

EDITOR'S NOTE: (June 20, 2001) Laurie Garris and Brent Zerger, both Public Arts Officers in Metro Art, volunteered as judges for this year's MTA Bus Rodeo. In this article, they describe their experiences at the Rodeo preliminary competition.



Volunteer judges develop a true appreciation of the art of bus operation from a unique perspective.
PHOTO BY BRENT ZERGER

...A Hoot and a Holler!

By LAURIE GARRIS and BRENT ZERGER

Being volunteer judges for the preliminary MTA Bus Rodeo competition was a hoot and a holler – a unique experience filled with swirling clouds of dust, crushed cones, and some daring near-misses.

As the drivers put their "horses" through the paces on the asphalt parking lot outside the Santa Anita Race Track, we judges expected to saddle up topside and swing our lassos while riding our thoroughbreds to victory.

See also:
[Operators, Maintenance Teams to Compete in Saturday's Bus Rodeo](#)

Instead, we were each given an event where we were paired with another seasoned judge, and a yard stick with which to measure the drivers' ability to come within inches of grazing and scraping the curb in a simulated passenger pick-up.

The demanding obstacle course included a serpentine maneuver, backing into a narrow channel, speeding through barrels, and avoiding running over strategically placed tennis balls. Participating bus operators steeled their nerves while focusing their skills on this highly competitive event.

While we groaned over each downed cone, we also cheered many impressive feats of seasoned driving know-how.

We also had an opportunity to chew the fat with many other MTA cowpokes, and came away with a better understanding of the challenges our bus operators face every day on the job.

Don't be surprised if this year's national Bus Rodeo champ comes from the Los Angeles MTA!

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