

1990

# MTA NEWS



Monthly Employee  
News From The  
Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

FEBRUARY ISSUE



MTA Instructor Brenda Esquivel got a thrill of a lifetime when she shook hands with the president.

## INSIDE



Arthur Winston

- Arthur Winston- Oldest MTA Employee
- RCC Honored by Caltrans
- Bob Minahan Touches Hearts in Kenya

## MTA's Quick Quake Response Heralded

### Employees Rally Together to Ensure Southland's Mobility

**D**aniel Ortiz was looking forward to retirement in early February. An MTA dispatcher with 34 years of service, he had just started what was normally a relatively quiet shift in the Operations Control Center on Jan. 17.

When the earthquake hit, said Ortiz, "it was like some giant hand had gotten hold of the 425 Building.

"I thought I was a goner. The lights went out and the ceiling panels fell."

Ortiz, who was working alongside colleagues Mark Solomon, Elias Goldblatt, Pat Rozema, Emmitt Pippin, and Dave Selig, dropped to the floor and under the console. With power out, the emergency generators kicked in immediately, and the dispatchers never lost telephone con-

tact between themselves and the 100 or so operators on the street.

Reported Ortiz, "One operator called me,

*See Quick Response, page 2*



MTA's Steve Ford with the President. Ford drove four VIP's in an agency van: White House Press Secretary DeeDee Meyers, the official photographer and nurse, and the man who carries the phone with the nuclear button.



MTA CEO Franklin White with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros.

### QUICK RESPONSE, FROM PAGE 1

hollering that the freeway under him had buckled. He was at LaBrea on the Santa Monica Freeway.

"I hated to tell him to back up on the freeway."

But he and other MTA drivers recorded no accidents, and within minutes, the agency launched a tremendous transportation response to a shell-shocked city.

Three days later, when President Clinton came to town to inspect the damage, MTA employees shuttled the entourage from the Burbank Airport

to some of the Valley's most damaged areas.

The special shuttle was coordinated by Caprice Young, special assistant to Franklin White, who recently accepted a position as assistant deputy

"I hated to tell him to back up on the freeway."



Bus Operator William Durazo with President Clinton. TOS's Thomas Mattox and Cristobal Medina are on the right.

mayor for the City of Los Angeles. Bus Operators Brenda Esquivel, Sam Wolfe, Cristobal Medina, Edmond White, Thomas Mattocks, Lillian Gray, William Durazo, and Margo Ross were selected to drive MTA vans filled with VIPs, including Governor Wilson, and Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

MTA's Jesus Godinez, and John Manning provided radio support and Teresa Moren, Ken Miller, and Dan Ibarra assisted with the overall shuttle movement. ■

## MTA Mechanic Among Quake Victims



Til "Paul" Lee

**M**TA News extends its deepest condolences to the family of Til "Paul" Lee, a mechanic A, who was killed in the collapse of the Northridge Meadows apartment building. His 14-year-old son, Howard, also was killed.

Lee, a 14-year MTA veteran, had worked in the Transmission Shop at the Central Maintenance Facility for the last two years. An engineer by trade in Korea, he specialized in dynamometer testing and overhaul transmission at the MTA.

"He was very intelligent and easy-going, just a great person to work with," said his supervisor, Ruben Goytia. "He was quiet and stuck to his work."

He began his career as a Mechanic "C" at Division 12 in Long Beach. He was promoted to a Mechanic "B" in July, 1981, and reassigned to South Park. He became a mechanic a year later and was reassigned to CMF in 1985. There he worked in the Electrical Shop and on the engine rebuild line.

Fifteen of Lee's MTA colleagues attended his funeral a week after the earthquake. CMF employees have taken up a collection and will send it to Lee's surviving son, who hopes to attend his first year of seminary.

Lee died as he was getting ready for work. ■



# At 87 Years Old, MTA's Arthur Winston Celebrates 60 Years on the Job

**W**hile harried middle-aged workers nationwide contemplate the joys of retirement, Arthur Winston is hard at work scraping paint off the sides of MTA buses.

At 87 years of age, the last thing on the MTA service attendant's mind is retirement. A trim man with a marvelous smile, he has survived six transportation agency mergers and takeovers and has outlived three of his four children.

On January 21, his MTA colleagues toasted Winston's 60 years of service to the transportation agency — an amazing feat for a man who attributes his longevity to good genes and being around younger women.

"They keep you moving," he says beaming. "Besides, I'm afraid to sit down for any length of time — I'm worried if I do, I'll freeze!"

Winston, who was born in 1906, also boasts a sparkling attendance record. In six decades on the job, he missed but two weeks of work when his wife of 65 years passed away in 1988. If that's unbelievable, MTA computer printouts show that for five years during the early '80s, he worked two straight eight-hour shifts a day. He neither smokes nor drinks.



Winston (middle) is flanked by Board Director Antonio Villaraigosa and Maintenance's Tony Chavira at his Division 5 anniversary celebration.

"I haven't been to a doctor in 50 years," he joshes. "If I went, he probably would find something wrong with me."

An Oklahoma native, Winston moved to Los Angeles with his family in the early '20s. His dad, who died at 99, found work with the Los Angeles Railway Company, and in 1924, the younger Winston did the same, signing on as a janitor at South Park in the city of Vernon.

He married his wife Frances, a seamstress, in 1924. "Lordy, how I do miss her," he says softly. They raised their family in a house on W. 69th Street. He still lives there, now sharing quarters with his great-granddaughter, Brandy.

Every Monday through Friday, Winston drives himself to work at MTA's Division 5, located at 54th and Van Ness streets. "He is an absolute delight to work with," says his boss, Maintenance Manager Rick Hittinger, 30 years his junior. "His strength, stamina, attitude, and willingness to cooperate is without peer." Winston supervises 17 employees on the day shift, and leads the charge to rid graffiti on the buses.

He blames society's woes on today's parents: "They give their children too many privileges. I don't believe in reading those sexy cartoons and listening to rap music. I don't think the young people should be wearing those sloppy clothes that look like they're falling off."



Arthur Winston looks decades younger than his 87 years.

**"I'm worried if I sit down, I'll freeze"**

*See Winston, page 12*

# MTA's Bus Fleet Shapes Up

New PRIDE Program is responsible for performance turn-around

"No other bus property in the nation can come close to this superior performance."

The MTA bus fleet is looking sharper, thanks to the agency's recently implemented PRIDE Program. Chaired by Equipment Maintenance Superintendent Ken Miller, the program aims to significantly improve vehicle cleanliness, miles between road calls, customer complaints, and on-time pull-out performance.

"The newly tabulated PRIDE Program indicators show that MTA personnel are 'with the program,'" says Miller, who was charged last May with assessing fleet deficiency and taking action to improve not only bus service but also the condition of the fleet. "For the month of November, complaints related to schedule adherence, pass-ups, and operator discourtesy all improved over the month of October by 15.9, 11.1 and 9.5 percent, respectively.

Miller says that on-time pull-outs for both the a.m. and p.m. in November produced the outstanding result of 99.44 percent for 64,680 runs. "No other bus property in the entire nation can come close to this superior performance," he declares.

Miles between road calls over the past year have improved a total of 13.4 percent, he adds.

Miller gives kudos to every employee assigned to MTA operating divisions. "These are the front-line people, who at times, have to work under adverse conditions that most of us can not even imagine," he says. "Obviously, we are headed in the right direction."

The PRIDE team is open to suggestions. Please send them to Ken Miller at the Regional Rebuild Center (RRC) or phone them in at 972-5800. ■



Division 10 staff is proud of what it's achieved.



# Applause!



## RCC Wins Another Award

RCC was recently honored by CalTrans with the "1993 Excellence in Transportation Facilities Award" for the Green Line segmental bridges at the RCC Board meeting in January.

Pictured from left are Raul Perez, RCC Board alternate; Bob Kruse, RCC Board chairman; Ed McSpedon, MTA executive officer, construction and RCC president; Carl Raggio, RCC Board member; and David Anderson, RCC Board member.



## MTA's Vince Pellegrin Leaves for NYTA

Engineering Manager Vince Pellegrin, who oversaw the MTA's Alternative Fuels program, was recently bid a fond farewell by the MTA Board for his 12 years of outstanding service to the agency. Pellegrin heads to the New York Transit Authority, where he will direct a similar program. Here, Pellegrin receives congratulations from MTA Director Evan Braude and Executive Officer, Operations Art Leahy.



## Rafael Murrillo Selected Operator of the Month

Rafael Murrillo, an MTA bus operator for the past 18 years, has been named Bus Operator of the Month for November 1993.

The Laguna Niguel resident works at Division 12 in Long Beach and operates lines 60 and 232 which run from Long Beach into downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach to LAX.

In his 18 years of service with the MTA, he has never been late for an assignment and has not been off work because of an illness in the last four years. He has received numerous letters of commendation and has been chosen twice before as an MTA bus operator of the month.

Murrillo describes himself as a people lover and primarily enjoys senior citizens and small children. When operating his route, he believes you have to pay a little more attention.

"Give them a little kindness and they seem to perk up and smile," he says.

Murrillo likes to fish and travel in his spare time.

## Transit Police Trio Deliver Baby

Officers Aerwin Angus, Joseph Cupo, and Senior Officer Angel Frias were in the baby business recently. Angus and Cupo, on patrol in the San



## Births

**B**orn to Division 5 Mechanic Armando Tapia and his wife, Julie, a son, Armando, Jr. during the morning of Nov. 11, 1993 at Kaiser-Permanente Hospital in Bellflower. He weighed in at 8 lbs., 8 oz. and was 14 inches long. Writes Armando, "He makes our family complete!" ■

*See Baby, page 11*

# Transit Police Snare Taggers

by Sgt. Shari Barberic



**T**hanks to the efforts of Transit Police GHOST officers and MTA maintenance employees, several notorious taggers are in custody.

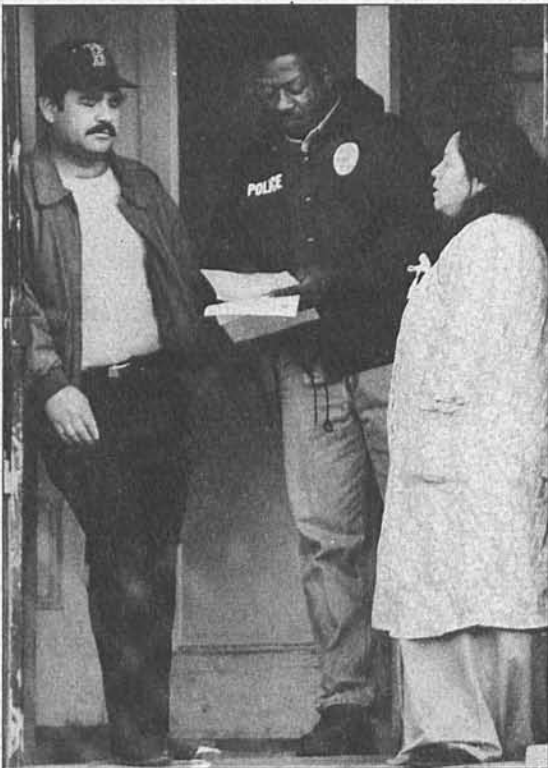
The first investigation began in early in November when Maintenance Supervisor Jimmie Jimenez contacted GHOST to report that several buses were severely damaged by taggers "scribing" or etching graffiti. Follow-up determined that one suspect, using the moniker "Big Lou" had caused most of the damage.

## Principal ID's Tagger as Former Student

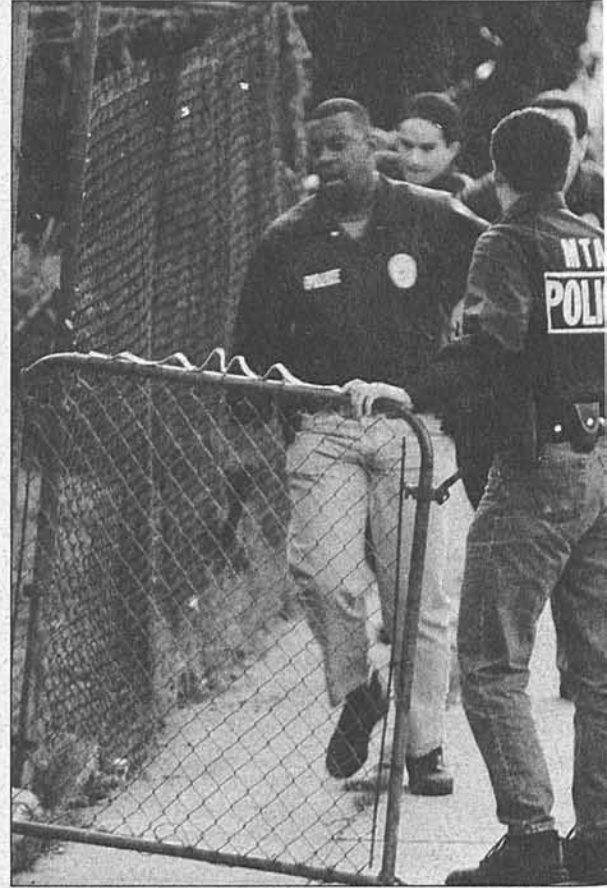
The next day GHOST officers Larry Barr and Jose Martinez met with the dean of Garfield High School, who identified "Big Lou" as a former student of that school and provided officers with his true name. Through contacts with street

informants, officers learned that Big Lou was the leader of a crew of taggers, known as the "Running the District Mob" (RTDM).

GHOST officers subsequently organized and conducted an undercover surveillance aboard a Garfield High School "tripper." Officer Angela Liljeblad saw Big Lou as well as several other Garfield High School students vandalizing bus #2005. Additional officers were requested to assist in the arrests. Officers Barr, Martinez, Linda



*GHOST Sgt. James Willis presents bill for \$38,000 in damages to the parents of two juvenile vandalism suspects.*



*GHOST officer serve search warrant at home of juvenile vandal.*

Slaughter, LaMark Williams, John Hardison, Charles Lewis, Robert Leffler, James Ferrell, Isaac Hill, Ira Terry, and Leonard Avila arrived and deployed tactically, insuring safe apprehension of the suspects.

Big Lou, another unidentified adult suspect, and four juvenile suspects were arrested for vandalizing bus #2005, and were booked on misdemeanor charges.

## Suspect Linked to \$100,000 Damage to MTA

Officers Barr and Martinez conducted an extensive follow-up investigation and determined that Big Lou had been responsible for vandalizing hundreds of buses resulting in an excess of





vandalism offenders.

\$100,000 dollars worth of damage to MTA property.

Officers sought and were granted a felony arrest warrant for Big Lou on vandalism charges, and on December 15, 1993, the warrant was served on him at his residence. Senior Officers Roy Romero, Fred Noya and Luis Hernandez assisted with entry into Big Lou's residence. Officer Patrick McCarthy and David Gomez provided assistance during the search of the residence and the recovery of evidence.

Big Lou was arrested, and officers seized numerous items linking him to extensive criminal graffiti vandalism over a five-year period.

**Graffiti Pair Nabbed**

Right on the heels of this success, GHOST officers snared two more high-profile vandals, "SEKT" and "SASH" who were suspected of inflicting more than \$100,000 of graffiti damages to MTA buses.

On Dec. 22, during the early evening hours, GHOST officers David Gomez and Robert Leffler were staking out the suspects' residence. The officers saw "SEKT" and "SASH" accompanied by another tagger exit the house. All three juveniles had graffiti paraphernalia and were heading toward the bus stop.

GHOST Officers John Rice, George Cranson, Angel Rivera, Isaac Hill, Ira Terry, Leonard Avila, Jose Garcia and Senior Officer Jack Goss were requested to assist. Thus began a difficult surveillance as the officers trailed the trio on buses and on foot, careful to avoid detection by the suspects.

Persistence and patience paid off for the officers when the suspects began tagging numerous buildings and utility poles in the area of 9th and Maple streets. Officers moved in for the arrest, and the suspects ran in various directions. But, thanks to the officers' carefully planned approach, the suspects were arrested without incident and charged with felony vandalism.

**Child Molestation Suspect Seized**

GHOST officers also assisted Patrol personnel in the arrest of a male adult for child-annoying on Dec. 14, 1993.

Senior Officer Brian Burdick and his partner, Officer Christopher Saliccioli were working patrol when they received a radio call of a

*See Suspect, page 9*



*Caprice Young*

**Goodbye, Caprice!**

Look for big achievements from Caprice Young, a special assistant in the Office of the CEO, who recently was named assistant deputy mayor of city services for the City of Los Angeles. The talented Yale University graduate says she'll miss her former MTA colleagues. Young, a CORO fellow, joined the agency six years ago, beginning as an intern. "My job was to decide what was going to be in the emergency supply cabinet," she says. She rose to the top quickly. She was on the design team that created the area teams and was the right hand for the LACTC deputy director of finance and administration.

Young, who earned her masters in public policy at U.S.C., is married to San Fernando Valley Area Team staffer Mark Dierking. ■

## Transit Police Shake into Action



**W**ithin minutes of the 6.6 Northridge quake, Transit Police organized an emergency response to assist with disaster relief efforts and ensure the safety of MTA patrons, employees and property.

As part of this effort, all officers assigned to the Division 15 substation in the San Fernando Valley were tasked with networking with the California National Guard, Red Cross, and the Los Angeles Police Department to aid public safety programs.

A command post was established at the National Guard Headquarters in Van Nuys where Transit Police liaised with other emergency service agencies and organized a strategic plan. Transit Police contacted all Red Cross shelters and temporary evacuation sites to assure assistance with public transportation needs. MTA police also aided the National Guard with transportation of Guard personnel, at times performing emergency transport themselves.

## New Transit Police Video Spotlights Rail

### Green Line staff and police team up to produce statewide safety video

"Rail Emergencies - Approach with Caution" is the title of the latest training video to receive approval from the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) which regulates police training throughout the state of California.

Produced by Rail Operations Green Line Division Manager Tom Jasmin, and directed and narrated by Green Line TOS Dennis Villard, the video details proper methods for law enforcement personnel to approach rail emergencies.

Lt. Dennis Flowers, Transit Police systems security supervisor, provided technical advice during production, coordinating with the



*MTA Transit Police Lt. Walt Schick (right) exchanges information with the National Guard's Lt. Anthony McNamara at National Guard Headquarters in Van Nuys.*

As time progressed, Transit Police were called upon to assist the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles County Safety Police with control at the FEMA Centers. ■

Transportation Department and with the Los Angeles city and county fire departments.

The video features Transit Police Sgt. Everett Rodriguez and Senior Officer Johnnie Jones demonstrating safe procedures for entering the train and lowering the pantograph in the event the train operator is injured.

MTA Transit Police Lt. Walt Schick, who is in charge of the department's training section, submitted the completed video to POST for certification. The video will be broadcast statewide to law enforcement agencies via the POST Satellite Telecommunications System at a future date. ■

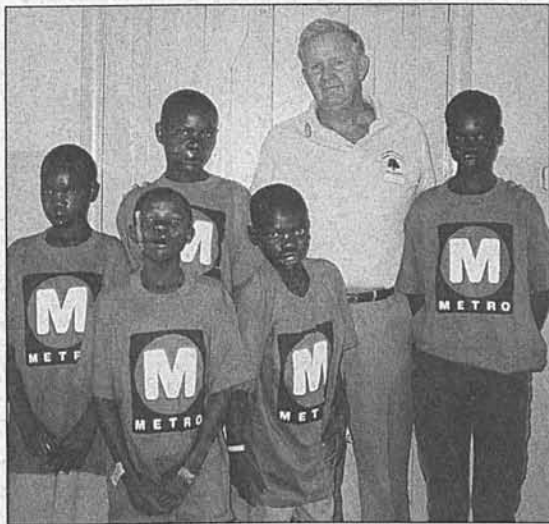




# Bob Minahan Touches Hearts in Kenya

**B**ob Minahan with the MTA advanced technology and economic development department recently had the experience of a lifetime.

Minahan has returned from Nairobi, Kenya, where he played a key role in ensuring that 250 children who needed reconstructive surgery for



*MTA's Bob Minahan with Kenyan youngsters after their surgical miracles.*

## **SUSPECT, FROM PAGE 7**

possible child molestation suspect aboard a southbound bus at Pacific Coast Highway and Palos Verdes Boulevard. Subsequent information from Dispatch stated that the suspect had exited the bus at PCH and Prospect and was walking northbound.

GHOST officers Tom Cody, Gary Borg, and Christopher Griego were close by and began a search for the suspect. They located a man fitting the suspect's description and detained him pending further investigation. Sgt. Mark Jennings and Officer Sean Angotti arrived to assist the GHOST officers.

facial deformities from cleft palate, burns and tumors — got it.

Minahan is the logistics coordinator for Operation Smile, a private, non-profit organization which recently sent three all-volunteer teams of plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and support staff from the United States to three hospitals in Kenya. You may recall that many members of the former LACTC Fun Club donated monies (*MTA News*, September issue) that covered the cost of a corrective operation for one child.

Minahan spent two weeks in Kenya where he accompanied doctors performing surgery over a two-week period.

"The trip was so satisfying," said Minahan, who is the project manager for the Ventura aerial alignment. "It was gratifying to see the kids get the repairs that will last a lifetime."

Minahan may return to Kenya this summer for another Operation Lifesaver. ■

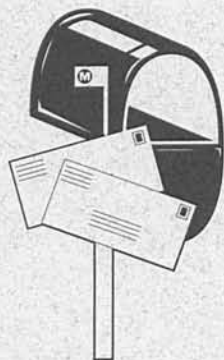


*One of Minahan's favorite photos. Members of the former LACTC Fun Club donated funds to pay for reconstructive surgery for a Kenyan child.*

Officers Burdick and Salciccioli contacted the victim, a 15-year-old male, and transported him to the suspect's location for a field identification. The victim positively identified the suspect as the man who had tried to touch him and had passed him a note threatening to rape him. Officer Burdick conducted an in-depth interview of the victim and discovered that the suspect, a 41-year-old Los Angeles resident, had also harassed other adult passengers by grabbing them and passing lewd notes to them after the bus departed LAX terminal. The officers recovered several items of evidence linking the suspect to the crime and strengthening the case. ■

# The Call Box

## Public Commendations



"By acting swiftly, you, hopefully, have discouraged others from wanting to do the same thing."

✉ Dear MTA:

I have been a regular rider on the Metro Red Line since its opening this year. The service is adequate and reliable.

The other week I was most disturbed to see graffiti at the Pershing Square station. You can imagine my surprise when I discovered the vandalism had been completely removed a couple of days later.

I want to commend you on the quick response. By acting swiftly you, hopefully, have discouraged others from wanting to do the same thing. I also noticed the greater police presence at that particular station following the incident. Bravo!

It is with pleasure that I will continue to ride the subway with the expectation that it is safe and adds to the quality of life of the community. Keep up the good work.

**Thank you.**  
**Toby Bruno**  
**Toluca Lake**

✉ Dear MTA:

I commute to work on the bus four days a week, and the 426 line is my lifeblood. I would like you to know that you have an exceptional driver in Mr. **Jesus**

**Saldana**, badge number 556. I have ridden with Mr. Saldana many times and he has always been most courteous, if somewhat quiet.

Today, however, Mr. Saldana made a great difference in my commute and I would like you to know about it. I live close to my stop, but I have to cross a very busy divided street at a point where there is no signal to get to the stop.

This morning, I was a tad late and traffic was heavy. Shortly after pulling away from the stop, Mr. Saldana saw me stranded on the other side of the road. Motioning for me to cross, he stopped the bus and waited until I could reach him, knowing that the next bus was 25 minutes late. I certainly didn't even hope for that kind of service, and although I'm sure it probably isn't in the rulebook, I've yet to find any rider who doesn't applaud those drivers who make an exception to assist other riders in need of help.

As a "regular," it is wonderful to know that I am person, not just a number, in Mr. Saldana's professional care, I hope that MTA also recognizes the fine service he provides.

**Sincerely,**  
**Marilyn Stein**  
**Van Nuys**

✉ Dear MTA:

Today, my day started poorly — my car broke down.

Therefore, I had to take the bus! Usually an uncomfortable experience for me, this time proved to be more than enjoyable.

On boarding, I asked the driver how much for the fare amount. He answered with a smile. I then noticed him give a thumbs up sign to an elderly citizen across Santa Monica Boulevard. He announced over the P.A. system that we were waiting for a passenger. Nobody grumbled, and ... when the man stepped up to show his pass he had the brightest smile I've seen in a long time. It made my day a lot better.

The driver continued west calling each street and being altogether a very pleasant and courteous person.

At Las Palmas, I asked him his name, which was **Ruben Hernandez**. He was driving bus #9045, which I might just take again for the kicks of it.

**Sincerely,**  
**Rick Metzler**  
**Hollywood**



# Equipment Maintenance Extends Hearts to Homeless

**S**tuffed teddy bears, miniature fire trucks, and bottles of perfume practically spilled out of the two barrels that Mechanic Jess Ramsey hauled into the building that houses the Homeless Outreach Program at Sixth and Ceres near downtown.

The gifts were courtesy of Equipment Maintenance employees, who, once again, outdid themselves during the department's recent annual charity drive.

The drive was spearheaded by employees Mary Mullaly, Stella Duncan, Jo Derry, Linda Shay, Ellen Levine, Cindy Waller, and Ramsey. It culminated in a potluck party at the Central Maintenance Facility, with 75 members of the department bringing a dish native to the country from which their families emigrated.

"We also made stuffed animal centerpieces to



*Cindy Waller, Stella Duncan, and Mary Mullaly, who orchestrated the charity drive, with some friends.*

give to the homeless," said Mullaly, a clerk who was the chairwoman of the toy drive.

The group selected both the Homeless Outreach Program Los Angeles Commission for Alcohol and Drug Abuse to receive the goodies. ■



*Pictured from left are Directors Mel Wilson, Antonio Villaraigosa, Officer Aerwin Angus, Director Hal Croys, Officer Joseph Cupo, Director John Fasana, Senior Officer Angel Frias, and Police Chief Sharon Papa.*

**BABY, FROM PAGE 5**

Fernando Valley, were flagged down by a man screaming that his wife was about to have a baby. The pair radioed Transit Police headquarters downtown. They got Frias, who had done the deed before, and he relayed instructions to

them. As soon as the little guy was born, the two officers wrapped him in a blanket and sat tight until paramedics came.

The three officers were cheered by the Board at a recent Safety Ad Hoc Committee Meeting.

**Bob Cashin Honored**

Robert Cashin, director of the MTA's Southeast Area Team, was recently presented with the California Highway Patrol's Division Chief's Commendation for outstanding performance. Cashin received kudos for the implementation of the successful Metro Freeway Service Patrol in coordination with the CHP, and for the creation and implementation of the enhanced Major Incident Response Program. The commendation also notes his obtaining funding for the Los Angeles Communication Center's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system upgrade. ■



*Bob Cashin (left) accepts CHP award from Chief Ed Gomez.*

**MTA NEWS**

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**WINSTON, FROM PAGE 3**

Winston, whose sports idol is Magic Johnson, has traveled throughout the world — and he started doing so at an early age. He frowns on the idea that one waits until retirement to do those favorite things, go those dream places. People should act on their plans as soon as they

can afford to, he says. "When you stop working, you feel old — and that's when despair, tiredness, and the feeling of having been cheated set in."

"The world doesn't owe me anything," he declares, before zipping up two flights of stairs to his manager's office. "That's why I'm still here." ■

**Clip and Send In!**

If you would like to share your unit's achievements with us, please write the particulars down on this form and send it to:

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