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fun in the
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Southern California Rapid Transit District



HEADWAY

Volume 7, Number 9

September 1980

Division 12's Brenchley wins Roadeo; girds for APTA finals in San Diego

There are more than 4,500 employees operating buses for the Southern California Rapid Transit District. Howard Brenchley is the best. He proved that handily in a parking lot at Santa Anita Race-track on Saturday, August 2, by winning the District's annual Bus Roadeo.

Competing against 13 other RTD operators who had qualified for the Roadeo finals, Brenchley scored 675 out of a possible 700 points to win the \$500 cash prize and an opportunity to represent the District at the fifth annual International Bus Roadeo in San Diego early next month.

An extra board operator at Division 12 in Long Beach who has worked for the District since May of 1971, Brenchley is a familiar figure at both international and local bus roadeos. He was the first place finisher in the 1977 RTD Roadeo and

went on to compete in the American Public Transit Association-sponsored International Roadeo that year. In addition, he has been the second place finisher in the RTD Roadeo for the past two years.

Ironically, the order of this year's finish was identical to the 1977 Roadeo. The second place finisher then, and now, is Carlos Baez of Division 9, with John Downes of Division 1 finishing third. Baez, who scored 626 points, won \$250 for his efforts, while two-time defending RTD Roadeo champion Downes collected \$100 for his 603-point finish.

Each of the remaining finishers were awarded \$50 cash prizes for making the finals. In order of finish they were: Ignacio Gonzales of Division 9, Hector Gutierrez of Division 6, Charles Wilkerson of Division 18, Roger Desgroseilliers of

Division 15, John Dover of Division 8, John Hardgrow of Division 7, William Ruiz of Division 1, Isiah McClain of Division 3, Frank Pachl of Division 1, James Roberts of Division 2 and Willie Hogans of Division 5.

The 14 finalists were culled from among more than 90 District operators who took part in preliminaries held two weeks prior to the finals over the same course with the top scorer from each division, plus three additional overall high scorers, qualifying for the finals.

The Transportation Department, which conducted this year's Roadeo with help from local law enforcement agencies and the RTD Property Maintenance Department, held a banquet honoring all the finalists and their wives at Luminaria's Restaurant on August 22.

The banquet was also something of a sendoff for Brenchley, who will receive two weeks of additional training on the Roadeo problems before competing against top operators from more than 60 other properties on October 7. At stake will be a top prize of a \$1,000 savings bond, with a \$500 bond awarded to the runner-up.

For the uninitiated, a Bus Roadeo is designed to be a competitive test and measure of a driver's skill behind the wheel, his knowledge of safety regulations, of the equipment he operates and his professionalism.

Just qualifying for the Roadeo is rigid, with the driver's past driving record and personal appearance playing an important part. In addition to successfully completing a written safety test, the operator — for a period of one year prior to the competition — must have worked fulltime as an operator for the District, must have had no preventable accidents, must have had no more than three unavoidable accidents, must have had no more than three missouts and must have had no suspensions.

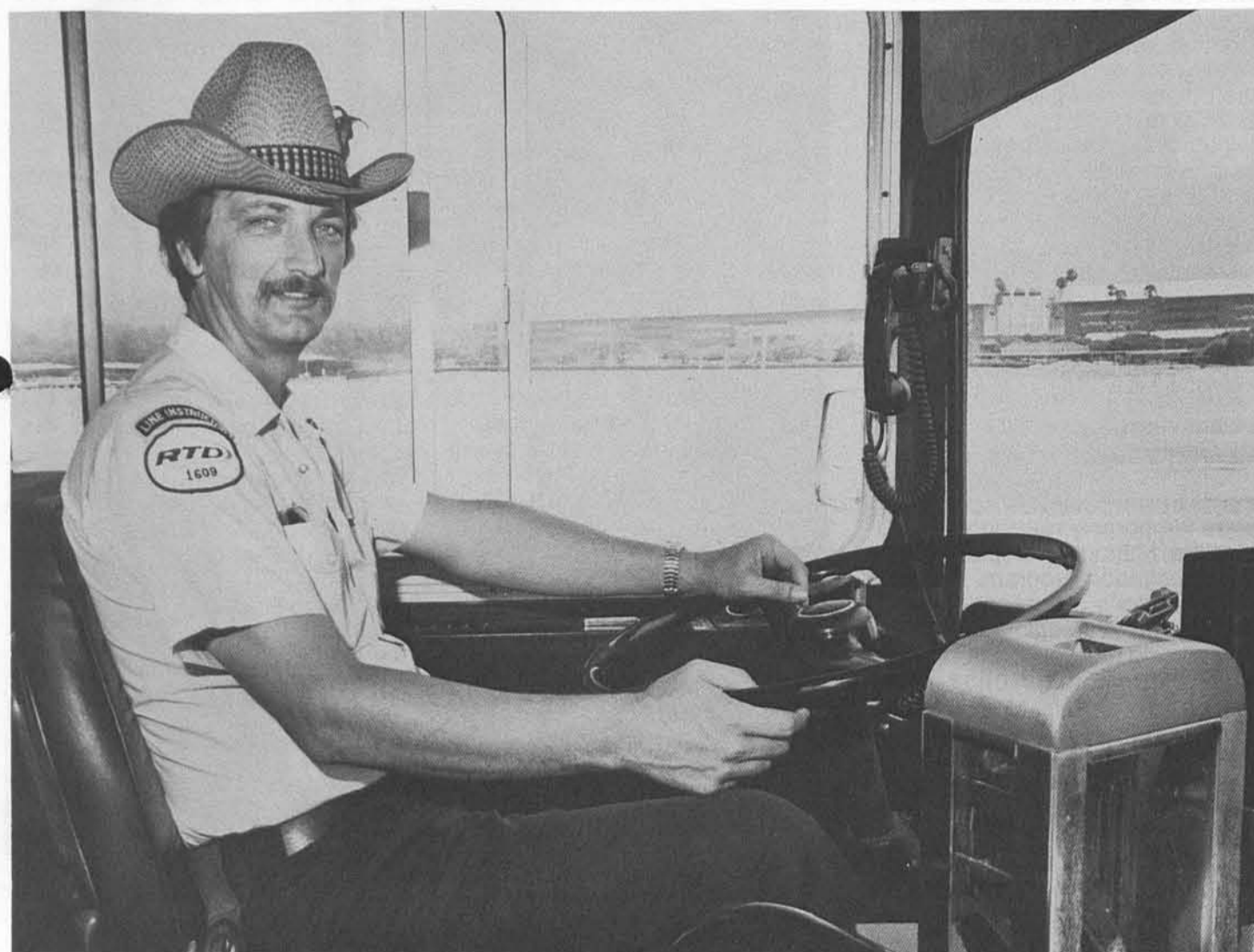
The actual competition includes a pre-trip bus inspection, a personal appearance rating and 12 simu-

**For more
Roadeo photos,
see page 5**

lated road problems designed to test a driver's ability in negotiating left and right turns, backing turns, passenger stops, reaction time and judgement problems.

During the driving test, which had to be completed in under seven minutes to prevent loss of points, a judge rode with the contestant, scoring him for smoothness of operation and safety habits.

Lending their assistance to the District as judges were representatives from the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Los Angeles Police Department, the L.A. County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol and the Los Angeles Board of Education.



IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT — RTD operator Howard Brenchley of Division 12 proved he could handle a 12-ton bus better than anyone in the District by win-

ning the annual RTD Roadeo for the second time. Brenchley's win qualifies him for a shot at national honors and a \$1,000 prize.

TRIPPERS

MR. RTD

Frank Miller of Los Angeles, a confirmed urbanite who grew up relying on public transportation to find his way around large cities in the United States and Europe, has been named Mr. RTD for Summer 1980.

A banking service clerk for Crocker Bank in downtown Los Angeles, Miller was selected from a cross-section of Los Angeles area bus riders who applied for the Ms./Mr. RTD competition. The first male winner in the year-old competition, Miller will serve as the District's goodwill ambassador through September.

"I grew up riding buses in Los Angeles," says Miller. "When I studied in Italy and Hawaii, I didn't have access to a car, and I automatically turned to public transportation to get me wherever I needed to go."

During his three-month tenure as Mr. RTD, Miller receives monthly bus passes valued at \$200, which enable him to ride on any of the District's more than 200 local and express bus lines.

"It's always a pleasure to offer special recognition to our riders who are living proof that public transit is a reasonable and reliable form of transportation," commented Board President Thomas Neusom.

NEW ARRIVALS

LaRue Palmer, a print shop employee, has a new member in his family. He and wife Vicki have a new baby girl, born June 2 at Garfield Medical Center. It is the couple's third child. Named Nikiya Jene, she weighed in at 6 pounds, 1 ounce and was 19 inches long.

Operator Laura Chapman of Division 1 is a grandma. Her new grandson, Arron James Jones, was born July 14, weighing in at 7 pounds, 2 ounces. The proud parents are DeAnna and Tim Jones, who live in Newport Beach.

MOVIN' ON

A host of part-time operators have recently been promoted to fulltime status and at Division 8 they feted four of their part-timers who were moving on and over to Division 15. Sam Bokobza, Michael Morris, Richard Lovett and Phillip Morris were promoted to fulltime status and Division 8 Transportation Manager Leilia Bailey said she was happy to see them moving on to full employment. "It was with mixed feelings that we sent them off," she says. "We wish them continued success over at Division 15 and know they will maintain the high standards they set here."

SO LONG BEACH

After 34 years on the road, numerous safe driving awards and several Operator of the Month citations, Hugh O. Van Patten of Division 12 in Long Beach decided to hang 'em up. The occasion brought his friends and co-workers together for a farewell party with cake and coffee courtesy of the UTU. Van Patten left with a gold-plated Cross pen and pencil set and the well-wishes of his friends.

DOCTOR FEES

Virginia M. Fees, the steno at Division 12, who is almost famous for the retirement parties she throws, now has a doctor in the house. Her son, Dennis L. Fees, recently received a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from the University of California, Davis. He is now on the medical staff at Fort Collins, Colorado.



Registration of senior citizens moves along slowly but surely

An army of 50,000 silver-haired senior citizens descended on RTD's Customer Service Centers and District headquarters during July, part of a new monthly pass registration and photo identification program aimed at elderly riders.

The program was not met by the violent demonstrations and protests that greeted the government's draft registration plan, but it did produce some of the same confusion.

At the Van Nuys Service Center, several seniors reportedly fainted while waiting in line outside the center in 100-plus degree heat. At a San Fernando Valley senior citizens' center, dozens of elderly became enraged when an accident prevented one of the District's Community Relations Representatives from showing up to assist them with registration. They were further angered when a last-minute replacement was sent out and forgot the passes.

At District headquarters, where an estimated 15,000 seniors were registered between July 7 and 31, a steady stream of elderly had difficulty locating the third floor registration room. One elderly non-English speaking woman became stuck in the elevator for more than an hour after she apparently pushed the emergency stop button by mistake.

Dozens of District employees from virtually every department were temporarily reassigned to assist the Marketing Department in the registration program. Community Relations representatives visited some 125 senior citizen centers around the Southland to register seniors for the base pass. (They were not, however, equipped to take photos or sell monthly stamps). Six of the District's 10 Customer Service Centers remained open on Saturday, July 26, and two on Sunday, July 27, to help senior citizens register for the monthly pass.

Apparently, much of the confusion was the result of seniors not completely understanding the registration instructions, which were widely publicized in the press and at community center meetings.

To qualify for the District's \$6 senior citizen pass all persons 65 and over or 62-65 and not employed full time were required to register for the base identification card.

When registering, seniors were asked to bring proof of age (birth certificate, driver's license, L.A. County senior citizen identification card, or the like) and a 1-inch by 1½-inch black and white or color photo of themselves. The photo was attached to the base pass. If they did not have a photo, several of the Customer Service Centers were equipped to provide one for \$1.

Once a person has obtained a base identification card with photo, he or she may purchase the \$6

monthly stamp at any of the more than 250 pass sale outlets throughout the county.

Similar to the procedure used by the District to identify and register those persons seeking handicapped discount passes, the senior citizen program was aimed at reducing fraud.

"We believe this program will eliminate those persons who have been improperly taking advantage of our discount rates for senior citizens," explained outgoing General Manager Jack Gilstrap. "The procedures are in the best interests of seniors who ultimately qualify for discounts, as well as for taxpayers."



PROCESSED — District employees Helen Miller and Jimmy Falcon (top photo, from left) assist senior citizens in completing registration forms and affixing photos to ID cards. Once registered, seniors (above) line up to purchase \$6 monthly stamp which is attached to pass.



It is late in the evening as a RTD bus lumbers along its route. At one stop two men board and, without warning, pull out guns. One man cautions the driver to keep the bus moving along normally, while the other man moves among the passengers, relieving them of their valuables.

Cautiously, the operator trips the silent alarm, but otherwise does exactly as instructed by the robbers. Miles away, in the fourth floor dispatcher center at District headquarters, a symbol representing that bus begins flashing on a dispatcher's video display screen. Instantly the dispatcher begins punching buttons that isolate the bus on his screen and magnifies that portion of the route where the bus is traveling.

On special telephone lines he notifies the police of a bus needing emergency assistance and is put in radio contact with a patrol car. The dispatcher is able to send the police to the bus' exact location as the display on his screen indicates each cross street and intersection the bus travels through.

Within minutes the police find the bus and, when the modern-day highwaymen alight, they are quickly taken into custody.

It may sound like science fiction or "pie-in-the-sky" dreams, but a system capable of doing exactly what was just described — and much more — is scheduled to be put in operation at RTD this month.

After nearly two years of preparation, the Automatic Vehicle Monitoring (AVM) system is slated to begin a one-year test phase that will involve four District bus lines, 200 buses and 15 random route vehicles belonging to road supervisors, transit police, mechanics and the like.

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration, which began looking into such systems back in

1972, is providing 100 per cent funding for the evaluation program. The District was chosen by UMTA to conduct the test in a realistic environment. At UMTA's request, the Department of Transportation's Transportation Systems Center (TSC) evaluated several companies and selected Gould, Inc. to develop the system being tested by the District.

"Our objectives are to evaluate and measure the system's performance and cost savings, to qualify this type of system for UMTA grants and to obtain technical data for use by other cities in procuring similar systems," explains Ken Bray, on-site project manager for TSC.

The four lines being used in the test — 41, 44, 83 and 89 — were selected to represent a cross section of the types of routes the District and other properties in the U.S. operate.

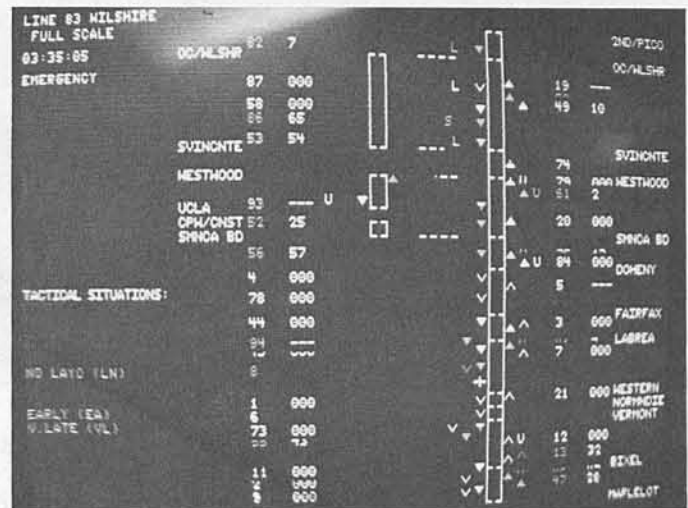
Basically, the system operates this way. Radio receivers onboard the bus pick up location codes from battery-operated transmitters (called signposts) mounted on light poles at one-fifth mile intervals along the bus route. The location codes are stored in a microprocessor in the radio and can be called up on command by the central control computers.

The microprocessors can store and transmit such information as location codes, number of passengers boarding and alighting at the last stop, arrival and departure time at last check-point and give status of silent alarm, request to talk, priority request to talk and so on.

After receiving and analyzing this information, the computer displays it on a cathode ray tube (television screen) at the dispatcher's console when requested to do so.

The dispatcher's console includes a color graphic display and allows the dispatcher to view a full

AVM test gives District tomorrow's system today



The way it works

Signpost transmitter (atop lamp post at left) sends location code to bus' microprocessor, which relays information to computer downtown on request. Computer displays information on video screen (above) at dispatcher's console. Six dispatchers, like Harvey Mendoza (below, right) with Anand Balaram, are being trained on new system for the test. Graphic below shows basics of the fixed-route system.

route, or any fifth or tenth of the route, with color-coded symbols indicating information such as emergencies, schedule status (early, late, on-time), location, direction and type of service. It can even tell when a bus is stopped, off-route or in layover status.

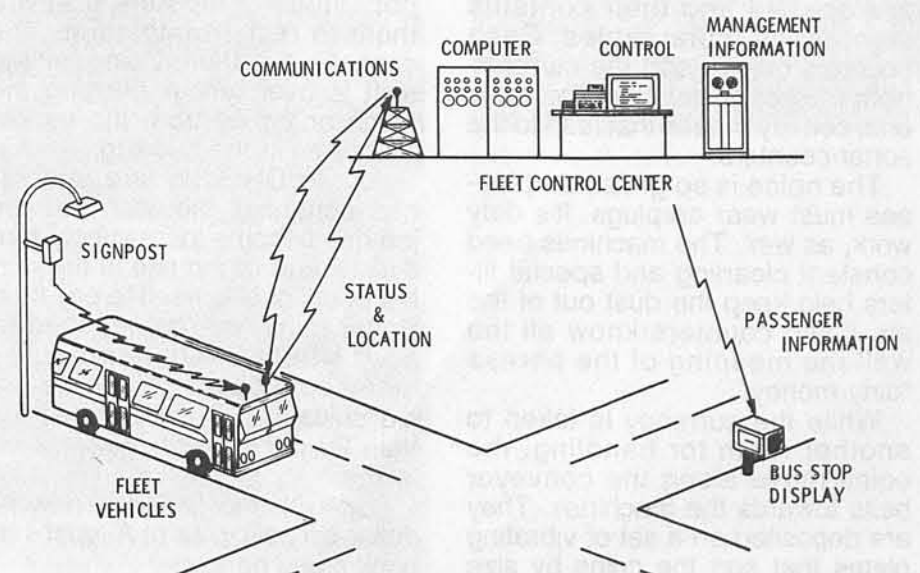
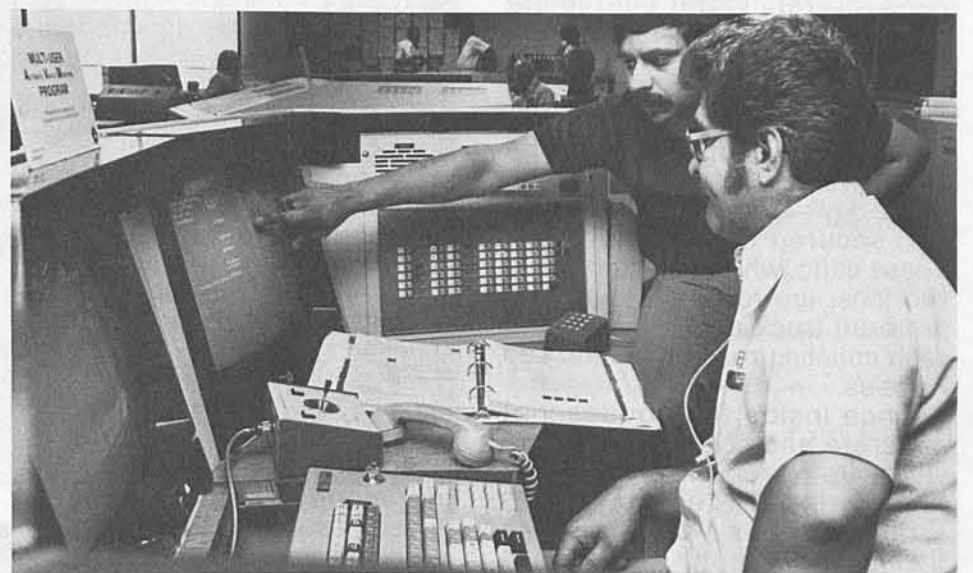
Another display available to the dispatcher — called an alphanumeric display — provides detailed information on individual buses or can provide summary data on the line or the entire fleet.

It takes the computer only 40 seconds to collect and display data on all 200 buses being used in the evaluation program.

There are three primary areas the test phase will concentrate on, Bray says. These include security, enhancing the management information system and the Real-Time Control aspect of operations.

"Now, when there is an emergency on a bus — such as a silent

(Please turn to page 11)





The buck stops here!

New policy eliminates
use of folding money
on District buses

In a move designed to speed up the passenger boarding process, eliminate a form of thievery and save the District hundreds of thousands of dollars in operating expenses annually, a no-dollar-bills policy was put into effect on all RTD buses beginning August 1.

District operators were advised to use discretion for awhile in applying the new policy until passengers became accustomed to the available alternatives, which included ticket books in various denominations, monthly passes or coin of the realm.

One of the main reasons for instituting the new policy was the savings to the District by eliminating 14 cash counting positions required to simply unfold, sort and count dollar bills all day long.

According to Assistant Controller-Treasurer-Auditor Frank Carr, the elimination of these positions will save the District \$400,000 a year in salary and benefits. The 14 BRAC employees will be reassigned to other positions in the District that would have been filled by hiring new employees.

"The District collects about \$300,000 a day in fares, averaging about \$45,000 in currency," explains Carr. "But, it takes nearly 60 per cent of our cash counting employees to handle currency."

(It requires between six and eight full time employees to handle the coins collected each day.)

Another problem the new no-dollar-bill policy is expected to solve deals with people tearing

dollars in half, folding them up and dropping them in the fare box. There's really no way an operator can tell if the folded bill is whole or not.

"The new policy will eliminate a form of fraudulent fare payment," says Acting General Manager Richard Powers. "Each day the District takes in \$700 to \$800 in one dollar bills that have been torn in halves, thirds, even fourths, folded and used for payment. That amounts to \$5,000 and more each week in lost revenue."

The District gives the mutilated bills to the bank, which returns them to the Treasury Department. If the serial number on the bill is intact, the Treasury will reimburse the District half the face value of the bill.

Another reason for the new policy is that District fare boxes were not designed for dollar bills, which clog the machine, sometimes to overflowing, and add to the maintenance costs. Payment in dollar bills also slows the boarding process since passengers are asked to fold and paper clip the bills before dropping them in the fare box.

RTD is one of the first transit agencies in the nation to adopt such a policy, and the Board of Directors acknowledged the fact that the elimination of dollar bills would affect passengers in every sector of the District's service area, also impacting all categories of riders.

According to Marketing Department estimates, the new policy will affect an estimated 200,000 passengers on a monthly basis, who represent riders paying cash fares when riding freeway express lines, busway lines, park and ride lines, BEEP lines and the various special service lines the District operates to racetracks, Dodger Stadium, Hollywood Bowl and so on.

Where's it all go?

Have you ever wondered what becomes of all those pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars, silver dollars, tickets, coupons, currency and everything else District passengers drop into fare boxes?

Well, every day, as each bus pulls into its division for refueling, its fare box is opened and the locked vault inside — containing all the day's receipts — is removed and secured onto a vault cart. These carts, which can carry up to two tons, are rolled onto an RTD armored truck and driven to the cash counting room in central Los Angeles.

Once inside the nondescript concrete and brick building the vaults are wheeled into the sorting room, where three large coin sorter/counters make a racket like the City of Azusa jingling its change in its pockets. The vaults are opened and their contents dumped on metal tables. Cash counters quickly sort the currency from the coins, brushing the coins onto conveyor belts that lead to the sorter/counters.

The noise is so great, employees must wear earplugs. It's dirty work, as well. The machines need constant cleaning and special filters help keep the dust out of the air. Cash counters know all too well the meaning of the phrase "dirty money."

While the currency is taken to another room for handling, the coins move along the conveyor belts towards the machines. They are deposited on a set of vibrating plates that sort the coins by size

into the various denominations. The sorted coins drop through large rubber hoses to counting heads that tally the total and then deposit each denomination of coin into bags ready for deposit in the bank. Each bag weighs between 35 and 50 pounds.

It may sound like Uncle Scrooge's idea of a dream job — counting money all day — but most of the 14 employees who will be reassigned as a result of the new no-dollar-bill policy are looking forward to the change of pace.

The work shift at the cash counting room is from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., but employees work until each day's receipts are sorted and counted. No money is left in the building overnight. Like the incoming money, employees enter through two electronically controlled doorways. They leave all their valuables in lockers and don pocketless jumpsuits that help them to resist temptation. They cannot leave the building until the shift is over, either bringing their lunch or eating from the vending machines in the building.

As the District's fare structure has increased, the cash counter's job has become increasingly more difficult due to the rise in the number of dollar bills used to pay fares. Paper currency had reached the point where it required twice as many employees to handle it as did coins, yet it represented less than 20 per cent of the fares collected.

But, with the District's new no-dollar-bill policy, as of August 1 the buck stops here.



Shake, rattle 'n roll



It required 14 sets of hands like Joyce Gayton's (top of page) working all day, everyday to unfold, stack and count the currency the District takes in. However, beginning August 1, those positions were phased out as the District's new no-dollar-bill policy went into effect. However, coins will continue to pour into the Cash Counting Room and employees like Roger Rudder (above) will continue dumping fare box vaults onto tables preparatory to sliding the coins onto conveyor belts leading to machines that separate and count them (left). Supervisor George Kotoulas (at left) and Winston Perry keep an eye on the machinery as coins move through the counting heads and are bagged for shipment to the bank.

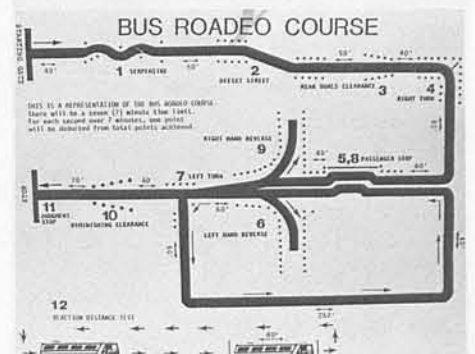
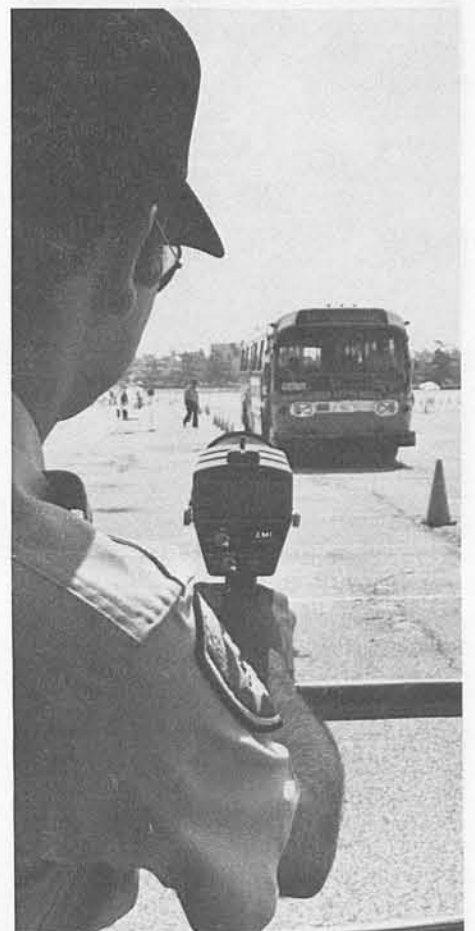
Showdown at Santa Anita

There is no mechanical bucking bull, but the annual RTD Rodeo produces its own unique brand of urban cowboy. District operators face a variety of obstacles daily as they ride range over the Los Angeles landscape, herding passengers to market or corralling hordes of harried commuters. The Rodeo simply recreates 12 of these obstacles in a confined arena and allows the top drivers from throughout RTD's spread to compete for top honors.

Under the watchful eye of judges, many from outside law enforcement agencies, a contestant maneuvers through the serpentine and offset street problems. Touching one of the cones means lost points. Below that, Manager of Operations Sam Black offers congratulations to overall winner Howard Brenchley, who lost only 25 of the possible 700 points.

At far right, a CHP officer keeps a radar gun trained on a contestant during the judgement stop, which required the bus to reach a speed of 20 miles per hour in a short distance and then quickly brake, coming as close as possible to the cone without touching it.

At the simulated passenger stop (below) a judge measures the distance from the bus to the "curb" while, bottom photo, a contestant slowly edges his bus through the rear dual clearance test — two sets of tennis balls set just wider than the rear tires.





*Thousands
enjoy fun
in the sun
in Norco*



Rides on ponies — both real and mechanical, fishing in a tranquil lake, bathing in a pool that produced waves just like the ocean, game booths with prizes just like at a carnival, volleyball, softball, horse shoes, lawn bowling, a live band to disco rollerskate to (if you brought your skates), a bingo game and food, food, food. After working up an appetite at the above, the nearly 3,000 District employees who attended the Annual Employee Picnic at Silverlake Picnic Grounds in the dairylands of San Bernardino County helped themselves to hot dogs, hamburgers, tacos, baked beans, potato salad, soft drinks, sno cones, popcorn, pretzels and a good time — all included in the price of admission. The photos on these pages show some of the fun employees and their families had.





RECREATION NEWS

Gridiron, golf links set stage for fall slate

College football, a swim-through aquarium and a semi-annual romp around the links are just three of the events in store for RTD employees as the Recreation Department prepares to slide from summer into fall.

College football is always exciting, whether the teams playing are your alma mater or not. The recreation program is pleased to be able to offer tickets to four UCLA Bruins' home games. The tickets are available for half price, with \$10 endzone seats going for \$5.

Tickets will be sold for the Bruins' September 13 meeting with Colorado, the September 27 game with Wisconsin, the October 11 contest against Stanford and the November 8 clash with Oregon. All games are on Saturdays beginning at 1:30 p.m.

If you've ever wanted to touch a fish, now you can at Marineland's Baja Reef, America's first swim-through aquarium. On any day between September 27 and October 5 you and your family can visit the Palos Verdes Peninsula attraction for a discount price of \$4 for adults and \$2 for children. (Guest prices will be \$5.25 for adults and \$3.25 for children). It's an all new, improved park that you may have overlooked this summer, so now's your chance to join the fun at a reduced price.

Golfers, it's time once again to dust off the clubs and get set to participate in the semi-annual RTD Golf Classic. This year's Autumn clubfest will be held Sunday, October 5, at the Green Rivers Golf Course. First tee off time on the Orange Course is at 10 a.m.

Open to employees, retirees, their family and friends, the tourney has a \$14 entry fee which covers greens fees and prizes fund. Golf carts are not included,

but are available. The deadline for entry is September 19.

If you can't believe *football* season is here already, don't read any further. The Los Angeles Lakers will play their first home game in the Forum on Sunday, October 12, at 7:30 p.m. against Houston and you can be there. Regular \$7.50 Colonnade seats are available for \$5.50. If you are taking children under 12, you can get their seats for \$3.75, if you purchase the ticket before October 6.

If you missed the Laker's in last season's triumphant championship bid, don't miss out again this year. Tickets will be offered throughout the season so keep an eye on this column and the recreation posters at your work location for details.

For big league action, we are offering limited ticket sales to the following Dodgers games: Sunday, September 7, vs. the Phillies; Saturday, September 20, vs. the Reds; Wednesday, September 24, vs. the Giants; and Sunday, Octo-

ber 5, vs. the Astros. \$3.50 tickets are going for \$3.

It's not too late to participate in Disneyland's 25th Anniversary celebration and you can do it at a reduced price. On Sunday, September 21, you can enjoy unlimited use of rides and attractions from 4 p.m. until midnight for only \$5.50 (employees and immediate family) or \$6.50 (guests).

For more information, call extension 6580.

All the recreation events in the world are no good if you don't get your tickets

The recreation program at RTD is growing at a tremendous rate, offering a wider variety of events than at any time in its history. More employees are taking advantage of special offers and discount tickets than ever before, and more employees are getting involved in the program by suggesting shows, events and trips for the department to obtain tickets to, according to Employee Activities Coordinator Diane Delaney.

However, Delaney points out that a large segment of the employee population miss out on activities because they are not familiar with how to order tickets, make reservations or purchase items for sale through the Recreation Department.

Delaney has set general guidelines for employees to follow.

1. Don't wait until the last minute to order your tickets. The main reason people miss events they want to attend is because all the tickets are sold by the time they get around to con-

tacting the rec department.

2. Tickets or merchandise may be purchased Monday thru Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. (only!) at the Recreation Office, located in the Employee Relations Department on the 6th floor of District Headquarters, 425 South Main Street, Los Angeles.

3. If using the mail is more convenient for you, be sure to observe the following information:

- Do not send cash through the mail.

- Make checks payable to the Southern California Rapid Transit District.

- Include your badge number and work location on the check.

- Include a note stating what event the check is for and the number of tickets you are requesting.

- If there are different prices for employees, guests and children, please indicate how many of each you are buying.

4. Tickets to events with as-

signed seats, such as concerts and plays, are generally not issued until the event is sold out or one week prior to the event (whichever comes first). This is so odd purchases of tickets can be matched with seating availability.

5. Calling in to reserve tickets does not guarantee you will receive the tickets. The reservation must be promptly followed by payment. Reservations are intended only for the benefit of employees who work outside the headquarters building and do not have the opportunity to visit the rec office at their convenience.

6. All Recreation Department activities are intended for the enjoyment of retirees as well as current employees. For purposes of buying tickets, retirees should consider themselves as employees.

"By letting everyone know how we work, we hope to be better able to serve everyone's need in the future," says Delaney.



WELL DONE — Division 15 operator Dave Bogenberger (left) receives a special resolution from Assemblyman Robert Cline for his volunteer work at Astoria Hospital in Sylmar. Center is hospital director Leita Parker.

If you have some talent, Bogenberger has the show

Can you sing? Can you dance? Can you tell funny stories with a dialect? Do you play an instrument? Are you a closet entertainer with an act that you've been dying to try out on a real audience? If so, Division 15 operator Dave Bogenberger is looking for you.

An operator for the past 21 years, Bogenberger spends his off hours producing a "musical revue extravaganza" presented to the patients at the Astoria Convalescent Hospital in Sylmar each month.

The two-hour shows feature amateur and professional talent, as well as some retired professional entertainers Bogenberger has found while driving a bus. He says he is constantly scouting for talent.

Bogenberger, who uses the stage name Robert Bright when performing in and producing his shows, got involved with the hospital shows through another RTD bus operator, Ted Benedict, who is now retired and living in New York.

Benedict used to produce the shows and asked Bogenberger, who sings, to participate. Bogen-

berger recalls that he was so impressed by the work these volunteer performers were doing and the obvious joy it brought to the elderly patients that he quickly became more and more involved.

The patients at the convalescent hospital are shut-ins, ranging in age from 70 to more than 100. The hospital has a variety of weekend entertainments, but Bogenberger says his show is by far the biggest.

He is quick to credit the many District employees, family and friends who help him put together each month's production. He especially cites the efforts of retired Division 7 operator Frank Thompson, who works as a technician and frequently helped get equipment and entertainers to the hospital; his brother Roger Bogenberger, who is an operator at Division 8; drummer John Fernandez, who is an operator at Division 15, and Debbie and Cindy Spadaccini, the 19- and 20-year-old daughters of Division 15 operator Florence Spadaccini who are regular performers in the show.

(Please turn to page 11)

Rail tracks still crisscross the yard where 12-ton buses now rumble, but the job at South Park hasn't changed since the turn of the century . . .

Keeping L.A. in motion

Since the early days of the famed Pacific Electric Red Cars, what is now the RTD's central maintenance division — known as South Park Shops — has played a major role in keeping Los Angeles in motion.

Rail fans and bus buffs say the ghosts of transit's past haunt the facility where rail tracks crisscrossed brick floors inside some of the facility's large warehouses and shops.

Named for a nearby city park, South Park comprises 13 acres of huge buildings in South Central Los Angeles at 54th Street and Avalon Boulevard. Purchased in 1903 by the Los Angeles Railway Corporation, an RTD ancestor, it served for decades as a site for overhauling trolley cars.

(Not everyone is aware that Los Angeles once had one of the most extensive rail transit systems in the United States. Many of the cars in that system were overhauled and repaired at South Park).

Once the newest innovation in public transportation, the trolley car started sharing the streets with horse-drawn buggies and was eventually crowded off those same streets by buses. The diesel-powered buses slowly but surely pushed the trolley cars out of South Park. The Red Cars stopped running in 1961 and the last downtown trolley was pulled out of service in 1963.

"The maintenance department had to be re-equipped when the bus took over as a new and more popular form of public transportation," says Mike DeGhetto, a District maintenance official. "In the past 30 years, South Park has become essentially self-contained, a place where RTD mechanics and welders can literally build a bus from the ground up. Our mechanics often have to make parts for some of our older buses when manufacturers no longer fabricate them."

Some 340 of the District's 1,200 mechanical personnel call South Park home. Thousands of parts, from electric generators to diesel engines and bus transmissions, are rebuilt there and then transported to the District's 11 operating bus divisions for installation in buses.

The operations at South Park are essential in keeping the District's 2,600 bus fleet on the road.

The central maintenance facility is a unique blend of old and new. There are pieces of equipment still in use at South Park with histories all their own — a drill press in the "blacksmith" shop that dates back to 1911, a threading machine that came to the Park in 1922.

"The Los Angeles Railway Corporation custom designed many of the machines," DeGhetto says. "We still use several radiator repair tanks made during World War II from scrap metal."

For years, the service bays at South Park were kept busy because the District operated one of the oldest fleets in the nation. With the average bus age at 12, some of the buses still in service were 30 years old and had more than one million miles on them.

Now, those same service bays will shelter the latest generation of

transit bus, but, ironically, even more mechanics will be needed.

"It has required a small army of mechanics to keep the fleet in operation," says Manager of Operations Sam Black. "Now that we are finally getting some new buses, with 1,200 expected in the next year, we will need even more mechanics to keep them rolling."

Black explained that the new equipment comes with sophisticated air conditioning equipment, special safety devices and each bus will have a wheelchair lift. "The new buses will require additional mechanics to keep them in proper repair," he says.

Specializing in a wide assortment of maintenance skills, the mechanics at South Park can work on buses needing extensive engine repairs, frame repair, reupholstering or painting. Buses that have been badly damaged in accidents are also repaired and readied for a return to service.

"Some of our mechanics have irreplaceable skills and we treat them like craftsmen," says DeGhetto. "They take pride in their workmanship."

Despite its age, South Park is famous for using some of the newest and most innovative techniques in engine upkeep.

Officials from public transit operations across the nation have visited the Injection Room at South Park, a specialized testing and repair facility developed to overhaul fuel injectors and fuel pumps.

These officials are interested in observing the District's methods for maintaining the pumps that transport fuel from the holding tank in the bus to the engine, where the diesel is burned to run the bus. Everyone is interested in making sure these parts work properly, for proper operation means fuel economy, which translates into more miles per gallon and reduced smog emissions.

And, when you use 26 million gallons of diesel fuel each year — like the District does — fuel economy can translate into a considerable savings.

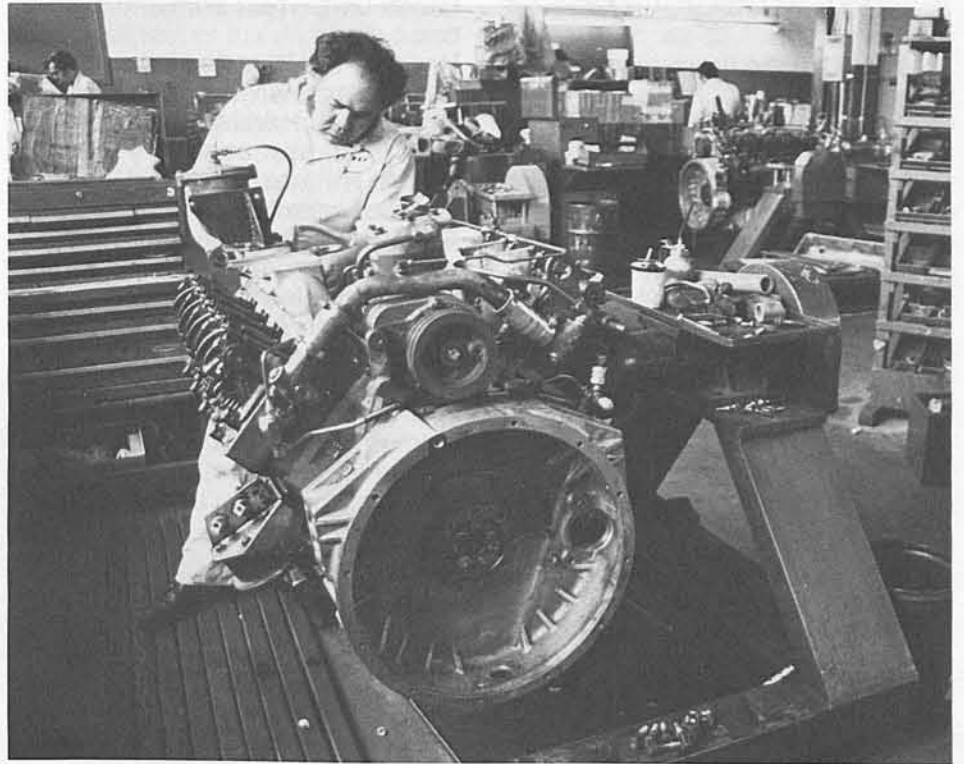
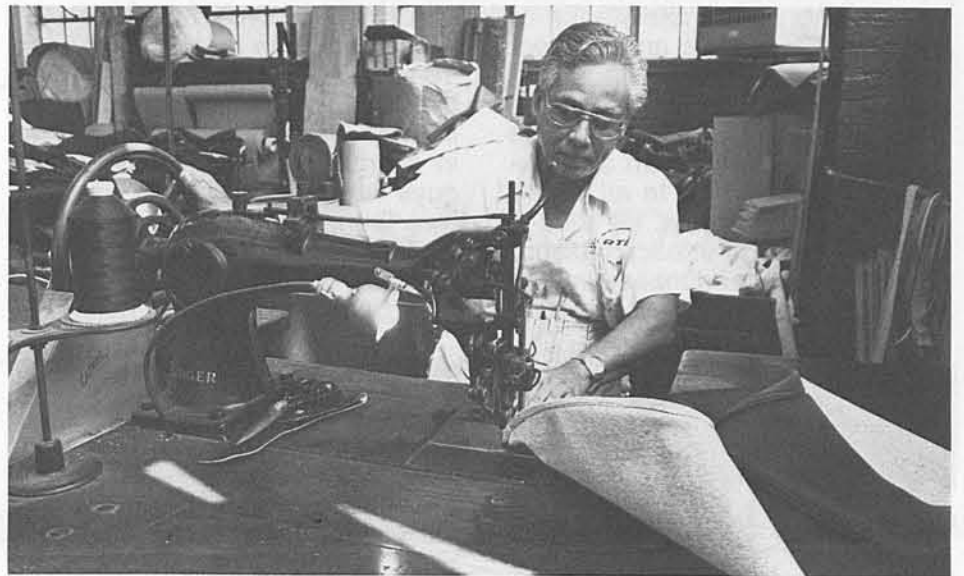
But, like the trolley car, South Park is scheduled to be replaced and its days may be numbered.

Plans are now on the drawing boards for a new central maintenance and administrative facility to be located near Union Station. Scheduled for occupancy in the mid-1980s, the new facility will be designed specifically for bus maintenance, but will also be equipped to help maintain equipment for the District's planned 18-mile subway expected to be operational near the end of the decade. Administrative headquarters will also be housed at the same facility.

What will happen to venerable old South Park Shops remains to be seen. An integral part of Los Angeles transit operations since the turn of the century, it should be interesting to see what is happening at South Park when the next century rolls around.

One thing is for certain . . . only time will tell.

(This article was written and compiled by News Bureau Representative Jim Smart and News Bureau Student Intern Sandra Morris).



All in a day's work



The daily activity at South Park is very much like a beehive . . . a flurry of activity all working towards the same goal. Some of the activity you can see any day includes (from top photo down) mechanic Mas Takata overhauling a bus engine from a pit where rail tracks — still visible — once carried trolley cars for servicing. In the upholstery shop, George Portier stitches seat covers on a machine older than some District employees. Craftsmen like mechanic Ted Brown can strip a bus engine to the block and rebuild it completely at the Park. Mechanic Jim Weirich tests a tray full of injectors, the critical devices that control the flow of fuel to the engine.

COMMENDATIONS

S. Harper, Jr., Line 95: I heard about the buses getting accommodations for wheelchairs, but it wasn't until recently that I saw this in operation. The concern of this driver for the two young wheelchair patients was beautiful to behold. I am glad the RTD has finally taken it upon themselves to give consideration to the severely handicapped. As a senior citizen I won't be sorry to pay the increase in fare as long as you see to it that the handicapped are helped.

A.K. Lopez, Line 869: He displays a very patient and helpful attitude toward his passengers, and always attempts to be as helpful as he can to give passengers information on transfers, routes and exact locations of bus stops. He maintains a very prompt schedule while taking time for any passenger who needs assistance of any type. He also is an excellent driver, making smooth starts and stops and driving courteously.

Julian Cortez, Division 9: He is a very pleasant person and extremely considerate to all of the passengers on his bus. He always has the time to greet each passenger with a smile and make him feel at home. There is a feeling of con-

geniality on his bus that is rarely found on RTD lines. We all feel Julian does a good job getting us home safely during the rush hour.

George R. McKenzie, Line 716: For the past 18 months I have chosen to commute by bus and, since my hours are irregular, I've had a chance to meet most of the operators on the line. Most of them are safe, courteous drivers, but Mr. McKenzie deserves special attention for his consistency in safe driving which saves gas, brakes and other maintenance on the bus that ultimately saves the company money. He is very formal, but treats everyone equal, without discrimination, regardless to their position or request. It is employees like this that cut costs, (help ease) inflation and, hopefully, restore our economics to normal stability.

Albert E. Troy, Division 2: What a joy! He is good-natured, friendly and doesn't have a chip on his shoulder. It was a pleasure riding with him. You ought to put him in charge of training some of the guys who are driving your buses, give them a little human kindness lesson.

Isiah McClain, Line 436: I found him to be a very calm and

careful driver. He is also a pleasant and courteous young man. He answered passengers' request for directions precisely and pleasantly. My compliments to you for having this type of employee.

Nicholas Bates, Line 42: The driver faced a wide assortment of passengers, ranging from the elderly and non-english speaking with paper money and no change to the inebriated looking for a free ride . . . not to mention the average passenger who didn't know where he or she was going. In every instance he dealt effectively and professionally with the situation and impressed me as an outstanding driver.

B. Bilbrew, Jr., Line 4: Your driver gave us one of the smoothest rides we have had in a long time. The bus wasn't particularly new and the driver made excellent time without sliding the passengers off the seats or jarring us when starting or stopping. When I got ready to leave I mentioned to him that it was an excellent ride and he just said, "Well, I work at it."

Robert D. Leon, Division 9: I saw my bus arrive as I waited at the signal on the opposite side of the street. I feared the bus would move before I could get across. The minute the signal changed I hurried across toward the bus. The driver saw me and waited to let me catch up and board. I was so very grateful because the sun was very hot and I am 81 years old and not

robust. Waiting in the heat for the next bus would have been hard on me.

Yvonne Payne, Dispatcher at El Monte Station: This lady is of extreme value to us all and we do appreciate her for her courteousness, her clarity in announcing and promptness and accuracy (and most of all her volume), her regularity on the job, her interest in her work and many other things too numerous to mention here. Although she deserves a promotion, please keep her where she is. How could we do without her?

School chums

Dear RTD:

This letter is being written in praise of a remarkable man, an RTD bus driver, Hubert Usher.

It was with some fear that we decided to send our children, ages 9 and 11, to school by RTD bus this year. Our experience with RTD drivers had been negative. In general, we found them rude and uncaring. That, coupled with reports of crime we read about on RTD made us feel as though we were throwing our children into a hostile and dangerous environment. Our friends agreed and hinted that we were irresponsible parents. However, due to our both working, we were forced to take the risk.

Thanks to Hubert Usher our fears were totally dispelled and our formerly disapproving friends are now thinking of sending their children by bus.

Hubert was incredibly kind and sweet to the children. They brought him flowers from our garden every morning because they liked him so much. And when the occasion arose that we could drive them to school, they refused to go because they wanted to see Hubert.

The school year came to an end and Hubert transferred to another route. However, our children and a friend who travelled with them did not want their friendship with Hubert to end. So they cajoled the parents into asking Hubert, his wife and daughter over for brunch. It was a very successful occasion and I'm sure the friendship between the families will continue.

I cannot imagine a better advertisement for RTD than Hubert Usher. Many people in both our offices and at the children's school know the story. In fact, the school newsletter plans to print up the story this fall to reassure parents who have to send their children to school on RTD.

Sincerely yours,
The Stone Family



Operator Usher and friends

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Moving Up

Johnny Caldito, from mechanic B to mechanic A.

Michael B. Cobb, from mopper waxer to service attendant.

George E. Cowley, from prop. maint. A lead. to bldg. & grds. maint. supervisor.

Dennis Dickason, from mechanic C to mechanic B.

David C. Edwards, from programmer analyst to sr. sys. analyst.

William Gardner, from div. dispatcher/ex. radio dispatcher to radio dispatcher.

David Gates, from mechanic B to mechanic A.

Olivia Gutierrez, from info clerk to ticket clerk.

Harold T. Harada, from comp. programmer to sr. sys. analyst.

Thomas B. Harris, from prog. analyst to sr. sys. analyst.

Jon A. Hillmer, from asst. planner to assoc. planner.

Eva Hines, from svc. attendant to svc. attend. leadman.

Floyd Hockless, from mechanic B to mechanic A.

Robert Hoskins, from eq. rec. spec. to sr. eq. rec. spec.

Willie Jackson, from prop. maint. A to prop. maint. A. leadman.

Willie M. James, from payroll clerk tmp. to jr. inv/acts. clk.

Pedro J. Jimenez, from mechanic A to mechanic A leadman.

William A. Kovach, from storekeeper to asst. stores supervisor.

Richard Lindberg, from mechanic C to mechanic B.

Ruth Manus, from sr. secretary to personnel technician.

Nancy M. Mower, from opr/ex. supv. of V.O. to supervisor of V.O.

Michael Palmer, from mechanic C to mechanic B.

Michael J. Payne, from mechanic C to mechanic B.

Robert Shorts, from trav. mop/wax. to rel/vault trk. driver.

Griselda Villicana, from typist clerk to keypunch opr.

Janis F. Whirlidge, from operations analyst to principal administrative analyst.

Winnetta Young, from typist clerk to svc. attendant.

Shifting Gears

Benjamin B. Brooks, 19 years. Operator at Division 7.

Alphonse R. Brown, 29 years. Operator at Division 7.

Robert J. Burns, 23 years. Operator at Division 9.

Oscar F. Carlson, 27 years. Operator at Division 9.

Russell Ralph Derifield, 39 years. Schedule checker.

Claude C. Harris, 22 years. Operator at Division 9.

John W. Kimbell, 24 years. Senior Instructor of Vehicle Operations.

Myron Melvin Lund, 22 years. Equipment Maintenance Supervisor I.

Wallace H. Mellander, 21 years. Operator at Division 9.

Charles J. Murrell, 34 years. Mechanic A Leadman at South Park.

Sidney F. Scott, 38 years. Senior Division Dispatcher.

William A. Teem, 22 years. Operator at Division 3.

Thomas W. Tegtmeyer, 31 years. Superintendent of Maintenance Divisions.

Hugh O. VanPatten, 34 years. Operator at Division 12.



LA's darling is L.A. Darling

Letters of commendation come and letters of commendation go, but Operator L.A. Darling, who has been with the District since 1957, recently received one he won't soon forget. Darling, shown above checking the assignment boards during the recent shakeup, works Line 20 out of Division 15. A lot of young school children ride the line to and from classes and about a dozen of them got together and gave Darling a farewell card on the last day of school. Many will be going on to other schools after the summer and this was their way of saying good-bye and thanks. Typical of the comments written by the kids on the card were "You've been a nice person, you always waited for the students" and "You're a super bus driver, especially since you can put up with all of us. I hope I'll be seeing you next year."



THE BEST — Displaying Certificates of Merit presented by Director Donald Gibbs (left) are Vicki Louis, Robert Robles and Jack Lyddiard. Looking on are Bob Williams, A.C. Howard and J.F. Cenderelli.

District honors trio

It has been several years since the District established a policy of saluting outstanding employees and an impressive number have earned this special recognition. Three more names were added to the District's honor roll last month. They were, Division 9 operator Jack M. Lyddiard, Division 6 Maintenance employee Robert A. Robles and Telephone Information Clerk Vicki Louis.

It was the second Operator of the Month award for Lyddiard, who is proving to be a real asset to the District. His friendly attitude and helpful nature make him an excellent frontline representative. His skill at operating a bus is evident in the fact that he has not had a single preventable accident in his 34 years behind the wheel.

As the third shift leadman at Division 6, Robles has earned the respect of his co-workers and supervisors alike. As Division Maintenance Manager Johnny Howard said in introducing Robert to the District Board of Directors, "I am proud to have him as one of my employees. He works well with or without supervision and I know I can leave the division in his hands without ever having to worry about what is happening, or not happening, in my absence." Robles has been married for 29 years, has one son and is very active in CYO and Little League.

In her one year with the District Vicki has earned an excellent reputation for her attendance, efficiency in handling calls, the accuracy of her information and her patient, courteous manner. Away from the telephone center, Vicki enjoys photography, modeling and playing backgammon.

Operator looks for talent among his co-workers

(Continued from page 8)

Bogenberger is also appreciative of the help he has received from singer Marco Valenti, a member of entertainer Liberace's Las Vegas troupe and a frequent guest performer in the hospital show.

One of the toughest problems Bogenberger says he faces is finding volunteers willing to give up one Saturday each month to take part in the shows. Amateurs are more than welcome, he says.

"No one gets any money for what we are doing," explains Bogenberger. "We just have the fun from doing it and from helping to make these people's lives a little brighter."

While he may not make any money from what he is doing, Bogenberger's efforts have not gone unnoticed.

The Sylmar hospital recently held a special day honoring Bogenberger for his work on their behalf, highlighted by 37th District Assemblyman Robert C. Cline presenting Bogenberger with a special resolution.

"He prepares for and performs in his shows as if they were Las Vegas productions, often driving many miles to pick up performers or guests who need transportation to the hospital," Cline said when presenting the resolution to Bogenberger. "It is part of his generous nature to search for those who need him most and to devote his time and energy to their well-being and happiness."

There has been a lot said and written about how the elderly are ignored and forgotten in this nation. Dave Bogenberger is doing something to change that.

AVM TEST PROGRAM

Tomorrow's system is here today

(Continued from page 3)

alarm — all the dispatcher can do is consult a schedule and send assistance to where the bus should be," says Bray. "With the AVM system the dispatcher will see exactly where the bus is and can also be shown the location of the emergency or supervisory vehicle nearest to the bus in trouble."

The AVM system should also enhance the District's data collection capabilities by allowing for an effective, full-ride check virtually all the time. It will provide information allowing planners and schedulers to determine scheduling needs, load distribution and fine tune the system.

"It will effect cost reductions without requiring service reductions," says Bray.

Perhaps the system's greatest potential, according to Bray, is in the area of Real Time Control. All the data collected will be analyzed by computer and be available almost instantly to the dispatcher. He will be able to detect immediately which buses are late, which will not make a layover or which buses can pick up the slack.

"Right now, I'd say the most unknown aspect of the AVM program is in this area," says Bray. "It will be interesting to see what the dispatchers will be able to do when they have an opportunity to see some of these problems developing and have the opportunity to take early, preventive action."

RTD Operations Analyst Allan Styffe, the program coordinator, says plans also call for testing on-

board vehicle displays and bus stop information displays during the 12-month evaluation.

"The on-board display panel will provide operators with up to 14 messages designed to help them drive the bus more efficiently," Styffe explains. "For experimental purposes, a few portable bus stop displays will be set up. These units will provide passengers with such information as arrival time of the next bus, type of service, headways and route."

For the random route portion of the AVM evaluation, a 54-square-mile area west from the central business district has been equipped with the signpost transmitters to monitor 15 vehicles with equipment similar to the bus electronics, Styffe says.



Director Marvin Holen presented commemorative plaques and congratulations for jobs well done to RTD employees who were shifting gears into retirement last month. Attending the ceremony at District headquarters were (from left) Charley Trippett (23 years), Sylvester Knorey (35 years), Herbert Fassbender (20 years), Clifford Ellyson (26 years), Benjamin Brooks (19 years), Leslie Douglas (26 years) and Hugh O. Van Patten (34 years). Unable to attend were John Pice (18 years), Roy Amicangiolo (14 years) and Stanley Johnson (13 years).



Retiree recognition

By Treva Woods
News Bureau Student *Learn*

There are people who would have you believe that the spirit of Don Quixote is dead. Not true. There still exist in Los Angeles a few protectors of the weak, a few defenders of high ideals.

One of those renaissance knights has as a trusty steed a 25,000-pound steel and rubber bus. He's operator Edward Penalber of Division 1, who regularly rides rein on Line 26 buses. He's the kind of operator who helps elderly passengers aboard, waits for riders running to catch his bus, and even gives out candy canes to his younger riders at Christmas.

But Penalber really shines during his off-duty hours when he spends his own free time working with young people in his East Los Angeles neighborhood of City Terrace.

Penalber is Sergeant-at-Arms and chief spokesperson for the City Terrace Park Parents' Sports Association. Historically, the association sponsored only baseball. When the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Youth Sports League offered to sponsor basketball, flag football and soccer teams for local youngsters at the park, Penalber was one of the first parents to step forward and volunteer his services as a coach and manager for the new teams.

The jointly sponsored athletic program has proven very popular with neighborhood teams. More than 600 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 16 annually participate in activities coordinated by the two organizations.

"So many youngsters sign up for the various sports that we often have to turn away 12 or 15 each season," says Penalber, the father of two sons, Edward, 13, and Christopher, 8.

Penalber first became involved



CALL ME COACH — Division 1 operator Ed Penalber, a member of the City Terrace Park Parents' Sports Association in East Los Angeles, poses with his Pee Wee League team, the Cardinals, prior to a recent game. Penalber has worked with youngsters at the park for the past five years.

Operator becomes part of solution to East Los Angeles gang problems

with the association five years ago when his sons were playing baseball at the park. Today, he coaches one basketball team, manages the football team and the park's Pee Wee League "Cardinals" baseball team, "which has a great no-win record," he says with a good-natured laugh.

"We teach kids that they're not

out to win games at any cost," explains Penalber. "If we win, okay, but if we lose, that's okay, too." He believes in this philosophy so strongly that he's made it a policy with all the sports center's volunteer coaches.

Growing up in Canada, Penalber says he never had an opportunity to play in neighborhood baseball games "So, I get my thrills watching these kids play. I love to see their faces when I take them out for pizza or to Dodger Stadium as an extra treat."

Penalber credits the flexibility of an operator's schedule with allowing him to devote himself to his primary concern — helping neighborhood teenagers stay out of trouble. The main goal of the parents' association and the Sheriff's League, says Penalber, is to provide athletics as an alternative to street gang involvement for area youths.

"If we can keep a kid off the streets for five hours a day, we have a chance of keeping him out of a gang," Penalber says. "The kids on our teams are normal, active youngsters, but the environment around here is bad for them."

In the past, City Terrace Park has been the site of gang-related violence, including several shooting incidents. However, since the formation of the jointly sponsored sports program, there has been a significant drop in crime.

One measure of the program's success, according to Penalber, is its attraction to youngsters, including members of gangs. Some reputed gang members have approached the Park Advisory Council to ask permission to start their own handball league.

"Although there are still problems with this proposal, this is really a step in the right direction," Penalber says. "Before, these kids would have just physically taken over the park."

Penalber tries to get involved with issues involving neighborhood youngsters. One crusade he led involved what he considered an unfair attitude toward young female athletes. They were not allowed to participate.

About two years ago Penalber insisted girls be allowed on his Pee Wee team, against opposition from the other coaches. The girls battled it out and today they are allowed to participate in all of the sports, including football.

"Things have loosened up a lot," says Penalber. "Our only problem now is getting the small boys to stop bopping the girls and start batting the ball."

(Treva Woods, a journalism graduate from California State University, Northridge, is presently pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration at the same university).

Gillis speaks up for RTD

Why do buses run where they do? Why do they reach certain points at certain times? Why are some buses late and why are others overcrowded?

These and many other topics were discussed by Schedule Checker Eugene Gillis during a Career Day at Figueroa Street Elementary School. Gillis, an operator at Division 7 before becoming a Schedule Checker, has been with the District 10 years. This was his second Career Day participation.

"The day was designed to expose fifth and sixth graders to a variety of careers by having individuals working at those careers tell what it is they do and how they do it," explains Gillis.

The group included every-

thing from attorneys to nurses and Gillis received a special Volunteer Service Award from the Los Angeles Unified School District for his part in the program.

Gillis also gave a plug for the Marine Corps at the Career Day. He has spent 15 years with the Marines, four on active duty and the past 11 in the reserves. He is currently serving as Squadron Operations Chief with the Marine Air Support Squadron Four stationed at El Toro Marine Corps Air Station.

A Vietnam veteran, Gillis is a Master Sergeant.

"I was mainly interested in explaining to them how the bus system operates, letting them know that the buses aren't just out there driving around the streets aimlessly," Gillis says.

RTD HEADWAY

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Editorial input and suggestions welcome. Deadline for receipt of editorial copy is the 14th of each month. Send black-and-white photographs only, please. Requests for photographic coverage of District events must be preceded by 72 hours notice.

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