continued from page 6 with the idea of forming work teams. Each of the six teams began to compete against each other using three key indicators to measure progress: 1) increased productivity which translates into more calls and less talk time, 2) a reduced absenteeism rate, and 3) a decreased number of telephone information complaints. Each team leader met with his or her team

"The luau culminates a year of intense effort..."

members to plan strategies, incentives, and, importantly, to name themselves. The teams emerged as the Doo Dah Gang under John Cohen's supervision, Chosen Few headed by Vikie Young, the Klique led by David

Coffey, the Smooth Operators closely watched over by Nadine Triche, the Info-Maniacs guided by Rose Mays, and the Whispers supported by Wil Beard.

"In the past Telephone Information was very regimented," said Garcia. She said it took almost a year to get the trust of the supervisors and convince them that changes could be made for the better. "I think the ideas have always been there. We were just given the opportunity to make it work," she said of their program modeled after Hewlett-Packard's employee motivation plan. Hewlett-Packard is rated as one of the top 100 companies in the United States on the basis of employee satisfaction.

Garcia is grateful to Director Robert Williams and Manager Elfriede Becker who gave the staff carte blanche on plan implementation as long as it did not conflict with the

BRAC contract. "Nothing could have happened without the freedom we were given and knowing that the people on the line are the ones that will make or break you. When we started we were all interested in management dynamics. But, I'm amazed at the power released by this program." The department now handles over 278,867 calls a month, that's up from the 223,969 calls handled at the same time last year.

Administrative Services Officer Scott Mugford expressed the year's success as one where management "merely watered the garden and it all just blossomed. The supervisors really responded. [Customer Relations Director] Bob Williams would come down and say 'thank you' when people knocked themselves out to get the job done. It was a terrific motivator. The key is that we remembered that our most valuable resources are our people, not computers or machines. Keeping that in mind, success came. You make people feel better about them-

Leilia Bailey

...continued from page 6 in the industry," he said.

Ms. Bailey approached the podium to thank everyone in attendance. "I wish my parents [both are now deceased] could be here. My mother was so proud of me when I was promoted from dispatcher to assistant division manager that she had my picture printed all over

herselves and at the same time you release this tremendous power," he said.

In a brief ceremony held later in the afternoon, Director Bob Williams presented Telephone Information Manager Elfriede Becker and her supervisors with a plaque engraved with Vince Lombardi's essay entitled "What It Takes To Be No. 1." General Manager John A. Dyer attended the ceremony and congratulated the clerks on a job well done.

Holding the plaque, Elfriede Becker said, "I am elated. I'm the lucky lady

"I am elated..."

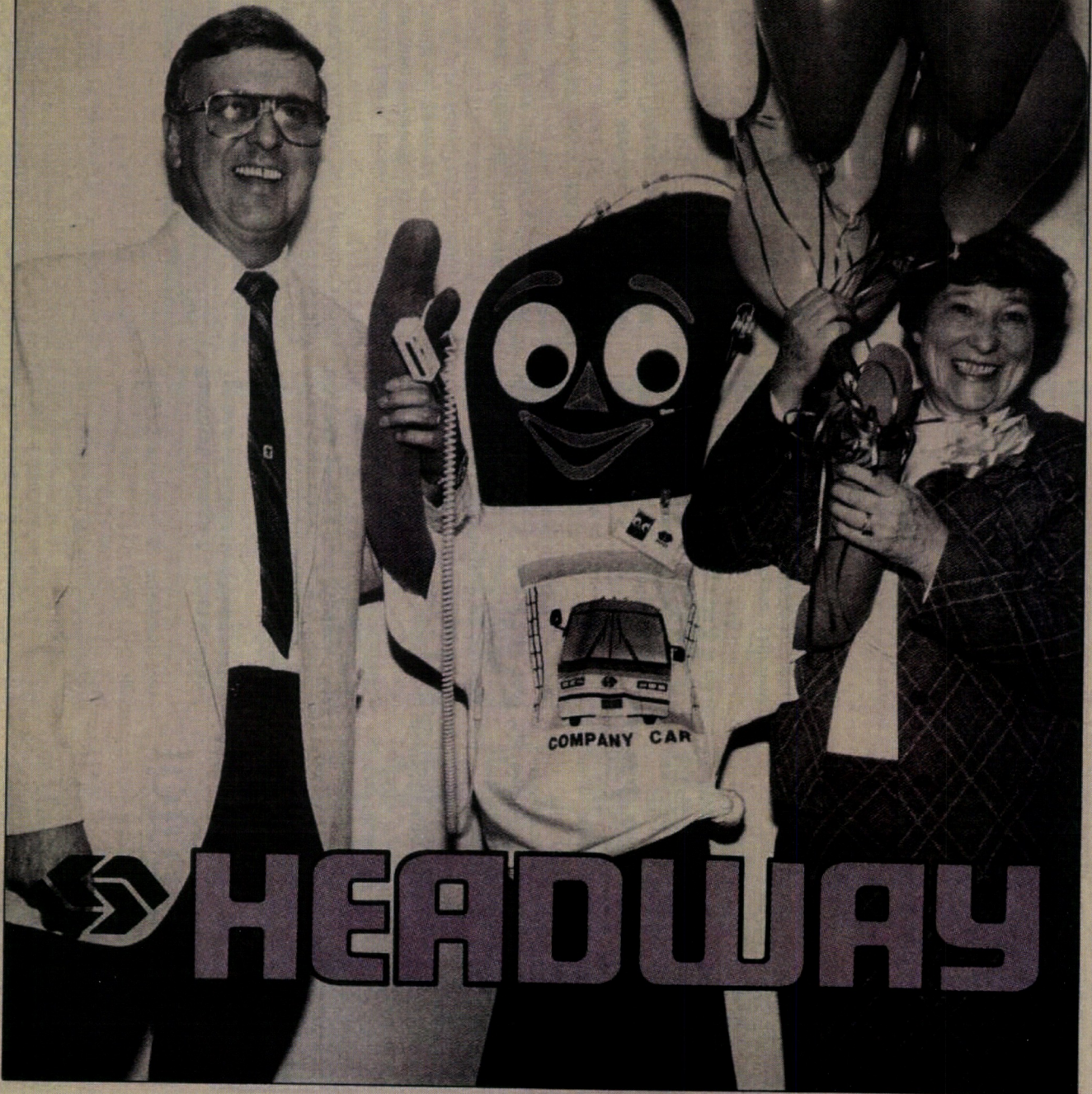
who gets to say 'thank you.' This could not have happened to a better department. This staff, all of them, have worked together." The luau committee and decorators included Rhonda Garcia, Paula Grigsby, Nadine Triche, Vikie Young, and Dee Hawkins.

the hometown newspaper. Today she probably would have resorted to sky-writing."

Ms. Bailey thanked her children for supporting her when she returned to school in order to pursue her career goals.

"So often after achieving my goals I've asked, 'Is this all there is?' I don't feel that way at all about this. This is great!" she said.

*Telephone
Information
Open House*



HEADWAY

Telephone Information Starts Open House Tradition

by Jim Warren

The birth of a new tradition went without a hitch the evening of November 12 as the Telephone Information Open House made its department debut. Over 200 enthusiastic family members, friends, and employees enjoyed the opportunity to tour Telephone Information's new home in the Headquarters Building. The festive and well-received occasion featured demonstrations, refreshments, and even instant photos with the evening's mascot, Gumby — all six feet of him, properly attired in his new RTD T-shirt and operator's headset.

Those interested in getting a feel for the work listened in on working operators as they took calls from the public and responded with the help of the innovative Computerized Customer Information System (CCIS). To learn more about CCIS, a 15-minute promotional video ran continuously, and supervisory personnel provided quick answers to visitors' routing

questions using the state-of-the-art system.

The Radio Dispatch Center and Passenger Services pitched in as well, offering tours of their facilities, and every group of operators was represented, from the Doo Dahs to the Smooth Operators, the Infomaniacs and the Klique, Whispers and the Chosen Few. Chief organizers Rhonda Garcia and Genelle McOwen were more than pleased with the success of the open house and particularly delighted to see so many former employees participate in the festivities. In full agreement, Manager of Telephone Information Elfriede Becker described the event as a "tremendous success. . . We have a wonderful department, and I am so proud to be associated with it." Thanks to the generous work of all concerned, the Telephone Information Open House already looks like a welcome tradition here to stay.



Family, friends, and coworkers attend the first Telephone Information Open House.





B. Potter



A. Simpson

When transit customers ask for information, they want fast, accurate and consistent answers. At SCRTD, the Computerized Customer Information System makes sure customers get the answers they need.

CCIS, currently being implemented by TRANSMAX (the prime contractor) and Megadyne Information Systems, is proving to be a highly effective way to provide route, schedule and fare information to the public. Using CCIS, telephone operators relay full itinerary information within seconds of the customer's telephone call.

Here are just a few of the questions SCRTD's telephone operators answer with the data provided by CCIS:

What is the best way to get from one point to another at a given time of day?

How long is the trip?

How much will it cost?

I use a wheelchair. . . what route is the best for me?

What are the bus stops and lines closest to my home?

Where can I buy bus passes?

The CCIS data base contains a unique electronic map of all five counties in SCRTD's service area, with indices for street addresses, intersections, and landmarks. In addition, full information on transit routes, stops, schedules and fares is provided, supported by a pathfinding algorithm. The pathfinding algorithm determines all possible transit paths between two points and ranks them in order of reasonableness, taking into account factors such as total trip time, number of transfers, and walking distance to and from the transit stops. Updating the data base is easy. A change need be entered only once, in one place, to be reflected in the information used by all the operators.

CCIS, like all TRANSMIS systems, is user-friendly. The only skills needed to access the system are the ability to type and remember a few simple commands.

Here's a typical example of the system in action:

A customer calls with a question: *"I have to get to a 9:00 class at UCLA this morning. What's the best way to get there from my home in North Hollywood? I live at 13027 Welby Way."*

The operator types the following:

- 13027 Welby Way (point of origin)
- UCLA (point of destination)
- 9:00 (arrival time)

Within a few seconds, the trip information appears on the screen.

In this case, the computer provides two options. The first takes a few more minutes of travel time but requires only one transfer, so the operator chooses the first.

The operator says: *"The best route is the 165S bus, transferring to the 560S. Board at 7:35 a.m. at Vanowen and Ethel, where the 165S is westbound on Vanowen. Get off at Van Nuys at 7:40. Catch the 560S bus at 7:54, southbound on Van Nuys. Get off at Hilgard and Strathmore, near UCLA, at 8:37. Your trip time will be 62 minutes. Because the 560S is an express bus, you must pay a premium fare. The cost of your trip will be 80 cents."*

One of the system's most useful special features is a built-in spelling corrector. Every name in the CCIS data base is coded phonetically. When an operator enters an incorrectly spelled name, the system matches it with similarly coded words in the data base and produces a list of "like" words from which the operator can choose.

SCRTD has identified several additional uses for the CCIS data base. For example, because of its extraordinary level of detail and accuracy, the geographic information could be used by municipalities to coordinate carpool or vanpool programs or to generate detailed maps for planning road maintenance, utility "right-of-way" layouts, and emergency vehicle routing. The transit property could recover a portion of the costs of maintaining the data base by charging for its use.

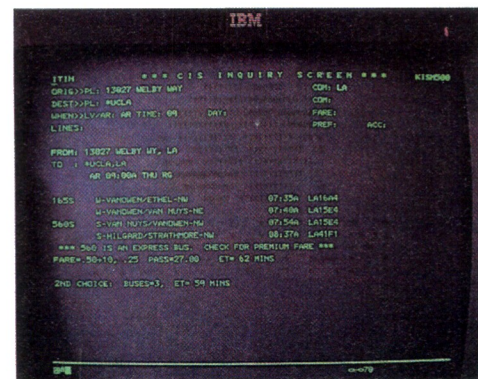
Originally, a 300 square-mile pilot version of CCIS was implemented by SCRTD. During its operation, the pilot

demonstrated the effectiveness of CCIS as a management tool. The system automatically generates a record of all calls, which allows management to spot trends in customer demand and to evaluate the efficiency of each operator. The result has been improved service to the public and improved productivity of SCRTD personnel.

SCRTD is currently implementing CCIS in its full 2,280 square-mile service area, enhancing the customer inquiry functions of the pilot and greatly expanding the capabilities of the data base to cover the needs of many departments in addition to customer relations.

Benefits

- EFFICIENCY. SCRTD estimates that if the District were to provide the same level of information without CCIS, the additional expenses would total more than \$1,000,000 yearly.
- REDUCED TRAINING TIME. Since the system is easy to operate, training time for operators using CCIS declines significantly.
- ENHANCED PUBLIC IMAGE, resulting from improved accuracy and consistency of information provided to the public.
- INCREASED RIDERSHIP. By providing clear and comprehensive information, CCIS encourages patronage among people who might hesitate to use public transit because of their unfamiliarity with the system.
- ADDITIONAL INCOME. Creation of a widely useful data base with commercial resale value allows transit systems the potential of recovering a portion of CCIS operating costs.



ABOVE. Screen displays route, schedule and fare data. RIGHT. SCRTD telephone operator.



R. Chapman



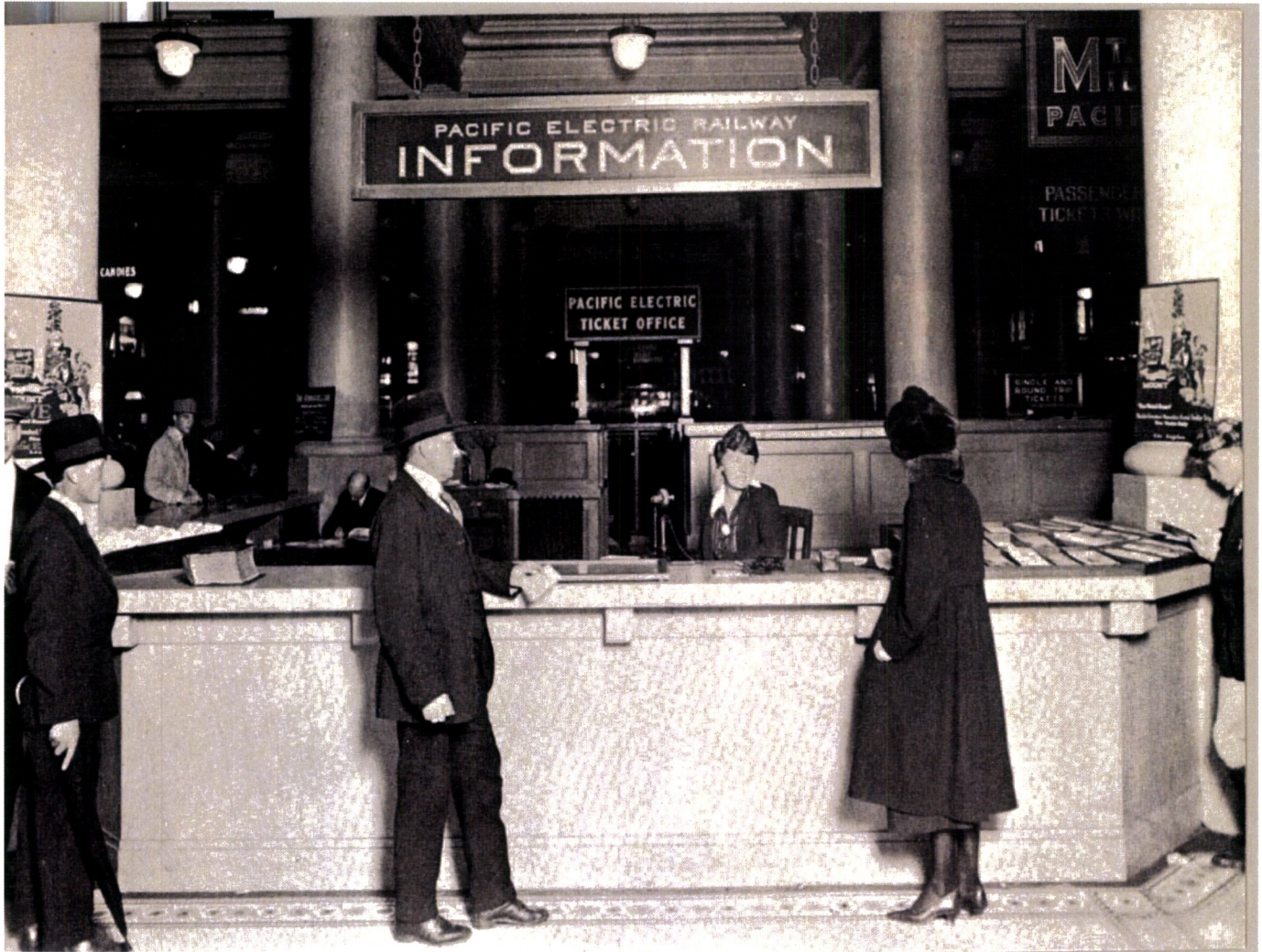
C. Holmes





COLLECTION OF HISTORIC PHOTOS
FROM VARIOUS TIME PERIODS





Circa 1920's. First known photo of Information Agent Sybil Mather at Pacific Electric's 6th and Main St. Station.



Circa 1929. Information Agent Sybil Mather helping walk-in patrons at Pacific Electric's 6th and Main Street Station.



February 1957. Information Department at the Pacific Electric's Building,
6th and Main St.



PBX Operations at Pacific Electric's 6th & Main St. Station



February 1957. Information Department at the Pacific Electric's Building 6th and Main St.



Circa 1950's. Metropolitan Coach Lines Front counter at 6th and Main St. Station



Circa 1942. Wartime crowd shown around Information Counter and milling about the Pacific Electric's 6th and Main St. Station.



Circa 1944. Wartime photo of the bustling Information Counter at the 6th and Main St. Station.



Circa 1944. Customer Information Agent at far right is Sybil Mather known as “ Information Bureau Chief”. (Note flag depicting company employees serving in the armed services.)



Circa 1942. Busy Information Center shown at Pacific Electric's 6th and Main St. Station.



Busy Information Center shown at Pacific Electric's 6th and Main St. Station.



Circa 1942. Wartime crowd shown around Information Counter and milling about the Pacific's Electric's Main St. Station.

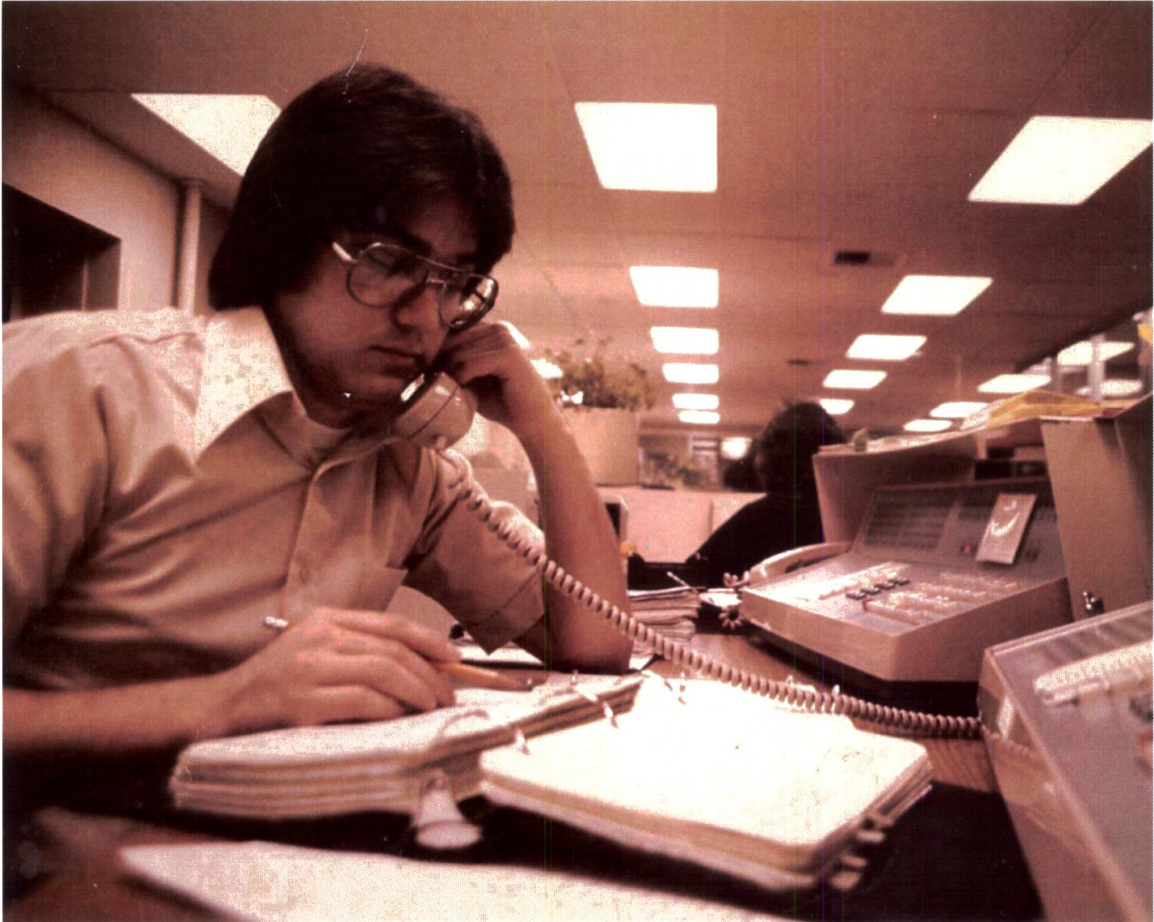


Information Counter at P.E Building Circa 1944. The flag above the counter depicts the total number of employees serving in our armed services during World War II (766) and also shows those killed in action (6).

“S.C.R.T.D.”

**Do you know any of these
people ?**





Doug Anderson- Assisting from Supervisor's Console



Jackie Taylor



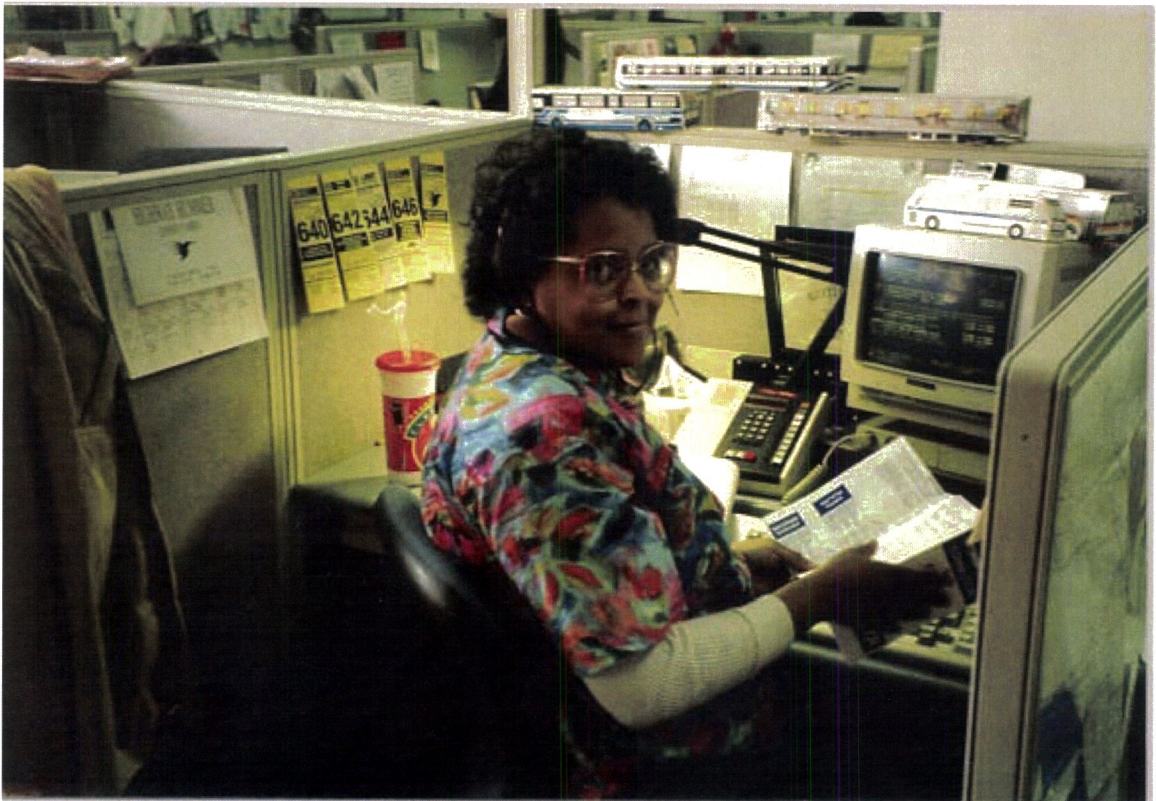
Liliana Chavez



Leslie Smith



Debbie Coddington



Jackie Exeart



David Ullrich & Dora Payan



Karen Pedini



Margarita Ramirez

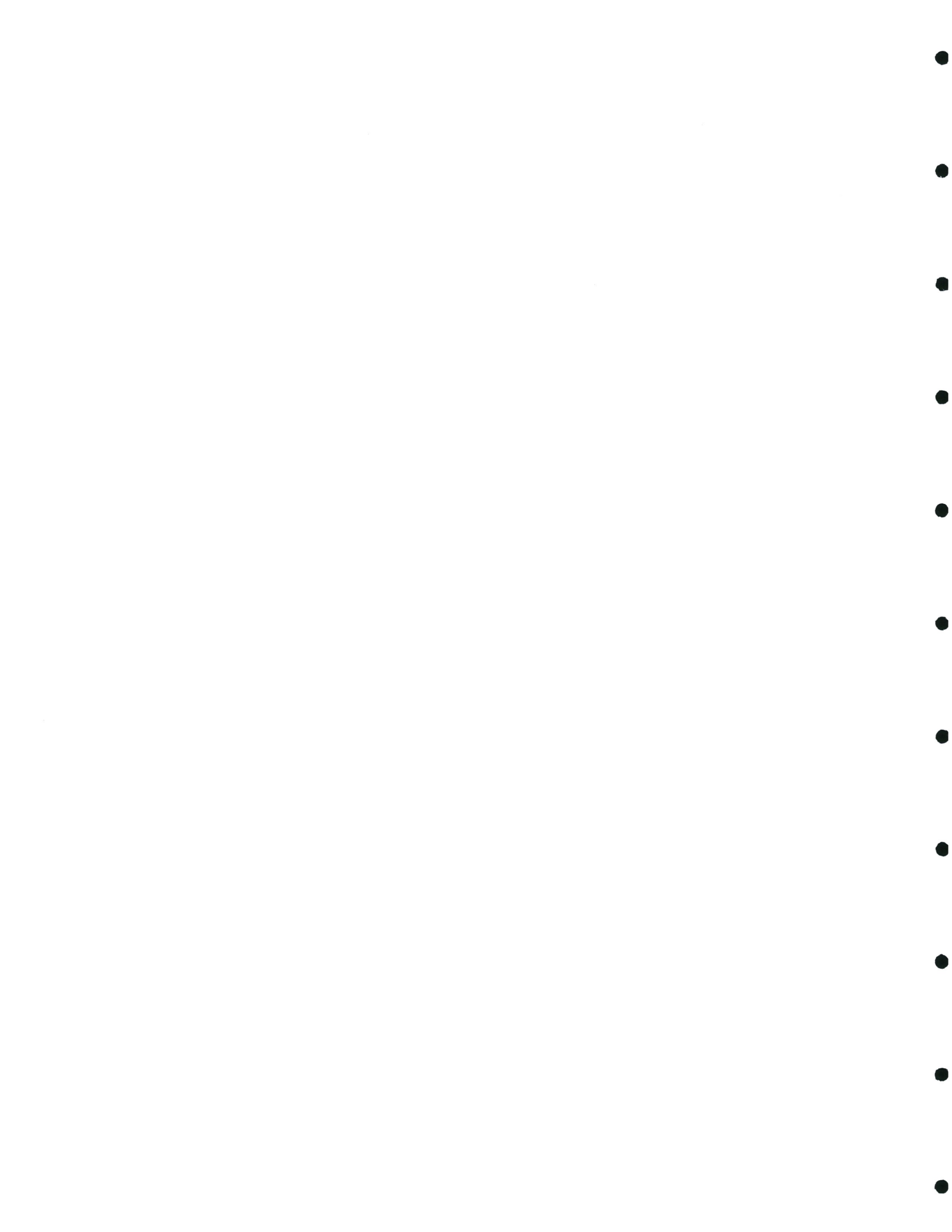


**Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority**

“METRO”

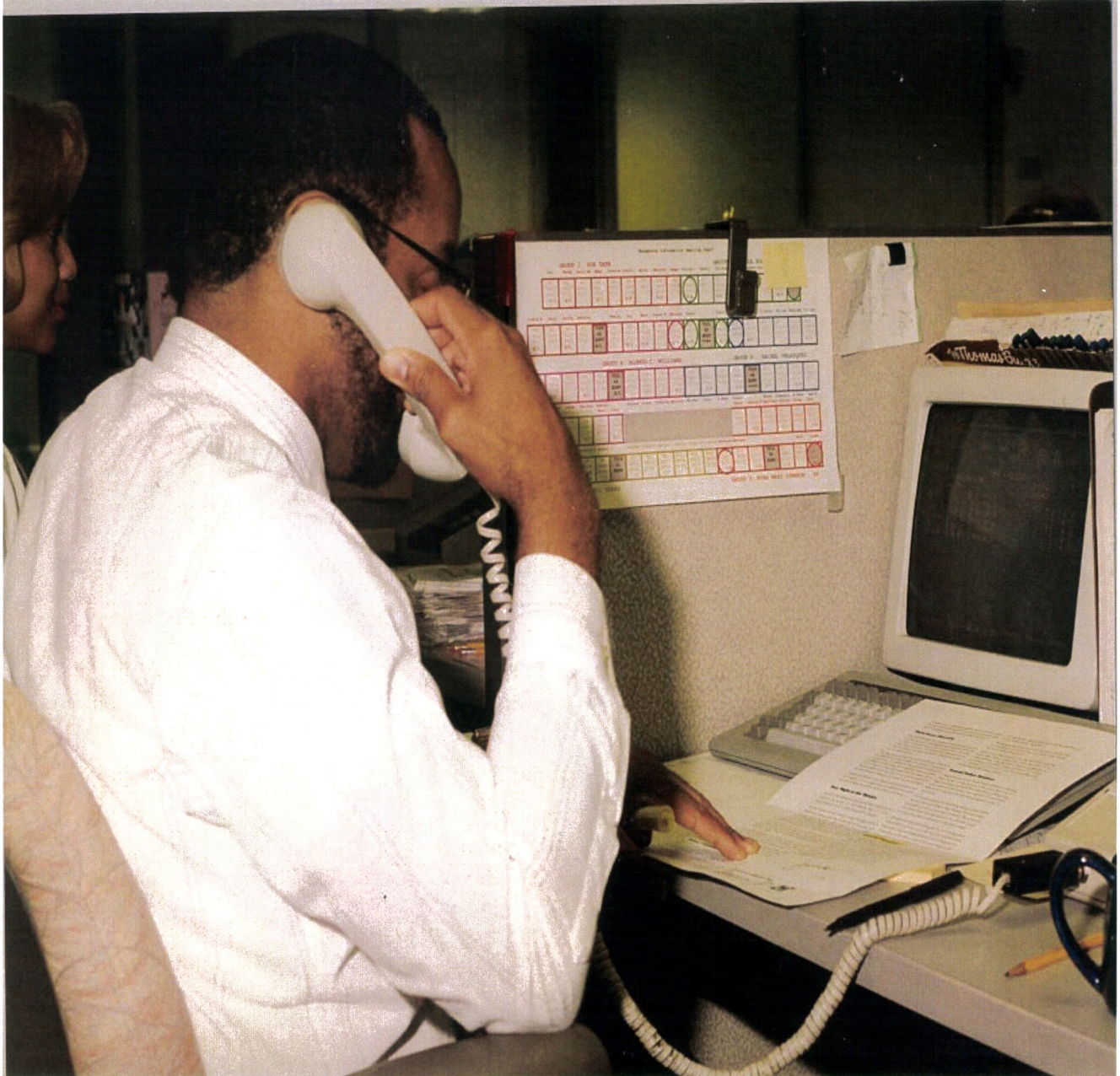
One Gateway Plaza

1993 - 2006





Jay Hammons



Alonzo Williams





Steve Texada



Honorary

Customer Information Agent

Arthur Winston



Tuesday November 19, 2005

MYMETRO.NET
Something news every day!

Metro's oldest employee Arthur Winston gears up for his new position as an honorary member of Customer Relations. Photos by Jimmy Stroup.



Group Reaction> Passenger reps Dalila Valles and Monica Macon said they were 'honored to meet and speak with Mr. Winston.' Agents Milca Elorriaga and Russell Jones acknowledged that he was 'truly an inspiration' to them. Alonzo Williams marveled at his wit and 'staying power to remain committed and dedicated so long.'

Arthur Winston Crowned 'Honorary Member' of Customer Relations Team

By Jimmy Stroup

(Nov. 22, 2005) Metro's most famous employee paid a visit to the Customer Relations Department in the Gateway Building today, delivering tips on clean living, longevity and the work ethic—things he seems to know a little bit about.

Arthur Winston, 99 years old and a Metro employee for nearly 72 years, was warmly greeted by many agents as he toured the call center, where he received his own personal telephone head-set.

Tell Us Your Secrets

Customer Relations employees were treated to a question and answer session with Winston.

Q: How is it different now from when you started in 1924?

AW: "The city was smaller, so we just had streetcars. We only had a few buses. In its age and time, it was all right. That's really coming from the horse-and-buggy days to now, though! When I started working I made 41 cents an hour and rent was \$17 a month. Times have changed!"

Q: How do you manage to stay so fit and active?

AW: "I never was in a whole lot of stress—I don't have no credit cards. If you living like that, you ain't living at all.... That credit is killing you. I'm not in debt. Don't owe nothing to nobody." He said he never has smoked or been fond of alcohol.

Q: What do you eat?

AW: "I eat anything that don't eat me!"

Q: What was it like meeting President Clinton?

AW: "It was wonderful. He didn't have a whole lot to say, but I met him, all right."

Arthur and the Future

And while he does intend to give up his day job, Winston plans to remain active and do things for seniors. "I can't see no limit on living," he said, shaking his head. "I don't see how people say you can only live to 60 or 70 years old."

Winston has plans to retire at his 100th birthday in March, but said he will return to help Customer Relations Department celebrate its centennial anniversary in August 2006.



Customer Relations most senior members Juanita "Maggie" Cook (left) and Marie Tervalon flank Winston. Between them both, Cook and Tervalon only come to 65 years of service, compared to Winston's 71.



Matt Raymond, Chief Communications Officer, Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager and Gail Harvey, Customer Relations Director, present Winston with a plaque from the Customer Relations Department commemorating his time at Metro. Not pictured: Tom Horne, Customer Relations Manager.

Presented with an official plaque, Winston was crowned 'honorary member' of the Customer Relations team by Gail Harvey, Alonzo Williams, Tom Horne and Matt Raymond.

"After providing such dedicated service to our customers, he has truly earned this title," said Gail Harvey, Director of Customer Relations.



Customer Relations Director Gail Harvey, Winston and Passenger Service Officer David Ullrich. Ullrich built the "Information" sign in honor of the Customer Relations Department's 100-year anniversary coming up in August. The sign is a replica of one that hung at 6th Ave. and Main St. in the old Pacific Electric building.

"I'm so proud and thankful to be here," Winston said. "I didn't even know this part of the building was here."

Customer Relations Director Gail Harvey arranged to have the program videotaped.

"Now we can share the special event with the rest of the staff who couldn't be here and later on, when we need a little motivation, we can pop the video in," she said.

Metro's Call Center: Handling 5,000 Calls a Day – and Counting



*"Metro Information...
May I have your starting point, please?"*

Each day, some 5,000 callers who want to know the quickest way to get from Point A to Point B hear that friendly greeting.

"Next to the bus operators, our telephone information operators talk to the riding public more often than any other person at Metro," says Communications Manager Alonzo Williams. "Last year we took 2.5 million calls. Our goal this year is to process the same number of calls more efficiently with fewer resources."

Saving Time and Money

To help meet this goal, Metro recently implemented a new web-based routing and scheduling system called "Tripmaster." Prior to developing Tripmaster, Metro operators were working with a 20-year-old system.

"Under the old system, we paid about \$200,000 in annual transaction fees," explains Williams. "As the fees continued to increase because of the high call volumes, we knew we had to develop a more cost-effective solution. We've been able to do more with Tripmaster and a smaller staff, and save money in the process."

The Benefits of 'Open Source' Technology

The new Tripmaster system took a little over a year to create, and was developed internally by Metro's Customer Relations and ITS groups. A real benefit is the application's "open source" technology, which allows Metro to freely share the system with other transit agencies' call centers.

"Foothill Transit and Long Beach Transit are already using our new application," adds Williams. "In the future, we hope a number of agencies around the country will be able to use it."

Fast and Flexible

In addition to revamping the ways operators can help customers, Metro has made other changes to the call center, including improving workstations, pursuing voice recognition and caller ID technology, and instituting new performance measures.

"We've become more flexible and have reduced our operator training time by almost half," Williams says. "In the last fiscal year, we've shaved off a minute in wait time – all this with fewer people and no overtime."

Customers can receive trip planning assistance by calling 1.800.COMMUTE or visiting metro.net.

Serving Customers One at a Time

In her 19 years at Metro Information, Supervisor Susan Tate has seen a lot of changes: new workstations, new equipment, new technology and new transportation methods. But what haven't changed are the needs of the customers she talks to every day – getting to their destinations safely and on time.

Without a doubt, the job of supervisor and telephone information operator takes a special type of person.

"Some people are already familiar with the areas where they want to go," she says. "But because LA is so large, our operators often need to assist customers in determining their best starting and ending points, and when it would be best to travel."

In addition to knowing your way around LA on transit, being a telephone information operator requires patience. It's not unusual for someone to make four or five separate trip requests in a single phone call.

Despite the challenges, Tate says being the "voice of Metro," is "wonderful. I enjoy helping people and wouldn't want to do anything else." •

▲ Telephone information operators, top: Nicole Chietan; from left: Vickie Brown, Norma Lizeth Ruiz, John Duran, Gina Marie Ramirez, Lia Gamino, LaKisha Myles, Patricia Casillas

▼ Below: Susan Tate, call center supervisor



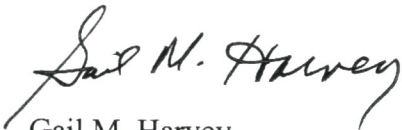


ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Customer Relations staff would like to thank everyone who supported us in this endeavor to capture special moments as noted in this memorable book of “**METRO Information Reflections**” from 1906 – 2006.

Special thanks to various individuals who together provided a wealth of resource information, artifacts, photographs and other cherished memorabilia that will be shared with future Metro Information Agents.

A copy of this document will be archived in our Metro Library for future reference.



Gail M. Harvey
Director of Customer Relations
Customer Relations



Alonzo C. Williams
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Metro