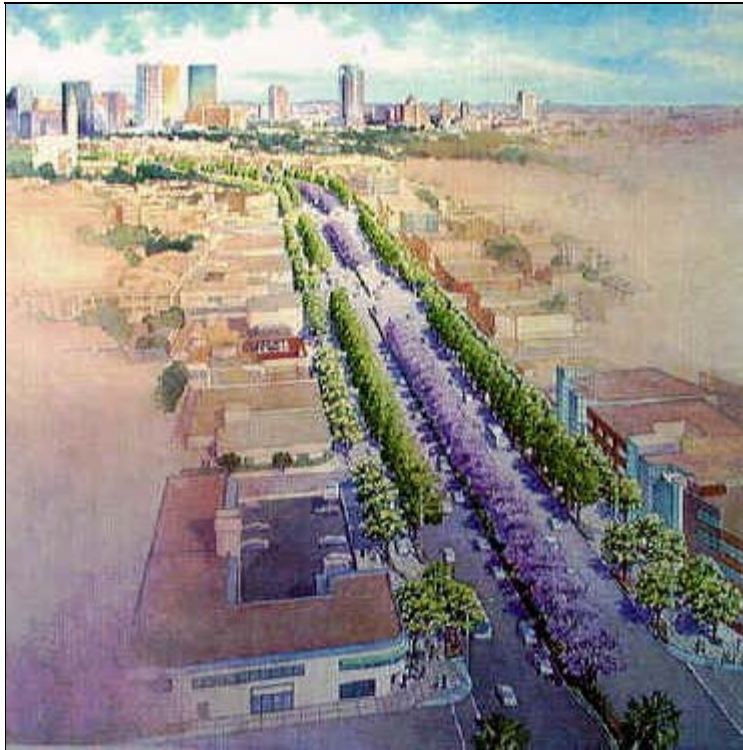


Editor's Note: The articles archived on this page appeared previously on the Metro Report page during July, 1999.

Board Approves Next Step for Santa Monica Parkway Project



Artist's concept illustrates proposed landscape improvements that will give a "Classic Boulevard" look to the Santa Monica Parkway. View is looking east from Sepulveda Boulevard toward Century City. Trees in the median and along the frontage road dramatically affect the visual character of the route.

(July 29) – The long-anticipated Santa Monica Parkway project took another important step, Thursday, with Board approval of the \$68.2 million project's Environmental Impact Report.

The project, a cooperative effort of the MTA, the City and County of Los Angeles and Caltrans, will create a "Classic Boulevard" along a 2.5-mile stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard and Little Santa Monica Boulevard. The renovated roadway will reach from the San Diego Freeway on the west through Century City to Beverly Hills.

When completed, the heavily landscaped avenue will be able to handle as much as 20 percent more traffic than it does today. The project will blend the two Santa Monica boulevards into three lanes of traffic eastbound and three westbound, separated by a tree-lined median.

According to Alan Patashnick, RTP&D project manager, the redesign of the boulevards will reduce delays and improve traffic flow. Most of the double intersections will be eliminated.

Currently, some 40,000 to 66,000 vehicles travel Santa Monica Boulevard

every weekday. This figure could rise to 80,000 vehicles per day by 2020.

Project construction is expected to begin in 2002 and be completed in 2004. Local, state and federal moneys will be used to fund the project.

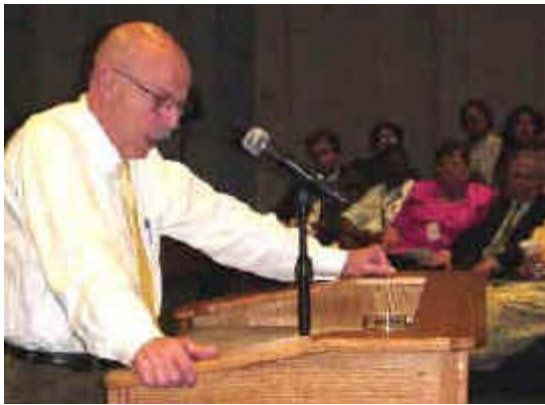
###

All-Staff Meeting Report

Burke: Consent Decree is MTA's 'Most Overriding and Pressing Issue'

By Bill Heard, Editor

(July 28) – The federal Consent Decree is "our most overriding and most pressing issue," CEO Julian Burke told employees who packed the Board room, Wednesday, for his quarterly all-staff meeting.



Burke stressed that the MTA

has sought clarification of recent Consent Decree rulings not to delay or avoid improving the bus system, but because "we have real issues with what the Special Master wants to do."

MTA lawyers filed briefs on Monday asking Judge Terry Hatter to rule in favor of the agency. On Thursday, MTA Board members will discuss what

action to take should the Judge rule against the MTA. That action could include an appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court. "We would have no choice," Burke said. "It's the only responsible thing we can do."

Burke began his remarks by listing the agency's accomplishments during Fiscal Year 1999. He was particularly pleased with improvements in bus service. "I think it's going to get better and better and better," he said. "Pride has a lot to do with why we have better fleet and on-time reliability."

Transit Zones Applications

The CEO expects that transit zone applications from Foothill Transit and a group in the San Fernando Valley will be presented to the Board in February or March, but he doubts they will receive quick approval due to possible law suits from affected groups.

The Foothill application, if approved, would affect Division 9 and about 10 percent of current Metro Bus peak buses. The Valley application would affect Divisions 8 and 15 and about 18 percent of peak buses. Burke noted that MTA guidelines require that creation of a zone cannot adversely affect transit service. The guidelines and the PUC code also require provisions for employees who are displaced or otherwise affected by a new zone.

"I want to assure you that this management will do everything to give our employees the best protection possible and as favorable as we can get for them," Burke said. He added, "There's no doubt in my mind" that, even with zones, MTA bus and rail service will expand as the population of Los Angeles continues to grow.

Other Important Issues

Burke said studies on the outsourcing issue are currently being conducted at the direction of the Board. He noted that the MTA already has contracted

out the printing and distribution of paychecks and the construction and operation of three CNG fueling facilities.

The CEO said some outsourcing might be sensible if it will make the MTA more efficient. He added, however, that he doesn't expect to present a plan for contracting out all management functions.

Burke labeled himself the "bottleneck" in issuing the Morale Task Force report. It's on his desk for completion of his cover letter remarks, he said, and will be issued within the next 10 days. The report will include some 90 recommendations and management's action plan.



In answer to a question, Burke said he does not anticipate significant layoffs, although some personnel adjustments may be made as conditions change. He mentioned Metro Construction, where the rail

construction program is winding down as completion of the North Hollywood extension nears. He added, however, that other non-rail construction projects could be handled by these employees.

Burke said he is in favor of merit-based pay, but he is not confident it can be implemented until managers are able to fairly evaluate employee performance against criteria that are equitably applied through the agency. "It has to be apples to apples," he said. (Photos by Gary Wosk)

###

Update

MTA's First Low-Floor CNG Bus Arrives for 10-Day Inspection Tour



PREVIEW: A first look at new low-floor CNG bus.

(July 29) – The MTA's first low-floor CNG bus -- in Los Angeles for a 10-day inspection by Transit Operations staff -- was on display in Patsaouras Plaza during Thursday's Board meeting.

The "pilot" bus, built by NABI, is the first of 215 new CNG buses scheduled to begin arriving in January 2000. Following staff review, the bus will return to NABI for additional inspections and testing.

Over the next year, the MTA will take delivery of 437 new buses. By the end of 2004, the agency is scheduled to receive a total of 2,095 buses.

###

Learn how to be a Amateur Radio Operator with MTA Amateur Radio Club

Introductory Class Set for Thursday

Amateur Radio is a hobby enjoyed by millions world wide. It is a hobby that offers many varied aspects from simple Morse code radio transmissions using small home built radios to bouncing radio signals off the trails of meteors and the moon using complex antenna systems and everything you can think of in between.

The MTA Amateur Radio Club is now offering a class to help you prepare to become an amateur radio operator. The entry level license requires the passing of two basic exams in the rules and regulations of amateur radio, good operating procedures and basic electronic and radio theory.

An introductory class will be held on **Thursday, August 5**, at noon in the Sunset Room on the tenth floor. The class will last about an hour so feel free to bring your lunch. Additional classes will be scheduled after the first class. For additional class information, contact Ralph G. Sbragia at 922-7369

The MTA Amateur Radio Club (MTA ARC or W6MTA) is seeking qualified amateur radio operators to join with us for fun, camaraderie and all the other activities that we decide to sponsor. We will also be directly supporting the amateur radio disaster communications efforts of the MTA. Our next meeting will be **Thursday, August 12**, at noon in the Sunset Room.

For further club information contact: Phil Gonzales (N6BN), 922-7682, Mike Mockler (KO6S), 922-3434 or Ralph G. Sbragia (KD6FYT), 213-922-7369.

###

"TEN PINS FOR ELSIE" Bowling Tournament to Score Benefit for Elsie Baldemor

A fundraising bowling tournament has been scheduled to benefit Elsie Baldemor, MTA accounting assistant, who has been battling cancer for almost a year. Elsie is currently on disability. This fund raising is to help defray her medical bills. Trophies will be awarded to the top three teams and members of the winning team will all receive ribbons. Trophies will also be awarded to the top three in the "under 12" division. The fee of \$20 for adults and \$10 for children under 12 years includes three games, shoe rental and a soda. (July 26)

WHEN: Sunday August 8, 1999

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

WHERE: Bowling Square, 1020 S. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

For more information and to register with your payment, please contact:

Willie Atienza, Audit, 922-4100, Cubicle 21-28

Neil Ginsberg, Accounting, 922-5412, Cubicle 20-30

Susan Carias, Accounting, 922-6162, Cubicle 20-122

Letty Lawenko, General Services, 922-4792, Cubicle 15-20E

Fe Little, Construction Contracts, 922-6386, Cubicle 9

###

MTA Campus Graduates First TLAMP Class

CLASS OF '99--

First internal class of TLAMP graduates include, bottom row, from left:

Lynn Bell, Marlene Belcher,
Milo Victoria, and
Ram Krishna;



middle row: Henry Ho, Bruno Guillemet, Barbara Olson-Bonk, and Ann John; top row: Maceo Bethel, Diane Delaney-Talton, Kevin Michel, and Bill Haines.

By Rick Jager

(July 29) The first class of the newly developed Transportation Leadership and Management Program (TLAMP) graduated Friday from the first TLAMP program offered internally at the MTA.

Originally offered at UCLA, the program was brought internally as part of a 1997 workout team recommendation to decrease the use of external consultants. MTA's Human Resources Development and Training Unit reported the move saved an estimated \$100,000.

The purpose of TLAMP is to provide additional training to management level employees in an effort to give them additional skills, strategies and knowledge of management and leadership practices to carry out the mission and goals of the MTA.

The class began their work in April of this year and consisted of 12 individuals from various departments including operations, administration, planning and construction.

The next internal TLAMP class will begin in late September and will consist of approximately 25 MTA employees.

###

MTA to Play Major Role in County's Welfare-to-Work Transportation Plan

By Rick Jager

(July 27) The MTA will play a major role in implementing recommendations resulting from a study being conducted as part of the region's Welfare-To-Work Transportation Plan.

The Welfare-To-Work Transportation Plan, approved by the Board of Supervisors in June, calls for a coordinated effort on the part of 17 major transportation operators in the county as well as small local transportation providers in incorporated cities to provide transportation options for welfare participants.

Under the plan, a needs assessment study will be conducted over the next year that will focus on examining what the actual needs of welfare participants are, how government can better provide information about public transportation options, possible solutions based on the needs and how they can be implemented.

The Welfare-To-Work Transportation Plan has dedicated \$15.6 million for FY 2000, including start-up costs, for a needs assessment study and transportation projects that may be developed and implemented.

The MTA will manage the projects and will be responsible for implementing recommendations resulting from the study.

The projects may include vanpools, shuttles and guaranteed ride home services, car ownership/loan programs and the development of such new transportation services as payment of car repairs.

###

Bus Rodeo '99 Brings Out the Best in MTA Bus Operators and Mechanics



Story and Photos by Gary Wosk

(July 26) The operator and bus maintenance team that won the 24th Annual MTA Bus Rodeo on Saturday under the hot summertime sunshine have tasted the fruits of victory before and are looking forward to competing at the internationals in Orlando, Florida this fall.

Held in the parking lot of the Santa Anita Race Track in Arcadia, 18-year veteran operator Mark Holland was declared best driver of the obstacle course in front of an estimated crowd of 350 people that included Administration Executive Officer Frank Cardenas and Chief of Staff Habib Balian.



Following his victory,
the 39-year-old Holland,

currently a Metro Red Line subway operator hailing from Division 20,
already was wearing his game face for the APTA-sponsored world
championship to be held on October 8. Besides luggage, he'll be bringing
along a new, improved attitude.

Top Operator Mark Holland

"In 1995 when I advanced to Orlando, my goal was just to finish. This time however I believe I have an excellent chance of bringing back the championship," said the ever-confident Holland who steered his mammoth coach through a network of impediments that included orange cones, 55-gallon drums and tennis balls.

Holland, surprisingly, barely made the finals after a sub-par performance in the preliminaries, disappointing, he says, since his scores in practice were always much higher.



For the second consecutive year, a mechanics team from Division 2, this time represented by Juan Villalba, Andrew Filimaui and John Tena sauntered to the winners circle.

The team was modest in its assessment of the big triumph and hope to replicate the success of the 1997 mechanics team which swept to the international championship .

Winning mechanics Juan Villalba and Andrew Filimaui with EDO Tom Conner, center.

"The win could have gone to any team, it was pretty tight," said Filimaui. "It feels good to win. The training we received in the last two weeks at Division 20 and the support of management made a huge difference.

Finally, Filimaui could no longer contain his enthusiasm.

I'm going to Disney World!" he exclaimed with a wide grin.

The bus maintenance team competition involved three events: brake inspection, bus inspection and engine inspection. Contestants raced the clock to troubleshoot, solve and repair implanted mechanical defects.

Enjoying his first rodeo and there for the entire event after arriving in his vintage 1966 Corvette was the MTA's executive officer of Transit Operations.

"This is a great way to show people how good we really are," said Tom Conner, a self-described "closet mechanic" whose wife Carol expressed a life-long desire to drive a bus following the event. "I hope the public, especially our passengers, will realize how highly skilled our operators and mechanics are."



Connor's executive management team was equally effusive in its praise.

"The mechanics that are competing here are without doubt the best in the country. They are working on the latest state-of-the-art equipment," said Deputy Executive Officer Richard Hunt, in charge of Bus Maintenance. "This gives them an opportunity to demonstrate their professionalism. I'm very proud to

be working with a group like this."

Division 18 mechanic Pat Shin has 10 minutes to solve seven problems.

His counterpart expressed similar admiration.

"The 30 operators who competed at this event are the most skilled in the MTA Bus system based on their skills and overall employment record," said Deputy Executive Officer Dan Ibarra, who manages the Bus Operations. "This is the single, most positive event bus operations has all year.

These drivers are the best of the best," continued Ibarra, encouraged that this year a crop of relatively new operators also participated. "Anyone who can steer these buses through the streets of L.A. are doing something very few can do. They are amazing."

Holland and each member of the bus maintenance team received stainless steel watches with the Bus Rodeo insignia inscribed on the face. Attendees also enjoyed a barbecue, children were entertained by clowns and there was a classic car show. In addition, members of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's special weapons team were on hand to staff an information booth next to a rescue vehicle.

###

Update

Six Operators Retire at Division 9

Six operators whose total service reaches 157.5 years, will be honored at a retirement celebration at Division 9 at 1 p.m., Friday, Aug. 27. They are:

Michael Brown, 23 years' service,
Dave Campbell, 39.25 years' service,
Silva Salvador, 23 years' service,

Jose Arizmendi, 25.5 years' service,
Michael Guevara, 23.5 years' service, and
Andre Saldana, 23.25 years' service.

The retirees and their guests will be treated to lunch at Edwards Steakhouse. At the 1 p.m. ceremony, refreshments will be served and division employees and union officials will salute the retiring operators. For information about the event, contact Larry Cosner at 922-4327.

Next Generation Tours MTA's Greatest Hits



HARD DAY--Division 18, the next generation, call it a day.

(July 23) The Harley motorcycles on display in Gateway Plaza were a big hit with youngsters during the MTA's "Take Our Sons to Work Day" on Friday. And there was more to roar about as an estimated 500 members of the next generation took a whirlwind tour of their parent's daily grind. Parents

from all divisions as well as headquarters were well-represented as official tour guides. The youngsters rode the subway to Hollywood for a tour of Metro Art, saw the fossils and railway artifacts in the MTA Library, logged in a few hundred calls at the Bus Operations Control Center, toured Division 10's building and train yard and spec'd out the Central Control Center starship-like enterprise. The big day started out with safety training, of

course, and ended with a FREE ice cream sundae. The sundae was by far the favorite.

John Dover, Senior TOS, of BOCC.

###

**Claudette Moody Selected as
Director, Government Relations**

(July 22) – CEO Julian Burke has named Claudette Moody, who has represented the MTA in



Sacramento and Washington, D.C., for 14 years, to the post of director, Government Relations.

Moody will head a seven-member department whose responsibilities include liaison with officials at the local and regional, state and federal levels. The staff monitors policy and political activities of these agencies to determine their impact on the MTA.

Government Relations employees assist the MTA Board in developing annual programs for legislation that will benefit the agency and the transportation industry. They also are responsible for keeping MTA staff informed about legislative and regulatory matters that affect the agency.

Moody began her career in government affairs as a legislative assistant to a Milwaukee congressman. She joined the LACTC in 1985 as a government relations representative working at the federal level and rose to administrator of state affairs in 1990. Since the MTA merger, she has been government relations manager of state affairs.

A native of Cincinnati, Moody earned a BA in government from Cal State University, Sacramento, and an MA in government from the College of William and Mary in Virginia. She lives in Glendale with her daughter, Emily, 6.

###

Daily News Incorrectly Reported Metro Bus Operator Salaries

July 13, 1999

To the Editor:

The Daily News erred in reporting the facts about MTA operator salaries in its July 12, 1999 editorial, "Back of the Bus".

New operators start as trainees earning \$8 an hour. After successful completion of their training, they make \$10 an hour. Once promoted to regular part-time employment, operators earn \$11.17 an hour and, eventually, become full-time operators. A full-time operator hired after July 1, 1997 earns a top hourly rate of \$17.18. Veteran full-time operators hired before July 1, 1997 may earn a top hourly rate of \$20.43.

The Daily News not only reported the wrong salary figures but gave readers the impression that all MTA operators earn the top rates. In fact, as veteran operators retire and new operators are hired at the new salary scale, the average salaries are below what they were two years ago when a new union contract was negotiated.

The Daily News also takes it for granted that MTA has a "bloated bureaucracy," but it failed to report that hundreds of administrative positions

have been eliminated in the past two years as the agency has streamlined its operations.

Marc Littman
Public Relations Director

###

Plaudits to Castillo and Staff from the Esperance Center

Letter dated July 16 from Barbara Hasselquist, Esperance Center Director:
Esperance Center is a day program for developmentally disabled adults. Yesterday, one of our clients failed to get off at her designated bus stop in Malibu where she usually meets her vocational trainer. We began a search for her and enlisted the help of MTA. This letter is to thank the MTA staff for all their help and patience. It is deeply appreciated in stressful situations. Special thanks goes to David Castillo who went out of his way to...bring (our client) safely inside the MTA headquarters building to wait with the police. He also expressed his concern by calling our office twice to make sure the client was taken care of and to offer to bring her a soda after getting off work.- (July 22)

###

Contributions in Remembrance of Ed Reyes will be Donated to Family

As our sincere condolences and thoughts of Ed go out to his family, many staff members have expressed their wishes to contribute to Ed Reyes' family. If you wish to contribute towards the family of Ed Reyes, please write a check payable to "**Rhodora Reyes**" and submit to:

22nd floor - Walter Davis, 922-3079
23rd floor - Ilda Licon, 922-2805 or
25th floor - Margarita Ortiz, 922-3003.

###

UPDATE

Judge to Rule After July 27 on Whether MTA Must Buy Buses

(July 21) – The federal judge who oversees the Consent Decree wrapped up an evidentiary hearing on Tuesday, but is not expected to rule on whether the MTA must purchase additional buses until after July 27. Lawyers for the MTA and Bus Riders Union have until that date to present legal briefs.

Judge Terry Hatter indicated, however, that he does not question the Special Master's authority to order the MTA to expand its fleet to relieve overcrowding. He said the only question he has to decide is whether the Special Master's ruling was clearly erroneous. Hatter indicated he is not convinced that it was.

In a memo to MTA Board members late Tuesday, CEO Julian Burke said, "We believe the evidence shows that the MTA has been complying with the Consent Decree and is making progress in improving Metro Bus service and

will continue to do so without implementing the unnecessary and excessive measures the Special Master has requested."

Burke wrote that the MTA "made a strong case that Metro Bus service has improved markedly as measured by such benchmarks as bus pullouts and load factor compliance checks." Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky has testified that there no longer is systematic overcrowding on the bus system. Even BRU lawyers and a consultant acknowledged the agency has made progress in overhauling service.

The MTA documented in court that it is spending more than \$1 billion -- more than 40 percent of its current fiscal year budget -- on Metro Bus operations and improvements and on subsidies for the 16 sub-regional bus operators. David Yale, director of Capital Development, told the court that, if the Special Master's orders stand, the MTA would fall \$196 million short in covering operating costs of running an additional 481 buses on top of its 2,095 buses in its remediation plan.

[\(Click here for facts about Metro Bus service improvements.\)](#)

###

Early Testing Shows Rapid Bus Concept Will Provide Faster Service to Patrons



An artist's rendering of the Metro Rapid Bus concept illustrates a bus and station that easily identify the system to the patron.

(July 16) – Preliminary tests conducted in two heavily traveled transportation corridors in Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley indicate that the MTA's proposed Metro Rapid Bus service will be measurably faster than current limited bus service.

The Metro Rapid Bus concept, an MTA/LADOT joint venture coordinated by the MTA Planning Department, is patterned after similar bus service in Curitiba, Brazil. It would function like a "rubber-tired railway," says Rex Gephart, project manager, (pictured)



providing express service to widely spaced bus stops. The buses would have signal

priority at intersections along the corridor.

In late June, the MTA and LADOT conducted a test on Ventura Boulevard where 36 intersections will be equipped with a signal priority system. For the test, a Metro Bus was given signal priority at 18 intersections. LADOT reported "very favorable results" in keeping the buses moving through the intersections.

In early July, the MTA conducted a test along the Whittier/Wilshire corridor to determine whether reducing the number of stops would significantly improve a Rapid Bus patron's travel time during peak hours. Over the approximately 24-mile course with some 30 stops, the test resulted in as much as an 18 percent savings over existing limited stop travel time.

"Metro Bus Service will have to be a significant improvement or our patrons won't recognize it as such," Gephart explains.

There are a number of key components that will make the Metro Rapid Bus program successful, Gephart says. These include a limited number of stops, bus priority movement through intersections, specially marked coaches and stops that patrons will easily recognize, and frequent, reliable service.

The MTA plans to offer Metro Rapid Bus service initially on three demonstration routes: the 24-mile Whittier/Wilshire corridor (Montebello to Santa Monica), beginning in March, 2000; the 16-mile Ventura Boulevard corridor (Universal City Station to Warner Center), opening in May, 2000; and the 12-mile Pico/Rimpau to Downtown to East LA corridor, opening in July, 2000.

Testing of the Metro Rapid Bus concept will continue throughout the summer and fall. Working with LADOT, the MTA will test signal priority in both directions on Ventura Boulevard and will make more test runs along the Whittier/Wilshire corridor. The MTA also will look for ways to reduce dwell time at bus stops.

###

**Past Becomes the Future on
New Metro Bus, Rail Passes**



Tickets to Ride-Metro Art Director Maya Emsden, left, Director of Revenue Agapito Diaz, center, and Revenue Manager Dave Bostwick review new Metro bus and rail passes with vintage illustrations.

By Ed Scannell

(July 15) -- LA's past is becoming a thing of the future with the reintroduction of vintage illustrations on new Metro Bus and Metro Rail passes.

Beginning in August, the MTA's monthly, semi-monthly and weekly transit passes will feature original artwork from passes issued by the Los Angeles Railway from 1934 to 1944 and by the Los Angeles Transit Lines from 1945 to 1947.

During August, the vintage illustrations will appear on all three types of passes. Beginning in September, they will appear only on the weekly passes. The designs will be reintroduced on the monthly and semi-monthly passes in early 2000.

"The illustrations provide a historical snapshot of life in Los Angeles during a time of great growth and change," said MTA Metro Art Director Maya Emsden. "Some of them depict a bygone era, but they also serve to remind us of the rich tradition of this great city."

Artifacts in Mint Condition

More than 500 of the colorful passes, which display scenes and messages from yesteryear, were brought to the MTA's Metro Art Department by a Metro Rail construction worker who uncovered the near mint-condition artifacts at an estate sale in Highland Park.

Two of the August, 1999, passes feature illustrations promoting the original LA Museum of History, Science, and Art, which opened in 1913 in Exposition Park and was originally housed in what is now the Natural History Museum.



Other August weekly passes feature illustrations encouraging passengers to take rail or bus service to destinations such as the "new" LA Library or the Al G. Barnes Circus, which performed on a vacant lot in the midst of oil wells at the corner of Wilshire and Fairfax near what then was the outskirts of town. Another pass announces the 1934 National Speedway Championship at the old LA Municipal Airport.

Upcoming vintage pass reproductions will celebrate holidays or advise mid-day Christmas shopping to help ease the rush hour squeeze, while others will announce such events as professional football games at Gilmore Stadium. Still others promote such patriotic goals as putting tokens in the farebox instead of pennies enabling more copper to be available for wiring U.S. bombers and cruisers during World War II.

While the number of vintage illustrations is finite, the amount of creativity in Los Angeles is limitless. As a result, the MTA hopes in the future to enlist local art schools to create a new generation of transit pass designs to succeed the reissued artworks.

###

Funeral Services Scheduled for Ed Reyes, RTP&D Chief Analyst

(July 20) – Funeral services have been scheduled for Ed Reyes, RTP&D chief administrative analyst, who died last Sunday while on vacation in the Philippines.

The funeral will be conducted at 9 a.m., Saturday, July 24, at St. Denis Catholic Church, 2151 South Diamond Bar Blvd., Diamond Bar. For directions call (909) 822-1293. Viewings are scheduled at 7 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday at Covina Hills Forest Lawn Cemetery, 21300 Via Verde, Covina Hills. For information, call (800) 204-3131.



(July 19) – RTP&D employees were saddened, Monday, to learn of the death over the weekend of their co-worker, Edwin M. Reyes. The chief administrative analyst died Sunday in the Philippines from complications following a SCUBA diving accident.

RTP&D Executive Officer Jim de la Loza broke the news to members of his department during a meeting in the Board room. Reyes had worked with de la Loza for the past three-and-a-half years.

"Ed Reyes was both a colleague and a close friend," said de la Loza. "He was a great guy, a real gentleman. He was genuinely concerned about the work he was doing at the MTA. He'll be greatly missed by all the friends he made here. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family."

Reyes, who would have been 35 on Thursday, joined the MTA in 1995. He was working toward a SCUBA certificate during a three-week vacation in the Philippines. While submerged in 60 feet of water, a problem developed and he surfaced quickly. In severe pain, he was airlifted to a Manila hospital where he was placed in the ICU unit. He remained in the hospital for two weeks before his death.

Reyes, a graduate of USC, is survived by his wife, Rhodora, and son, Christian, 6, who were with him in Manila.

###

###

New Transit Operations Chief Talks about Challenges Ahead

By Bill Heard, Editor



(July 15) – Although Tom Conner, the MTA's new Transit Operations executive officer has been at the agency only since April 28, he is very clear on the challenges and issues his department faces. Among them: complying with the federal Consent Decree, getting costs down, improving service, hiring and training top-quality operators and mechanics and putting new technology in place. Conner sat down recently with the editor of metro.net's *MTA Report* to talk about these challenges and

his experience, to date, at the MTA. ([Click here to read the full interview with Conner.](#)) ([Click here for background on Conner.](#))

###

UPDATE

MTA Back in Court as Lawyers Show Facts on Bus Service Improvements

(July 20) – The MTA returned to federal court, Tuesday, for the second day of an evidentiary hearing in its bid to challenge the Special Master's most recent rulings interpreting disputed elements of the Consent Decree. During Monday's testimony, MTA attorneys presented facts showing the agency had significantly improved the performance of the Metro Bus fleet.

Judge Terry Hatter, who is being asked by the MTA to set aside the Special Master's orders, heard four hours of testimony on Monday, then recessed the hearing until Tuesday afternoon.

Among those testifying at Monday's hearing were MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky and David Yale, director of Capital Development.

Although the Bus Riders Union has declared that the MTA must immediately purchase and put into service more than 500 additional buses to meet load factor targets in the Consent Decree, the MTA argued that it would be excessive to spend \$463 million in taxpayer-supported funds on more buses, when the Metro Bus remediation plan is starting to show positive results.

[\(Click here for facts about Metro Bus service improvements.\)](#)

During Monday's hearing, attorneys noted that the MTA is putting hundreds of new buses in service, that compliance with load factor targets is improving and that "good faith efforts" to meet those targets have resulted in 98 percent compliance during peak morning hours.

The MTA also took issue with the Special Master's interpretation of load factor compliance. Bliss, in effect, has specified "absolute load factor ceilings that must be met, day in and day out, during every 20-minute window during peak hours on every bus route," according to the MTA's legal brief.

The MTA, however, finds that interpretation "wholly inconsistent with the language of the Consent Decree and the facts." It has provided testimony indicating that, during negotiation of the Consent Decree, "no one ever suggested that the 'maximum load factor ceiling' represented an absolute ceiling, rather than just...a performance goal."

###

MTA Returns to Court to Request Review of Consent Decree Orders

(July 15) – The MTA returns to federal court, Monday, to make its case challenging the Special Master's most recent rulings interpreting disputed elements of the Consent Decree.

During the evidentiary hearing, the MTA will face attorneys representing the Bus Riders Union. The BRU has declared that the MTA must immediately purchase and put into service more than 500 additional buses to meet load factor targets in the Consent Decree. These buses would provide service in addition to the current service levels, and their purchase would be over and above the 2,095 buses the MTA is scheduled to buy through 2004.

The MTA argues in a legal brief that federal courts may not interfere in the management of a public agency except in cases in which a constitutional violation has been established. No such violation has ever been found in this case. Under the agreement signed in October, 1996, Special Master Donald Bliss was given the power only to "facilitate the resolution of disputes" not to "issue substantive orders," MTA lawyers say.

Compliance is improving

During Monday's hearing, attorneys will note that the MTA is putting hundreds of new buses in service, that compliance with load factor targets is improving and that "good faith efforts" to meet those targets have resulted in 98 percent compliance during peak morning hours.

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The MTA, however, finds that interpretation "wholly inconsistent with the language of the Consent Decree and the facts." It has provided testimony indicating that, during negotiation of the Consent Decree, "no one ever suggested that the 'maximum load factor ceiling' represented an absolute ceiling, rather than just...a performance goal."

Following arguments by attorneys for the MTA and BRU, Judge Terry Hatter may rule at that time, but more likely will take the matter under advisement and issue a ruling at a later date.

###

Division 10 Operator Lujan to 'Star' in Public TV Show

By Gary Wosk

(July 12) -- Since 1983, Metro Bus Operator Robert Lujan of Division 10 has quietly gone about his business of providing first-class service to his passengers.

Then last week, Lujan, 47, pictured at left, was cast into the limelight when the producers of the Public Broadcasting System series "Livelyhood," asked him to appear in an upcoming episode, "Carpool to Nirvana." The segment deals with how to find the ideal workplace and tackles such subjects as the search for the best commute, from bikes to buses. Approximately 10 MTA bus operators were considered for the show, set to air Friday, Oct. 15, at 9 p.m.



"This is a great opportunity for the MTA to put its best foot forward," said Lujan shortly before setting out with PBS. "The Authority's best assets are the people doing the job. I consider this an honor."

Lujan was attired in his "dress uniform," including cowboy boots, for the full day of interviews, conducted aboard his bus in such communities as Westwood and East Los Angeles and in the Division's train room. Even some passengers were questioned, most replying that they were satisfied with bus service.

Never at a loss for words, Lujan, a Monterey Park resident who exudes a Tony Bennet-like coolness and is quite a storyteller, empathized with the struggles of the transit dependent and continuously exuded a positive attitude about his job and the MTA during filming.

"I enjoy interacting with the public and never tire of seeing who's coming

through the front door of the bus," said Lujan,.

###

Cash Fares Up, Pass Sales Steady Despite Bus Riders Union 'Fare Strike'

UPDATE July 13) – Despite publicity about the Bus Riders Union 'fare strike,' cash fares collected on Metro Buses, Monday, were higher than the 13-week average. A survey of the seven MTA Customer Service Centers and key pass vendors showed sales of all passes were holding steady or were up slightly.

The MTA collected \$257,414 in cash from fareboxes on Monday, up \$12,298 over the average of \$245,116 collected for the past 13 Mondays. Token collection totaled \$189,354 -- \$10,634 above the 13-week average of \$178,720.

In an average month, the MTA sells 47,000 monthly passes, 157,000 weekly passes and 41,000 semi-monthly passes. Some 47 percent of Metro riders use passes. ([Click here for facts about the proposed fare increase.](#))

###

BRU Begins 'Fare Strike;' No Service Disruptions

(July 12) – No widespread service disruptions had been reported by mid-day, Monday, the first day of the Bus Riders Union "fare strike," although two demonstrations were held aboard buses.

Demonstrators, reacting to the on-board presence of a TV camera, became rowdy aboard one bus, which continued in service. A second demonstration on Line 207 buses, also for the benefit of cameras, started at Wilshire/Western, across the street from BRU headquarters.

LAPD's Transit Bus Division is monitoring bus operations and is responding with officers as necessary. By Monday afternoon, a Sheriff's Transit Services Division spokesperson said she had received no reports of service disruptions in their patrol areas.

The beginning of the "fare strike" followed a boisterous public hearing, July 10, at which BRU supporters and others protested the proposed 10-cent cash fare increase with skits and chanting.

###

Josie Nicasio Named New MTA Controller

(July 9) – Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh has announced the appointment of Josie Nicasio, a 24-year MTA veteran, as the agency's new controller.

In her new post, Nicasio will supervise a 65-member accounting staff. She will be responsible for planning and directing overall financial activities related to accounting, including payroll, accounts receivable and the FIS system. Her staff prepares the agency's monthly financial statements, as well as internal and external financial reports.



Nicasio has more than 30 years of progressively responsible management experience in finance. She earned a BS in business administration-accounting and business management, graduating cum laude from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. She also has been a California Certified Public Accountant.

Nicasio lives in Los Angeles. She has three sons, Ryan, 25; Eric, 18; and James, 11.

###

President Visits Locke High School;
\$35,000 Pledged to TCAP Program



MTA's Naomi Nightingale, Transportation Sec. Rodney Slater and LAUSD/MTA TCAP Liaison Holly Johnson tour Locke High School.

Student Rep. Emanuel Higgins greets visitors during VIP tour of Locke High's TCAP during President Clinton's visit.

(July 8) – President Clinton and the secretaries of transportation and labor visited Locke High School in Watts, today, where students enrolled in the MTA-sponsored Transportation Careers Academy Program (TCAP) displayed their latest projects.

Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater used the occasion to announce pledges to the TCAP program of \$25,000 from Southwest Airlines and \$10,000 from the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority.

"Transportation is about more than concrete, asphalt and steel," said Slater. "It's about investing in people and providing the opportunities to pursue better lives."

"The MTA is extremely pleased to receive this contribution to the program," said Naomi Nightingale, director, MTA Human Resources. "These monies will help support training and development for students in TCAP and will provide authentic work and leadership experiences."



Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman (pictured, left, with Locke High Assistant Principal Eloise McGehee) also showed great interest in the program and discussed possible funding to expand it to other areas.

Other VIPs attending the event included U.S. Representatives Maxine Waters, Javier Becerra, Juanita Millender-McDonald and Loretta Sanchez, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Assemblyman Carl Washington, Sheriff Lee Baca, Ervin "Magic" Johnson and Compton Mayor Omar Bradley.

In addition to the White House press corps, Los Angeles-area media covered the event. Nightingale and student TCAP representatives were interviewed by the LA Times, Channels 4, 7, 9 and 11, KNX, KFI, the Wave Newspapers and the Chinese Daily News.

Some 140 students participate in the TCAP program at Locke High, part of more than 660 students enrolled in the program at North Hollywood High, Wilson High in East LA, John Glenn High in Norwalk/La Mirada and Franklin High School in LA.

The MTA provides mentors for the TCAP program and each summer provides internships for 58 students.

TCAP originally was funded in 1994 by the MTA in partnership with LAUSD, the Norwalk/La Mirada Unified School District and the Los Angeles Community College District and by a grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

###

FY 2000 to be "Watershed Year," CEO Declares in Budget Message

(July 7) – Fiscal Year 2000 will be a "watershed year" marked by major improvements in transportation, CEO Julian Burke declares in his just-released Budget Message. The message opens the MTA's Adopted Budget

book which is now available in the MTA Library.

The agency's spending plan for FY 2000, which began July 1, is \$2.536 billion, \$118 million more than last fiscal year's budget. The largest portion of the balanced budget, more than \$931 million, is earmarked for Metro Bus operations and for the purchase of new buses and funding for bus-related facilities. [Click here for the CEO's full Budget Message.](#))

Burke identifies three factors that will significantly influence transit service in FY 2000. There will be a continued improvement in bus service with the addition of 130 peak hour buses in calendar year 1999 and as a result of the opening, June 12, of Metro Red Line service to Hollywood.

The second major impact will come from the delivery of 437 new CNG buses, the awarding of purchase orders for more new buses and the addition of 281,000 operating hours. The third factor will be the opening in spring 2000 of Metro Red Line service to Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood.

"While the MTA's prospects in this fiscal year are quite favorable," Burke wrote, he listed among its challenges the agency's request for a judicial review of the Consent Decree and the possibility of an unfavorable ruling, the transit zone issue and competition from other regions for federal and state funding.

The FY 2000 budget provides \$121 million for Metro Rail operations; \$292 million for completion of the Metro Rail construction project; \$756.8 million to subsidize the county's 16 municipal bus operations and Metrolink, as well as various other transit, highway and street programs; \$327.2 million for debt service; and \$72 million for MTA administrative costs.

The budget also includes \$10.2 million in revenues from a fare increase proposed to take effect Nov. 1, 1999, if adopted by the Board. A hearing on the proposal is scheduled at 10 a.m., Saturday, July 10, in the MTA Board Room.

###

MTA Accountant:

What ever happened to the issuance of the Morale Report findings? The morale in my department is so bad we need a Prozac dispenser by the elevator door. (July 7)

(Editor's Note: [The Morale Report](#) was discussed during the CEO's staff meeting on Tuesday. The executive officers have submitted their responses to the issues and recommendations in the report. These will be developed into an implementation plan which is to be issued simultaneously with the report. Senior management wants to issue the Morale Report and the implementation as soon as possible. This has been a longer than expected process because of the amount of information received from employees, the process of developing the issues and recommendations and the process of preparing the implementation plan.)

Del Amo Station Art Work Turns on Wheel of Puzzles

(July 6) – It's big. It's round. It's impressive. And it's a puzzler. It's the "Del Amo Wheel," the latest art work to be installed at a Metro Blue Line station.



Created by British-born artist Colin Gray, the 9-foot diameter molded-concrete wheel is styled after decorations on a temple in Konarak, India.

Gray wanted his ornate work of art to contrast with the Del Amo station's "industrially made, practical and plain" surroundings in the Rancho Dominguez-Carson area. He composed 10 word puzzles from images and events associated with local history, hoping that commuters would solve them over a period of time.

Answer these brain twisters, drawn from among the 10 on Gray's work, and you'll begin to understand the enigma of the "Del Amo Wheel":

- ❓ "The original folk upon this land were the ones that made it all by hand," or
- ❓ "The leatherman came, the leatherman went. He received this land with no penny spent," or
- ❓ "The tree with wings on the outer edge lies. The six-winged plane that still couldn't fly."

The answers to the word puzzles aren't to be found on the wheel. They can only be unearthed in the local public library. "That was part of the artist's intent: to get people to use the library," says Alan Nakagawa, Metro Art senior public arts officer.

The Del Amo Wheel, created at a cost of \$58,800 and installed June 26, is among several art projects planned for the Metro Blue Line. These include projects at the Willow, Firestone, Florence and Metro Center stations. Future art projects also include public performances and temporary art installations associated with the extension of Metro Blue Line platforms to accommodate longer trains.

###

Hayden, Murray Bill Not Approved Final Hearing Set for August 17

UPDATE, July 7) – The Hayden, Murray bill restricting MTA spending to bus purchases and highway repairs (SB-1276) ran into stiff opposition, Tuesday, in the state Senate Transportation Committee. Legislators supporting the MTA argued that the bill would affect spending on a variety of county transportation projects and delay construction of the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena.

The bill will have a final hearing, Aug. 17, and must receive committee approval to be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

###

(July 2) – A bill to restrict MTA spending only to bus purchases and highway repairs until the agency complies with the federal Consent Decree will be discussed by the Senate Transportation Committee in Sacramento, Tuesday, July 6.

Senate Bill 1276 had been considered "dead" for this legislative session until State Senators Tom Hayden and Kevin Murray secured an urgency provision that allowed the committee to take it up.

The MTA has issued a statement strongly opposing the measure, noting that such legislation would "paralyze Metro operations because it may not permit MTA to spend money to run Metro Bus or Metro Rail service or subsidize the 16 sub-regional bus operators in the county, fund the Freeway Service Patrol and other vital programs."

At a June 10 news conference, the senators said their legislation would limit MTA spending to bus purchases and street repairs until the Special Master agrees there's sufficient funding to meet the Consent Decree requirements. The bill also would require a fiscal analysis of options for purchasing 532 buses and hiring operators and maintenance personnel and an audit by the State Auditor.

###

Service Complaints Declined Sharply in May; Downward Trend Continues

(July 2) -- Figures compiled by MTA Passenger Relations indicate that customer complaints decreased significantly in May – declining 13 percent from April, 1999, and 16 percent from May, 1998.

Customers submitted a total of 1,209 complaints in May compared with 1,390 the previous month, the lowest figure for May since 1995 when the MTA logged 995 complaints.

Schedule Adherence complaints fell almost 25 percent. Unsafe Operation reports were down 16 percent and Passed-Up complaints declined 5 percent. Operator Discourtesy reports in May were up only three from the April level.

"Complaints regarding schedule adherence have decreased the most, which clearly reflects the positive impact of our new buses, our improved maintenance and increased supervision, as well as our Professional Pride program," said Tom Conner, executive officer, Transit Operations. "A pleasing side effect is that during this same period, there also has been an increase in the number of operator commendations."

Passenger complaints have trended steadily downward for the past 9 months. At the end of May, complaints averaged 1,547 per month, a 10.8 percent decrease from May 1998 when the 12-month average stood at 1,736.

###

MTA's Take Our Sons To Work Day Friday, July 23, 1999 Schedule of Events

7:30 AM

"Sons" Arrive At Your Work Location

7:45 - 8:30 AM

Get Acquainted "Continental Breakfast" at your work location (juice, pastry/donuts)

Each division/location is responsible for providing breakfast for the sons.

The committee is requesting that some type of continental breakfast be provided for the sons visiting your location.

Sons will receive the following from their respective coordinator/chaperone:ID Badge, Goodie Bag and Safety Vest (if applicable).

8:30 - 9:30 AM

DIVISIONS

Receive Safety Training from a Safety Instructor

Receive a Tour of the Division

Listen to Various Division Speakers (highlighting traditional and non-traditional jobs)

Write Questions to Panel Speakers

GATEWAY

Participate in Transportation-Related Activity

Receive a Tour of the Department/Location

Listen to Various Department Speakers (highlighting traditional and non-traditional jobs)

Write Questions to Panel Speakers

9:30 - 10:15 AM

Panel Discussion in the MTA Boardroom, Gateway Building, 3rd floor

10:30 - 12:00 PM

TOURS – All tours begin/leave from the Gateway Building on the Plaza Level!

Gateway Plaza: Fire engine, CNG bus, Red Line Car, employee-owned cars and motorcycles

Metro Red Line: Ride from Union Station to Hollywood (featuring Metro Art)

Central Control Facility (CCF): Ride Red Line & Blue Line to CCF

Division 10: Ride to Division 10 for Building and Yard Tour

Bus Operations Control Center: Take elevator to 6th floor (Gateway Building)

MTA Library: Take elevator to 15th floor (Gateway Building)

12:00 - 1:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 - 2:30 PM

TOURS – All tours begin/leave from the Gateway Building on the Plaza Level!

Gateway Plaza: Fire engine, CNG bus, Red Line Car, employee-owned cars and motorcycles.

Metro Red Line: Ride from Union Station to Hollywood (featuring Metro Art)

Central Control Facility (CCF): Ride Red Line & Blue Line to CCF

Division 10: Ride to Division 10 for Building and Yard Tour

Bus Operations Control Center: Take elevator to 6th floor (Gateway Building)

MTA Library: Take elevator to 15th floor (Gateway Building)

2:30 - 3:00 PM

FREE Ice Cream Sundaes in the MTA Cafeteria, Gateway Building, 3rd floor

3:00 PM






ADJOURN

###

Take Our Sons to Work Day Scheduled Friday, July 23

(July 2) – What, another bunch of kids running around the MTA? Yes...but it's valuable to the MTA and to the next generation. It's the second "Take Our Sons to Work Day: A Summer Day at the MTA," scheduled Friday, July 23, from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Like the "Take our Daughters to Work Day" held April 22, Take our Sons will provide a rewarding experience for the young men who participate. And fun, too. Activities for the youngsters include:

-  Tours of the Metro Red Line, Bus Operations Control Center and the Central Control Facility.
-  Free MTA souvenirs.
-  Ice cream sundaes.
-  Classic car and motorcycle display.
-  LA City Fire Engine display.

"We are proud to be one of the first organizations to celebrate both Take Our Daughters and Take Our Sons to Work Day," says Cindy Shavers, administrative analyst in Human Resources Development and Training. "We believe all children should have an opportunity to gain exposure to the world of work and receive positive attention from adults."

For more information about Take Our Sons to Work Day, contact Marion Colston-Fayyaz at 922-2260 or Cindy Shavers at 922-2264 (e-mail: shaversc@mta.net).

###

Employees of the Month

[\(Click here to see photos of April Employees of the Month.\)](#)

Five people have been selected as MTA Employees of the Month for April. Congratulations to:

Matt Coats, a communications technician in Administration, who helps keep the MTA's computers and computer networks on-line. He recently worked more than 12 hours on his day off to help complete an exhibit for the Training and Development Department's Career Day 1999. As a result, attendees saw a superior exhibit. In his off-duty time, Coats built a computer network for the Compton Community center to provide Internet services to the community.

Paul Rankin, a warranty and equipment mechanic in Transit Operations, has worked on special projects for the past two years. He has made training aids for CNG engines and compiled a manual for the 72,000-mile CNG engine tune-up. During the recent MTA Career Day, Rankin helped with the Maintenance Instruction presentation and answered visitors' questions. He's now working on a parts and picture manual for a new diesel engine.

Michael Richmai, a transportation program planner in RTP&D, played an instrumental role in expediting the processing of \$227 million in state grants, allocation requests and fund transfer agreements for the Metro Red Line project during 1998. His work gave the MTA the fastest possible access to these funds. His accuracy and timeliness in processing the funds epitomizes the high standards Richmai sets to help the MTA be a more effective agency.

Jessica Smith, an accounting aide, and Nelson Silo, an accountant, are both in Finance. They recently developed a system to track state sales tax funds, TDA/STA and Proposition A and C disbursements. The information provided by the system has been a significant help in reconciling records. The data also is used by the Budget Department, project managers and auditors as the basis for making allocations decisions in future budgets.

Best wishes to April's Employees of the Month!

###

Why can't something be done to ensure that non-contract employees receive their full pay for every pay period? Because of our timesheet-input system, if an error is made, the system doesn't confirm the total number of hours in that pay period. I know I'm not the only person affected by this.

A. Good question. According to Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh, the input process has been reviewed by the heads of Accounting and Payroll and there appear to be some procedures lacking. He says the input process should be capable of catching input errors and he has taken action to improve the process.

###

MTA Amateur Radio Club to Meet Thursday

You are invited to attend the next meeting of the MTA Amateur Radio Club on Thursday, July 29, from noon to 1 p.m. in the Windsor Conference Room on the 15th floor of MTA headquarters. Bring your lunch and learn about all the opportunities that ham radio can present for fun, recreation, community service, camaraderie and emergency preparedness. For further information contact: Phil Gonzales, 922-7682; Mike Mockler, 922-3434 or Ralph G. Sbragia, 922-7369.

CALLING ALL 'CLASSIC' CARS: Enter your classic car, truck or motorcycle in the MTA's 5th Annual Car Show. The event is scheduled Saturday, July 24, during the MTA Bus Roadeo at Santa Anita Racetrack. Compete for awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, plus a "People's Choice" award. Registrations are due Wednesday, July 21. For information, call Lanny Hoel at 922-6641, Mark Lopez and Freddy Steger at 922-5779, Chris Franberg at 922-5750 or Carlos Rojas at 922-5160. (June 15)

Free Jazz Concert:

The MTA employee jazz band, Metromorphosis, will play "The Don't Cry for Me LACMTA Concert" from 12:10 p.m. until 1 p.m., Wednesday, July 14, in the Board Room. This is drummer Bruce Moore's final concert prior to leaving the MTA for newer venues. Other band members are Dennis Arnold,

soprano sax; Paul Burke, tenor sax; Mike Ortiz, bass and percussion, Robert Rainey, bass, Wynston Perry, electric piano; and Nick Stasinos, guitar. The session will feature guest vocalist Terry Davi

Retirement Lunch for Dave Sievers:

Join Dave's friends at the San Antonio Winery at 11 a.m., Thursday, July 15, for a retirement luncheon. Contribute toward a gift and buy your own lunch. For information, call Ann John, 922-7285, by July 13.

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