

**'Express Yourself'
Essay Contest Winner
Spends Time Saved
with His Daughter**

By GARY WOSK

(July 14) A panel of

**judges has declared a 48-
year-old Woodland Hills
father who "feels**

**compelled to write about subjects he feels strongly about" as
winner of the MTA's "Express Yourself and Win" essay contest. The
competition encouraged riders to explain how Metro Rail saves
them time.**



Rail Supervisor Barbara Service and Bus Operator Cora Hooks hoist the "Express Yourself" banner.

The contest was one element of an aggressive communications campaign to promote the June 24 grand opening of the Metro Rail extension from Hollywood to the San Fernando Valley. Nearly 1,000 entries were reviewed.

First-place essay writer Michael Guetzow, winner of a round trip for two on Southwest Airlines, wrote the following:

That special giggle

"There is somewhere, deep inside my 7-year-old daughter, Sarah, a special giggle and sweet smile she saves just for me. The time saved riding Metro Rail would allow me to play her games, read her books, or just enjoy her company, and find that special giggle she saves just for me."

Guetzow, a Chatsworth-based travel agent who promotes the benefits of Metro Rail when planning trips for his clients, is not sure where to book the family's vacation with the winning prize.

"Why would we want to go anywhere, now when we have a great subway?" he said.

The second place essayist, Deborah Newton of Los Angeles, will receive a \$250 shopping spree at Ralphps. She wrote:

"I've been trying to find the time to spend with my children because I work. On Metro Rail, we pretend we're on a sightseeing tour. I will take my children to the show, zoo or beach. And everywhere we go is in Metro Rail's reach. I will teach my children to travel responsibly when riding Metro Rail...and that we don't need a car because Metro Rail can take us anywhere near or far. Not only do I save time and money while on the run, riding on Metro Rail gives us time to have fun. "

Three tied for third

Three essayists tied for third place and will receive free travel on the Metro System for three months.

Paiwei Wei of Los Angeles wrote:

"Ever notice how people naturally daydream when they sit inside a subway train? The deadline-driven, caffeine world robs us of our personal time $\frac{3}{4}$ to tend to the gardens of our imaginations $\frac{3}{4}$ or to dream about playgrounds with puffy white clouds and fields of green. Far from the leashes of pagers, cell phones, e-mails, smog, gridlock, and road rage $\frac{3}{4}$ subways are the overlooked sanctuaries from the daily grind. Heck, it gets you there $\frac{3}{4}$ without stop signs, parking meters or a single red light. A fleeting moment to

daydream is a wonderful treat...even if it only lasts until the next station."

Christine Springett of Studio City wrote:

"Metro Rail is actually giving me back time that was previously lost sitting in my car."

And Paramount resident William Ochoa wrote:

"After living in the LA area for 36 years, for the first time I can see things I never knew existed."

Entry forms in English and Spanish were distributed on all Metro Buses and Metro Rail, beginning April 3. Southern California Rideshare distributed the forms to some 4,000 companies.

[Back to MTA Report](#)