

# MTA NEWS



Monthly Employee  
News From The  
Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

MAY ISSUE

## INSIDE



Narisco Polanco

- Narisco Polanco, MTA Rail Operator of the Month
- Jesus Lopez Runs Marathon
- MTA Takes Its Daughters to Work

## MTA Breaks Ground on Pasadena Line

Light rail system is the agency's third

**W**aving a blue and white MTA banner, Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Director Richard Riordan, joined by the mayors of Pasadena and South Pasadena, heralded the start-up of construction on the Pasadena Blue Line light rail system last month.

When completed in 1998, the line will run 13.6 miles through Pasadena, South Pasadena, Highland Park and Chinatown, and include 14 stations. It will carry a projected 55,000 passengers per day by the year 2000.

The first task to be completed involves demolishing the old Los Angeles River rail bridge. The single track structure will

be replaced by a segmental bridge wide enough to operate trains in both directions. The workers should finish the actual demolition in two months.

The track will run at street level except for an elevated segment and station in Chinatown, and a below ground configuration in Old Pasadena.

The RCC project manager is Laurence Weldon. ■



*Making waves — Pasadena Mayor Rick Cole, South Pasadena Mayor Pro-tem James Woollacott, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, and MTA Chairman Richard Alatorre signal the beginning of construction on the Pasadena Line. Jim Smart, deputy director, media, snapped the photo.*

## Running on Empty

"It relaxes my mind... and makes me perform better on the road."

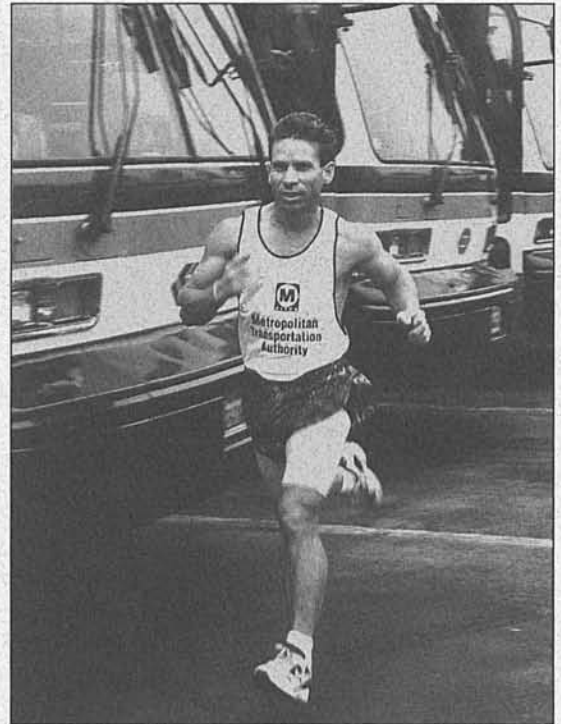
**J**esus Lopez, an operator at MTA's Venice division, often admires the incredible beauty of the Southern California coast. But not only from the driver's seat of the bus. Between his split shift — he has three to four hours off — he jogs the distance between Venice to the Pepperdine University campus in Malibu.

"It relaxes my mind," says Lopez, who was one of 19 MTA men and women who ran in the L.A. Marathon. "It makes me perform my job better, and increases my stamina on the road."



*Jesus Lopez and his manager, John Adams, proudly display marathon awards. Lopez says Adams has been a big support.*

Lopez has wanted to run in marathons since he was a boy growing up in Mexico. He says he used to stare enviously at his schoolmates on the track team. "But I came from a poor family," he says sadly, "and I had to head to the fields after schools to help my pop earn some money."



*Occasionally Jesus Lopez' passengers spot him jogging the coastline.*

Moving to the U.S. some 20 years ago, Lopez quickly achieved his dream. He averages 40 to 50 miles of running a week. This marathon was his 14th. He hopes to eventually beat his best marathon time of 3:55:58.

Lopez and his wife Ofelia live in Boyle Heights. They have two children, ages 19 and 14. ■

## MTA Employee Mourned

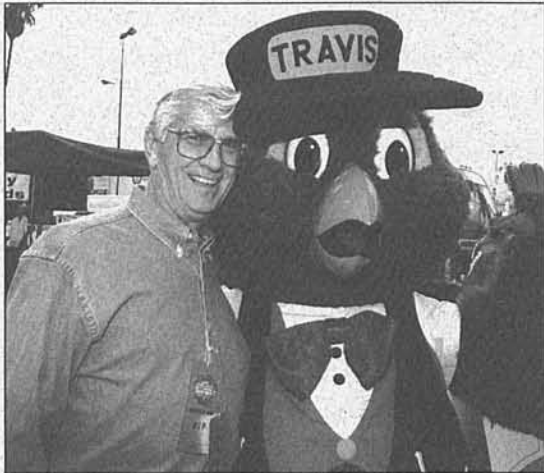


**O**ur deepest condolences to the family of Donald Johnson, a 43-year-old MTA employee who was killed in a March 14th on-the-job accident. Johnson, a traction power inspector, suffered an electrical shock while working in the Metro Blue Line power sub-

station near the intersection of Willowbrook Ave. and Piru streets in Willowbrook.

Johnson, a resident of Pomona, had been with the agency since December, 1992. He is survived by his father, Henry, and a brother and sister. ■

# Los Angeles Marathon Sports Transportation Theme



*Kim Kimball, deputy chief executive officer, with friend.*



*Judi Schwartz, director of board relations, Kimball, and Muhammad Ali.*

**T**he MTA sounded its rail safety message at the ninth running of the Los Angeles Marathon on Saturday, March 5. The agency's Travis the Owl delighted scores of youngsters while driving home the rail safety message at the same time.

The program was co-sponsored by the Transportation Foundation of Los Angeles,

which was founded to foster interest in and understudying of integrated mass transit systems through public, cooperative and institutional education programs. The Foundation relies solely on contributions from outside sources, and does not use taxpayer dollars.

Nineteen MTA employees ran in the marathon.



*Alice Wiggins, deputy director of marketing; Kim Kimball; Judi Schwartz; RCC's Genetha Eddins; and Bob Hoskins.*



## Off and Running

**T**he RCC is busy this month testing rail cars on the Green Line. Several weeks ago, the RCC borrowed a light rail car from the Blue Line and successfully operated it at speeds of up to 55 miles per hour between the Lakewood Boulevard and Long Beach Avenue stations. The Green Line is expected to begin operating by next summer. ■

# Applause!

## MTA Employees of the Month



*Narisco Polanco*

### Narisco Polanco Tapped Rail Operator of the Quarter

Narisco Polanco, an 18-year veteran of MTA bus and train operations who has guided Blue Line trains since opening day in July, 1990, has been named the agency's Rail Operator of the Quarter.

The Huntington Beach resident, known among friends and co-workers as "Chico," has an exemplary service record, having no absences, rule violations, or avoidable accidents during the qualify-

ing period.

When he's not carrying Blue Line passengers, Polanco enjoys swimming, fishing, traveling in his motor home and cooking. He and his wife of 26 years, Felipa, have five children ranging from 26 to 16 years of age.

### Liliana Chavez Selected Telephone Information Operator of Month



*Liliana Chavez is flanked by Director of Customer Relations Bob Williams (left) and the Board's Nick Patsaouras.*

Meet Liliana Chavez, who was selected Telephone Information Operator of the Month for February 1994. With the agency eight years, she has received this award three previous times — truly an amazing feat! This impressive accomplishment is the result of her outstanding job performance and a personal commitment to excel. Chavez is frequently called upon to assist in the training of new employees and to serve as acting supervisor. A mother of four, she is involved in school and community functions.

### Elton Ford Gets Kudos



*Honoree Elton Ford, Jr. is flanked by the Board's Mel Wilson (left) and Maintenance's Tony Chavira.*

Here's to Elton Ford, who was named the Equipment Maintenance Department's Employee of the Month. A 22-year agency veteran, he is assigned to MTA's manpower section as an assignment coordinator. He is responsible for providing adequate division coverage for clerical and equipment records specialist staffing which he handles with consistent accuracy. He recently modified his schedule and worked extended hours in order to assist in the training of new ERS's. Married with five children, his hobbies include softball and camping.

*See applause, page 8*

# “Three Strikes and You’re Out”

-- Transit Police Operation in Hollywood Nets Two Career Criminals

by Sgt. Kit Armstrong

**T**ransit Police officers did not wait for the “three strikes and you’re out” crime bill to pass before taking a career criminal off the streets for good.

P.M. patrol shift officers became alarmed recently when they took several armed robbery reports from victims who were robbed at knife point while waiting at the Hollywood Freeway and Western Avenue bus station. The robber, according to the reports, would stalk his victims down the station stairways and rob them of their purses at knife point while they were waiting for a bus on the freeway platform.

## Suspect was Registered Sex Offender

Over the course of several weeks, police officers Michelle Thornburg, Sean Angotti, Roberto Smith, Kim Turner, Roy Cejas and Carlos Diaz, led by Sgt. Mark Jennings, conducted plainclothes surveillance and decoy operations in the area of the bus station. During one operation, a man who fit the description of the robber approached decoy officers Turner and Thornburg and offered them crack cocaine. The man was arrested for a drug offense and transported to the Hollywood police station. The suspect also was a registered sex offender.

## Officers Get their Man

Not satisfied with just the drug arrest, the officers continued their investigation, preparing a photo line-up for viewing by previous robbery victims. As a result, one victim made a positive identification.

Despite the man’s arrest, other robbery reports were still coming in, so the officers persisted with their surveillance efforts. On the night of Feb. 3, officers staking out the station saw a man

fitting the description of the robber loitering. He was moving from stop to stop and looking down the stairway as passengers alighted the buses and walked down the stairs. He carried a large knife. He was arrested.

## Linked to Five Other Robberies

The suspect was booked at the Hollywood police station, where a lineup was conducted. Two victims identified the suspect as the man who robbed them. Additionally, the suspect was linked to five other open robbery cases in the Hollywood area according to Hollywood Det. Mike Thrasher. The suspect also has a long criminal history of committing violent robberies and has stabbed some victims. Since the suspect has previous convictions and has done state prison time for robbery, he will be prosecuted as a career criminal, which could result in a state prison sentence for life if convicted.

## Transit Police Wins Praise from LAPD

Det. Thrasher commended the officers for an outstanding job, thanking them for clearing his case load. Transit Police Chief Sharon Papa also had high praise for the officers: “I am pleased that the officers’ efforts not only removed a vicious criminal from the transit system, but also from the surrounding area. This operation demonstrates how motivated, dedicated and skilled our transit police officers are, and the results that can be achieved if line officers are given the flexibility to quickly react to a crime situation and the equipment to conduct surveillance operations effectively and safely. The entire Transit Police Department is proud of its work.” ■

# RCC Wins Another One!

**T**he RCC has been honored by the California Department of Transportation for outstanding achievement in the building of Red Line Segment 1. The project was recognized as a winner in the category of “environmental enhancement” in this year’s *Excellence in Transportation* awards competition.

The judges noted that “they were very impressed with the quality of work during construction and how the RCC handled the environmental aspects of building this massive project.”

Said RCC President Ed McSpedon, “This is another affirmation of the outstanding professional job being done by the members of the L.A. Metro Rail team!” ■

# Transit Police Talk

by Sgt. Shari Barberic



**T**ransit Police Chief Sharon Papa made a special delivery to Senior Officer Angel Frias during a recent MTA Safety Ad-hoc Committee meeting.

Frias, who recently assisted in the deliveries of three babies, was recognized for his actions beyond the call of duty. The most recent incident occurred on Jan. 20, when he was flagged down in Van Nuys by a man who reported that his wife was about to have a baby. Like a knight in blue, he helped the mother-to-be, delivering a healthy baby girl and securing a place in Transit Police history.

## Frias is "Midwife of the Year"

Frias was presented with the first-ever Transit Police "Midwife of the Year Award" in acknowl-

edgment of his unique accomplishments. The plaque featured a pacifier with the inscription, "He Delivers!" and arrived via a Domino's pizza box, prompting chuckles from the audience.

Quipped committee chairperson Antonio Villaraigosa, "Maybe we could make Senior Officer Frias an honorary obstetrician!" Frias, who often jokes that he was pre-med before he was pre-law, works the p.m. patrol shift and has three children.



Sgt. Shari Barberic

"Maybe we could make Senior Officer Angel Frias an honorary obstetrician!"

## Sgt. Armstrong Nabs Robber

Sgt. Kit Armstrong, after four years of service in Administration and Rail Planning, finally realized his goal of returning to Patrol, where he was assigned to crime fighting duties on P.M. Watch.

Recently, as he and Officer Albert Plazola patrolled the area of Washington and Hoover streets, they were flagged down by a man who had just been robbed at gunpoint. The victims described the two suspects and said they had run southbound on Hoover. Officer Plazola remembered seeing two men who matched the suspects' descriptions running west on 20th Street just seconds earlier.





*Senior Officer Angel Frias delivers and gets big congrats from Chief Papa.*

**Officers Engage in Foot Pursuit**

Plazola and Armstrong spotted the duo walking west on 20th Street and attempted to detain them. Both suspects ran north on Magnolia, with Sgt. Armstrong in foot pursuit and Officer Plazola following in the car. The pair split up at Washington, one running east and the other running west.

Armstrong and Plazola captured one of the sus-

pects at Orchard and Washington, but the other escaped despite an area search by assisting Transit Police units. The victim, who was robbed of a gold ring, made positive identification of the man in custody. The 22-year-old suspect was booked for armed robbery at LAPD Rampart Division.

"It's great to be back in the field!" said an exhilarated Sgt. Armstrong after the arrest. ■

**Division 16, Terminal 25 to Close**

**D**ivision 16 in Pomona will close as an operating division on June 26. All buses now assigned to the division, located at 1551 E. Mission Road, will be transferred to Division 9, located at 3449 Santa Anita Ave. in El Monte.

Also, Terminal 25, located south of Venice Boulevard in downtown Los Angeles, will close. ■

**Hurray, Papa and Company!**

Kudos to Sharon Papa and her team after the MTA Board gave Transit Police the responsibility for providing all bus and rail security!

## Applause!

continued from page 4



### Deborah Craney Earns Master's Degree

**C**ongratulations to Transportation General's Deborah Craney, who will receive her master's degree in leadership and management this month from the University of LaVerne. The administrative analyst hopes to eventually specialize in strategic and tactical management. A former business manager in the medical field, Craney earned her bachelor's in management & organizational behavior from LaVerne. ■

### Schedule Checkers Morris and Jones Honored



Congratulations to Schedule Checkers Larry Morris and Richard Jones (pictured above) who were recently selected the Scheduling and Operations Planning Employees of the Quarter. In making the presentation, their boss, Steve Parry (pictured on the left), saluted them for their years of transportation expertise.

The two, who have each been with the depart-

ment 22 years, have been instrumental in the development and maintenance of the MTA's computer checking system, which consists of a hand-held terminal used to record the number of boarding passengers. The type of terminal has been copied by other transit systems around the country.

### Maintenance Retirees

The following MTA employees recently retired and were honored at the March 16 meeting of the Operations Committee:

**Donald Clark** began working for the MTA in 1971 and retired after 23 years of service. At the time of his retirement, Clark worked at Division 16 as a mechanic A. Clark is married, has three sons and one daughter, and plans to become self-employed in the swimming pool maintenance and repair business after his retirement. He loves fishing and trips to Las Vegas.

*See applause, page 9*



*Dep. Exec. Officer of Operations Ralph De la Cruz, retirees TOS Daniel Ortiz, Div. 16 Bus Operator Eddie Mitchell, Division 1 Bus Operator John Rodriguez, and CEO Franklin White.*



# A Little Extra

**T**he following operators went above and beyond the call of duty and showed extraordinary courtesy to fellow operators, patrons and motorists:

Ruben Hernandez	Div. 7
Michael Lopez	Div. 10
James M. Daugherty	Div. 16
Carl F. Berkowitz	Div. 15
Neil O'Brien	Div. 15

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8*

**Roland Glass** began working for the agency in 1973 and retired after 21 years of service. At the time of his retirement, Glass worked at Division 6 as a utility A. He is married with one daughter and one son. His future plans involve traveling and simply enjoying life.

Division 1 Operator **John Rodriguez** has been employed with agency for the past 17 years. His excellent driving record and numerous letters of commendation strongly indicate the quality of an outstanding employee. Operator Rodriguez and his wife Antonia reside in Downey. They have three adult children and four grandchildren. Now that he has some free time, he hopes to get involved in different hobbies.

Division 15 Operator **Joseph Barnett** has been employed with the MTA for the past 23 years. During his years behind the wheel, he has been recognized for his outstanding driving skill. He is most proud of the fact that he has not had a misout in more than 20 years. Operator Barnett and his wife Ella reside in Quartz Hill, and have five adult children and three grandchildren. He enjoys fishing during his free time.

Robert B. Crowe	Div. 15
Rosa M. Fresnedo	Div. 10
James R. Noss	Div. 15
Alma D. Merk	Div. 5
John B. Lett	Div. 10
Betty Liddell	Div. 15
Benjamin H. Welch	Div. 9

And kudos to Shannon D. Burns of Div. 18 who recently averted a service delay! ■

Division 9 Operator **Damian Lopez** received numerous letters of commendation during his 23 years of service. He had no chargeable accidents and held an excellent attendance record. He and his wife Ofelia live in Fontana. They have four children. His hobbies include gardening and restoring old cars.

Transit Operations Supervisor **Daniel Ortiz** has been employed with the Authority for the past 34 years. Before retiring he was number one on the seniority roster. He and his wife Gloria have been married for 24 years, have six adult children and five grandchildren. He enjoys traveling.

Say good-bye to Division 18 Operator **Eddie Mitchell**, who is leaving after 24 years of service to the agency. He received the Outstanding Operator Award in 1986, 1987, and 1989. This award was presented to those operators who achieved the highest excellence in their driving skills, attendance and customer relations. Operator Mitchell and his wife Cynthia live in Gardena. His hobbies include golf and bowling. He also have served in the Air Force Reserves since January 1977. ■

# Births



**B**orn to Division 18 Operator Tammy Stigas and Chukwudi Echezona, a daughter, Adaorah Echezona, on May 22, 1993. The little one weighed in at 7 lbs., 3 oz., was 22 inches in length, and was born at Kaiser in Harbor City. Writes her proud mom, "You're looking at the first black female president of the United States!" ■

## Bits and Pieces



*Edgardo Carlos*

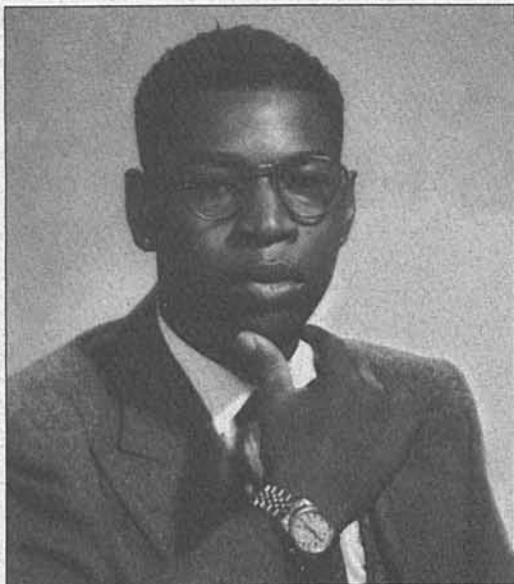
### Auditor Edgardo Carlos Earns Kudos

**E**dgardo Carlos, an MTA auditor, has been named a certified internal auditor (CIA) by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Carlos was given the designation after passing a rigorous four-part examination. Only a fourth of those who took the exam passed. Carlos joins 20,000 certified internal auditors worldwide who are members of a recognized professional group.

### Son of Operator Walter Sample Graduates with Honors

**R**eginald Anthony Sample, the 21-year-old son of Division 18 Operator Walter Sample, Jr. and his wife, Alvina, was recently named for inclusion in the 1994 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Sample, who will receive his bachelor of arts degree from Fisk University in Tennessee in April, also was induct-

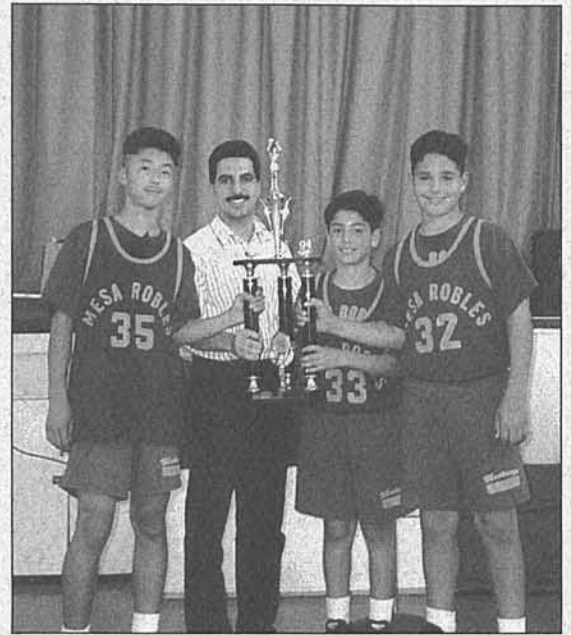
ed into the Delta Mu Delta National Business Honor Society, and last year was included on the Dean's List of excellent students in academic achievement. Sample also was captain of Fisk's baseball team. His proud father celebrated 20 years of service to the agency in March. His older son, Walter III, graduated cum laude from Atlanta's Morehouse College in 1989 and is pursuing a career in law.



*Reginald Sample*

After graduation, the younger Sample says he would like to join his Dad as an MTA employee and become a member of the MTA family.

### Son of Division 5 Mechanic Johnny Rodriguez Stars on Court



**D**ivision 5 Mechanic A Johnny Rodriguez writes us to say how proud he is of his son, Johnny Jr., who excels in school sports and recently made the honor roll at Mesa Robles Junior High in Hacienda Heights. The younger Rodriguez, who is a point guard and team captain of his school's basketball team, recently led his team to the La Puente/Hacienda Heights Tournament Championship, completing an undefeated season. In this photo, Johnny, Sr. helps his son, number 33, hold the trophy. Onlookers include two teammates. ■

# Public Commendations

**Dear MTA:**

I'm presently employed with the L.A. County Department of Children's Services, but I had heard there were job openings for bus operators, so I decided to call your personnel office.

I spoke to a very nice woman named **Gail Licon**, who gave me all of the information I needed to know. She was warm and friendly over the phone. I then asked her if she would be there around 12:15 p.m., or if it was her lunch hour. She said it was, but that she would wait for me to come in first. I was really surprised she would do that. I thought it was great!

I came in around noon and she was there to greet me. She explained everything in a positive way. I filled out my questionnaire and gave it back to her. She smiled and said that it would take 4 to 6 weeks for me to get an application. Then I departed with a good feeling about the company and its employees. All in all, it was a great experience.

Please let her know that I really appreciated her help and advice in the matter of employee hiring.

**Sincerely,  
Adrian Mandese  
Los Angeles**

**Dear MTA:**

Please commend Operator **Max Campbell** on my behalf.

Today, I boarded the 7:10 a.m. bus to West Hollywood at the Vernon Blue Line connection. A gentleman sat behind me and made several threatening remarks to me. I was very fright-

ened, both afraid to remain seated and afraid to move away or off the bus. Suddenly the MTA Police asked the man to step off the bus for a few questions. It was apparent that Mr. Campbell notified the police to remove the passenger. As the bus pulled away, Mr. Campbell comforted me and explained that I should not feel that mass transit is dangerous.

Please express my gratitude to Mr. Campbell for his kindness.

**Sincerely,  
Stephanie Mikhail  
Long Beach**

**Dear MTA:**

It is my pleasure on this Valentine's Day to tell you about a wonderful, kind driver on the Normandie Line. Her name is **Landon White**. One morning, I was standing on the corner of Normandie and Washington daydreaming. She knew I was her passenger and she was kind enough to blow her horn and say, "Wake up, MTA is here!" Bless her for her kindness. A smiling face makes the day.

**Thank you,  
Anne B. Page  
Los Angeles**



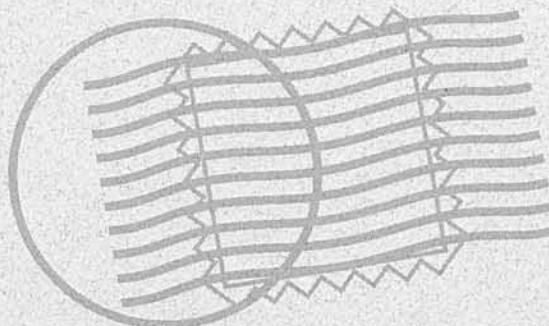
## A Uniform Uniform

Bus and rail operators can look forward to new uniforms later this year.

Dress will feature midnight navy pants, sweater vests, and gray-blue shirts. Men will wear ties with an embroidered MTA logo. Accessories will be black. Women operators can wear coordinating berets; men may wear navy caps.

According to Deborah Craney, uniform project manager, these uniforms are of a natural fiber blend, which is far superior in quality and durability to what operators had been wearing.

TOS's will wear a similar outfit with a supervisor's patch inscribed in gold.



## MTA NEWS

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## "Take Your Daughters to Work" is an MTA Hit!



Shop Steward Gabriel Martinez poses with his daughter, Sara. Next to them are mother and daughter, Tensy and Claudia Eich. Eich is an equipment engineer.

**N**early two dozen MTA moms and dads participated in the second annual "Take Your Daughters to Work" program on Thursday, April 28.

"I loved it," said Assistant Payroll Manager Bill Hesser, who brought his 9 1/2-year-old daughter

Christine, to work. "You know, proud Daddy got to show her off!"

Hesser said that Christine, who attends Imperial School in Pasadena, learned to operate a fax and copier machine, and discovered the difference between a PC and mainframe.

Shop Steward Gabriel Martinez, in heavy maintenance at CMF, said his 10-year-old daughter, Sara, also had the time of her life. "She did some filing, and learned to operate the computer that directs the hi-tech robots to deliver material from the Stores Department to the rest of CMF," he said. His daughter attends school in Norwalk. ■



*Who's the boss? In this photo, little Christine Hesser, daughter of Assistant Payroll Manager Bill Hesser, is the chief!*



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