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Transportation artifacts recently donated to the MTA Research Center and Library include, at left, a destination sign from a Pacific Electric Red Car, held by Administrative Analyst Jim Walker, and a Los Angeles Transit Lines Yellow Car logo, held by Library Administrator Matt Barrett.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Employees Donate Many of Library's Transportation Artifacts

By MATT BARRETT

(May 19, 2004) A great number of employees at the MTA have histories in transportation from LACTC, SCRTD, its predecessors, and even other transit companies that the SCRTD acquired years ago.

Over the years, many employees have collected key reports, memorabilia, and evidence of their having "been there" when important events occur. It may seem surprising, but over time, many of those items become valuable for both research purposes and public outreach about the key role public transportation plays in Los Angeles.

The MTA Research Center, Transportation Library and Archives has its foundations in decades of donations. Dorothy Peyton Gray, SCRTD/MTA Librarian, 1988-2001, was relentless in seeking items to document transit history from 1871 to the present.

The Library has continued with her vision and is grateful for the continuing stream of materials received, whether its a Pacific Electric document safe restored by MTA's Paint Shop, a dashboard from a 1940 Yellow Coach, a commemorative pass from the 1984 Olympics, a uniform patch, a photograph, a report detailing the first 20 years of the El Monte Busway or the latest Environmental Impact Report.

Evidence of dedication

It is all evidence of the dedication of transportation employees, the past,

present and future investments in local communities and service to the public.

It is important to note the differences between the missions of the Library and Records Management.

Records Management exists to keep MTA's records "manageable" according to adopted policy and legal requirements.

The Transportation Library and Archives exists to serve employees and the public as a research, technology transfer, education, cultural and public affairs resource. It is the only transportation library in Southern California, and the fourth largest collection in the U.S.

"While working at RTD and MTA, we collected pins, badges and various forms of fare media, which are now collectibles. They hold a lot of memories for us", said Joanne and Tom Longsdon, soon to be retirees. "However we could not think of putting them away in a photo box at home. We wanted to give them to the library. Now they will be on display, and many people can enjoy them for years to come."

Currently on display are items commemorating public transportation's success during the 1984 Olympic games held in Los Angeles, and other historic artifacts.

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