

Metro Report Archives

December 2002 Articles

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MTA Provides Counseling for Operators Involved in Accidents (Dec. 30, 2002) No Metro Bus or Metro Rail operator wants to be involved in an accident. But, accidents do occur, and when one does, it can be a traumatic event for all who are involved, especially the operator.

Catoe Reviews Progress and Challenges at All-staff Meeting (Dec. 20, 2002) - Decidedly upbeat despite the ominous warnings of potential state transportation funding cuts, Deputy CEO John Catoe called on staff to be "incredibly creative" in response to the challenge of FY 2003: More service in the face of a reduction in state funding.

Official Opening of Imperial Highway Overpass (Dec. 18, 2002) Officials from MTA and other public agencies marked the opening of an overpass near the Imperial/Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line at a ceremony, Monday.

Free Rides on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve (Dec. 17, 2002) MTA will offer free Metro Bus and Metro Rail rides on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve in a tradition established by the MTA Board to afford individuals a safe journey home and reduce traffic congestion around the holidays.

Board Approves Members of South Bay Governance Council (Dec. 12, 2002) The MTA Board approved the selection of seven individuals, Thursday, to serve on the governance council for the Metro South Bay service sector.

Vermont, South Broadway Metro Rapid Lines Debut Sunday (Dec. 11, 2002) MTA's successful Metro Rapid bus program is poised for a 24-line expansion that will be phased in beginning Sunday, Dec. 15, with the start of service on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway.

Three New Limited Metro Bus Lines Start Sunday (Dec. 11, 2002) In addition to two new Metro Rapid lines that begin operations Sunday, Dec. 15, MTA also will implement three new limited stop Metro Bus lines.

MTA Opens Bids for Valley's Metro Rapid Transitway (Dec. 6, 2002) The Metro Rapid Transitway – the east-west busway that will connect the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station and Warner Center in the San Fernando Valley – took an important step forward, Thursday.

MTA Eying 5 North-South Rapid Transit Corridors in Valley (Dec. 6, 2002) Following a series of community meetings and analysis, an MTA project team has narrowed the list of alternatives for a north-south high-capacity bus transit corridor in the San Fernando Valley from 13 to five.

MTA Community Relations Spreads the Rail Safety Message (Dec. 5, 2002) When members of MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety Outreach Program think of the Metro Gold Line, they are less concerned with its stations and rails than with the number of children who live along the new line and whether "Sly Fox" and "Birdie" still captivate the youngsters.

Extra Cars Added to Weekend Metro Blue and Red Line Trains (Dec. 5, 2002) As of Nov. 30, MTA has added extra cars to increase the weekend capacity of Metro Blue Line and Metro Red Line trains.

Division 8's Richard Brady Assists at Scene of Traffic Fatality (Dec. 4, 2002) A Metro Bus operator provided emergency assistance at the scene of a fatal traffic accident in West

Hills, Sunday morning, extinguishing a car fire and aiding the injured.

MTA, County DPW Win Award for Information Network (Dec. 4, 2002) MTA and the LA County Department of Public Works have won a prestigious award for creating an advanced traffic signal control program that promises to help relieve traffic congestion in large portions of the county.

Bulletin Board

- **It's a Wrap!** A Very MTA Holiday was had by All
 - West Valley Division 8 Wins Top Trophy in Bus Decorating Contest
 - Gateway Division 10 Launches Toy Drive for Children at USC County Hospital Cancer Ward
 - San Gabriel Valley Division 9's Generosity is Bounty for Local Food Drive
 - Venice Division 6 Fund Helps fill Santa's Bag in local "Toys for Tots" Campaign
 - West Hollywood Division 7's Holiday Party was a Family Affair
- **Deck the Holiday Metro Bus fa la la la la ... la la la la** - (Dec. 20, 2002) Students at Santa Monica Blvd. Elementary School prepare for the Holiday Bus Competition
- **North Los Angeles Division 3 Hosts Holiday Party for Community Families** (Dec. 18, 2002) Division Advisory Committee members from North Los Angeles Division 3 and volunteers hosted a Christmas party at Wilson High School, Saturday, to give presents to needy families close to their communities.
- **Night of Revelry at MTA's Holiday Magic** (Dec. 18, 2002) A record turnout of employees and their guests – 510 in all – attended MTA's annual holiday dinner dance.
- **LED Lights Help Train Operators See Signals Better** (Dec. 17, 2002) Metro Rail employees in the Wayside Systems Signal Department are evaluating high-tech signal lights they believe will be easier for train operators to see in most weather conditions.
- **MTA's Peter Liu Elected to Board of CAATS** (Dec. 17, 2002) Transportation Planning Manager Peter Liu has been elected a member of the board of California Alliance for Advanced Transportation Systems (CAATS).
- **MTA Gives 'Holiday Joy' to Jordan Mission's Skid Row Kids** (Dec. 13, 2002) It's been a tough year for the poor, the co-founder of the Fred Jordan Mission said Friday, but the generosity of MTA employees who donated toys, food, blankets and other gifts to the Mission's annual drive will be bring holiday joy to the kids on LA's Skid Row.
- **South Bay, Westside/Central GMs Meet Their Constituents** (Dec. 13, 2002) General managers from two service sectors with some of the region's heaviest traveled bus routes formally introduced themselves to their constituents this week.
- **Library to Host 'ID the Photo' Open House on Wednesday, Dec. 18** (Dec. 13, 2002) The Dorothy Peyton Gray Library and Archive wants to know about dozens of pictures in MTA's collection of historic photographs of Los Angeles transit and transportation workers.
- **ITS Director Oscar Quiroga Dies Following Battle With Cancer**
- **U.S. Department of Justice Honors MTA's Office of Inspector General**

- [Co-Workers Ask TOWP](#) Donations for Pam Murano during Cancer Treatment
- [BOCC Gets Into the](#) **Holiday Spirit of Giving** (Dec. 11, 2002) The employees in the Bus Operations Control Center are showing their holiday spirit by holding their third annual holiday food and toy drive for The Midnight Mission.
- [Deputies Respond with Force](#) in Metro Rail 'Hostage' Scenario
- [Central City Division 1](#) Honors Employee of the Month
- [Steel Canvas](#): Chatsworth Students Decorate Division 8 Holiday Bus
- [Wednesday](#): Holiday Craft Fair at Gateway
- [Use Discretion With](#) **Holiday Gifts from Contractors, Lobbyists** (Dec. 6, 2002) 'Tis the season to – among other festivities – receive gifts from family, friends, co-workers and associates. However, MTA's Ethics Department is offering a friendly reminder to employees to use discretion if accepting a gift from a lobbyist or contractor.
- **SLIDE SHOW** [Veterans Day Revisited](#): Metro San Gabriel Valley pays tribute to MTA employees who have served in the nation's armed forces.
- [West Valley Division 8's](#) **Operator Hits the Small Screen** (Dec. 5, 2002) Look for Metro Bus Operator Philip Ramirez alongside Hollywood star Kiefer Sutherland in an upcoming episode of the hit Fox television series, "24."
- [MTA's Phyllis Meng](#) Honored by Facility Management Group
- [Transit Golf Club's](#) **October Championship Tournament**

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MTA, County DPW Win Award for Information Network

(Dec. 4, 2002) MTA and the LA County Department of Public Works have won a prestigious award for creating an advanced traffic signal control program that promises to help relieve traffic congestion in large portions of the county.

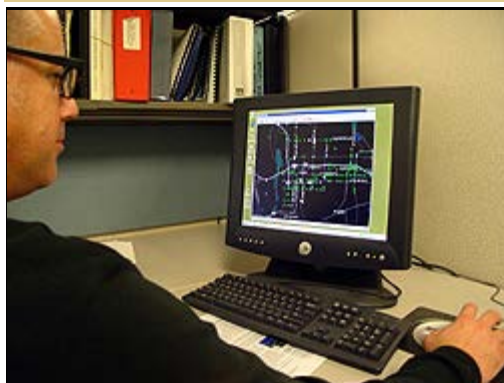
The California Alliance for Advanced Transportation Systems (CAATS) presented an "Award for Excellence" to the agencies for developing the Information Exchange Network (IEN).

IEN combines computer technology with traffic signal control systems and street-surface sensors that eventually will be placed along arterial roadways throughout the San Gabriel Valley, the South Bay and the Gateway Cities areas. The system will monitor the "real-time" flow and volume of traffic on these roadways.



IEN Crowd: Transportation Planning Manager Robert Yates, flanked by RTPD Director Renee Berlin and DEO Carol Inge, brings home top honors for development of an advanced traffic signal control program called the Information Exchange Network.

Project manager Robert Yates tracks street-surface sensors with IEN technology.



IEN also permits operators to respond to incidents and events they observe along those arterials, controlling traffic signals as necessary to alleviate traffic congestion. A pilot IEN system has been installed in Pasadena.

Robert Yates, MTA's project manager, says IEN will be integrated with a similar electronic traffic monitoring system called ATSAC, operated by LADOT. When IEN is completed, the two systems will provide traffic monitoring and control for most of LA County.

Other recipients of CAATS awards for excellence included Caltrans and LAX. CAATS is a non-profit corporation that strives to maintain California as a leader in development and use of intelligent transportation systems.

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Division 8's Richard Brady Assists at Scene of Traffic Fatality

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 4, 2002) A Metro Bus operator provided emergency assistance at the scene of a fatal traffic accident in West Hills, Sunday morning, extinguishing a car fire and aiding the injured.

An 86-year-old woman, a passenger in one of the cars, was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver, her 86-year-old husband, died later at a local hospital. The driver and passenger in the other car were listed in serious condition at a Northridge hospital.



Richard Brady, a 19-year MTA veteran Metro Bus operator, was first on the scene at a West Hills traffic fatality.

Operator Richard Brady, 52, a 19-year MTA veteran assigned to West Valley Division 8, was driving a Line 165 bus westbound on Vanowen Street approaching Berquist Avenue. Only one passenger was on board. Suddenly, a silver 2002 Cadillac pulled out of Berquist and crossed into the intersection in front of the bus.

Brady hit the brakes and the horn and managed to avoid the car, but a maroon Corvette driving parallel to the bus ploughed broadside into the Cadillac, spinning it out of control. The Corvette came to rest against a curb.

Scene of destruction

With a scene of destruction before him, Brady hit the priority radio switch to alert the Bus Operations Control Center. He yelled at a neighbor, who had come out of her house at the sound of the crash, to call 911.

Then, Brady ran to assist the people in the Cadillac. The airbags had deployed, but the driver – Stanley Dearborn – was only semi-conscious. His wife, Judy, lay beside him. The operator assured Dearborn that help was on the way.

Brady ran back to his bus radio to notify BOCC that, although MTA wasn't involved in the accident, help was needed. Then, he turned his attention to the people in the Corvette.

Smoke was pouring from the engine of the demolished car and both the driver and passenger, Walter Knuth, 39, and Cyris Maloo, 31, were badly injured. "The passenger was in worse shape and was still in the car, bleeding," says Brady.

Doused the fire

The operator retrieved a fire extinguisher from his bus and doused the fire. He contacted BOCC again to warn dispatchers that a detour would be needed on Vanowen.

Paramedic units arrived at the scene to treat and transport the accident victims. Brady gave a statement to the police and returned to Division 8.

The sudden tragedy shattered an otherwise uneventful Sunday morning for Brady.

"I was relaxed and, before I knew it, all hell broke loose," he says. "My first concern was to make sure the bus was secure and then to render assistance to any of those involved in the accident. Unfortunately, it didn't work out with two of the victims, but maybe I helped the other two."

After the events he had just participated in, Brady was released from duty for the rest of the day.

"The situation could have been difficult to deal with," he says, "but we have a good support crew here at Division 8."

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Does David Letterman Have Direct Deposit?

(Dec. 4, 2002) We don't know whether late-night talk show host David Letterman has direct deposit – with his millions he surely laughs all the way to the bank.

With a goal of signing up 100 percent of employees for direct deposit, MTA Payroll takes a cue from Letterman with this list of:

Top 10 Reasons to Use Direct Deposit

Number 10: Direct Deposit saves money for employees, companies, the government and society.

Number 9: It's convenient. You don't have to go to the bank to cash or deposit your check.

Number 8: It's safe. No more lost, stolen or misplaced checks. (Did you know that nearly 4 million paychecks are lost or stolen each year?)

Number 7: It's reliable. Your money will be available the morning of the payment, or sooner.

Number 6: You can get your paycheck even when you are on vacation or out sick – reassured that the checks you've written will clear.

Number 5: Direct Deposit is more confidential. From 3 to 9 people at a financial institution handle each check compared with 1 or 2 who handle a Direct Deposit transaction.

Number 4: There is more security and control with an electronic transaction.

Number 3: Major banks and credit unions waive account fees and minimum balances, offer free checking and free travelers checks, discounts on loans, thus creating additional savings.

Number 2: Financial planners recommend Direct Deposit as a way to start gaining control of your finances. You can have your paycheck deposited directly into as many as five Direct Deposit accounts, such as checking and savings accounts.

And Number 1: You may not win the Lotto, but you can achieve your dreams. This is a great way to set aside a small amount each payday for that dream cruise or tropical vacation that seems out of reach.

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Extra Cars Added to Weekend Metro Blue and Red Line Trains

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 5, 2002) As of Nov. 30, MTA has added extra cars to increase the weekend capacity of Metro Blue Line and Metro Red Line trains.

All Metro Blue Line trains that operate between 11:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekends will be equipped with three cars, instead of the mix of two and three cars that normally operated in that time period.

Two extra cars have been added to Metro Red Line trains operating between Union Station and Wilshire/Western between 9:30 a.m. and 8 p.m.

In addition to increasing capacity, the additional cars will permit easier boarding and alighting at busier stations.

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MTA Community Relations Spreads the Rail Safety Message

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 5, 2002) When members of MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety Outreach Program think of the Metro Gold Line, they are less concerned with its stations and rails than with the number of children who live along the new line and whether "Sly Fox" and "Birdie" still captivate the youngsters.

"Sly Fox" and "Birdie" star in one of several age-specific videos the Rail Safety Outreach group uses to reach its audience: the kindergarten to high school students who live along the Los Angeles to Pasadena alignment.

The Rail Safety Outreach group – from left, Assistant Community Relations Manager Joanne Longsdon, Communications Officer Carlos Valdez and Senior Community Relations Officer Barbara Burns – began making presentations Oct. 4.



PHOTO: BILL HEARD

The Rail Safety Outreach group – Assistant Community Relations Manager Joanne Longsdon, Senior Community Relations Officer Barbara Burns and Communications Officer Carlos Valdez – began making presentations Oct. 4.

The original plan was to address all the children affected by the Metro Gold Line before MTA begins pre-revenue operations early in 2003.

The group's work took on added urgency when Supervisor Gloria Molina required that all school children along the 13.7-mile alignment be safety trained before any testing begins.

32,000 students trained

To date, Rail Safety Outreach has completed 116 of 148 scheduled presentations to some 32,470 students at 31 of the 54 targeted schools. Having trouble visualizing 32,470 children? That number of children would fill more than two-thirds of Edison International Field in Anaheim.

Because the right of way has not been used since it was vacated by the Union Pacific in 1993, Rail Safety Outreach is concerned that many residents are unaware how to live safely with neighborhood trains.

"A whole generation has come and gone without rail traffic being on that right of way," Longsdon explains. "They're going to have to realize that neighborhood streets they take every day with Mom and Dad are going to be different beginning next summer."

Rail Safety Outreach Tips for Kids

- Two trains (not just one) may cross an intersection (you must look for both).
- Don't put anything on the rail; besides damaging the train, the train may project the object back at you at great speed.
- There are no sidewalks in a train tunnel or on a trestle.
- Don't jump the couplers between cars.
- Don't try to beat the train by driving around the gates.
- Don't stop for any reason on a rail.
- If your car stalls on the track, get out of your car immediately and run diagonally toward the oncoming train to avoid

Safety presenters attend a full day of intense training to become certified. They are required to practice what they have just learned and immediately address a group.

Each presenter's first presentation is videotaped and reviewed to pinpoint any areas requiring polish and to check that he or she hits the same key points.

Valdez recalls, "I was in denial," when he saw the video of his first presentation. "To begin with, I was very uncomfortable speaking with groups."

being hit by debris

- Don't run close to a passing train; the suction generated by the train can pull you under.
- A train extends 1.5 feet on each side of the tracks.

Speaks to large groups

Valdez specializes in presenting to groups of students from kindergarten through fifth grade $\frac{3}{4}$ some groups as large as 125 $\frac{3}{4}$ and presenting to English as a Second Language students of all ages.

Liz Armijo-Holbrook, a San Gabriel Valley service sector community relations officer, volunteered to be a presenter a year ago, when she worked in the Communications department.

"I'm surprised how specific the children can be," Armijo-Holbrook says. "They may challenge the facts or statistics you put out to them."

One class disputed her points by referring to things they had seen on television or movies. "The teacher stepped in at that point and reminded the students that television and movies are not real life."

"The one thing that seems to surprise them the most is how long it takes a train to stop," says Burns. "The P-2000 trains take 600 feet to stop. I've had a few gasps when I've given that number. With little kids I try to equate that with something in their lives: 'That would be running around your school six times.' "

"Kids are generally receptive to this kind of safety message," says Bill Moore, MTA's director of Quality Management and a safety volunteer. "Adults often rationalize how what you're saying doesn't relate to them."

Some kids hard to reach

"High school and middle school students are hard to reach," says Burns. "At that age they don't think of mortality. They feel somewhat invincible."

"I ask them to take the (safety) message home, to grandparents, uncles, aunts, parents who don't attend the training, to help keep their family safe," Burns adds. "I've been stressing this particularly with the English as a Second Language classes."

The Rail Safety Outreach Program reinforces its message by leaving reminders behind. One of the leave-behinds is a flyer describing a contest for each classroom.

"We ask them to either send an essay about what they learned or draw us a picture," says Longsdon, noting that the children can win small prizes for the best efforts. "When the essays and drawings come back, we can see they have retained our message."

Construction of the Pasadena Gold Line now nears its end, but MTA's effort to spread the word about safety along the tracks has no such finish line.

"It will never be done," Longsdon declares. "It's an ongoing effort. Long after I retire it will still be going on. It's something you can't stop. You have new generations coming along every day."

Note: At the November 19, 2002 Meeting of the Metro Gold Line Transition Committee, the safety team was commended by Chair, Supervisor Gloria Molina, and Committee Member and South Pasadena City Councilman David Saeta, for their efforts to reach over 30,000 students on the alignment in less than two months.

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MTA Transit Golf Club League Play by GEORGE PEREZ

Transit Golf Club's October Championship Tournament

(Dec. 5, 2002) The Champions Tournament at Camarillo Springs Golf Course was the last obstacle for the Transit Golf Club 2002 top tournament players.

This was not just another tournament for the Club's top three point winners in each flite. A victory this day would earn the title of Club Champion. The challenge would be against the golf course, and against the other top players in each flite that would be bringing out all the skills gathered during the year.

Of course, the rest of the field was ready to challenge the top three positions in a defiant way saying, "This is what will happen next year."

The First Tee Shot

Our first group was off the tee and the tournament was on. I made it a point to group the top players in each flite together. In this way each player knew exactly where he or she stood and what the others were doing.

When a shot was made, good or bad, the pressure mounted instantly. I was paired with the top three "A" players, which included Robert "Chi-Chi" Ramirez, MTA's Steve Mullaly and Michael Piotrowski.

Steve began the round like a "Pro" by getting birdies on the first two holes. This put the other two on the defensive. I could not help the joy I felt as I saw these three guys going at each other.

We finished the front nine and only Chi-Chi was close to Big Steve as Michael had a few bad holes that put him and the season in the third-place seat.

The "B" flite players in contention were, Anthony Rogers, Frank Cole, and Abdul Zohbi. I was not with these players but Mark Beauchamp advised me that the "B" Flite championship play was first class and very competitive. Anthony Rogers set the standard by shooting a blazing "38" in the front nine which nearly locked in a first place finish, unless Anthony fell apart or was somehow struck by lightning.

The "C" flite also had its high caliber of players competing for that honor of finishing in first place. The top three in "C" flite included Lorenzo Lopez, Corval Sattler and David Guyer. Jill Jourden had previously qualified for the "C" Flite championship but, unfortunately, had to withdraw and could not compete in this last and most important tournament. Nevertheless, Jill established the fact that she is a worthy competitor and we will all be on the look-out for her next year.

The End Results

The "A" flite Champion was MTA's own and always-ready-to-play Steve Mullaly, ending his golf round with a three-stroke lead. Second place went to "Chi-Chi" Ramirez, one of our LA County Sheriff's deputies, and third place went to Michael Piotrowski.

The "B" Flite was particularly tough this year with many players improving and going low during the year.

Anthony Rogers, by playing defensively on the back nine, held off the competition, and settled the "B" flite championship with a victory. Anthony took charge from the beginning, but ran into trouble on a couple of holes as often happens playing defense. Frank Cole finished a very respectable second place, and Abdul Zohbi did his best to land in third place.

David Guyer was the "C" flite Champion. David was a very steady player this year and his victory proved how determined he was to improve.

Lorenzo Lopez, made a statement this year as one of our most-improved golfers. As a new golfer, Lorenzo invested much time practicing and improving his all-round game. Corval Sattler, a long-time and valued club member, took third place and also showed big improvements in his game.

As usual, the Transit Golf Club selects a member who represents our best player, taking into consideration handicap and low gross scores.

At the end of the year, when the smoke had cleared, the club championship was a duel between last year's champion, Julio Palomo, and previous champion, Alan "Chick" Epstein. The results were that "Chick" was on his "A" game finishing the season with a round of 78. When the scores for the lowest seven rounds were averaged, "Chick" had the lowest scoring average, clearly the best player for 2002.

Camarillo was in great condition for this first annual championship round and we enjoyed every shot.

The Rewards

Our Club Champion and the Flite first-place winners will represent Transit Golf in the annual Public Links Golf Association (PLGA) "Champion of Champions" tournament in December. Our winners will compete against other champions and flite winners from other golf clubs. We wish our players the best rounds ever. Come home with trophies!

The Transit Golf Club motto is, "Everyone's a Winner in Transit Golf," so until we start next year's competition, keep 'em in the "Short Grass."

To obtain a 2003 TGC Application, contact Steve Mullaly at (213) 922-5159.

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West Valley Division 8's Operator Hits the Small Screen

By LISA HUYNH

(Dec. 5, 2002) Look for Metro Bus Operator Philip Ramirez alongside Hollywood star Kiefer Sutherland in an upcoming episode of the hit Fox television series, "24."

The show, which airs on Tuesdays, is a suspense drama series similar to the movie "Mission Impossible."



Metro Bus Operator Philip Ramirez was featured in "24," a hit television series on the FOX network.

Ramirez, who's assigned to West Valley Division 8, is featured in two episodes. The first, which aired three weeks ago, only shows the Metro Bus 7411. In the second episode, which has not yet aired, Ramirez is shown driving the bus and stopping to pick up Sutherland.

The scene was shot in Canoga Park in late September. It took at least six hours to shoot the scenes with Ramirez.

"The funny thing was that I wasn't nervous when we were shooting, but I was nervous waiting for my scene to air," says Ramirez.

He was chosen because of his personality and "stage presence." Ramirez is known as a sharp dresser by his coworkers.

Ramirez had no previous acting experience, but he says he would love to become an actor if he were given the opportunity.

"It was amazing and fun," says Ramirez. "It was like being in an amusement park. I would love to do it again."

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MTA's Phyllis Meng Honored by Facility Management Group

(Dec. 5, 2002) Phyllis Meng, a supervisor in General Services, has been named a Fellow of the International Facility Management Association.

A prestigious designation held by only a few members, the Fellowship was awarded to Meng for her past service to the organization during a recent conference in Toronto.

She has served as IFMA's west coast regional vice president, as president of the Los Angeles chapter and as chair of the IFMA Foundation, increasing its assets by 42 percent.

In 1998, Meng received IFMA's Distinguished Member Award. She received the Council Achievement Award for Public Sector Council in 1996 and the Distinguished Author Award of Excellence in 1995.

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Fellowship for Phyllis Meng

Use Discretion With Holiday Gifts from Contractors, Lobbyists

BY AMY HOWELL

(Dec. 6, 2002) 'Tis the season to – among other festivities – receive gifts from family, friends, co-workers and associates. However, MTA's Ethics Department is offering a friendly reminder to employees to use discretion if accepting a gift from a lobbyist or contractor.



Warren Morse, DEO of Marketing, signs over a gift basket to Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman, as required by MTA's Code of Conduct.

Section 15 of MTA's Code of Conduct states that employees are allowed to accept gifts from contractors as long as the amount does not exceed \$10 in a single month or up to \$50 in a calendar year.

Similarly, employees may accept gifts from lobbyists as long as the amount does not exceed \$10 in a single month or up to \$120 in a calendar year. Employees are not allowed to accept gifts of any amount from bidders or proposers.

"The public has to have confidence in their public servants that they are not making decisions that are biased based upon receipt of gifts from people they deal with," says Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman. "Employees have to act in the best interest of the agency."

Gorman cites cheese and fruit baskets, gourmet coffee and wine, mugs, clocks, crystal vases, folding chairs, leather jackets and other apparel, sporting event tickets and lava lamps as gifts employees have received in the past.

Turn in the gift

If an employee receives a gift from a contractor or lobbyist, he or she may return it to the giver, donate it to a charity without taking the tax deduction or turn it over to the Ethics Department.

If the employee chooses the latter, the gift will be donated to a local charity and the Ethics Department will notify the employee of what happened to it.

Employees may accept from contractors or lobbyists certain things that by law are not "gifts," such as informational materials, company-related calendars and books. Allowable gifts are outlined in Section 16 of MTA's Code of Conduct for Employees.

For more information on the agency's policy on gifts, allowable gifts and gifts from contractors and lobbyists, employees may refer to their "Code of Conduct for MTA Employees" booklet or to the Ethics Department's Intranet web page under the heading, "Codes" and "Employees."

"We're here to get the word out so people do the right thing," says Gorman.

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MTA Eying 5 North-South Rapid Transit Corridors in Valley

By ED SCANNELL

(Dec. 6, 2002) Following a series of community meetings and analysis, an MTA project team has narrowed the list of alternatives for a north-south high-capacity bus transit corridor in the San Fernando Valley from 13 to five.

When analysis is completed in early 2003, MTA will recommend one or more corridors to connect the north San Fernando Valley with the East-West Metro Rapid Transitway and with Metro Rapid service on Ventura Boulevard.

See metro.net report: [MTA Opens Bids for Valley's Metro Rapid Transitway](#)

The five potential north-south corridors that remain under study include the rail right-of-way adjacent to Canoga Avenue, Lankershim Boulevard, Reseda Boulevard, Sepulveda Boulevard, and Van Nuys Boulevard.

"High capacity north-south bus service will be a vital piece of the transportation system in the San Fernando Valley," says Countywide Planning Chief Jim de la Loza. "Metro Rapid service on Ventura Boulevard is hugely successful and we expect the east-west Metro Rapid transitway to draw large numbers of passengers, as well. A north-south corridor will be the right complement for these two lines."

In addition to public input, the study is factoring in employment density, population density, areas of high transit usage, land use condition and population under 15 and over 64.

The recommended project may incorporate such enhancements as enhanced bus stops with canopies, lighting, ticket machines, maps, "next trip" displays, transit signal priority, park and ride facilities, landscaping, and pedestrian and bike access improvements.

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MTA Opens Bids for Valley's Metro Rapid Transitway

- See metro.net report: [MTA Eying 5 North-South Rapid Transit Corridors in Valley](#)

(Dec. 6, 2002) The Metro Rapid Transitway – the east-west busway that will connect the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station and Warner Center in the San Fernando Valley – took an important step forward, Thursday.

With some 60 people in attendance, MTA Senior Contract Administrator Robert Sechler opened two bids for design and construction of the Transitway. The MTA estimate for the 14-mile project was between the high bid and the low bid.

MTA plans to award the construction contract later this month and issue a Notice to Proceed with construction of the project by mid-January, 2003. The Transitway is expected to open for service in spring, 2005.

Although Project Manager Roger Dames emphasizes that the bids have not yet been analyzed for responsiveness and responsibility, the apparent low bidder for the design-build project is Shimmick-Obayashi Joint Venture. The only other bidder was Granite-Brutoco Joint Venture. Both bidders already had passed the technical qualifications step in the two-step procurement process.

"These are preliminary numbers," Dames said. "We'll have to evaluate a lot of other documents that were submitted with the bids." Those include documents pertaining to MTA's disadvantaged business enterprise goals and subcontractor qualifications.

Shimmick-Obayashi submitted a bid of \$153.45 million if MTA provides project insurance and \$154.45 million if the joint venture provides it. Granite-Brutoco submitted bids of \$198.85 million with owner's insurance and \$199.96 million if the joint venture provides insurance.

MTA's estimate for construction of the project is \$169.15 million if the agency provides insurance and \$170.8 million if the construction firm provides insurance.

Under MTA's plan, the successful bidder will develop a final design based on the agency's requirements and then will carry out construction of the project. This increasingly popular design-build approach is expected to be applied to other major MTA projects over the next few years.

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Senior Contract Administrator Robert Sechler announces the bids for construction of the Metro Rapid Transitway as Contract Administrator Bonnie Borchardt posts them for the audience.

Central City Division 1 Honors Employee of the Month

By DANIELLE GROSSMAN

(Dec. 10, 2002) Metro Bus operator Shonda Breland received the Employee of the Month award, recently, during Operator Appreciation Day at Central City Division 1.

"I am honoring Shonda for her numerous customer accommodations," said Division Transportation Manager Sonja Owens. "For assisting me in boosting morale, and for just doing things around the division, even if she's not asked."

"I'm shocked," said Breland. "I never expected to get one. But to get one is cool."

Operator Appreciation Day, a luncheon provided by the division management team, was held, Dec. 3, to thank bus operators for their hard work.

"We finally made Number One in the system in terms of on-time performance, lowering accidents and lowering Worker's Compensation cases," said Owens.

Owens says that thanking the employees is important "because, if it were not for the operators, we would not be Number One for October, and we would not be doing as well as we're doing. I have to give back to them."

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PHOTOS: DANIELLE GROSSMAN



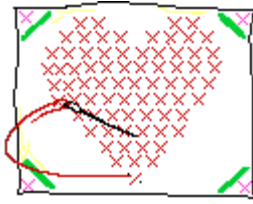
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Central City Division 1 celebrated Operator Appreciation Day with a luncheon provided by the division management team.



Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens presents Shonda Breland with a plaque, honoring her as Employee of the Month.

Handicrafts for Sale Wednesday at MTA Holiday Craft Fair



(Dec. 10) Do a little holiday shopping and support an MTA crafts maker at the Holiday Craft Fair, scheduled for Wednesday.

The fair will be held in the third-floor lobby at Headquarters from 9:30 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Featured crafts on sale by exhibitors include crocheted items, holiday wreaths, toys, jewelry and pottery.

The crafts fairs showcase employees' talents and make holiday shopping a little easier, noted coordinator Donna Deverell.

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Chatsworth High School students are hard at work decorating a Division 8 bus for MTA's Holiday Bus Decorating contest. >

Steel Canvas: Chatsworth Students Decorate Division 8 Holiday Bus

By ERIC RAPP

(Dec 10, 2002) Some San Fernando Valley teenagers are putting paint to bus, but not to deface it – they're decorating a Metro Bus for the holidays.



PHOTO: ERIC RAPP

About 90 students from the 12th grade Humanitas class at Chatsworth High School are participating in MTA's annual Holiday Bus Decorating contest.

Each morning for the past week or so, about 20 students at a time have come to Division 8 and helped paint and decorate the bus.

Teacher Kathie Donner says her students have participated each year for the past four years. In addition to painting the bus, the students also are holding a canned food and toy drive.

"Once the bus is completely decorated, we'll use it to deliver the food and toys to needy families throughout the community," says Donner.

For the students, it's a chance to have some fun and let their creativity flow. And most of them are planning to go to Gateway Plaza on Dec. 20th for the judging of the Holiday buses.

Even though the Division 8 bus will be facing stiff competition from every other MTA operating division, the students are confident their design will prevail.

"I think we'll win," said student Cristina Cameron.

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Deputies Respond with Force in Metro Rail 'Hostage' Scenario

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 10, 2002) "Keep your hands! Keep your hands up!" Holding their pistols in a combat grip, a pair of Sheriff's deputies stalks down the aisle of a Metro Blue Line train, concentrating on a "suspect" crouched in the shadows of the darkened car.

At the other end of the car crouches Metro Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Hector Gutierrez, playing the "suspect" in this hostage takeover exercise. In the seats between, employees playing "hostages" try to stay out of the line of fire.

Three times the morning of Dec. 4, groups of deputies ran through a "tactical training drill" staged in a train storage shed at Metro Blue Line Division 11. Following each event, they gathered to critique their methods and listen to ideas from exercise observers.

"It's preparation," said Division Manager Duane Martin. "Our law enforcement people, our supervisors, controllers and train operators must be prepared for a worst-case scenario. Responding police agencies should be able to handle a situation as efficiently and safely as possible."

For the drill, the deputies switched the barrels of their pistols to a configuration that would accommodate paint ball shells. They, along with the "suspects" and "passengers," wore special masks to protect their faces and eyes. Good thing, too, because a number of "shots" were fired and participants were splattered with paint.

Realistic as possible

"We've made this exercise as realistic as possible," said Sheriff's Lt. Mike Parker. "In reality, it would be a few deputy sheriffs having to deal with something like this within a few minutes of it's happening."

Officers would face a number of difficulties in handling such a situation, Parker explained, including the confined space of a subway tunnel or the open space around a light-rail train,

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



approaching and boarding a train from ground level, and preventing injuries to patrons.

Unknowns in such a situation include the number of passengers aboard the train, the number of suspects, whether they're armed and with what types of weapons, as well as their ultimate intentions.

Parker advises those involved to "be a good witness. The better the understanding we have of the situation, the better the description we have of the suspects and the weapons, the better the job we can do."

Martin notes that the operator would be the most important source of information for officers faced with handling a hostage takeover or other emergency situation aboard a train.

"Time is on our side in many circumstances," said Parker. "But, once someone fires a weapon, time is no longer on our side and we have to go in aggressively. For the deputies, it is one of the most dangerous things we would have to do."

Like other rail operators, MTA is required by the California Public Utilities Commission to conduct various types of emergency drills each year. A drill is scheduled, Wednesday, on the Metro Gold Line and others will be conducted in the months to come.

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BOCC Gets Into the Holiday Spirit of Giving

By JENNIFER YEHL

(Dec. 11, 2002) The employees in the Bus Operations Control Center are showing their holiday spirit by holding their third annual holiday food and toy drive for The Midnight Mission.

The Midnight Mission is a homeless shelter on Skid Row that helps needy families get back on their feet as well as provide them food, shelter, clothing and health care.

The donation barrels for the food and toy drive were put out following the Thanksgiving Holiday.

"Every year our holiday food and toy drive has gotten more and more successful," says BOCC manager Ellis Kyles, the man responsible for the effort. "This year we have collaborated with everyone in the Westside/Central sector in hopes of a larger turnout."

So far, most of the donations have been food, canned goods, and non-perishable packaged items.

"We are not trying to compete with the other holiday efforts in the building," says Kyles. "We don't get contributions from everyone, but whatever we receive we're am grateful for because we know whoever receives the donation will be grateful, too."

The Midnight Mission serves about 2,500 to 3,000 needy guests on Christmas Day.

"We felt that that we would be able to contribute more with getting everyone in the department involved than just doing this individually," he says. "It's nice to just doing something for someone else for the holidays."

The drive will last though Dec. 12. For anyone that would like Information about the holiday collection, contact Ellis Kyles (213) 922-4629.

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Holiday Spirit - Manpower Planning Transit Operations Supervisor James Woodson, left, and BOCC Manager Ellis Kyles collect gifts for BOCC's third annual holiday drive for the Midnight Mission.

Three New Limited Metro Bus Lines Start Sunday

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 11, 2002) In addition to two new Metro Rapid lines that begin operations Sunday, Dec. 15, MTA also will implement three new limited stop Metro Bus lines.

More! See ["Vermont, South Broadway Metro Rapid Lines Debut Sunday"](#)

"The creation of five bus service sectors earlier this year has brought about needed changes in our bus system to reflect what the community transportation needs are," said CEO Roger Snoble.

The three new limited stop Metro Bus lines are Line 370 (Garvey Ave.), operating peak hours on weekdays between El Monte and Atlantic Avenue; Line 380 (Hollywood Blvd./Colorado Blvd.), providing weekday peak hour service between Vermont and Lake Avenue; and Line 381 (Figueroa Street), operating between Century Boulevard and York Boulevard.

MTA for the first time also will operate existing limited Metro Bus Line 333 (Venice Blvd.), on Saturdays between Santa Monica and downtown Los Angeles.

Other service improvements include shuttle service in downtown LA and new morning, afternoon and midday service on 17 Metro Bus lines.

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Vermont, South Broadway Metro Rapid Lines Debut Sunday

By ED SCANNELL

(Dec. 11, 2002) MTA's successful Metro Rapid bus program is poised for a 24-line expansion that will be phased in beginning Sunday, Dec. 15, with the start of service on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway.

The 11.9-mile Vermont Metro Rapid Line 754 will operate between the Metro Red Line Vermont/Sunset Station and the Metro Green Line. The 10.5-mile South Broadway Metro Rapid Line 745 will operate on South Broadway between Union Station and the Metro Green Line.

"Metro Rapid has been a huge success story in Los Angeles and has generated considerable interest from other large cities that are trying to grapple with congestion," Mayor James Hahn said at a Wednesday morning news conference.

"These new Metro Rapid lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway will take a large bite out of the daily commute time of thousands of bus passengers," he added. "I'm confident that once again Metro Rapid will attract many new riders to the system."

Rides on the two new lines on Dec. 15 and 16 will be free.

24-line expansion

The new lines are part of a 24-line expansion of the Metro Rapid system that will be completed by 2008. They will complement the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier and 16-mile Ventura Metro Rapid lines which began service in June 2000.

The Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720 currently has average weekday boardings of 45,000. Average weekday boardings on Ventura Metro Rapid Line 750 are 9,000.

"Metro Rapid is one of the most effective tools in our mobility tool box and an innovative way to transport our customers to jobs, medical facilities and places of recreation quickly and safely," said CEO Roger Snoble. "It has demonstrated that when transit makes sense, people will ride it."

MTA and LADOT anticipate that Metro Rapid service on Vermont and South Broadway will result in a 20-25 percent improvement in travel time over current service.

"LADOT is very pleased to be a partner with MTA in a project that is moving thousands of people quickly and efficiently" said LADOT General Manager Wayne Tanda. "We're looking forward to building the remaining 22 Metro Rapid expansion lines, which will greatly improve mobility in Los Angeles."

Five-year plan

More! See: ["Three New Limited Metro Bus Lines Start Sunday"](#)

PHOTO: DANIELLE GROSSMAN



Mayor James Hahn inaugurated the new Metro Rapid service on Vermont Avenue at a Wednesday morning news conference. Below, the Mayor arrives on Metro Rapid.



PHOTO: DANIELLE BOUTIER

In addition to Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, the corridors selected for the five-year Metro Rapid expansion plan include Florence, Van Nuys, Soto, Crenshaw-Rossmore, Pico, Santa Monica, Hawthorne and Long Beach Ave.

Also, Hollywood-Fairfax-Pasadena, Western, Beverly, Vernon-La Cienega, Atlantic, Central, San Fernando-Lankershim, West Olympic, Garvey-Chavez, Manchester, San Fernando (south), Sepulveda (south), Torrance-Long Beach and Lincoln.

Total one-time capital costs for implementing the expansion are estimated at \$110.5 million which will be used to construct 24 corridors with 356 miles of bus signal priority in 34 cities and 11 Los Angeles County unincorporated communities and to construct 779 Metro Rapid stations, all with "next trip" displays.

The Metro Rapid bus program was recently selected as a semifinalist in Harvard University's 2002 Innovation in American Government Awards. Sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the awards recognize outstanding examples of creative problem solving in the public sector.

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U.S. Department of Justice Honors MTA's Office of the Inspector General for Integrity, Commitment, and Outstanding Service



PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

Pictured, from left, Interim Inspector General Bill Waters, Mimi Strauss, acting Deputy Inspector General, Investigations; Linda Royster, Investigations Analyst, and John Gricus, Senior Special Agent.

(Dec. 12, 2002) - Three members of MTA's Office of Inspector General accepted awards for distinguished service and outstanding achievement in law enforcement during the United States Attorney's Office annual recognition awards ceremony, Dec. 6, at Parker Center. They are Mimi Strauss, acting Deputy Inspector General, Investigations; John Gricus, Senior Special Agent, and Linda Royster, Investigations Analyst 6.

"This is the first time the MTA's Office of Inspector General has received the award," said Interim Inspector General Bill Waters. "It means that MTA is a big part of the law enforcement that is saying 'No!' to crime in America."

"The honor is an historic landmark for OIG," said Strauss. "OIG staff members received this award alongside a host of other distinguished law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Internal Revenue Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration and numerous police and sheriff's departments from throughout the region."

The MTA team was honored by the United States Department of Justice for outstanding efforts as part of a multi-agency task force investigating political corruption.

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ITS Director Oscar Quiroga Died Following Battle With Cancer

(Dec. 12, 2002) Oscar Quiroga, former assistant director of Information Technology Services, died at home, Dec. 10, following a long battle with cancer. He was 54.

Services are scheduled at 11 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 14, at Calvary Chapel Montebello, 931 S. Maple Ave., Montbello. Burial will be at Forest Lawn Cemetery, Covina.



Oscar Quiroga
1949-2002

An MTA employee since May, 1986, Quiroga was responsible for network engineering, network administration, telephone administration and the ITS Help Desk. He is survived by his wife, Arlene, an employment services clerk in MTA Human Resources, a son and daughter by a previous marriage.

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Board Approves Members of South Bay Governance Council

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 12, 2002) The MTA Board approved the selection of seven individuals, Thursday, to serve on the governance council for the Metro South Bay service sector.

The seven were nominated by various cities within the South Bay service sector and approved in November by the South Bay Cities Council of Governments.

"MTA remains committed to improving the overall operation of our bus service," said MTA Board Chairman Hal Bernson. "The creation of community-based governance councils will provide the direction needed to provide quality service to our customers."

Members of the new Metro South Bay governance council are Curren Price, Inglewood city councilman; John McTaggart, Rancho Palos Verdes city councilman and mayor; Jim Hendrickson, city manager, Palos Verdes Estates and Teresa Price, Redondo Beach transit manager.

Also approved by the Board were, Lou Mitchell, president of Watts ACORN, a nonprofit community group; Margaret Hudson, member of the Carson Public Safety Commission; and Howard Sachar, a member of MTA's Citizens Advisory Committee.

The MTA Board earlier this year approved the creation of individual governance councils of up to nine members to provide local control over the service sectors.

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Co-Workers Ask TOWP Donations for Pam Murano during Cancer Treatment

By PAM ENGELKE

(Dec. 12, 2002) Co-workers of Pam Murano, Corporate Safety special investigations manager, are asking employees to donate TOWP hours to help during her battle against cancer.



Pam Murano

Murano was diagnosed with cancer in mid-July and underwent chemotherapy, having to leave work in August.

She underwent extensive surgery last month and will undergo another chemo round shortly after healing from her surgery.

Murano is upbeat and anticipates a return to her position at MTA in March. Meanwhile, her TOWP account is running low.

Murano asks employees who plan to donate TOWP hours to give no more than eight hours each, adding that donors should also make sure they have enough TOWP hours for their own "rainy day" fund.

To make a TOWP donation to Murano, contact Pam Engelke, manager, Occupational Health and Safety, at 922-4249.

[Human Resources Policy HR 7-2](#) (Time Off With Pay), Paragraph 1.6, describes donation of TOWP hours. The policy also provides a link to a Request and Authorization Form that can be printed out and completed by the donor. Forms may be sent to Engelke at Mail Stop 99-10-8.

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2002 Holiday Gift Drive



Gift Drive coordinator Bessie Rush-Johnson, center, is joined by CEO Roger Snoble and Fred Jordan Mission co-founder Willie Jordan. Children from MTA's Child Care Center, pictured here, also contributed gifts for the Skid Row kids.

MTA Gives 'Holiday Joy' to Jordan Mission's Skid Row Kids

(Dec. 13, 2002) It's been a tough year for the poor, the co-founder of the Fred Jordan Mission said Friday, but the generosity of MTA employees who donated toys, food, blankets and other gifts to the Mission's annual drive will bring holiday joy to the kids on LA's Skid Row.

The economy also held down the number of gifts collected through MTA's Gift Giving Drive, this year, but Willie Jordan thanked Gift Drive coordinator Bessie Rush-Johnson and her volunteers, adding that the Mission is "so grateful to all MTA employees for these wonderful toys."



CEO Roger Snoble, who helped load the gifts into waiting Metro Buses for transport to the Mission, said, "The gifts our employees have put together

will help many families that otherwise might not have a joyous holiday."

As Snoble and Jordan spoke, children from MTA's Child Care Center gathered around Santa Claus and a huge pile of plastic bags, stuffed with gifts, crowded the Headquarters entrance.

"MTA probably conducts our best toy drive," said Jordan, noting that other major donors have dropped out during the past year as stores closed and operations changed.

On Dec. 22, the Fred Jordan Mission will host a holiday party for 12,000 and 15,000 children and their mothers. The gifts contributed by MTA employees will be distributed to the kids at that event.

"MTA gives quality toys," Jordan said. "We like each child to have one nice toy along with two or three smaller toys. MTA is really the backbone of nice toys for the toy drive."

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South Bay, Westside/Central GMs Meet Their Constituents



GM Tracy Daly is joined by MTA Board Member Paul Hudson at LACMA reception.



GM Dana Coffey, right, greets city officials and civic leaders from the South Bay region.

(Dec. 13, 2002) General managers from two service sectors with some of the region's heaviest traveled bus routes formally introduced themselves to their constituents this week.

General Manager Dana Coffey greeted representatives from cities in the South Bay sector at a luncheon at the Carson Community Center. General Manager Tracy Daly held a reception for representatives of Westside/Central cities at the LA County Museum of Art.

Also attending the events were representatives of local, county, state and congressional officials, civic groups and employee unions.

Introduced by CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe, the general managers outlined their priorities for providing safe, efficient transit service to the communities in their service sectors.



As the GM responsible for Operations Central Instruction, Coffey emphasized employee training. OCI expects to start training operators sometime next year using a driving simulator that will replicate driving conditions and emergency situations.

Above, CEO Roger Snoble talks with City of Carson City Manager Jerome Grooms at the Carson reception hosted by GM Dana Coffey. Below, Deputy CEO John Catoe and West Hollywood Division Transportation Manager Ron Reedy enjoy the reception at LACMA hosted by GM Tracy Daly.

"With today's technology, it's crucial that our employees are trained to do the job at the best level they can," Coffey said.

"We want to continue to build high-performing team that will provide better service."

Preventing accidents will be "a top priority in keeping our employees and passengers safe and increasing the mobility of traffic," Daly said. "A bus accident on the Westside affects a lot more than the passengers on board."



The Westside/Central sector already is responding to transit needs adding bus trips to better serve patrons.

"In good and bad economic times, transit and transportation are critical," Daly said. "Transit is more than transportation. Transit is education; transit is jobs; transit is people caring about other people."

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Free Rides on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 17.2002) MTA will offer free Metro Bus and Metro Rail rides on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve in a tradition established by the MTA Board to afford individuals a safe journey home and reduce traffic congestion around the holidays.

Patrons may ride for free from 9 p.m. until closing on the Metro Rail system, and from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. on the Metro Bus system. The free rides will be given on both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Metro Rail and Metro Bus systems will operate on a Sunday schedule Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Brochures detailing the free ride program will be on all Metro buses and on Metro Rail trains.

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LED Lights Help Train Operators See Signals Better

By LISA HUYNH

(Dec. 17, 2002) Metro Rail employees in the Wayside Systems Signal Department are evaluating high-tech signal lights they believe will be easier for train operators to see in most weather conditions.

As a pilot project, the signal team has converted several signal lights on the Metro Blue Line from incandescent to Light Emitting Diode (LED).

LED signals were installed on the arrival and departure track at the main train yard in Long Beach and at the Pico station. The signal team also installed LED lights on the pedestrian crossing at the Imperial/Rosa Parks station.

One of the many advantages of using LED is that it does not generate as much heat as incandescent lights. LED lights also consume less power, but provide a brighter light.

100,000-hour life span

Because LED lights have a life of at least 100,000 hours, signal inspectors will spend less time replacing bulbs and will have more time for maintenance and testing.

The extended life also means inspectors can spend less time working in hazardous areas along the rail right-of-way during revenue operating hours.

"The LED lights can last for at least ten years," says Robert Chappell, director of Maintenance of Way/Communications. "The incandescent lights have to be replaced at least once a year."

LED lights are bright, clear and have strong visibility in almost all weather conditions. This is significant because it's difficult for the train operator to see the color of the signal when the sun shines behind the signal or directly on the lights.

LED lights are brighter

"The operators love them," says Rail Division Transportation Manager Duane Martin. "They are brighter and can be seen farther in the distance, as well as, when bright sunlight shines on them."

The signal department receives many reports of dim or dark signals caused by the reflection of the evening sun. These calls often are the



Metro Rail employee Aderemy Omotayo makes a quick inspection before putting the finishing touches on the signals.



Employees in the Wayside Signal Department have successfully changed a signal from incandescent to LED at the train yard in Long Beach.

cause of unnecessary train delays.

LED lights are currently used in street intersection lights, for automobile lights and for other uses. A California Public Utilities Commission order also allows their use on at-grade railroad crossings.

Once LED is approved by the MTA Board, all the Metro Blue Line wayside signals will be replaced within a few months.

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MTA's Peter Liu Elected to Board of CAATS

(Dec. 17, 2002) Transportation Planning Manager Peter Liu has been elected a member of the board of California Alliance for Advanced Transportation Systems (CAATS).

Liu, who joined MTA in 1993, begins his tenure as a CAATS board member Jan. 1. As a board member, he will be one of 20 executives who will develop strategic plans, programs and services, and form partnerships to sponsor the use of advanced transportation systems.



Peter Liu

CAATS members represent public agencies and private companies that work to foster development and use of intelligent transportation systems in California.

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Holiday Magic 2002 - A Night to Remember



Balloons decorated the dining room at the dinner dance.



The dinner dance committee takes a bow.



Guests checked in at the dinner dance reception table.



Partygoers line up to view a mountain of raffle prizes.

Night of Revelry at 7th Annual Holiday Magic

(Dec. 18, 2002) A record turnout of employees and their guests – 510 in all – attended the 7th annual Holiday Magic, MTA's annual holiday dinner dance.

"There were a lot of new people and they were all excited," says Employee Activities Manager Diane Delaney-Talton. "We made an effort to bring in more division employees."

Held in the Pacific Ballroom of the Wilshire Grand Hotel, Holiday Magic offered a night of revelry – a Monte Carlo room for those who follow Lady Luck, a raffle for a table full of great prizes, dancing, music and a delicious meal. -- *Bill Heard*



Deputy CEO John Catoe welcomes employees to the annual holiday dinner dance.

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



MTA Security Lt. Keith Bowlin and his wife, Renita, pose for a photo in their holiday finery.



'Round and 'round she goes!



"I'm sticking!"



"Place your bets, ladies and gentlemen!"

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Metro Bus Operator Guillermo Rosales is Santa Claus in Christmas play staged by North Los Angeles Division at Wilson High School Dec. 14.

North Los Angeles Division 3 Hosts Holiday Party for Community Families

By LISA HUYNH

PLUS! [Metro Bus stars in 58th Annual Northeast Los Angeles Parade](#)

(Dec. 18, 2002) There’s nothing like kicking off the holidays with a party – especially when it’s solely dedicated to less-fortunate children.

Division Advisory Committee members from North Los Angeles Division 3 and volunteers hosted a Christmas party at Wilson High School, Saturday, to give presents to needy families close to their communities.

Metro Bus Operator Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell, who is co-chair of DAC, used her own money to buy food, drinks, wrapping paper, ornaments and decorations for the party. Manny and Lisa Haro also pitched to buy the food.

Alvarez-Mitchell and other DAC members – Rosalia Medina, Manny Haro, and Gabriel Jimenez – spent hours wrapping presents and decorating for the party.

Other volunteers included: Angela Jones, Margaret Tucker, Edith Villa-Nueva, Art Alva, Louis Peralta, Tammy Beymer-Thomas, Pauline Sigala, Lindley Anparano, Rudy Lagunas, Darryl Babcock, Mary Chavez, Terrie Navarette, Albert Tenchavez, Christine Ramirez, Joey Hernandez

PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH

Division Advisory Committee members from North Los Angeles Division 3 and volunteers hosted a Christmas party at Wilson High School, Saturday, to give presents to needy families close to their communities.

From left, Assistant Transportation Manager Don Karlson, Rosalia Medina, Manny Haro, Pauline Sigala, Gabriel Jimenez, Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell and General Manager Jack Gabig.

and Denise Garcia.

The DAC members collected more than \$2,700 since July by selling raffle tickets. They bought enough toys for 45 families who live in Highland Park, Cypress Park and Monte Vista.



The children wait patiently to open the presents while all the gifts are distributed to each family.

The needy families were chosen through the help of the Aragon, Mountain View, Griffin, Monte Vista and Huntington elementary schools.

“I’m excited because we’ll be getting presents and I get to enjoy the party,” says 11-year-old Gamaliel Ramirez.

Although only 38 families attended the event, Alvarez-Mitchell says that she’s proud of the group’s efforts to making the event successful.

“I love seeing the smiles on the children’s faces,” she says. “I would love to do it again next year.”

DAC members and volunteers were so busy preparing for the party, they had no idea that the San Gabriel Valley Sector would recognize them for their hard work and dedication.

General Manager Jack Gabig presented each DAC member a certificate of recognition.

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Metro Bus stars in 58th Annual Northeast Los Angeles Parade

PHOTOS BY HELEN ORTIZ

The DAC members also participated in the 58th annual Northeast Los Angeles Parade, Dec.1, at the invitation of Council Member Ed Reyes. To get into the holiday spirit, the DAC members decorated a Metro Bus. Local Brownie troop 783 also participated in the two-mile long parade.



From left, Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Daniel Armijo, Helen Ortiz, Rosalia Medina, Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell and Gabriel Jimenez. Below, Rosalia Medina, Oscar Rodriguez, Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell and Brownie troop 783 were among the many participants of the Northeast Los Angeles parade.



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Officials from MTA and other public agencies marked the opening of an overpass near the Imperial/Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line at a ceremony, Monday.



Among the officials at the opening of the Imperial Highway overpass were LADOT General Manager Wayne Tanda, third from left, James Okazaki of LADOT (back row), MTA Board Chair Hal Bernson (center), Supervisor Yvonne Burke, LA City Council Member Janice Hahn and Deputy CEO John Catoe (back row, right). PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH

Imperial Highway Overpass Opens

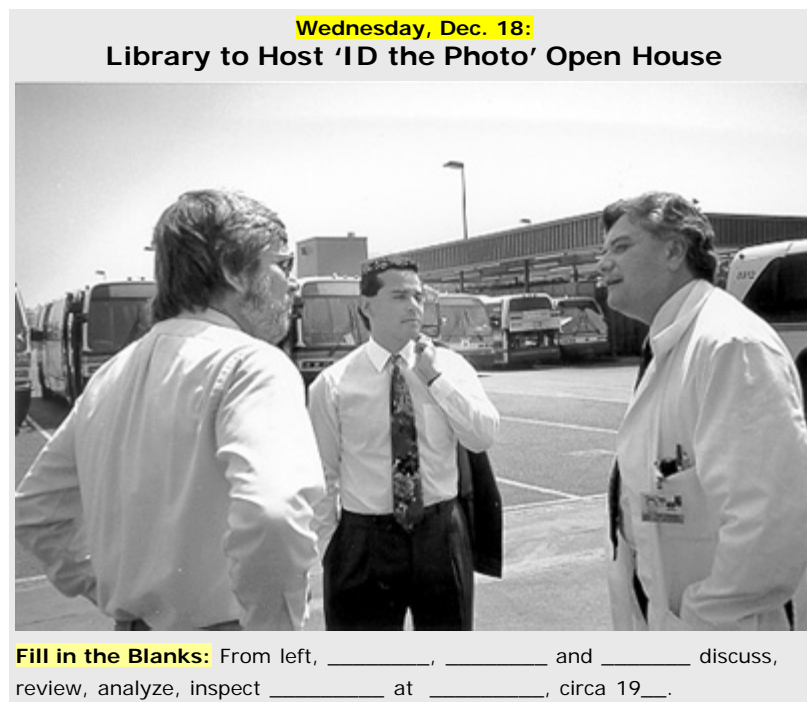
By LISA HUYNH

(Dec. 18, 2002) Officials from MTA and other public agencies marked the opening of an overpass near the Imperial/Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line at a ceremony, Monday.

The 2,000-foot long bridge will lift Imperial Highway traffic over Wilmington Avenue and the Metro Blue Line and Union Pacific tracks. The \$20-million bridge will relieve traffic congestion and improve safety at railroad crossings.

The bridge features a northbound Wilmington Avenue on-ramp to eastbound Imperial Highway and a westbound Imperial Highway off-ramp to southbound Wilmington Avenue.

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Identify THIS.

Have you ever looked at a picture in your family's old photo album and wondered, "Who the heck is that?"

Well, that's what the Dorothy Peyton Gray Library and Archive wants to know about dozens of pictures in MTA's collection of historic photographs of Los Angeles transit and transportation workers.

The Library will conduct an "ID the Photo" open house on Wednesday, Dec. 18, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Library is located on the 15th floor.

Many photographs donated to the Library have no identification or information associated with the people, places, events, and equipment depicted.

Librarian Matt Barrett is asking current and retired employees to help the Library "fill in the blanks" in preparation for a future digital archive, as well as for MTA's Museum project.

Barrett encourages employees to stop by the open house to enjoy refreshments, check out the reconfigured library space and help with photo identification.

Additional "ID the Photo" events will be scheduled in the Library and at other MTA locations in the near future.

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Deputy CEO John Catoe addresses budget cuts at all-staff meeting Dec. 18.

Catoe Reviews Progress, New Challenges at All-staff Meeting

By GAYLE ANDERSON

Decidedly upbeat despite the ominous warnings of potential state transportation funding cuts, Deputy CEO John Catoe called on staff to be "incredibly creative" in response to the challenge of FY 2003: More service in the face of a reduction in state funding.

The remarks came during an all-staff meeting held Wednesday during which Catoe reviewed the past year, citing achievements, progress, and the challenges that lie ahead.

Chief among the success stories was the start-up of Service Sectors operation. "One year ago," said Catoe, "we were talking about the structure of operations for the service sectors: how to efficiently operate the service sectors and how to improve the quality of bus and rail service.

"Today, we have six general managers – including Gerald Francis of Rail Operations – providing community-based service. Two service sectors began operations in June; three more opened in September.

"Today, we get direct input from the community at public meetings and outreach activities on how to implement improvements. And, the local governance process is underway. When the councils are in place, as is the South Bay Governance Council recently approved by the MTA Board, the local perspective on improvement will be significantly sharpened."

Recent service changes provide a timeline of marked improvements in operations:

Metro Rail expanded service hours in October. Two new Metro Rapid lines and three new limited stop Metro Bus lines began operations Dec. 15.

Construction of the Pasadena Gold Line is expected to be completed in April, and, following pre-revenue testing, the Gold Line will open to the public next summer.

All solutions to the tug of war between budget cutbacks and stepped-up services are not yet on the table, noted Catoe, who made a direct appeal to staff to contribute creative ways to offer more services at lower cost without sacrificing quality.

Safety's Still First



Corporate Safety DEO Gary Spivack opened the all-staff meeting with an interactive safety quiz. Employees who answered correctly were awarded prizes in the form of wrapped gifts that would fit nicely a certain type of tree. Try your hand at the quiz, then click [answers](#) to score your safety fitness.

1. What is MTA's Safety Policy?
2. Name four of the six MTA Safety's First Principles.
3. What is the single most important behavior of safety leaders?
4. In the iceberg analogy used during our safety skills training, what is "above the line?"
5. What percentage of injuries are caused by unsafe acts by people?
6. What is the name of the MTA safety form you use to report an unsafe condition?
7. What day of the week has the highest rate of accidents?
8. Which three MTA bus lines have the highest rate of accidents in the system?
9. Should you report all incidents? What about small paper cuts?
10. What should you do when you approach an escalator that is not working?

Part of the creative solutions, said Catoe, are likely to include cost-effective technology, consolidating overlapping services with municipal operators, reprioritizing capital programs, and identifying efficiencies.

Answers to Safety's First Quiz

1. "Safety's first for our customers, employees, and business partners as we plan, construct, operate and maintain the region's transportation system"
2. --Safety is a "24/7" priority
--Safety is everyone's responsibility
--Accidents and injuries are preventable
--Working safely is a condition of employment
--Training is essential for good safety performance
--The management team is accountable for safety
3. Walk the talk! Model the behavior
4. Known results, e.g. Fatalities, lost time injuries, medical treatment and first aid cases
5. 96%
6. Safe 7 - report of unsafe condition
7. Monday
8. Line 20/720 on Wilshire
Line 204 on Vermont
Line 45 on Broadway
9. Yes, report all incidents
10. Do not walk on it. Take the stairs or elevator

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in frame.

**Deck the Metro Bus at
Gateway Division ...
fa la la la ... la la la**

photos by jennifer yeh

Operator Paul Magallanes
assists an artist >

**Students at Santa Monica
Blvd. Elementary School
prepare for the Holiday Bus
Competition.**

- The annual Holiday Bus Decoration competition is scheduled to take place at Patsaouras Transit Plaza on Monday, Dec. 23. the buses will be on display from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

By JENNIFER YEH

(Dec.20, 2002) Fourth grade students from Santa Monica Blvd. Elementary School, adopted by West Hollywood Division 7 and their Division Activities Committee (DAC), hope their bus will win first place this year at the annual Christmas Bus Competition at Gateway.

For the past week, DAC volunteers have brought their bus from Division 7 to the schoolyard where nearly 100 students gather anxiously around the bus at recess and lunchtime to take part in the decoration.

"The kids get really excited when the bus comes in," says Assistant Principle Talbot Troy. "As soon as they finish their lunch they run straight to the bus."

Coordinators for the program are Division 7 Service Attendant Marilyn Dear, Bus Operators Paul Magallanes and Arlene Mills who assisted the children in painting and decorating.

"The bus looks great," says Ron Reedy, Div. 7 Transportation Manager. "The kids have worked really hard and we hope to win first place in the competition."

On the day of the competition six chosen students will ride in on the decorated bus dressed as elves, along with Santa Claus



and his three helpers.



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- [Gateway Division 10](#) Launches Toy Drive for Children at USC County Hospital Cancer Ward
- [Venice Division Fund](#) Helps fill Santa's Bag in local "Toys for Tots" Campaign

By JENNIFER YEH

MOMENTS - Photos by Jim Lukens capture the spirit of Division 10's gift to the children of County General Hospital. [SLIDE SHOW](#)

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Photo by Johnny Rios

Gateway Division 10 acting TOS Ernie Martinez, acting assistant manager Luis Alcantar, Metro Bus Operator Jerome Williams and TOS Bill Ruiz tally bounty of toys for children at Los Angeles County Children's Hospital.

(Dec. 27 2002) By virtue of first-hand and heartfelt experience, Gateway Division 10 and Venice Division 6 know the value of sharing.

Division 10's first toy drive produced two truck loads of more than 300 toys for some 200 young patients of the Los Angeles County USC Children's Hospital Cancer Ward.

On Christmas Eve, Santa Claus, played by acting TOS Ernest Martinez, and his helpers took the holiday-decorated bus to the hospital and delivered the toys one by one to many joyful recipients.

The toy drive was inspired by the Transportation and Maintenance employees. Organizers of the event included Assistant Manager Luis Alcantar, Transportation Operation Supervisors Frances Alford, Ernie Martinez, Helen Jackson, and Bus Operator Allen Dade.

"The drive generated hundreds of toys," said Martinez. "The response from employees at Division 10 was overwhelming. They really let the holiday spirit enter their hearts."

Division 10 hopes to make the holiday toy drive an annual event, said Martinez.

Venice Division Fund Helps fill Santa's Bag in local "Toys for Tots" Campaign

The maintenance employees at Venice Division 6 found a new way to share the holiday joy.

With the money earned from winning the "How You Doin'?" and Maintenance Division of the Year award, the first shift at Division 6 proposed using the proceeds to buy toys to donate to the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program.

The effort was coordinated by Edgar Triay, a Maintenance General Clerk who put together the funds, set up the charity and purchased all the toys.

A total of 50 toys were delivered on Christmas Eve to Fire Station 63 in Venice for the "Toys for Tots" program.

Organizers of "Toys for Tots" collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.



Mechanic Eddie Peterson, right, helps deliver toys to Fire Station 63 Captain Steve Norris. The toys were distributed to local children through the "Toys for Tots" campaign.

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West Hollywood Division Holiday Party was a Family Affair



Santa's Helpers: from left, Comunciations Manager Jody Feerst Litvak; Ma'Ryia Mahome, daughter of Div. 7 Assistant Manager Derick Mahome; General manager Tracy Daly, and Div. 7 Transportation Manager Ron Reedy. Below, Santa and helper Ma'Ryia make holiday wishes come true.

(Dec. 27, 2002) West Hollywood Division 7's holiday party was a family affair. Held in the train room, which was decorated with ornaments and holiday lights, the party featured a buffet and live entertainment provided by a disk jockey and employees performing Karaoke. Midway through the celebration, Santa Claus and his elves dropped by for a surprise visit aboard the holiday bus to give employees' children a tour of the decorated bus and hand out presents. -- from Jennifer Yeh



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photo by Laura Woodward



All 11 Metro Bus divisions participated in the holiday event at Patsaouras Plaza.

West Valley Division 8 Wins Top Trophy in Bus Decorating Contest

(Dec. 27, 2002) Chatsworth High School students and West Valley Division 8 employees won first place in the 11th annual Christmas Bus Decorating Contest, Dec. 23. Denker Elementary students and South Bay Division 18 earned second place. State Street Elementary and Carson High Schools students and Arthur Winston Division 5 won third place. -- from *Lisa Huynh*

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Metro Bus operators from left, Norma Martinez, Maria Pedilla and Fabian Naruri took their off-duty time to help distribute food to the less-fortunate families. Photos: Helen Ortiz.

San Gabriel Valley Division 9's Generosity is Bounty for Local Food Drive

By LISA HUYNH

(Dec. 27, 2002) The holidays is a time of giving and receiving – the Division Advisory Committee members at San Gabriel Valley Division 9 gave in a big way, last Wednesday, to families less fortunate.

Juan Ausburger, who is chairperson of DAC, came up with the idea of selling Christmas pins at a dollar each and then donating the profit to a local church.

Within two weeks, the DAC members made over \$750 and donated the money to Valley Community Church in El Monte.

With this effort, the church was able to feed at least 200 families – double the amount of what they would normally give.

"Our DAC members here at division 9 are really representing our sector in terms of our efforts of connecting to the community we serve," says General Manager Jack Gabig. "Our hope is that we can do more next year."

Operators, supervisors and employees from the sector helped distributed the food to registered needy families from the church.

"The DAC members, along with the MTA received an overwhelming appreciation from the community," says Communications Manager Helen Ortiz.

The church bought foods such as canned goods, pastas, rice, vegetables and fruit from a local food bank.

"Everyone that walked by me had a smile and said thank you to the MTA," says Ortiz. "It was just a wonderful morning and it brought the spirit of the holiday to our hearts."



Valley Community Church food drive benefited some 200 local families.

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A very MTA holiday to all
Holiday Scenes from around the MTA in 2002



Gateway Division 10 and Venice Division 6 Launch Toy Drives to Benefit Community Children

By JENNIFER YEH

(Dec. 27, 2002) By virtue of first-hand and heartfelt experience, Los Angeles Division 10 and Venice Division 6 know the value of sharing. [See Report](#)



West Valley Division 8 Wins Top Trophy in Bus Decorating Contest.

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(Dec. 27, 2002) Chatsworth High School students and West Valley Division 8 employees won first place in the 11th annual Christmas Bus Decorating Contest, Dec. 23. [See Report](#)



San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Helps Feed Needy Families This Holiday Season

By LISA HUYNH

(Dec. 27, 2002) The holidays is a time of giving and receiving – the Division Advisory Committee members at San Gabriel Valley Division 9 gave in a big way, Dec. 18, to families less fortunate. [See Report](#)



Home for the Holidays at West Hollywood Division 7

By JENNIFER YEH

(Dec. 27, 2002) West Hollywood Division 7's holiday party was a family affair. [See Report](#)

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MTA Provides Counseling for Operators Involved in Accidents

By AMY HOWELL

(Dec. 30, 2002) No Metro Bus or Metro Rail operator wants to be involved in an accident. But, accidents do occur, and when one does, it can be a traumatic event for all who are involved, especially the operator.

Such an event easily can cause bodily shock, with responses that could include nightmares, sweats, erratic heartbeat, dilated pupils, memory loss, crying or anger. An operator may even experience long-term physiological and/or psychological damage as a result of being involved in an accident, preventing them from returning to work or living a normal life.



Dr. Renee Christensen, Carol Allen, Keith Grove and Liz Malle are part of a network of Employee Support Systems Company trauma specialists who assist Metro Bus and Metro Rail operators involved in accidents.

Fortunately, there are trained professionals MTA can call on 24 hours a day, seven days a week to put an operator involved in an accident on the road to recovery, professionally and personally.

"The goal is to get the employee back to work quickly and get their life back to normal," says Dr. Renee Christensen, vice president of Employee Support Systems Company, retained by MTA in 1986 to preside over the agency's Employee Assistance Program.

Christensen worked with United Airlines management and staff after terrorists flew Flight 11 into one of the World Trade Center towers on September 11. She is part of a five-member team that is trained in rail safety and on-call to MTA. A large network of trauma specialists also is available to assist.

Debriefing is essential to healing process

The healing process begins with a debriefing. Held approximately 24 hours after the traumatic event, a debriefing is essential in preventing an operator's body from sustaining long-term physiological or psychological damage.

During the debriefing, a counselor will discuss all aspects of the event with the operator. This helps the operator move disturbing thoughts into long-term memory, allowing the employee to proceed with his or her life.

Follow-up debriefings may be required, depending on the severity of the traumatic event or if conditions exist in the operator's life that may contribute to resistance to recovery.

Although the initial debriefing is between the operator and a counselor, follow-up debriefings may include other operators involved in similar situations who have successfully returned to work.

If an operator does not participate in a debriefing, the long-term effects he or she may experience can include changes in blood pressure, ulcers and panic or anxiety attacks. These could prevent the operator from returning to work or from living a normal life.

"The operator counsels with us until we feel it's safe for him or her to return to work," says Dr. Christensen. "We try to make sure there is a smooth return to work."

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