



HEADWAY



Southern California Rapid Transit District

Volume 1 Number 1 December 21, 1973

District buses roll despite energy crunch

Christmas may not hold the same glow this year for Southern Californians living in the shadow of the current energy crisis, but RTD buses will continue to serve the community despite the scarcity of diesel fuel. "There is a national energy crisis, it is a real one, it will be with us for some time, and the federal government recognizes that mass transit can play a key role in helping to alleviate the effects of the crisis," said RTD President Thomas Neusom. "For the near term, we have received assurances from the Office of Petroleum Allocation that we will have enough diesel fuel to continue uninterrupted service until January 18. For the future, we have also been assured that federal allocation regulations for middle distillate fuels are to be promulgated December 27 which would assure public surface mass transportation 100 percent of current needs as long as such an allocation program is necessary."

and RTD General Manager Jack Gilstrap met in Washington, D.C. with Charles DiBona, President Nixon's special assistant for energy policies, officials of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Transportation, and the staffs of several members of the California congressional delegation. "It was made very clear to us in Washington that mass transit is considered one of the top priority users of diesel fuel," he said.

The Washington meetings came as a result of an announced five percent cutback by Standard Oil Co. of California in RTD's November fuel supply. New policies and procedures instituted by the U.S. Energy Policy Office required Standard to cut its deliveries to the District back to 1972 levels, and that all fuel allocations be made on a month-to-month basis based on '72 purchases.

When coupled with RTD's seven



RTD states its case to Los Angeles . . . and Washington, D.C.

Train rooms, paddle boards and 'headway'

Employees of the Southern California Rapid Transit District span the total spectrum of public transportation in the Los Angeles area. Some remember the city's old trolley lines, and others work exclusively on the futuristic specifications for the proposed rapid transit system.

Yet, as the District and its employees move further into the future of public transportation, the traditions of the trolley days remain in the day-to-day operation of RTD

— train rooms, paddle boards, and headway.

HEADWAY promises to be a progressive employee newspaper for all District employees. Been elected president of the Lions' Club? Your son make Eagle Scout? Did your daughter get married? If so, you're news. Anything that happens to you is important to the entire RTD family. Let HEADWAY know about it.

Capturing the RTD on paper is a job best done by everyone.



ACTOR George Takei has been named to the RTD Board of Directors by Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Takei, runner-up in the recent race for L.A.'s 10th District city council seat, was sworn in at the Nov. 29 Board meeting.



Division 9's Vernon Engel . . . 'Mr. Fleet Safety' of 1973

Vernon Engel serves up winning recipe for safety

Take one 36-year public transportation veteran, add nearly 2 million miles of Southern California driving, and let simmer over an accident-free career.

Those are the ingredients for the National Safety Council's "Mr. Fleet Safety" of 1973 — District operator Vern Engel. Judges of the greater Los Angeles chapter of the National Safety Council chose Engel for the honor after examining the records of nominees from area transit properties as well as taxi, truck, and other fleet properties.

In congratulating Engel, RTD President Thomas Neusom said, "When you consider that his record equates approximately 100 safe trips around the world, and further, that his has been the most precious cargo of all, the transportation of people, it is easy

to see why he was selected to receive the highest individual safety award in the Los Angeles area."

Engel's career has spanned service on both streetcars and buses since 1937. In comparing conditions facing the new operator of today and those he faced in '37, Engel said, "In those days everybody rode the streetcars and buses. You got a cross-section of the public and people seemed to be a bit easier to get along with. Today a driver has to be more of a psychologist to avoid problems with his passengers."

In an interview with John Walsh, RTD director of safety, Engel revealed the "secret ingredient" of his success. "Never let anyone surprise you," he said. "You have to be ready for any situation. I think if somebody jumped

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RTD takes rapid transit program into community



RTD DIRECTOR Byron Cook (right) provides a "preview showing" for Congressman Barry Goldwater, Jr. of the San Fernando Corridor alignment during the Winnetka Community Meeting.



MEANWHILE, OUT EAST, the transit alignment for the San Gabriel Corridor is discussed by (from left) RTD consultant Don Brackenbush, Director Adelina Gregory, and an interested couple who attended the Rosemead Community Meeting.



Thompson



Norie

A series of 18 community meetings has been completed throughout Los Angeles County to obtain local reaction to the impact of RTD's proposed rapid transit program. The opinions of county residents will provide the District's technical consultants with additional input which will enable them to "tailor" certain segments of the program to the requirements of the communities involved.

The meetings were held in areas along the eight corridors recommended for initial construction. According to George McDonald, manager of planning and marketing, the public response at the community meetings has been "very gratifying."

"The value of the meetings was not embodied in the vast 'quantity' of residents who attended," he said, "but in the 'quality' of the people in each audience. The vast majority of them were the important individuals within the community involved — the 'influentials' — who came with an open and receptive mind, and with an inquiring, willing-to-learn attitude."

The meetings represented a consolidated effort by RTD directors, staff and employees who worked together to insure the successful execution of each presentation. Directors Arthur Baldonado, Adelina Gregory, A. J. Eyraud, Jr., Jay Price, Hugh Carter, George Brewster, Byron Cook, Victor Carter, Don McMillan, and President Thomas Neusom, all represented their respective corridor.

RTD staff members participating in



A MEMBER OF the overflow audience at the District's Beverly Hills Community Meeting asks a pointed question of RTD's project consulting team concerning the Wilshire Corridor.

the presentations included McDonald, Richard Gallagher, Howard Beardsley, Bruce Benzler, Dan Miller, Peter Drake, Joe Cooper, Chris Dahlstrom, Helen Bolen, Barbara Patterson, Elizabeth O'Leary, and Frenchy Dupre. Community Representatives Lou Collier and Al Reyes played a major role in presenting the rapid transit program to each audience.

RTD is now seeking technical data from Los Angeles County and the 78 cities within county lines to further define community requirements for the rapid transit system.



Two operators cited by RTD Board

At the commendation of their passengers, two District operators have received "Operator of the Month" honors from the RTD Board of Directors. Grace Thompson, Division 3, and Horace Norie, Division 5, were awarded certificates of merit in presentation ceremonies before the Board.

Thompson, whose husband Bivin is also an RTD operator at Division 3, was cited for her extra concern for the aged and handicapped, and her out-

standing safety record. Victor Carter, RTD director representing the City of Los Angeles, made the presentation.

Norie received an "Operator of the Month" award from Jay B. Price, RTD director and City of Bell councilman. During his 27 years of service with RTD and its predecessor agencies, Norie has received 77 letters of praise from his riders, and once before was named "Operator of the Month." He operates on RTD's West 54th Street - North Main Street Line 8.



CELEBRATING THEIR GRADUATION to Mechanic C, another class of mechanics is ready to service RTD's fleet of diesel buses. From left to right (top photo), seated, are graduates Melvin Domaloan, Jimmie F. Evans, Jimmie Hubbard, Jr., and Elisha Howard. Standing, left to right, are George Powell, general superintendent of maintenance and equipment; Earl Morey, foreman instructor; graduate James Manier; Jerry Long, president of the Amalgamated Transit Union, Division 1277; and George

Heinle, manager of operations. Gerald Clark also graduated, but was unable to be present for photo. From left to right (bottom photo) are Long; Earl Zwiebel, assistant to the general superintendent of maintenance and equipment; graduates Ronald R. Durfee, Roberto Urzua, Alfredo Huizar, Edgar G. Davis, and J. C. Anderson; Morey; and John Wilkens, assistant manager of operations. The graduation ceremonies culminated 22 weeks of classroom sessions and 16 weeks of on-the-job training for each group.

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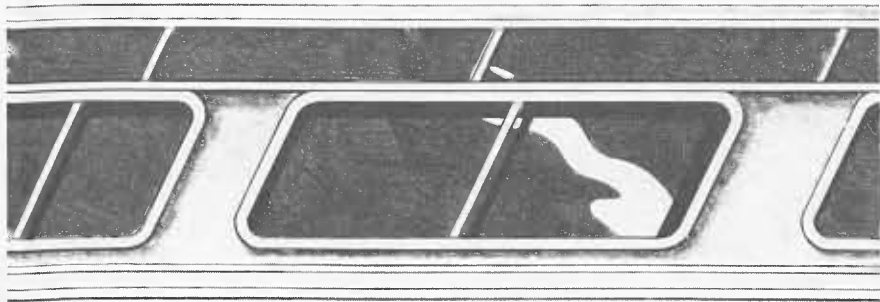
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ATA names Gilstrap V-P

General Manager Jack Gilstrap has been elected vice president of the American Transit Association for a one-year term. A member of ATA's board of directors, Gilstrap was elected during the opening session of ATA's 92nd annual meeting in Miami, Fla. in October.

1974: Year of Decision



Happy Holidays

Energy crunch

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percent expansion of service since November, 1972, the District was allocated 12 percent less fuel than it needed. In an emergency move to meet its November fuel requirement, RTD borrowed from its December allocation, thus leaving roughly 75 percent of the diesel fuel needed for December.

The cutbacks threatened a reduction in RTD's operations which could have resulted in a weekday reduction in the level of bus frequency, along with a total cancellation of Sunday routings.

Neusom and Gilstrap noted that officials in Washington, rather than taking actions which would result in the curtailment of mass transit, recognize the need to move in the opposite direction.

"We came back with the strong impression that a curtailment in private automobile operation is in the offing," Gilstrap said. "With this factor in

mind, and with favorable signs that mass transit will be able to get the fuel it needs, RTD is moving ahead with a Bus Improvement Plan that will help take up the slack when area residents will be turning to us increasingly to meet their transportation needs." The plan provides for an expansion of service, and the hastening of RTD's bus purchase schedule.

A first step toward increasing the District's bus fleet by nearly 20 percent was taken by RTD's Board of Directors at a special meeting held Nov. 30.

"It is our hope that the 300 new buses we now have out for bid will be used strictly to expand our services, rather than any used as replacements for older units," Neusom said. "To expand service in such a manner, we must come up with additional funding for fuel, maintenance, and drivers' wages — we are talking about a program which would cost in the neighborhood of \$15-20 million."

The total expenditure on the new

As 1974 approaches, the Southern California Rapid Transit District enters what promises to be the most dynamic era in its history as a public agency. As members of the community turn to us to meet a greater share of their transportation needs in the face of the energy crisis, RTD is responding quickly to meet the challenge. The District is working to improve and expand public transportation services by soliciting support and additional funds which would provide for extended bus routes, additional lines, and the development of innovative transit concepts such as subscription bus service.

At the same time, RTD is finalizing its plans for an area-wide rapid transit program. In November, 1974, Los Angeles County voters will be judging our performance as public agency employees when they cast their ballot on the most

extensive public works referendum in California history.

During the coming year, each of us will have an opportunity to demonstrate to the public at large that we merit its continued support as we strive to meet Southern California's public transit challenge.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the executive staff of RTD, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to District employees for their service during the year 1973. While serving the community — under trying conditions at times — you have demonstrated that you are truly public transportation professionals, worthy of the public's confidence.

Best wishes for a very happy holiday season.

Thomas B. Neusom
PRESIDENT

Jack A. Gilstrap
GENERAL MANAGER

buses will be \$14.4 million, of which the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration funds two-thirds, while RTD contributes one-third. Neusom emphasized that the funds by law can only be spent on purchase and not operating expenses.

Because of possible curtailments in private auto use, Gilstrap added that area residents will have to look to the District to meet their transportation needs. "As a result," he said, "we are advancing our purchase schedule. We will attempt to keep in service all of our present fleet of 1650 buses as long as possible. Normally, we would be using many of the 300 new units as replacements, but we want to be in a position to serve the greatest number of people."

Among the proposed actions included in the Bus Improvement Plan are RTD's entry into the Dial-a-Bus field, the assignment of exclusive lanes for buses on surface streets and freeways, and park-and-ride facilities throughout the Los Angeles Basin.

"These expansion of service plans

are all proposed on a contingency basis," Gilstrap explained. "They are contingent upon the availability of fuel, and the availability of federal and local funds. Current District revenues are not sufficient to support such expansions."

On the other hand, Neusom pointed out that some of the elements in the Bus Improvement Plan, such as exclusive bus lanes on surface streets and freeways, are very low cost concepts.

"Exclusive lane plans have been in the City's hands as long ago as last December, but no favorable action has yet been taken," he said. "Nor has any positive action been taken on our subscription bus service expansion proposals. Instead, public dollars continue to be spent subsidizing parking for public employees."

"We hope local officials will attune their mass transit thinking to that now prevailing in Washington," Neusom concluded, "and that our proposals for increasing services will be favorably acted upon."

Vernon Engel

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onto the roof of my bus, I'd be ready for him."

Asked what qualities a new driver should try to develop within himself, Engel answered, "That's easy — patience and courtesy. If you're patient and courteous with everyone, all the other things fall right into place, and you'll be a success."

As a man who obviously enjoys being an operator, Engel added another piece of advice. "It is important that a driver keep his temper. If a fighter can get his opponent mad, he's got him beat, and the guy that gets mad will lose every time. It's the same thing with driving," he explained. "If you let yourself get mad at the things that go on in traffic, or get mad at a passenger, you're going to have an accident for sure."

Engel is one of RTD's veterans who has logged thousands of miles shifting gears manually, making change, cranking the fare box and opening and closing doors by hand. Yet, Engel says that today's driver has it rougher than he did when he was broken in. "First of all, we didn't have near the traffic to contend with that there is today. And back then other drivers

seemed more willing to give you a break in traffic. It was also easier then to predict what the other drivers' moves would be.

"Even though our buses weren't as powerful and weren't as automated," he continued, "people helped to make the job easier. For instance, we didn't have as much vandalism or objects thrown at the buses. Occasionally there would be a drunk on board, or an argument, but even then they weren't any real problem. Fares and transfers were simpler then, too.

"No," Engle said, shaking his head, "it's tougher on the young drivers of today."

Engle's 36-year driving career had one brief interruption from 1943-46 when he served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. After the war, he brought his skills back to his old job of serving the Los Angeles riding public, and has continued his safe driving career ever since. He has never changed jobs, but rather his company has undergone several reorganizations. Over the years it has been variously called the Pacific Electric, Metropolitan Coach Lines, Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority, and now the Southern California Rapid Transit District.

His safety record as a driver, regardless of the name of the

organization he drove for, has remained impeccable. Not only has he never had a chargeable accident, but he has

never even received a traffic citation in both his personal and professional driving career.



GENERAL MANAGER Jack Gilstrap and President Thomas Neusom congratulate Vernon Engel, National Safety Council's "Mr. Fleet Safety" of 1973. Displayed at right are six safety

"Oscars" which were presented to Divisions 9, 12, 11, 10, and 1 at the annual awards banquet of the greater Los Angeles chapter of the National Safety Council.



Stage set for opening of Del Mar ramps to busway

ROLLING THROUGH a test run down the newly installed Del Mar on-ramp, an RTD bus prepares to merge into the El Monte-Los Angeles Express Busway. Prior to its inaugural passenger runs Dec. 31, RTD officials boarded buses to record data which will be used to regulate the speed and insure the

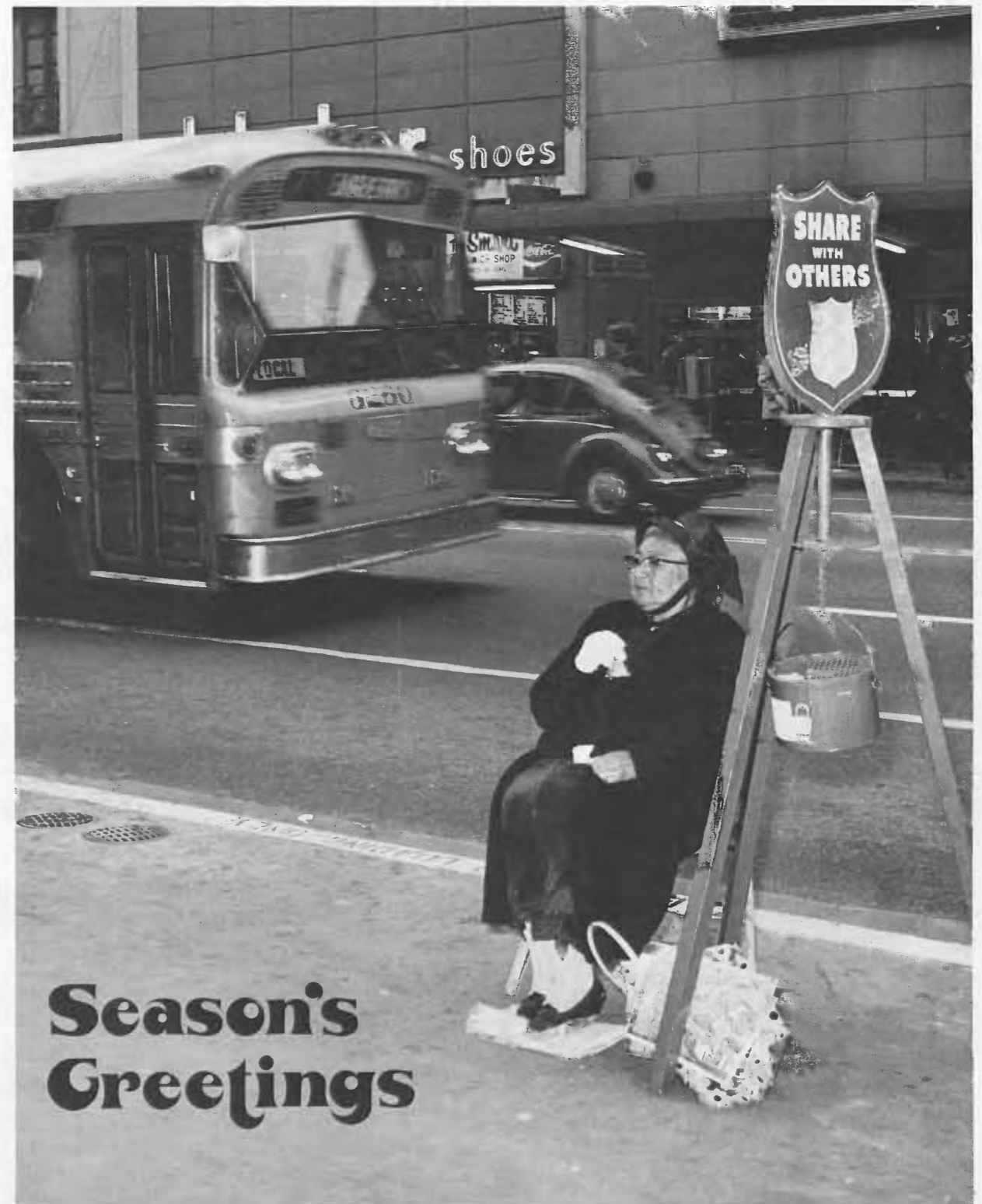
safety of the merging buses. The new Del Mar Avenue ramps in San Gabriel mean faster, more convenient service to just about any point in Los Angeles. The ramps will provide more rapid access to the Busway for lines 52F, 53F, 63F, and the 507 Subscription Bus during peak commuting hours.



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Season's Greetings