

Metro Report Archives

February 2003 Articles

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- **Board Approves 9-Member Governance Council for SF Valley** (Feb. 28, 2003)
The MTA Board of Directors has approved the selection of nine community leaders and activists to serve on the governance council for the Metro San Fernando Valley Service Sector.
- **Passes, Buses, Transitway Among Items on Busy Board Agenda** (Feb. 28, 2003) Five new transit pass programs, purchase of 200 articulated buses and the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway budget were among items the MTA Board approved, Thursday, at its February meeting.
- **Policing Contract Issue Goes to MTA Board** (Feb. 26, 2003) The MTA Board is scheduled to discuss security for the Metro system, Thursday, as it considers recommendations for awarding contracts to the Sheriff's Department and LAPD.
- **Policing Contract Issue Goes to MTA Board** (Feb. 26, 2003) The MTA Board is scheduled to discuss security for the Metro system, Thursday, as it considers recommendations for awarding contracts to the Sheriff's Department and LAPD.
- **'Compo Bus' Makes National Debut at MTA** (Feb. 20, 2003) The "Compo Bus," a 40-seat coach with a corrosion-proof, carbon fiber reinforced body, is the newest addition to MTA's fleet and the first of its kind in the nation.
- **MTA Staff Retrieves Wayward \$100 Bill for Lucky Customer** (Feb. 19, 2003) It was late in the evening of Feb. 3 and George Escutia was dead tired from a long day's work when he boarded Metro Bus Line 94 in Burbank to start the long ride home to La Puente.
- **Signal Priority Project Will Help Bring Metro Rapid Service to Smaller Cities** (Feb. 14, 2003) As part of an effort to improve bus transit schedule adherence and speed up travel times, MTA has begun implementing the Countywide Bus Signal Priority Project, a program designed to ensure that even the county's smaller cities can have Metro Rapid service.
- **Federal Appropriations Bill Includes \$48.86 Million for MTA** (Feb. 14, 2003) The U.S. Senate is expected to vote, today, on the FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill – a measure that includes \$48.86 million for MTA projects and funds for other local transportation needs.
- **Economic Forecast: State Deficit Threatens Transportation Investment** (Feb. 13, 2003) The state's budget deficit threatens investment in transportation, including MTA, the president of the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corp. said, Thursday, during a forum at MTA Headquarters.
- **MTA a 'Groovy Place' for Employee Transportation Coordinators** (Feb. 12, 2003) Despite a driving rain, MTA Headquarters was a "very groovy place," Wednesday, as some 120 employee transportation coordinators from around LA County gathered for a rideshare seminar.
- **Metro San Fernando Valley Joins the 'Movers and Shakers'** (Feb. 12, 2003) In its continuing effort to work more closely with each of the communities served by MTA, Metro San Fernando Valley recently joined the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA).

- **Board Sets Transportation Criteria in Face of State's Budget Crisis** (Feb. 12, 2003) The MTA Board has established its transportation project criteria in the face of a growing state budget crisis.
- **Emergency Agencies Respond in Anti-Terrorism Exercise** (Feb. 7, 2003) "Bringing order to chaos." In a nutshell, that's what emergency personnel were practicing in the wee hours of Friday during a major anti-terrorism exercise at Union Station.
- **Snoble Seeks Support for Transit Programs in U.S. Capitol** Feb. 7, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble met with members of the California delegation in Washington, D.C., last week, to seek support for MTA's current projects and program priorities for the rest of FY 2003 and for FY 2004.
- **Division 3 Wall Gets a Makeover from Local Artist** (Feb. 6, 2003) Artists often leave something behind with each canvas they paint – an impression and a remarkable story.
- Well known in his community, artist Leo Limon was chosen six years ago to paint a mural at North Los Angeles Division 3 to cover a graffiti-scared wall.
- **Zero-Emissions Test: Electric Vehicles are 'On the Road' at 7 MTA Locations** (Feb. , 2003) They arrived right after New Year's Day – 36 shiny new Neighborhood Electric Vehicles (NEV) from General Motors –like a belated Christmas gift ordered over the Internet.
- **GMs Experience the 'Hot Seat' in Mock Governance Council Meetings** (Feb. 5, 2003) MTA's sector general managers had an opportunity, Monday, to see what it might be like to sit in the "hot seat" during a meeting of the governance councils now being formed in the five service sectors.

Bulletin Board

- [Central City Division](#) receives a check for \$500 for winning Best Transportation
- [Patron Appreciates](#) a Bus Operator's Good Deed
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) Both the transportation and maintenance teams at Crossroads Depot Division have worked together to accomplish a common goal – improving overall performance.
- [BOCC Employees](#) Honored for Perfect Attendance
- [Metro South Bay](#) Showcased Old, New Buses in Parade (Feb. 27, 2003) Metro South Bay showcased MTA's past and present buses, Feb. 23, during the 20th Annual African-American History Parade in South Los Angeles.
- [Choral Presentation Caps](#) AAEA's Black History Month Celebration
- [OBITUARY](#) Funeral Services Pending for Division 15's Marcel London
- [MTA's Top Operators, Maintenance Employees](#) to be Honored During 'A Night of Stars' (Feb. 25, 2003) MTA will honor its most exemplary frontline employees, March 1, during "A Night of Stars" – an event highlighting the accomplishments of almost 200 Metro bus and train operators and maintenance personnel.
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) South Bay Division's significant improvement in reduction of Worker's Compensation claims and customer complaints earned them the "How You Doin!" Award for Most Improved Transportation Division for the second quarter

FY2003.

- **New! [MTA Transit Security](#) Marks 10-year Anniversary of Memorial to Transit Police Officer Edward E. Reed**
- **[Doo-Wopp](#) was Retired Division 15 Operator's Road to Fame** (Feb. 19, 2003)
Skip Williams, a retired Metro Bus operator, devoted most of his life to his first love – promoting music and promoting musical acts.
- **OBITUARY [Funeral Services](#) for retired Transit Police Sgt. Raymond Thomas** will be conducted at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 22, at Trinity Baptist Church in Los Angeles.
- **[Division 10 Maintenance](#) Finds New and Better Way to Remove Chewing Gum** (Feb. 14, 2003) Sticky, messy, and disgusting – chewing gum on Metro buses is an on-going problem.
- **[MTA's Tony Martin Connects](#) with West Africa Through Music** (Feb. 13, 2003)
When Tony Martin returned in 1971 from the World Campus Afloat Program, sponsored by Chapman University, he knew he had to get involved with West African percussion.
- **[Westside/Central Operators](#) Presented 'Best of the West' Award** (Feb. 11, 2003) Six Westside/Central sector operators were presented "Best of the West" awards at a luncheon, Feb. 5, in recognition of their good safety records.
- **[MTA Recognized Among Top 500 Entry-Level Employers](#)** (Feb. 11, 2003)
CollegeGrad.com, an Internet job search service, recently named MTA as one of the top 500 entry-level employers of college students and graduates in the U.S.
- **[Pooh, Tigger and GM Dana Coffey](#) Help Young Readers at Ritter Elementary** (Feb. 11, 2003) Winnie the Poo, Tigger and South Bay Sector General Manager Dana Coffey were honored guests, recently, during school assemblies at Ritter Elementary School in Watts.
- **[Safety's First](#) at Crossroads Depot Division** (Feb. 11, 2003)
- **[Frank Clarke](#) is Buyer of the Quarter**
- **[Appreciation](#)** - Real Estate Department team received a certificate of appreciation from the City of Los Angeles for their work in preparation for the start of construction on the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project.
- **[GM Rich Rogers](#) Sets Gateway Cities Sector's Course** (Feb. 6, 2003) Over the next six months, the Gateway Cities sector will focus on improving customer service, safety, service effectiveness, employee recognition and training programs.
- **Obituary [Memorial Service, Today, for Mary Ellen Garcia](#)** (Feb. 6, 2003) The memorial service will be conducted at Oakdale Mortuary, 1401 S. Grand Ave., Glendora, at 7 p.m. Funeral and burial services will be conducted at the mortuary at 1 p.m., Friday, Feb. 7.
- **[Be Safe Out There](#)** (Feb. 6, 2003) New posters address safety hazards at MTA Headquarters.
- **[AAEA Presents Event-filled](#) Black History Month** (Feb. 5, 2003) Black History month has been widely recognized and celebrated since 1926. As in past years, the tradition will be continued at MTA with special events throughout the month.

Lost Purse and \$1,300 Returned to Thankful Passenger (Feb. 4, 2003) A Metro Bus passenger, in Los Angeles on a business trip from Mexico, was more than grateful to MTA, Jan. 30, when her lost purse – with nearly \$1,300, a passport and a plane ticket inside – was recovered by an alert operator.

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AAEA Choral Presentation Caps Black History Month Celebration



Black History Month Celebration, sponsored by the MTA African-American Employees Association, culminated in a rousing performance of "History in Song," a musical tribute from members of the MTA Chorale assembled for the occasion in the lobby of MTA Headquarters on Wednesday. The choir, assembled by Carmelita Romero and conducted by Renee Willis and Kathy Murrell, featured Don Costa Seawell, Frank Sahlem, Gerald Price, Patricia Clark, Tom Traylor, Robin Blair, George Parks, Collins Kalu, Bill Satterfield, Pamela Fairbanks, Letty Lawenko, and Carmelita Romero. Accompanied on the keyboard by guest musician, Elder William Wells, the choir sang a progressive history of the African-American experience, choosing songs from a chronological timeline, beginning with the abolition of slavery in 1865 through 1985, when the first Martin Luther King Jr. Day was commemorated. Below, George Parks delivers the welcoming remarks. --
Gayle Anderson



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A Patron's Appreciation for a Bus Operator's Good Deed



Metro Bus Operator Parmjit Grewal

PHOTO BY ERIC RAPP

Editor's Note: *metro.net* frequently carries stories about MTA employees who assist our patrons in ordinary and extraordinary ways. The deeds of these everyday heroes help put a human face on an agency whose services reach every corner of LA County. The following letter illustrates how one employee's thoughtfulness can affect our customers. Metro Bus Operator Parmjit Grewal is assigned to West Valley Division 8. (2/28/03)

To Whom It May Concern:

A few months ago, I lost my wallet filled with money and credit cards. One of your bus drivers, Parmjit Grewal, found my wallet at a gas station and called me to return it.

I contacted the office to report his valiant efforts to return my wallet.... Due to illness and a death in (my) family, I haven't had time to send an email until now.

I think in today's society finding a person who is as honest as this man has been is unbelievable. He could have taken my money (because there was a lot of cash in my wallet) and no one would have ever known.

You should be proud and you should commend this man greatly for respecting the ethics of his job and recognizing the importance of privacy.

If it was not for him, I would be greatly in debt...due to the important documents in my wallet. Please recognize his act of goodness.

Thank you!
Fayegheh Montazeri

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Officials Break Ground for Santa Monica Boulevard Parkway

CEO Roger Snoble, at right, Mayor James Hahn and County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, center, are among officials leading ground-breaking ceremony for Santa Monica Boulevard Parkway Jan. 31.



INSET: Artist's rendering illustrates landscape improvements designed to 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.

(Feb. 4, 2003) The much-anticipated reconstruction of the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project began, Jan. 31, with the turn of a spade as local officials gathered to mark the occasion.

The \$68.5 million project will reconfigure 2.5 miles of Santa Monica Boulevard by combining the two existing roadways – "Big" and "Little" Santa Monica – along with the railroad right-of-way, into three eastbound and three westbound traffic lanes.

The renovated roadway will reach from the San Diego Freeway on the west through Century City to Beverly Hills. When completed, it will be able to handle as much as 20 percent more traffic than it does today.

"The project will significantly improve traffic flow on this famously congested boulevard and will transform this area into a classic boulevard that will beautify the neighborhood," said Mayor James Hahn.

Metro Rapid bus line

"Once this project is completed, MTA is poised to establish a new 20-mile Metro Rapid bus line that will run from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica along Santa Monica Boulevard," said CEO Roger Snoble.

Included in the project are neighborhood access roads on the north and south sides of the main road. I-405 freeway ramps will be improved and a new street lighting system, a landscaped median and bicycle lanes will be added.

MTA is providing \$23.6 million in funding for the project, with the remainder coming from a combination of federal, state and local funding.

The first of six phases of construction – freeway ramp improvements – will begin in March. The project is expected to be completed in July 2005. All three traffic lanes on Santa Monica Boulevard, east- and west-bound, will remain open during construction.

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Lost Purse and \$1,300 is Returned to Thankful Passenger

By JENNIFER YEH

(Feb. 4, 2003) A Metro Bus passenger, in Los Angeles on a business trip from Mexico, was more than grateful to MTA, Jan. 30, when her lost purse – with nearly \$1,300, a passport and a plane ticket inside – was recovered by an alert operator.



Metro Bus Operator Gregory Scott

Irma Galvan left her purse on the Line 42 bus from LAX when she helped another passenger burdened with packages get off the bus. After disembarking, she realized she had left her purse behind.

Not long afterward, at Terminal 31 opposite MTA headquarters, Gateway Division 10 Operator Gregory Scott was at the end of his shift.

Checking through his bus, Scott found the purse on one of the side seats. He followed procedures by calling his radio dispatcher to report what he had found.

Tried to notify the woman

Transportation Operations Supervisor Frances Alford picked up the purse from Scott and took it to Division 10. Alford and Assistant Transportation Manager Liz Estany tried to notify the woman to let her know her purse had been found.

"We called the hotel that was listed on her plane ticket," says Estany. "I also called Air Mexico and they called her contact number in Mexico."

"Instead of us finding her, she found us," says Alford. "Somehow she got a hold of the bus dispatcher and they called us."

Estany, along with Transportation Manager Tom Jasmin, returned the purse to Galvan.

"She was so happy she wanted to know how much was the reward was for finding her purse," says Estany. "I told her that we don't need a reward and to just enjoy her stay in Los Angeles."

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Click on image above from infoplease.com web site or go to www.infoplease.com and click on Black History Month link for comprehensive review of Black History Month activities.

AAEA Presents An Event-Filled Black History Month

By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 5, 2003) Black History month has been widely recognized and celebrated since 1926. As in past years, the tradition will be continued at MTA with special events throughout the month.

MTA's African-American Employee Association (AAEA) kicked off the celebration of Black History month, today, by hosting the first session of a speaker series.

The noontime speech featured Renita Tyson, director of the United Negro College Fund and the MTA Employee Choir. Throughout the month employees can look for the following events.

Wednesday, Feb. 12: AAEA's speaker series continues with Marie Lemelle, president of the Department of Water and Power African-American Association, 12-1 p.m., Windsor Conference Room (15th floor).

Wednesday, Feb. 19: Poet's Corner will feature famous speeches and spoken words performed by MTA employees, 12-1 p.m., Windsor Conference Room (15th floor). Employees who are interested in speaking, should contact DonCosta Seawell at 922-1056.

Tuesday, Feb. 25: Reception and award presentation at the Howling Monk coffee house in Inglewood, 6-8:30 p.m. South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey will be honored, along with many others. For more information, contact Rashayna Moore at 922-5308.

Wednesday, Feb. 26: The final AAEA's speaker series session, 12-1 p.m. (details will be available later this month).

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GM Rich Rogers Sets Gateway Cities Sector's Course

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 6, 2003) Over the next six months, the Gateway Cities sector will focus on improving customer service, safety, service effectiveness, employee recognition and training programs.

That was the message General Manager Rich Rogers had for employees, last week, in a series of meetings at Central City Division 1 and Crossroads Depot Division 2.

"The only way we, as a team, can meet our goals is to work together," Rogers told operators and maintenance employees gathered for an early afternoon session, Jan. 30, at Division 2. "Based on our record for the first six months as a sector, we're doing a pretty good job!"

Rogers plans to conduct a survey within the next month or so to gauge employee attitudes about MTA, operations management, employee safety, training and other sector concerns. He'll incorporate feedback from the survey to develop his sector's action plan.

Improving customer service

The GM told employees that efforts in the first six months of sector operation were concentrated on improving service effectiveness, safety performance and communications at all levels, with an emphasis on improving customer service and upgrading the overall image of Metro Operations.

Looking toward the future, Rogers said the sector has implemented a new safety recognition program that was created and developed by division employees. Other recognition programs also are being considered.

The focus on training will include customer service and conflict resolution training for operators, technical training for maintenance employees and opportunities for supervisory and leadership training.

"I look forward to the next six months," Rogers said. "We will be closer to reaching our goal of providing the best transportation services in the nation by working as an effective team."

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Mary Ellen Garcia
1944 - 2003

Memorial Service for Mary Ellen Garcia

(Feb. 6, 2003) A memorial service will be conducted Thursday, Feb. 6, for Metro Bus Operator Mary Ellen Garcia of Division 9 who died Jan. 31.

The memorial service will be conducted at Oakdale Mortuary, 1401 S. Grand Ave., Glendora, at 7 p.m. Funeral and burial services will be conducted at the mortuary at 1 p.m., Friday, Feb. 7.

Garcia, 58, joined SCRTD in June 1980 and was only months away from the 23-year retirement mark at her death from cancer. She had worked out of Division 9 for a number of years and was well known to her colleagues there.

Division 9 Operator Alecia Tovar wrote this tribute to Garcia:

A color photograph of Alecia Tovar, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored patterned top. She is smiling and has her arms crossed.	<p>Many go through life without A goal. You gave us life and Real love. Your memory will live with us for Ever. Knowing that you Left a great legacy behind. We Look forward to some day finding Each other and Never separate from you. God is your family's overseer And you his helper. The Reason is to help Him Care for us In your own special way. We All love and miss you.</p> <p>-- Alecia Tovar</p>
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Be Safe Out There - Posters addressing three of the most common safety hazards at MTA Headquarters – elevators, escalators and liquid spills and burns – are part of the Safety's First campaign. Designed by Elizabeth Bain of Metro Graphics, left, the posters originated in the Safety Communications Subcommittee headed by Communications DEO Warren Morse, right. "We wanted to remind people of these hazards," says Morse. General Services Director Brian Soto, center, says the posters "will be strategically placed in the building where they'll have the most impact." (2/6/03)

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Buyer of the Quarter - From left, Purchase Contract Manager Richard Bachman, Materiel Manager Margaret James, Buyer of the Quarter Frank Clarke and Purchase Contract Manager Al Mitchell.



Frank Clarke is Buyer of the Quarter

(Feb. 7, 2003) Frank Clarke has been named the Procurement Department's "Buyer of the Quarter" for his commitment and dedication to providing outstanding service to his customers.

Clarke is responsible for purchasing such materials and supplies as hardware, plumbing supplies, batteries, uniforms and safety items.

He approaches all of his assignments with a positive and professional attitude. His communication style and friendly personality have worked effectively in dealing with his internal and external clients and suppliers.

Clarke is always willing to take on new assignments and help others. He has distinguished himself as being dependable, highly motivated and a true asset to the Purchasing Section, Procurement Department, and the MTA.

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Certificate of Appreciation



RE: metro.net report

[Officials Break Ground for Santa Monica Boulevard Parkway](#)

Director Velma Marshall, center, and her Real Estate Department team received a certificate of appreciation from the City of Los Angeles for their work in preparation for the start of construction on the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project. Under contract to the City, the department appraised and helped acquire – on time and on budget – a number of properties needed for the project. Team members, from left rear, are Diane Dominguez, Jim Blackman and Richard Coker. Middle row, from left, are Frances Impert and Lynn Bell. (2/7/03) PHOTO: BILL HEARD

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Winnie the Pooh (Princess Nicholson) and GM Dana Coffey work with Ritter Elementary School kids during a recent school assembly. PHOTO BY VICTORIA WOODS.



Pooh, Tigger and GM Dana Coffey Help Young Readers at Ritter Elementary

(Feb. 11, 2003) Winnie the Pooh, Tigger and South Bay Sector General Manager Dana Coffey were honored guests, recently, during school assemblies at Ritter Elementary School in Watts.

Coffey adopted the school last September with a pledge to help the pupils reach a goal of reading one million words this school year. Thus far, the children have read more than 5,000 words.

Assisted by Carson Division 18 operators Princess Nicholson, dressed as Winnie the Pooh, and Tamra Williams as Tigger, Coffey helped the students read the Metro Bus safety pamphlet and a few other books.

The GM delivered 100 books, donated by employees and staff of Metro South Bay. The children also toured a Metro Rapid bus provided by Arthur Winston Division 5 TOS Michael Morris – a highlight of the day.

Coffey and Communications Officer Victoria Woods were presented Certificates of Appreciation for their continued support of Ritter Elementary's One million Words campaign.

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MTA Recognized Among Top 500 Entry-Level Employers



By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 11, 2003) Finding a job can be tough these days, especially because we live in a highly competitive world.

CollegeGrad.com, an Internet job search service, recently named MTA as one of the top 500 entry-level employers of college students and graduates in the U.S. MTA is a member of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

The Metro Internship Program, which gives college students an opportunity to work in a professional environment, was the primary reason MTA was cited by CollegeGrad.com, according to Marion Colston-Fayyaz, director of Strategic Organization.

MTA expects to hire 25 entry-level college graduates in 2003.

"MTA is pleased to be recognized as one of the top 500 employers," says Colston-Fayyaz. "This recognition has been given to our agency for its continued work as an employer with a very active college internship program."

Colston-Fayyaz believes the program would not be successful if it weren't for the commitment and dedication MTA departments give to their college interns.

She also credited Administrative Intern Tai Alimi, who coordinates the Metro Internship Program, for completing NACE's Job Outlook 2003 survey that helped place MTA among the nation's top 500 employers of entry-level college graduates.

Since 1995, CollegeGrad.com has been helping college students and recent graduates look for jobs. The job search service's web site not only features job postings, but also such helpful links as resumes, cover letters, job search advice and more.

MTA, Disney, Boeing and Hewlett-Packard were among the top 500 employers named by the service.

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Safety's First at Crossroads Depot - Employee injuries and Worker's Compensation claims are down at Crossroads Depot Division 2. Division management treated bus operators to root beer floats, Jan. 29, to thank them for their achievements. Transportation Manager Diane Frasier notes that the division had gone 46 days without a lost-time injury. (2/11/03)



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Best of the West - Six Westside/Central sector operators were honored Feb. 5 in recognition of their good safety record - from left, Gateway Division 10 Operator Tadeo Vasquez, West Hollywood Division 7 Operator Hardie Gillie, Metro Westside/Central General Manager Tracy Daly, West Hollywood Division 7 Operator David Terrell, and Venice Division 6 Operator Johnny Hardwick. Not pictured: West Hollywood Division 7 Operator Rodolfo Cortez and Venice Division 6 Operator Anthony Scott.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Westside/Central Operators Presented 'Best of the West' Award

By JENNIFER YEH

(Feb. 11, 2003) Six Westside/Central sector operators were presented "Best of the West" awards at a luncheon, Feb. 5, in recognition of their good safety records.

The award acknowledges their record of having no avoidable or unavoidable traffic accidents, no Worker's Compensation or injury claims and no long-term absences in the past five years.

"We wanted to set the bar as high as we could," says General Manager Tracy Daly. "These six truly exemplify the best qualities every operator should try to achieve."

Honored were Venice Division 6 Operators Anthony Scott and Johnny Hardwick, Gateway Division 10 Operator Tadeo Vasquez and West Hollywood Division 7 Operators Hardie Gillie, David Terrell and Rodolfo Cortez.

Before the luncheon, the operators shared their techniques for safe driving.

Be courteous to passengers

Hardwick says three things that he does to maintain a good record and avoid accidents is to always be courteous to passengers, practice safe driving and keep up with his schedule.

Operator David Terrell says starting the day off with a clear mind helps him get through his shift. He maintains his focus throughout his shift.

"I don't drive a day at a time, I drive a stop at a time for safety," he

says. "If there is anytime I am close to an accident, I pull off the road for half a minute to clear my mind before I go back in service."

Terrell advises that it's safer to wait for when the traffic light is yellow, rather than taking the gamble trying to beat it.

"I know that I am not going to get off a minute earlier, so I take my time," he says. "I try not to be in a rush. Sometimes there are things that can make you late, such as traffic or construction, but I don't let that take over."

Courtesy is important

Terrell also says courtesy is important because by being courteous to people, there's less pressure, which makes the day easier.

Anticipating what other vehicles on the streets are going to do is a good idea, says Division 7 Operator Hardie Gillie. "It helps to know what others are going to do, because it helps you prepare and avoid potential accidents."

Division 10 Operator Tadeo Vasquez agrees it's a good idea to anticipate occurrences. He maintains an exceptional record by using courtesy and making good judgment calls.

"These operators and the lessons they share on safety are truly excellent examples for all of us," says Daly.

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MTA's Tony Martin Connects with West Africa Through Music

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(Feb. 13, 2003) When Tony Martin returned in 1971 from the World Campus Afloat Program, sponsored by Chapman University, he knew he had to get involved with West African percussion.

A senior equal opportunity program representative in MTA's Diversity and Economic Opportunity department, Martin was a student when he saw the National Ballet of Sierra Leone perform during his trip to Africa. He was in awe of the performance.

"After the performance, I was trying to buy instruments from the group," says Martin. His first purchase was a wooden bilaphone, "forefather" of the modern xylophone, and two drums.

Mild-mannered EO rep by day, Tony Martin, at right and below, marches to the beat of a different drummer as a distinctly authentic West African percussionist.



Without any formal instruction, he started playing with other Chapman students, making up the music as they went along. His first performance was for the college Board of Trustees dinner.

After graduation, when he moved back to Los Angeles, Martin started looking for musicians who knew how to play the West African percussion style of music.

Taught by master drummer

He joined a group called Mori Nimba, the first West African group based in LA. His teacher was a master drummer from Guinea called "Papa."

Over the years, he has taken lessons from many different instructors. On a second trip to West Africa with the group, Sona Sane, Martin studied percussion with the National Ballet of Senegal.

He also has played with the Nigerian ensemble Rhythms of the Village and with the Brazilian ensemble Folklorico du Brazil, as well as with other drum groups throughout California.

Martin now performs throughout Southern California with Abalaye (whose name means "remember your ancestors"), a group that hopes to open an educational center in the area.

'Everything and everywhere'

Martin has always liked percussion and remembers, as a child, playing rhythms on "everything and everywhere."

His passion for West African percussion grew not because he wanted to be a musician, but because he felt connected to the music.

"It was the spiritual attraction that really drew me in," Martin says. "And playing was like going to church, what I am trying to hang on to, what has kept me going to learn more and more."

"Here I am, 50 years old," he says, "and I'm still drumming."

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Division 10 Maintenance Finds New and Better Way to Remove Chewing Gum

By JENNIFER YEH

(Feb. 14, 2003) Sticky, messy, and disgusting – chewing gum on Metro buses is an on-going problem.

Removing it was even a bigger problem – until recently.

The maintenance department at Gateway Division 10 last week began using a dry ice machine that is capable of removing gum, some graffiti and other sticky items from bus floors, seats and hard-to-reach areas.

The compact machine, which resembles a commercial rug steam cleaner, uses crushed dry ice and air power to freeze and blow away sticky items that are deeply embedded in crevices and ridges of the bus floor.

"With this machine, service attendants are able to clean six to eight buses a day," says Assistant Maintenance Manager Jim Fulkerson. "It makes up for a lot of labor time."

Machine saves time

Service Attendant Sergio Perez says on average it would take him about three hours to remove all the chewing gum manually, but the machine cuts his time by 75 percent.

"Not only is it economical, but it's a multi purpose machine," says Fulkerson. "It cleans all kinds of things."

Division 10 heard about the \$15,000 machine two years ago, but at that time, it had not yet been perfected.

Currently, Division 10 is sharing the machine with other Westside/Central divisions.

"We want to get the word out to other divisions about the machine," says Fulkerson. "Gum is a

PHOTOS: JENNIFER YEH



Before and After: Service Attendant Sergio Perez uses dry ice machine to remove gum. Below, Perez labors to remove chewing gum by hand.



Dry ice machine cuts cleaning time by 75 percent.



continuous problem and with this machine it cuts time and gets service attendants off their hands and knees."

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Doo-Wopp was Retired Division 15 Operator's Road to Fame

By LISA HUYNH



Goodnight Sweetheart Goodnight

Goodnight, sweetheart,
well it's time to go,
Goodnight, sweetheart,
well it's time to go,
I hate to leave you,
but I really must say,
"Goodnight, sweetheart, goodnight!"

--The Spaniels, 1954/55

Skip Williams, above and second from right in vintage photo below, recorded several well-known songs during a music career in the 1950s and '60s. Williams retired from East Valley Division 15 in 1998 after 23 years of service.



That's not all: See [Celebrity Platoon Sergeant](#)

(Feb. 19, 2003) Skip Williams, a retired Metro Bus operator, devoted most of his life to his first love – singing and promoting musical acts.

In a musical career dating back to the 1950s, Williams has several well-known songs to his credit. The doo-wopp classic "Goodnight Sweetheart Goodnight," recorded with The Spaniels in 1954/55, was a smash-hit single. "Brand New Baby" and "Daddy Loves You," recorded in the '60s, also got air play nationwide.

His music career began when he joined the Army in 1954. He was in a band, but it didn't last too long. Months later, during a 30-day leave from the Army, he recorded "Goodnight Sweetheart Goodnight."

After he left the service in 1960, Williams put together another band called the Vice-Roys. The group only stayed together for a year.

Williams, 67, went on to pursue a solo career, recording "Brand New Baby" and "Daddy Loves You." Then, in the '80s, he collaborated with another artist, Moody Scott, to record a song called "Romeo and Juliet."

What he's doing these days

Although he enjoys singing, Williams' real passion is being road manager and promoting musical acts. He has managed groups like the Originals, the Ink Spots and others.

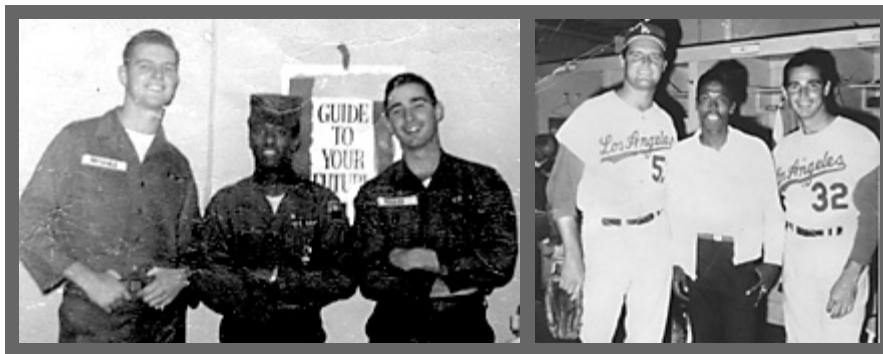
"Singing was fun, but I really loved managing," says Williams. I got to meet so many different people. It was great!"

Currently, Williams is promoting and traveling with bands and solo acts. He also visits Division 15 as often as he can in his spare time.

"I'm here at Division 15 more than I'm at home," says Williams. "The staff and the employees are fantastic. You couldn't ask for a better division."

He has made quite an impact on people, especially his friends at Division 15.

"We love Skip," says Metro Bus Operator Tony James. "It's always a pleasure to see him. He's a beautiful person and everyone around here loves him, even the new people. Even though he's retired, he's still an operator in heart, in spirit and in soul."



Celebrity Platoon Sergeant

In and out of uniform, Skip Williams became friends with two of the celebrity Army reservists – Dodgers pitchers Don Drysdale, left, and Sandy Koufax he trained in the 1960s.

Williams kept in contact with Drysdale after the Army. Drysdale would give him box seat tickets to the games, but Williams, who is not a sports fan, would always give the tickets to the operators at his division.

Even after Drysdale's death in 1993, Williams has kept in touch with his family.

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MTA's Top Operators, Maintenance Employees to be Honored During 'A Night of Stars'



GRAPHIC DESIGN: ELIZABETH BAIN

(Feb. 25, 2003) MTA will honor its most exemplary frontline employees, March 1, during "A Night of Stars" – an event highlighting the accomplishments of almost 200 Metro bus and train operators and maintenance personnel.

With the historic cruise ship Queen Mary as the backdrop, the annual awards banquet will celebrate those who contribute to MTA's performance as one of the nation's leading transit properties.



To qualify for the 2002 Metro Gold Star Award for the period of July 1, 1997 to June 30, 2002, the operators and maintenance employees had to meet stiff criteria. They could have no lost work time injuries, no disciplinary actions and no more than 30 days absent.

In addition, Metro bus and rail operators could have zero preventable traffic collisions and no more than three customer complaints over the five-year period.

Select few to be honored

The stringent standards mean that only a very small percentage of division employees qualify for the award. The 72 operators represent only 1.6 percent of the 4,400 employed by MTA. The 111 mechanics and service attendants who qualify represent only 5.5 percent of MTA's 2,000

maintenance employees.

Among the many to be honored are 96-year-old Arthur Winston, a service attendant leader at the Metro South Bay division that bears his name, and Tu Phan, a member of the two-man Metro Rail team that won the American Public Transit Association's 2002 International Rail Roadeo in Baltimore.



Among the speakers at the event will be MTA Board Chairman Hal Bernson, CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe. The general managers will introduce the employees from their sectors.

Each honoree will receive a specially designed lapel pin, suitable for wearing on the uniform, and a 2002 Metro Gold Star Award medallion.

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Members of LAPD, MTA Transit Security and Sheriff's Department gather in remembrance of the loss of a fellow officer.

PHOTO: LISA HUYNH



MTA Transit Security Marks 10-year Anniversary of Memorial to Transit Police Officer Edward E. Reed

By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 25, 2003) Fallen MTA Transit Police Officer Edward E. Reed was a friend and active member in his community until he died in 1993.

Lt. James Cook from MTA Transit Security held a memorial service, Friday, to mark the 10-year anniversary of Reed's death. Members of the LAPD and Sheriff's Department were among those who attended the service.

Reed died 10 years ago in the line of duty. A drunk driver broad-sided Reed's patrol car and he was killed instantly. It was the first year MTA has held a memorial service for Reed.

"Not only are we memorializing Officer Reed, but also the service and dedication of the Transit Police Department," says Cook.

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South Bay Division 18 receives award for the "How You Doin'?" Most Improved Division. The transportation team tied with Crossroads Division 2 for the honors.

PHOTOS: JENNIFER YEH



Good Marks for Division 18 in Second Quarter

By JENNIFER YEH

(Feb. 25, 2003) South Bay Division 18 has a lot to be proud of this quarter.

Not only did the division earn a "How You Doin'?" Award, but Division 18 mechanic Johnny Rodriguez won the Metro South Bay slogan contest with his entry, "Leading The Way With Metro South Bay."

Division 18's significant improvement in reduction of Worker's Compensation claims and customer complaints earned them the "How You Doin'?" Award for Most Improved Transportation Division for the second quarter FY2003.

"Our customer complaints have been a priority," says Transportation Manager Cynthia Karpman. "What we did differently was to contact the customers personally and discuss the complaints."

"Without all the employees working as a team, we would not have been able to achieve this," says Karpman.

Division 18 received a check for \$500, while slogan contest winner Rodriguez received a \$50 gift certificate to Claim Jumpers.

South Bay Division 18 Mechanic Johnny Rodriguez won the Metro South Bay slogan contest with his entry, "Leading The Way With Metro South Bay." The slogan was created last year and used in the Christmas bus painting contest.



South Bay Division 18 Transportation Manager Cynthia Karpman and Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey hold the \$500 check awarded for the "How You Doin'?" Most Improved Division.



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Marcel London

Funeral Services Pending for Division 15's Marcel London

(Feb. 26, 2003) Funeral arrangements are pending for Marcel London, 22, a second shift service attendant at East Valley Division 15, who died in an automobile accident, Feb 24.

London was killed when his car struck a power pole just after midnight at the intersection of Jefferson Boulevard and Potomac Avenue in the Crenshaw District.

London, a native of Los Angeles, joined MTA in May, 2001. His survivors include his mother, Yvonne Ray; his father, Lindsay London; and two sisters, Chavone Ray, a MTA Customer Information agent, and Charonne Ray, a Division 4 service attendant who previously worked at Arthur Winston Division 5.

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The maintenance and transportation teams got together to sport their award-winning smiles, after being named the "How You Doin'?" Most Improved Division for the second quarter.



PHOTO: DAVE HERSHENSON

Division 2 Takes Home Two Honors

By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 27, 2003) Both the transportation and maintenance teams at Crossroads Depot Division 2 have worked together to accomplish a common goal – improving overall performance.

Division 2 won the "How You Doin'?" awards for Most Improved Maintenance Division and Most Improved Transportation Division for the second quarter FY 2003.

General Manager Rich Rogers congratulated each team with a \$500 check.

"Division 2 has shown improvements from one quarter to the next," says Rogers. "It shows that progress is being made and that it's a team effort."

The maintenance team significantly improved on on-time pullouts, miles between mechanical failures, attendance and bus cleanliness.

"It's an honor to win such an award," says Maintenance Manager Donell Harris. "Our morale has improved tremendously, which helps everyone to focus on a common goal."

The transportation team improved on its on-time pullouts and has lowered its new Workers Compensation claims, accident rates and complaints.

Transportation Manager Diane Frazier says she is proud to work with such an amazing group of people, both in maintenance and transportation.

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Members of the Metro South Bay staff board green vintage GMC coach bound for the 20th Annual African-American History Parade. PHOTO: RICH MORALLO



Metro South Bay Showcased Old, New Buses in Parade

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 27, 2003) Metro South Bay showcased MTA's past and present buses, Feb. 23, during the 20th Annual African-American History Parade in South Los Angeles.

Hundreds of children, residents and families cheered the sight of a green GMC vintage coach and a red Metro Rapid bus rolling down Western Avenue.

"We wanted to share a part of our history - the green vintage bus was built in 1958 - as the community celebrates Black History Month," said General Manager Dana Coffey. She and other staff members walked along with the two buses to greet and talk with members of the community.

"We were also able to show where we've been and where we are going to in the community," said Coffey. "This was an excellent opportunity to show our Metro Rapid Bus with the sign reading 'It's Getting Better On The Bus.'"

Metro Rapid service began recently along Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, with other lines to follow in the South Bay," Coffey said.

Also walking along the two-mile parade route was Arthur Winston Division 5 Transportation Manager Patsy Goens. "It was an interesting parade. I had a great afternoon. I spent most of my time passing out cardboard bus replicas and flyers announcing Metro South Bay's community meetings to the residents."

Albernetta Shehee, the lead Division Advisory Committee (DAC) member from Carson Division 18, along with other DAC members, transportation operation supervisors and families also volunteered to help hand out Metro information, safety pamphlets and coloring books to the families and business members along the route.

Regional Rebuild Center mechanic David O'Hara drove the vintage bus. The bus was taken out of revenue service in 1975 and restored and painted in 2000 to the way it looked in 1958.

Division 5 Operator Gregory Smith drove the Metro Rapid bus. The other Metro South Bay members in the parade were June Singleton-Reece, Elsie Iwigbu and Vivian Hampton.

Hampton's son, Jamal, and Community Relations Office Vicky Woods' son, Carlos, rode the buses and helped represent Metro South Bay at the parade.

"The vintage bus is really amazing," said Hampton. "I used to ride this kind of bus when I was a teenager."

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BOCC Employees Honored for Perfect Attendance



PHOTO BY JENNIFER YEH

Perfect Attendance Awards for FY 2002 were presented, this week, to employees in BOCC. The criteria for the award was no unexcused absences and less than three tardies during the calendar year. Pictured, from left, are General Manager Tracy Daly, TOS Russell Modell, Administrative Analyst Monique Ramos, TOS Kenneth Jones, TOS Paul Lajoie, TOS John Escher, TOS Bonnie Bradford, TOS Edwin Blakely, TOS Stephen Rank, TOS Dave Dhillon, TOS Frank Chavez, TOS Armen Euredjian, TOS David Seelig, TOS William Dukes, and Operations Control Center Manager Ellis Kyles. (2/27/03)

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Central City Division 1 receives a check for \$500 for winning Best Transportation Division for the second quarter FY 2003.



PHOTO BY DAVE HERSHENSON

Division 1 Clinches Two 'How You Doin'?' Awards

By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 28, 2003) "Teamwork is key to our success," says Transportation Manager Sonja Owens.

Central City Division 1 won the "How You Doin'?" awards for Transportation Division of the Month for December 2002 and Best Transportation Division for the second quarter FY 2003.

General Manager Rich Rogers presented Division 1 a trophy and a check for \$500.

"It takes coming to work on time everyday, pulling buses out of the yard on time, driving safely, being on time at the bus stops and being courteous to our customers," says Owens.

Division 1 came in first in in-service on-time performance and was lowest in complaints for December 2002 and the second quarter FY 2003.

"I feel very proud of the operator and supervisors who work together as a team to ensure that we are serving the public well and take pride in our jobs," says Owens.

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