

# Metro

EMPLOYEE MAGAZINE OF THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

 Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

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# Family



## Partnership for progress

*MTA Construction, Operations bring Wilshire on line*

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The MTA's Bob Reece is making it big in Hollywood with a new screenplay.

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Cover photo: Illustrating the MTA Construction/Operations partnership at the Wilshire/Western Metro Red Line station are (from left) Jesse Diaz, Rail Operations start-up manager; Charles Stark, Segment 2 construction project manager; and on the platform, Tom Lee, construction manager, and Joe Ellis, train operator of the year, 1995.

Clarence Hendricks photo.

## Metro Family

A monthly employee publication of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

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# CEO Thoughts and Thanks



*A fresh wind is blowing through the MTA, and it's a renewed commitment to customer service as our first priority. Within that commitment, my vision of the agency is one in which each employee has an absolute passion for making a service difference.*

I'm so committed to this idea that I looked for some way to make a personal expression of appreciation for employees whose vision matched mine. Maybe you've seen the result. They're the "problem solver" buttons. The "problem solver" button is my way of acknowledging individual employees who show initiative, determination and skill in getting tough jobs done.

If you get "caught in the act" of doing something extraordinary, and I find out about it, you'll be labeled a "problem solver." I hope you'll wear the button proudly.

### Employee recognition

I want all of us to get involved in recognizing the outstanding performances of our employees. We make a difference each day that we come to work and we ought to be proud enough to stand up and say so.

It's time that we turn our attention to

the more positive aspects of working for the MTA. And, on that note, I'm pleased to report that we have just initiated the "MTA Employee of the Month" program.

Starting in July, all MTA employees will be able to nominate any employee below the director level for Employee of the Month honors. The Employee of the Month award will go to those individuals who consistently demonstrate outstanding performance and who best embody the spirit of striving for excellence.

One of the most exciting aspects of this program is that recognition is tied directly to the agency's mission. Employees who contribute to the fulfillment of the MTA mission will be honored for their work. As individuals are honored, their teams, their departments and units, also will receive recognition.

I want this program to encourage team spirit and a can-do attitude. Above all, I want it to convey the message of how

important each and every employee is to the accomplishment of our goals.

I encourage each of you to get involved. If you know a regular full-time employee who consistently performs at a superior level, is a team player, acts with integrity, demonstrates initiative, and inspires others to action, please nominate him or her at your earliest opportunity. I'm looking forward to September when the first employees of the month will be announced.

### And thanks

Special thanks to all who contributed to the successful opening of the Wilshire extension of the Metro Red Line. Your heroic effort during long days on your feet demonstrated a can-do attitude with sterling results. Hats off to you all!

Congratulations, also, to the budget team. As you will see elsewhere in this issue, our FY '97 budget is balanced without reliance on one-time revenues, layoffs or service cuts. Our bus and rail operations are fully funded, including increases to municipal operations and improvements in the bus system. I believe the County of Los Angeles will be well-served by the spending plan that was recently adopted by the Board of Directors.

Finally, thanks to all of you who continue to strive for excellence in the midst of planned and continuous change. ■



### Rail Rodeo Winners

Here's the hot-shot Metro Red Line maintenance team who represented the MTA at the national Rail Maintenance Rodeo in Atlanta in June. From left with their instructor, Conrad Santana, are Eston Bakaimani, Ramiro Estavillo and Ruben Baez. The team took fourth place out of 16 teams competing in the arduous event.



# Ham operators are forming a club at MTA

*No radio, no experience necessary to join*

**W**hen the Red Cross needs communications during an emergency, who do they turn to? When a soldier stationed abroad wants to call his mom, who often makes the connection? Amateur radio operators.

These and many other communications services are performed every day by America's ham operators who do it to serve the community or just to have fun. Interested in becoming a ham, yourself? Have we got a club for you!

Some 40 MTA employees, led by veteran ham operator Phillip Gonzales of Telecom, are currently forming the MTA Amateur Radio Club. The club meets

*It's not necessary to own a radio to join.*

twice monthly during the noon hour and also offers training sessions for those studying for Federal Communications Commission amateur radio licenses.

"We're involved in a broad range of activities," says Gonzales. "Electronics, high-tech equipment, emergency commu-

nications, helping people during disasters or just making friends with other ham operators around the world."

## No Morse Code

About half the club's members already hold FCC licenses. The others are studying for the written exam which covers elements of FCC law, antenna theory, terminology and other topics. Basic licensees are not required to know Morse code.

"I studied 30 minutes a day for 30 days and aced the test," says club member Richard Witte, who qualified for his ham license last year. "If you come to our study groups, read the material and ask questions of the experienced members, the test shouldn't be a problem."

Most club members have ham radio equipment, but it's not necessary to own a radio to join the club.

"Some people start with a handie-talkie or a portable radio that you can buy for as little as \$200," says Witte. "With all the amateur repeaters in the Los Angeles area, you can talk to a lot of other hams with very inexpensive equipment."

With the club still in the formative stages, there's no membership fee or dues



MTA Amateur Radio Club members Richard Witte and Transit Police Officer John Lee make a radio check during a national field day exercise at Friendship Park in Rancho Palos Verdes. The club offers many such activities for members.

yet. The next step is to draw up by-laws, elect officers and submit required information to MTA Employee Activities in order to gain recognition as an established club.

"Forming the Amateur Radio Club has a value to the community, to the individual and to the MTA," says Gonzales. "We're a group of specialized communicators who can be called on for help during

emergencies when the MTA's own communications resources may be over-taxed." ■

For information about the MTA Amateur Radio Club, contact Phillip Gonzales at 922-7682, Richard Witte at 922-3677 or Ralph Sbragia at 922-7369.

## MTA's tax-sheltered retirement funds

*401(k), 457 plans put pre-tax dollars to work for employees' future*

**R**ight now, some 5,700 MTA employees are earning extra money through the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the 401(k) Thrift Plan. Pre-tax dollars that are salted away for retirement, but are available in certain circumstances to use in emergencies or for quick loans.

Take the 457 plan, for example, a tax shelter open to both union and non-represented employees. Earnings are based on a selection of mutual funds and other investment options. The employee may choose from a list of 25 options.

Current tax laws allow employees to sock away up to 25 percent of their pay or \$7,500 per year, whichever is less, although that may increase if Congress passes legislation this year hitching the contributions to the Consumer Price Index.

Even better, 457 has a "catch-up" pro-

vision under which an employee can defer up to \$15,000 a year for three consecutive years prior to retirement, based on salary and past record of contributions.

### Some restrictions

Funds withdrawn by an employee who leaves the MTA can only be placed in another 457 plan. When an employee departs the MTA the employee has only 60 days to select a distribution plan.

"If the employee doesn't select an option, he or she may not make another selection until age 65," says Ed Paull, pension and benefits manager. "All funds withdrawn will be taxed as ordinary income."

The 401(k) plan is a similar animal - earnings are based on the same 25 investment options - with somewhat different provisions. An employee can invest up to

\$9,500 a year, but there's no "catch-up."

Distributions are taxed as ordinary income and an additional 10 percent tax penalty is collected for any distribution prior to age 59 1/2. All 401(k) funds are "portable" and can be rolled into an IRA or into another employer's 401(k) plan.

### Borrow up to 50%

And there's a new wrinkle: The 401(k) now has a loan provision under which an employee can borrow up to 50 percent of the account value. Loan interest rates are tagged to the prime rate, plus one-half percent.

"The one-page loan document is easy to fill out and the money can be available in the same week it's requested," says Brenda Bozeman, benefits technician. "Repayments are handled by payroll deduction from the bi-weekly paycheck.

Employees also can continue to make contributions during the life of the loan."

The best source for account and loan information in English or Spanish about the 401(k) and 457 plans is the ICMA Automated Service Line: 1-800-669-7400. The line is open from 5:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., PST. By selecting various options, callers can get information about personal accounts, share prices for specific funds, earning rates, fund transfers and other information.

Employees also may make an appointment with Francisco Ubieto, marketing representative for ICMA Retirement Corp., the MTA's retirement plan consultant, for assistance in designing a portfolio. Ubieto can be reached at 310-322-5449, Ext. 5941. ■

# A Hollywood dream comes true

*Fledgling screenwriter's hard work pays off in a movie deal*

By Bill Heard

Just back from a second honeymoon in Hawaii, the MTA's Bob Reece was not looking forward to lunch with his attorney and business manager last May at a Hollywood restaurant. A screenwriter and short story writer in his spare time, Reece anticipated the worst. The glum voices on his answering machine had signaled another rejection of his latest movie script.

While the three waited for their meal to arrive, he drew no comfort from the long faces across the table. Then, as the steaming Thai dishes were placed before them, the bomb fell.

But instead of disappointment, there were broad smiles and the best news he could have hoped for. Twentieth Century Fox would buy his script! Ron Howard's company, Imagine Entertainment (*Apollo 13*, *Backdraft*) would produce it! And, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*, Fox would pay in the "low-six figures."

"The guys set me up to believe the deal had fallen through, so the good news came as quite a shock," recalls Reece, the MTA's video director and editor. "The biggest emotion I felt was relief. But, I also felt vindicated because I had been trying to sell a script for so long."

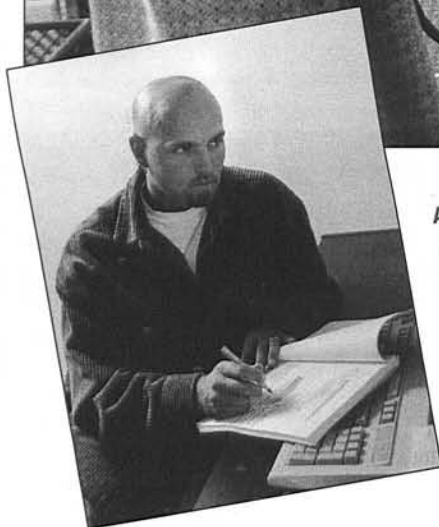
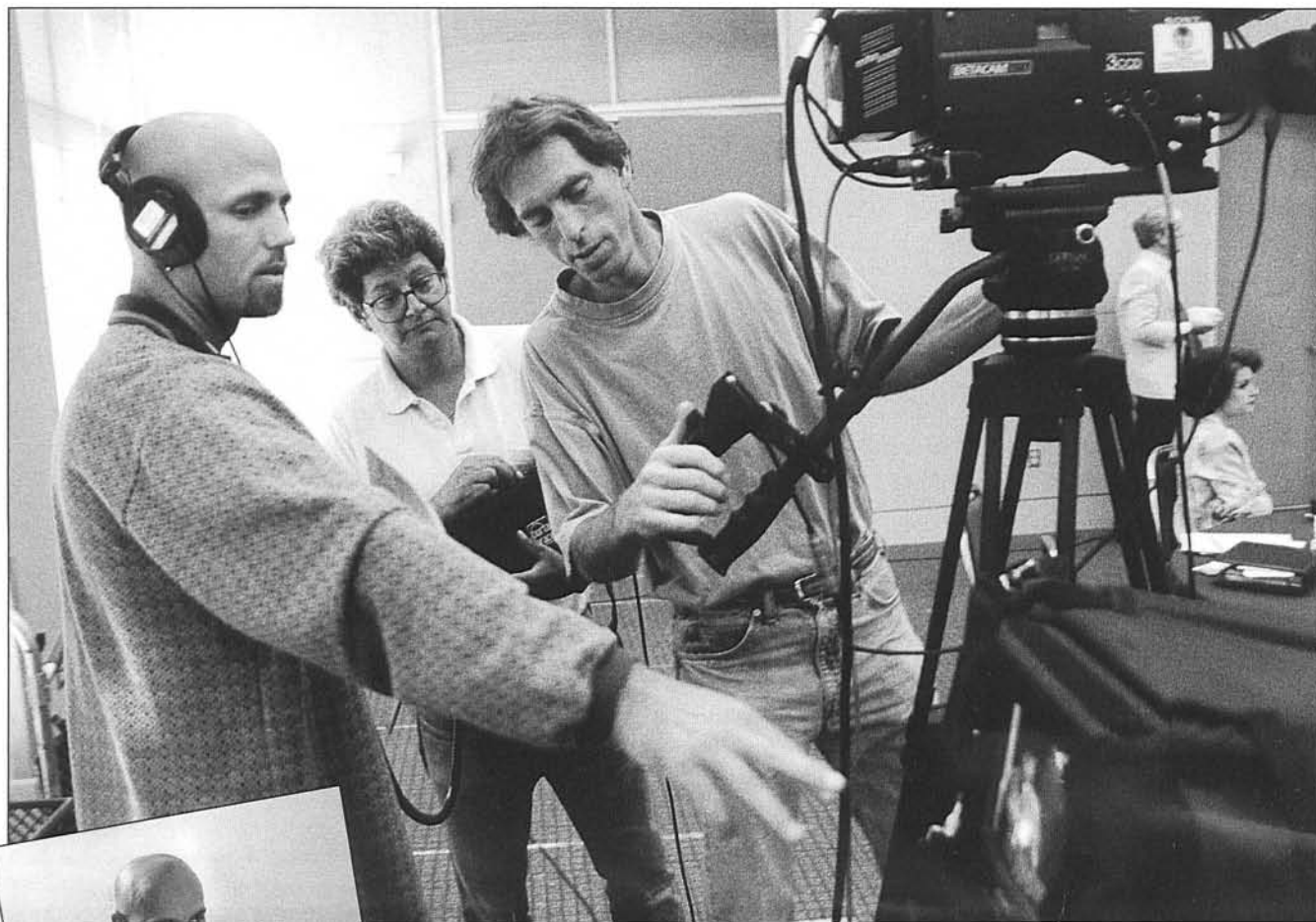
*'The biggest emotion I felt was relief. But, I also felt vindicated.'*

To the 29-year-old Reece, who began writing stories as a second grader in Orange, success as a screenwriter has been a life-long dream. But he also has other creative talents that have shaped his career.

After high school, Reece earned an AA in visual communications. Then, it was on to Columbia College, a small film school on La Brea, for a bachelor's degree.

"They had cameras, sound stages and editing facilities and that's what I needed," he says. "I didn't want to sit in a classroom and talk about theory or watch movies."

Reece supported himself during college as a freelance photographer shooting catalog fashions for L.A.'s garment industry. Following graduation in 1990, he moved on to more challenging assignments in Europe, working out of



**Above: Reece directs cameraman Gilbert Prowler (R) and sound engineer Paul Moro during a location shoot for an MTA video project.**

**Left: In his home office, Reece spends his evening hours writing and revising scripts,**

fashion centers in Milan, Italy, and Vienna, Austria.

Reece returned to the United States in 1991 and, through a referral, worked on several projects for the MTA's video production department. This eventually led to a full-time position as video director and editor.

### Directing videos

Five days a week, Reece can be found either at his video editing console on the 19th floor of the Gateway Headquarters building or in the field directing a camera crew. These jobs may range from a televised talk by CEO Joe Drew to safety training videos or MTA public service announcements.

Before work and often into the wee

hours of the morning, Reece concentrates on his writing — sometimes a short story, other times one of the three screenplays he has written. He also is a self-taught musician who composes scores on the piano, although he can't read music.

"Film is such a perfect marriage of all these things for me," he says. "It combines the visual, the story-telling and music all in one medium."

Reece's first effort for the screen was "Notes on Valet Zen," a comedy about a young man who considers himself the world's best valet parking attendant. Next, he wrote "Third Floor," a dark comedy about an apartment building manager who alienates his tenants. Nibbles from some studios, he shrugs, but no takers yet.

### Romantic comedy

Fox has purchased "A Fare to Remember," a romantic comedy about a

young woman who takes a taxi from New York City to Chicago when all the airports are closed by a fierce storm. Oddly enough, much of both scripts was written while Reece, himself, was in transit.

"I sketched out almost every scene while riding Metrolink to and from work," says the Van Nuys resident. "That gave me another hour and a half of writing time each day."

What happens next with Reece's script as it goes through the development process is anyone's guess. Things move slowly in Hollywood and movies can be years in the making from Big Deal to Big Screen.

"They could change it into an alien abduction story if they want," he says. "I hope that doesn't happen, but it's their property."

Despite the murky future for the screenplay, Reece's vision of his own future is clear. He wants to continue telling the MTA's story through visual productions.

"I like what I do a lot," he says. "This work keeps me grounded. This is what life is really about. It's what our agency is trying to do in working with the real people of the city I live in." ■



# Celebrating the Wilshire Corridor

VIPs and volunteers usher in new subway line with the approval of thousands of visitors



Counter-clockwise from left: Saiful Tipu (R), Metro Blue Line train operator, with his nieces and nephews, takes a moment for the camera during a ride on the Red Line's Wilshire extension. The children, from left front, are Asif, Nadia, Kaniz, Arif and Noim.

MTA rail mechanic David Gomez and his wife, Diane, (center) brought family members out to tour the Wilshire/Western station and take a ride on the subway.

Julie Silliman of Metro Art directs MTA employee family members to points of interest in the Eastern Portal.



The Wilshire extension expands the Red Line by nearly 50 percent, adding 2.1 miles of dual tunnels to the existing 3.2 miles of revenue track that begins at Union Station. New stations at Vermont, Normandie and Western now give passengers a total of 8 boarding points.

The stations are designed in a contemporary architectural style. Each has security and safety features, including electronic surveillance and closed-circuit TV cameras. The stations are wheelchair and handicapped accessible and have ticket machine instructions in English, Spanish and Braille.

"Most of the people were saying the subway is a good idea. It'll take them less time to get to work."

Lonell Anderson, operator  
MTA Division 5

The Wilshire/Vermont station features large murals by artist Peter Shire, entitled "Los Angeles Seen." At Wilshire/Normandie, commuters can view "Festival of Masks Parade," a mural by Frank Romero, while at Wilshire/Western, artist Richard Wyatt's art project is titled, "People Coming, People Going."

Increasing passenger convenience are parking lots and "kiss 'n ride" lots at the stations, as well as direct, free connections with 16 bus lines. Red Line ridership is expected to jump from 22,000 daily to 40,000 within a year.

Travel time from Wilshire/Western to Union Station is only 12 minutes, with trains averaging 35 mph. Trains operate at five-minute intervals during morning and evening peak periods, every eight minutes mid-day and at 20-minute intervals in the evening. No service is offered between 11:45 p.m. and 4:43 a.m.

Still under construction and slated for completion in December, 1998, is the 4.8-mile segment from Wilshire/Vermont to Hollywood/Vine. Work also is under way to extend the subway under the Hollywood Hills to North Hollywood. An opening is anticipated in 2001.

Future expansions of the Red Line are planned from Wilshire/Western southwest to Pico/San Vicente, and from Union Station to Whittier/Atlantic in East Los Angeles. ■

Enthusiastic applause from a crowd of some 300 VIPs greeted a Metro Red Line train as it burst through a banner into the Wilshire/Vermont station, July 12. The excitement signaled the start of a weekend of celebration that marked the opening of subway service on the Wilshire Corridor.

During the official ceremony, speakers praised the vision and leadership of those who worked to obtain public support and funding for construction of the Red Line.

"They recognized that we can no longer pave our way to mobility," said Leslie Rogers, Federal Transit Administration regional administrator.

CEO Joe Drew publicly thanked the Metro Rail engineering team, designers and contractors, and the combined Construction-Transit Operations startup group, commending the "quality of the effort by all members of the MTA team."

By constructing the Red Line, "we're connecting the cultural fiber of our community," he said. "We're building for the future."

"The opening gave us a chance to meet our ridership. Talking with riders helps us tailor our telephone information service to meet the needs of the public."

Wil Beard, supervisor  
MTA Telephone Information

Drew quoted a line from the hit movie, Independence Day, in which a character emerges from a Los Angeles subway tunnel following an alien invasion and says, "Thank God for the Metro Rail!"

It was a happy crowd of visitors who turned out for free rides and tours during the opening weekend. MTA observers tabulated a total of about 85,000 boardings for the two-day event. Visitors found ready access to the four-car trains, thanks

to efficient crowd control by the Transit Police and about 225 MTA volunteers who directed people into the stations and kept order on the platforms.

Above ground, visitors were entertained by such acts as the Voices of Zoe Gospel Choir, the jazz group Malachi and the Megatrends, South American musicians Andez, and blues singer Zola Moon. MTA volunteers distributed hundreds of posters, water bottles and other gifts. Many youngsters sported flags, stars and other painted designs on their faces.

Public visiting, tours and train rides were the final elements of a two-week Wilshire Corridor celebration that began with MTA Employee Day, June 30, which turned out scores of employees and their family members. That event was followed, July 2, by Metro Red Line Team Appreciation Day, a thank-you to the MOS-2 start-up group.

# The search for

*Programs honor exceptional performers.*



The Employee Recognition Task Force is responsible for developing program guidelines and serving for a year as the selection committee. From bottom, clockwise, are Phyllis Tucker, chair; Luanne Swenberg, Warren Morse, Ron Jue, Dominique Grinnell, program coordinator; Herman Vargas and (center) Ed Reyes. Not pictured are Byron Lee, Jay Carpenter and Leila Procopio.

The MTA is launching two new programs this summer to recognize superior employee performance and to solicit employees' ideas on how to save money, increase efficiency or improve working conditions.

The Employee of the Month Program officially began in early July with the distribution of nomination forms to all departments. The first group of seven Employees of the Month — one each from Administration, Communications, Construction, Executive Office, Finance, Transit Operations and Regional Transportation Planning and Development — will be honored in September.

Details of an Employee Suggestion Program will be announced later this year. The program is intended to encourage employees to submit ideas that will facilitate change. An employee task force, appointed by the executive officers, will develop the guidelines for the program, which may include monetary awards for employees whose suggestions are accepted by an evaluation committee.

### 100 Ways contest

In mid-July, the agency kicked off a "100 Ways to Improve Bus Service Contest" and challenged employees to recommend innovative ways to meet that goal.

"We're looking for practical suggestions that will help cut costs and save time and that will have a positive impact on our customers," said CEO Joe Drew. "No one knows our business better than the people who work every day to put the service on the street. Their ideas will be key to this program."

Contest winners will be announced in late September.

Rounding out the MTA's thrust toward increased communications between management and employees is a series of Employee Appreciation Days at the oper-

ating divisions and monthly CEO "brown bag" lunches with members of various departments.

Employee Appreciation Days were held at Divisions 5 and 8 in June and at Division 6 in July. Events are scheduled at Divisions 1, 3, and 12 in August.

### Brown bag lunches

At this writing, Drew has attended brown bag lunches with Regional Transportation Planning and Development, Customer Relations, Transit Operations, Administration and Management Audit Services.

"Employee Appreciation Days and the brown baggers are excellent opportunities for me to find out what employees are thinking," said Drew. "Employees at

*The program will recognize those who strive for excellence.*

every level of the organization feel free to tell me what's on their minds. It's valuable for me to receive that kind of input."

### Employee of the Month

The Employee of the Month program will recognize those who strive for excellence and who help the MTA achieve its mission of serving the public — whether that includes carrying passengers, maintaining equipment, planning transportation programs, providing information, constructing transit facilities, or any of the myriad functions the MTA performs for the public.

Every employee below the director level who has been with the MTA a minimum of six months is eligible to be nominated as an Employee of the Month. Any employee can nominate any co-worker, or can nominate themselves.



# or excellence

ers; seek ideas to improve MTA service



Nomination forms, which are available in the kitchens of all MTA buildings, require a written description of how the nominee has met the criteria for the honor. The form also has space for a description of the nominee's specific contributions that demonstrate excellent performance.

### Five criteria

"There are five criteria we'll use to judge which employees deserve to be honored as Employees of the Month," said Drew. "Those criteria are the quality of the nominee's work, teamwork, dependability, initiative and motivation of himself, herself and others. We want to reward excellence."

After the nomination form has been completed, it must be reviewed and signed by the nominee's department head or director. Completed forms must be submitted for review by the second Friday of each month for consideration in the selection process for the next month's awards.

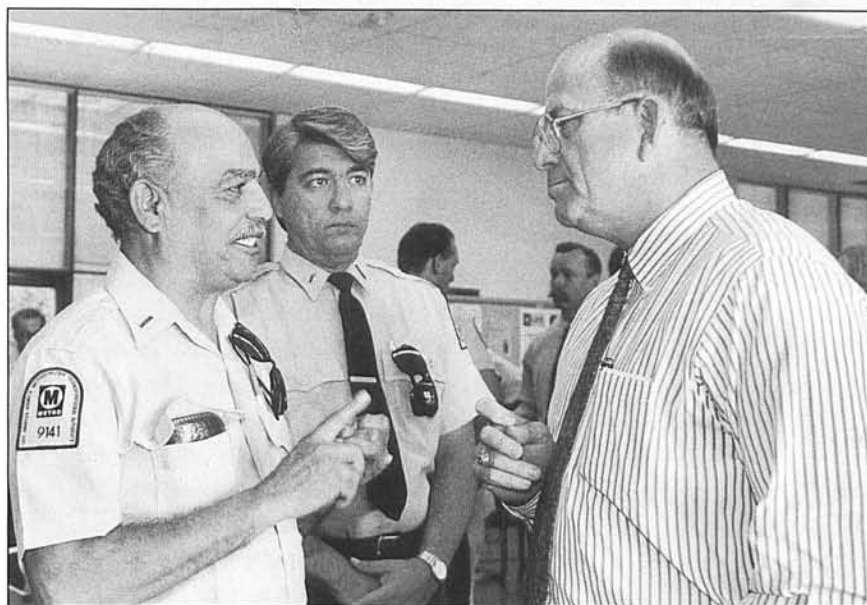
Following department head review, the nomination goes to the unit executive officer for approval. The form with the three signatures — nominating employee, department head and executive officer — must reach the Internal Communications Department by the fourth Friday of the month for the nominee to be considered for the program the following month.

Internal Communications will present all approved nominations to the Employee of the Month Selection Committee for further consideration. The 10-member committee, which includes representatives from each major unit, will study the nominations and select the seven Employees of the Month.

Those chosen as Employees of the Month will receive an award from their executive officer and have their photo displayed in the MTA cafeteria area. The photos also will appear in Metro Family magazine. All nominees will receive a letter congratulating them for their outstanding performance. ■



Photos: Tracy Mostovoy, The Perfect Exposure



**Clockwise from above left: Milo Victoria, Division 5 deputy service operations manager, (C), shows CEO Joe Drew a bus seat back that has been scarred with graffiti. From left are Service Operations Manager Bill Haines, Regional General Manager Ralph Wilson and Dana Coffey, deputy service operations manager.**

**Division 8 Service Operations Manager Tony Sandoval (L) and Northern Regional General Manager Jon Hillmer talk with TOS Tony Amoroso and Operator Fidel Mendoza of Division 8.**

**Bus Operators Lou Fontanez and Gus Fanfanssian make a point with CEO Joe Drew during his Division 8 visit.**

# Abracadabra! Now you see it, now you don't!

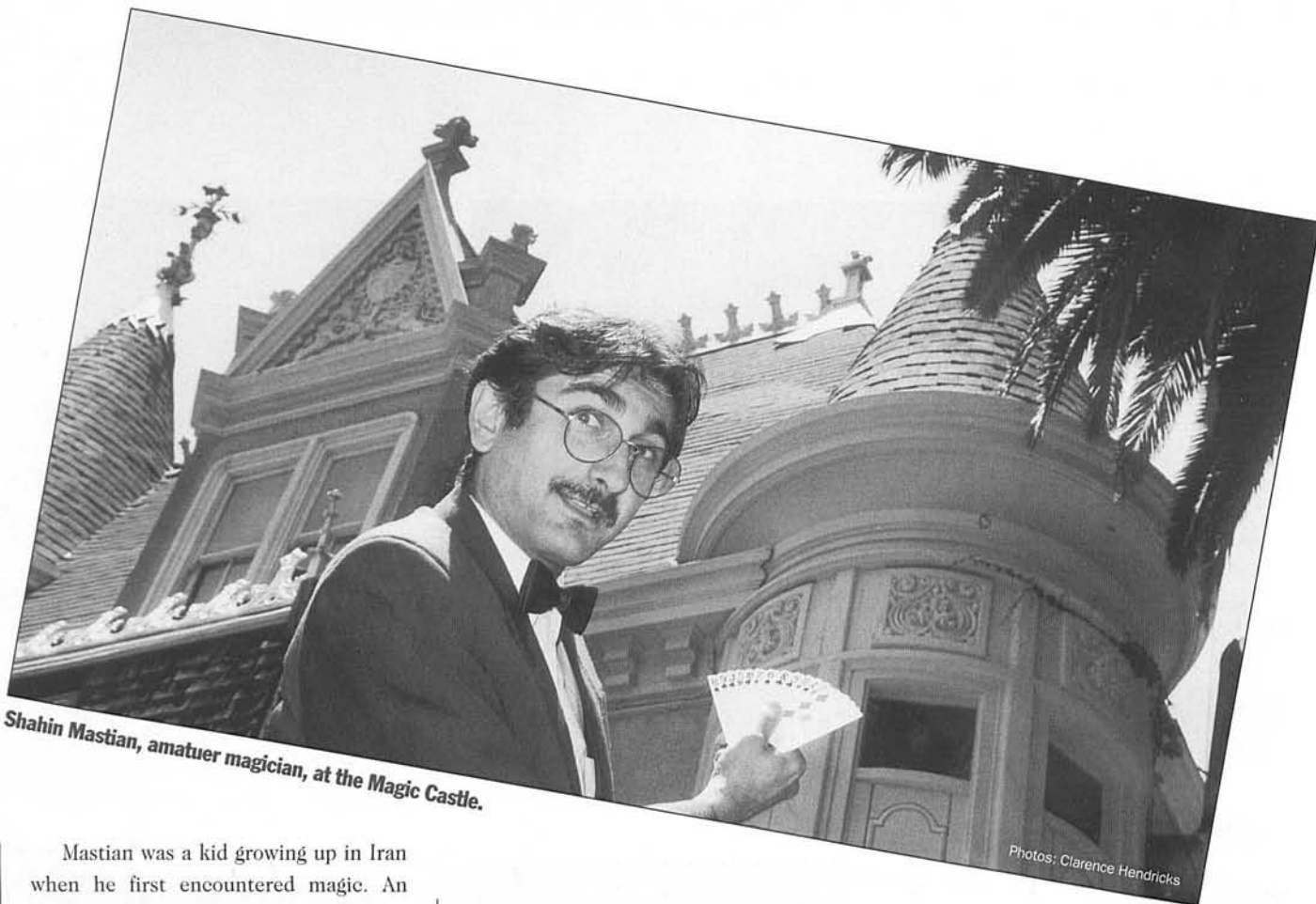
*The conjurer's art is a problem-solving opportunity for MTA's Mastian*

**F**or Shahin Mastian, amateur magician and MTA computer engineer, magic is a problem-solving opportunity.

"With computers, I'll program a code to solve a problem and if one statement goes wrong, the program fails," says the accomplished sleight-of-hand artist. "With magic, the problem is the illusion. If one sequence goes wrong, the magic fails."

Watching the 39-year-old Mastian perform his prestidigitation, however, the observer isn't likely to see an illusion go wrong. Cards and coins disappear and reappear miraculously from between his slim fingers. Disjoined ropes are made whole again with a flick of the wrist.

"Select a card and place it deep in the deck," says Mastian, shuffling the deck and snapping his fingers. "Is this your card?"



Shahin Mastian, amateur magician, at the Magic Castle.

Photos: Clarence Hendricks

Mastian was a kid growing up in Iran when he first encountered magic. An elderly man he met in a café in his hometown of Tehran inspired his early interest. Over the years, which included moving to the United States in 1979 when he was 21, other interests took the place of magic.

"I went into computers and for many years that was all the magic I could perform," he says. Mastian graduated from Cal State Dominguez Hills in 1982 with a B.S. in computer science and joined the RTD's MIS department. He earned a masters degree in computer engineering from USC in 1985.

Still single today, his interests range from computers to magic to wind surfing. "Even wind surfing is a problem-solving opportunity," he says, "because you have to change your sails to meet the wind direction in order to follow your course."

### Interest rekindled

His interest in magic was rekindled in 1989 when he caught Magician Eric Maurin's performance at a local restaurant. They struck up a friendship and Maurin became his mentor.

"The tricks I learned from Eric I first tried out on friends," says Mastian. "When they said, 'Do it again,' I knew it looked like magic."

With coaching from Maurin and other magicians, Mastian soon decided he would attempt a genuine feat of magic: membership in the Academy of Magical Arts, Inc., one of the nation's most prestigious magicians clubs.

The club is headquartered at the Magic Castle, a spooky Victorian mansion in Hollywood. Professional members include Harry Blackstone Jr., David Copperfield, Siegfried and Roy, and comedian/magicians Steve Martin and Harry Anderson.

### Club audition

To prepare for his membership audition into the exclusive club in 1991, Mastian sought advice from a fellow employee and amateur magician, Paul Westerline, who retired from the MTA in 1994. He studied books on magic and put together a demonstration of the classic illusions.

"Lots of magicians use gimmicks or high-tech equipment," Mastian says. "I'm trying to be an artist. Anything I use for magic is an ordinary object. The skill creates the magic."

Suddenly, it was show time! The club's membership committee gathered in a small theater in the Magic Castle to assess

Mastian's sleight-of-hand skills and probe his knowledge of the conjurer's art. They watched as he demonstrated card illusions with such intriguing names as "Doctor Daley's Last Trick," and "Matrix" and then performed several coin tricks.

"I wasn't really nervous," he recalls, "I was just anxious to perform well."

Satisfied with what they had observed and with his answers to questions about the history of magic and his personal ambitions as a magician, the committee took only half an hour to reach its decision: Mastian was in!

For the computer engineer/magician/wind surfer, it was another problem-solving opportunity. A challenge met and mastered.

Bill Heard

*Want to read more about magic? The Magic Castle recommends these classics:*

*Royal Road to Card Magic; Hugard, Jean and Braue, Frederick, 304 pgs.*

*Mark Wilson's Complete Course in Magic; Wilson, Mark, 472 pgs.*

*Mastering Magic; 100 Secrets of the Great Magicians; Gibson, Walter, 236 pgs.*



*"Select a card and place it deep in the deck," says Mastian. "Is this your card?"*



The card has returned to top of the deck. He shuffles again. Snap. The card is back at the top. A classic trick - "The Ambitious Card," it's called - and in his hands, it's magical.



# A hand up for the next generation

*Mentors are needed to work with students interested in transportation*

Looking for a challenge? Have skills and knowledge you'd like to pass along to the next generation of transportation pros? Can you spare 12 to 15 hours from your daily grind over the next nine months for something professionally stimulating?

Sure you can. And, all you have to do to take advantage of this exciting offer is to contact the MTA's Career Development and Training Center and volunteer to be a student mentor. Some 280 to 300 mentors are needed during the 1996-97 school year to work with students participating in the MTA-sponsored TOP (Transportation Occupations Program) and TCAP (Transportation Careers Academy Program).

*Some 280 to 300 mentors are needed during the 1997-97 school year.*

Open to MTA employees and consultants, the mentor program allows professionals to share with students and teachers on a regular basis their experiences in such fields as engineering, urban and transportation planning, architectural design, transit operations, marketing, and in the various transportation trades.

Mentors sometimes assist students with their projects, counsel them on college selection and help develop job networking skills. Rather than a "big brother or big sister" type of relationship, mentors provide a professional connection with the transportation industry.

## Youngsters are focused

"Mentors will find that the young people are very focused when they're involved in exciting, challenging activities," says Naomi Nightingale, manager, Career Development and Training Center. "It's amazing how bright and ready for the work environment they are."

She estimates a mentor will spend 15 to 20 hours in contact with an assigned student over the course of the school year. That includes a weekly phone conversation with the student, a monthly visit to the school and participation in a Career Day event. The program, which has the



Ray Harner, North Hollywood High School teacher, and Jim Sowell, MTA manager, environmental compliance, discuss the agency's mentor program for high school students involved in TOP and TCAP.

support of MTA executive officers, can be conducted during work hours.

"As a mentor, you get a real sense that you've helped a youngster," says Nightingale. "We see student attendance and confidence going up. Students who weren't very enthusiastic about school now have a totally different attitude."

TOP has provided scholarships and job training since 1985 to more than 500 young people interested in engineering, urban planning, architecture and other transportation-related careers. TCAP, a similar program started in 1994 and co-sponsored by the MTA and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), is a "school within a school" program for students at Locke, North Hollywood and Woodrow Wilson high schools.

TCAP prepares students for advanced

studies in transportation subjects at the community college and university levels, or for entry placements in the transportation industry. TCAP is fully funded by grants and matching funds from the MTA, LAUSD, Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Department of Education.

## TOP internships

TOP gives high school juniors two years of instruction and internships in drafting, computer-aided design, graphic design and other technical subjects, including engineering aide. More than \$250,000 in TOP scholarships in amounts ranging from \$300 to \$1,500 have been awarded to college-bound students in the past 11 years.

Some 90 high school juniors and seniors, as well as college students, worked

in various departments at the MTA the past two months as part of either the TOP or TCAP programs.

A third organization sponsored by the MTA — Transportation Teaching Institute (TTI) — provides training for the teachers involved in the two programs and links students with MTA mentors.

TTI also needs MTA volunteers to train teachers involved in the TOP and TCAP programs, assist teachers with curriculum writing, give lectures, tours and workshops, and provide transportation-related information and resources. Sixteen teachers from the three high schools, along with three instructors from Valley, Los Angeles and Southwest community colleges, have just completed six weeks at the MTA during which they developed this year's instructional programs. ■

# The '97 budget: A cornerstone

*\$2.83 billion spending plan gives top billing to customer service*

The MTA enters the 1997 fiscal year with a \$2.83 billion balanced budget that gives top priority to customer service. It also emphasizes full funding of bus and rail operations, and improvements in operational and construction safety.

"This budget sets in place a cornerstone for the evolution of the MTA," said CEO Joe Drew. "We've resolved nearly all merger transition issues and are focused on meeting customer needs, improving the quality of our service and improving the effectiveness of our organization."

## Major 1996-97 budget expenditures

### Transit Operations \$1,046.1 billion

Bus, Rail Ops	\$695.6 mill.
Debt Service	205.2 mill.
Other	145.3 mill.

### Construction \$1,224.5 billion

Rail Projects	\$941.2 mill.
Bus, Minor Rail	172.9 mill.
Other	110.4 mill.

### Regional Planning \$559.5 billion

Local Return	\$188.2 mill.
Muni Ops Share	109.3 mill.
Commuter Rail	39.2 mill.
Paratransit	29.4 mill.
Other	193.4 mill.

The new budget calls for spending \$1.046 billion for transit operations; \$1.23 billion for Metro Rail and other construction projects; and \$560 million for regional planning and programming. All Prop C discretionary revenues received above budgeted projections will be dedicated to the Bus System Improvement Plan.

Highlights from the budget approved by the Board, June 26, include:

- Fares remain at \$1.35,
- Bus service continues at current levels,
- Increasing rail service by 30 percent with the opening of the Metro Red Line Wilshire corridor,
- Implementation of the \$10.4 million Bus System Improvement Plan,
- Adding approximately 200 new CNG buses to the fleet at a cost of \$62.4 million,
- \$11.7 million in funding for the ATTB (Advanced Technology Transit Bus),
- Funding of \$47.4 million for the Freeway Service Patrol and Motorist Assistance Program,
- Continuation of rail construction projects in Hollywood, North Hollywood and Pasadena,
- Opening of the Metro Red Line Wilshire Corridor.

The budget includes provisions for wage increases for unionized employees



CEO Joe Drew recently announced three appointments to the MTA's executive ranks. William Henderson (L) is the MTA's new Controller. He formerly served as financial accounting manager for the City of Anaheim. Barbara Long was named Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Previously, she was responsible for planning and forecasting for Broadway Stores. Terry Matsumoto (R) was appointed Executive Officer for Administration. Earlier, he served as Director of Strategic Funding Analysis in the Regional Transportation Planning and Development division and is a former MTA Controller.

consistent with current labor agreements. A 3 percent achievement-based salary increase is planned for non-contract employees. The budget contains funding for 8,340 MTA employees, 50 more than 1996.

### The plus side

Looking at the plus side of the budget, fare revenues are expected to increase \$14.7 million over 1996 to reach \$241,735,000 in FY-97 on a farebox recovery ratio of 35 percent. Prop A funding should increase by 6.8 percent and Prop C funding by 7.3 percent, according to UCLA forecasts of expected tax revenues.

The FY-97 budget also includes \$118 million in funding for municipal bus operators, a 15 percent increase, and \$29.4

million for ASI Paratransit services for the disabled, a 66 percent increase. Another \$40 million is earmarked for Metrolink service operated within Los Angeles County.

The FY-97 budget provides for an increase in staffing for the Construction Safety Department and an emphasis on reducing on-the-job injuries and illnesses through increased MTA oversight and safety education.

Other safety measures in the budget include an emergency dispatch center using portable buildings and a bus outfitted with communications equipment, installation of the Transit Radio System in some 750 buses, and implementation of an automatic train protection program to ensure system integrity. ■

Joe Drew's

## CEO HotLine

Thanks to all of you who called during the first month the CEO HotLine was in operation. Here are some of the issues and concerns you raised:

**When will we have a celebration for those who have earned Service Award pins?**

Because MTA employees serve at many remote locations and work different hours, no central celebration is practical. However, I want all department heads and division managers to conduct appropriate ceremonies each month to recognize

employees who have earned these well-deserved awards. After a long delay caused by production problems, MTA Employee Activities is now forwarding Service Award pins to department heads for distribution.

**Toastmasters International used to be a popular organization at the MTA, but membership has dropped dramatically due to a lack of support by the agency. Toastmasters can help develop our communications skills. Why can't the MTA support Toastmasters?**

I've participated in Toastmasters and recommend it as an excellent training tool for speakers. There apparently are two main issues. The first is management support. The second is whether the MTA should pay the dues for Toastmasters

members as we often do for membership in corporate and professional organizations. Human Resources is developing a policy now that will apply to membership in all outside organizations. I'll report to you when the policy is completed. In the meantime, I would like all managers and supervisors to support membership in Toastmasters for any employee who could benefit from the experience.

Our Employee Development Department also offers speaker training. Courses in the basics of public speaking and the basics of presentations are offered throughout the year and are well-attended. For information on these excellent training courses, call George Nickle, Employee Development, at 922-7112.

**Bus and train operators are allowed to carry Mace as self-protection, but it's against the rules to carry pepper spray. Why can't the rules be changed to permit pepper spray?**

MTA Transit Operations has had several requests from operators to approve the use of pepper spray. Two factors should be noted. About four hours' formal training is required to qualify a person to carry and use pepper spray. And, experience shows that pepper spray can affect not only the assailant, but anyone within about 20 feet — that could easily include passengers. Transit Operations is researching the requests and expects to adopt a formal policy very soon. ■



# All In The Family

Every family has moments to celebrate and to remember. On this page, you'll find a monthly listing of MTA promotions, Service Awards and employee retirements. Those who are no longer with us also are remembered In Memoriam.

## PROMOTIONS

**Anderson, Allen V.**  
Mec "B" to Mec "A"

**Bellaflor, Clem**  
Sr Audit to Audit Mgr

**Belmonte, William E.**  
Serv Attend to Maint Specialist

**Bohlinger, Linda J.**  
Exec Ofer PLG & PRO to Dep Ch Exec Ofer

**Bonakdar, Mory**  
Maint Speclst to Maint Speclst Leadr

**Burgener, James L.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Campos, Ernest A.**  
Mec "A" to Maint Speclst

**Carpenter, Henry Jay**  
Crime Anlst To Tran Oprns Emerg Disp

**Carron, Richard**  
Acting Dir Contr Admin to Dir Contr Admin

**Chaves, Anthony R.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Chhith, Hean**  
Electrn to Fac Syst Tech

**Edwards, John**  
Prop Maintr to Facilit Inspect

**Fischer, Anne M.**  
Acting Dir Contr Admin to Dir Contr Admin

**Gageby, Heather A.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Garcia, John F.**  
Serv Attend to Facilit Inspectr

**Geverians, Jacob**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Hall, William R.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Holden, Ruthe**  
Aud to Sr Auditr

**Kurovski, Douglas C.**  
Equip Rec Speclst to Assgn Coord Clrk

**Lasco, Maria Carina G.**  
Asst Accts Rep to Accts Rep

**Leach, Mindy M.**  
Sec to Sr. Sec

**Leahy, Michael O.**  
Asst Dir Facil Maint to Dir Info & Tech Serv

**Mabe-Moreno, Ruth B.**  
Ofe Supv to Asst Accts Rep

**Martinez, Milagritos**  
Typst Clrk to Cust Info Agnt I

**Matsumoto, Terry**  
Dir of Cap Plng to Chief Admin Ofer

**Maul, Evelyn A.**  
Cust Info Agnt to Equip Rec Speclst

**Mitchell, Alphonso**  
Sr Buyer to Purch Contr Mgr

**Nacar, Dennis G.**  
Custod to Maint Speclst

**Newton, Richard F.**  
Sched Oprns Plan to Sched Plan

**Northington, Emenuella R.**  
Act Sr Trans Oprns Supv to Sr. Tran Oprns Supv

**Orona, Michael R.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Pattison, Mark R.**  
Sr Pub Aff Ofer to Pub Aff Supv

**Sanches, Ehuridice**  
Cust Info Agnt I to Accts Payble Clrk

**Sechler, Kevin L.**  
Engr Anlst to Engr Assoc

**Shaw, Marilyn**  
Sec to Sr Sec

**Sosa, Ildefonso E.**  
Mec "B" to Mec "A"

**Terry, Lilith A.**  
Sr Engr to Proj Engr

**Tweine, John C.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Winters-Smith, Linda**  
Cash Clerk to Equip Rec Speclst

**Zamfirescu, Sorin V.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

**Zellars, Carlton K.**  
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN) to Trans Pol Ofer

## RETIREMENTS

**Ahlstrom, Martin W.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**Alfaro, Eugène J.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**Barone, Lilian C.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**Bethards, Carol J.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**Carbajal, Hector G.**  
Apr '73 to May '96

**Cordova, Francisco**  
Mar '79 to Mar '96

**Daniels, Doll**  
May '79 to Nov '95

**Garcia, Samuel**  
Sept '72 to Mar '96

**Inouye, Stanley T.**  
Aug '66 to Jun '96

**Jimenez, Federico**  
Dec '72 to May '96

**Lawrence, Daniel J.**  
Apr '73 to May '96

**Leal, Jesus**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**Madril, John M.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

**McComie, Joseph H.**  
Dec '78 to Jun '96

**McKemie, John R.**  
Apr '71 to Jun '96

**Mena, Larry L.**  
May '73 to May '96

**Morales, Carlos B.**  
Jan '84 to Jan '96

**Pasini, Ernest L.**  
May '73 to May '96

**Pasley, Gwendolyn**  
Apr '90 to Mar '96

**Perussi, Giordano**  
Nov '80 to Jun '96

**Poole, Bennie R.**  
Jul '82 to Feb '96

**Robles, Jesse M.**  
Feb '80 to Feb '96

**Sanders, Calvin E.**  
Jun '78 to Jun '96

**Senteno, Edward C.**  
Jun '73 to Jun '96

## MTA SERVICE AWARDS

**30 years:**

**Craver, George L.**  
7/2/66

**Carmier, Walter J.**  
7/9/66

**Scott, Luke E.**  
7/16/66

**Simmons, John W.**  
7/16/66

**Hampton, Ollie J.**  
7/20/66

**Riccio, Robert E.**  
8/13/66

**Warren, William A.**  
8/13/66

**Guajardo, Jesus R.**  
8/13/66

**Inouye, Stanley T.**  
8/16/66

**Benard, Joe G.**  
8/25/66

**25 years:**

**Echternach, Mary Lou**  
6/9/71

**Thill, James E.**  
7/3/71

**Service, Barbara J.**  
7/26/71

**Mitchell, Warren**  
7/31/71

**Alegria, Hector**  
8/7/71



The Metro Blue Line maintenance team was the local runner-up in a qualifying competition to represent the MTA at the Rail Maintenance Rodeo in Atlanta earlier this year. With their instructor, Russel Homan, from left are: Nam Nguyen, Alan Addie and Kevin Doan.

**Smith, Roy J.**  
8/14/71

**Kovach, Richard J.**  
8/14/71

**Jones, Dormin D.**  
8/21/71

**Tayrien, Diane A.**  
8/30/71

## 20 years:

**Houston, Lou E.**  
7/6/76

**Brooks, Hazel L.**  
7/6/76

**Blakely, Edwin L.**  
7/6/76

**Houston, Theophilus D.**  
7/6/76

**Freeman, Forrest T.**  
7/6/76

**Leonard, Otis W.**  
7/6/76

**Gilbert, Carl B.**  
7/6/76

**Cameron, Johnny R.**  
7/8/76

**Skarseth, Dorothy M.**  
7/12/76

**Randolph, Barbara A.**  
7/12/76

**Johnson, Donald L.**  
7/12/76

**Churchill, Steven R.**  
7/12/76

**Banuelos, Miguel S.**  
7/12/76

**Holland, Leo C.**  
7/12/76

**Hudec, Phillip J.**  
7/20/76

**Perez, Narciso M.**  
7/26/76

**Garcia, Jose R.**  
7/26/76

**Robertson, Charleene**  
7/26/76

**Washington, Ansvella**  
7/26/76

**Quintana, Leonel**  
7/26/76

**King, Alvin L.**  
7/26/76

**Branchesi, Orfeo J.**  
7/26/76

**Retamar, Julio E.**  
7/26/76

**King, Edward C.**  
7/26/76

**Caffery, Willis A.**  
7/26/76

**Sherman, Duane R.**  
7/27/76

**Johnson, Louis R.**  
7/29/76

**Booker, Dorothy R.**  
7/29/76

**Peres, Jorge D.**  
8/2/76

**Alba, Hortencia**  
8/2/76

**Touchstone, Calvin**  
8/2/76

**Moran, Willard H.**  
8/4/76

**Duran, Sylvia J.**  
8/16/76

**Shorts, Robert**  
8/19/76

## IN MEMORIAM

**Zwiebel, Earl G.**

Hired: 10/02/45  
Died: 05/16/96

**Funk, Kenneth E.**

Hired: 07/28/43  
Died: 4/25/96

**Barnett, Jack E.**

Hired: 6/02/36  
Died: 5/5/96

## Suggestion Box

Editor:

I thought the June issue of "Metro Family" was: \_\_\_\_\_

I especially liked: \_\_\_\_\_

I did not like: \_\_\_\_\_

Here's a suggestion for a story or feature in a future "Metro Family" issue: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank You for your ideas. Please cut out this section and send it by interoffice mail to Bill Heard, Editor, Metro Family Mail Stop 99-13-60.

# Metro Family News Briefs

## '96 Bus Roadeo, car show set August 17 at Santa Anita

The MTA's annual Bus Roadeo operator and maintenance competition is set for Saturday, Aug. 17, at the Santa Anita Race Track parking lot (Gate 6) just off Colorado Place in Arcadia. A car show is included in the event.

The operator competition is a test of a bus operator's skill behind the wheel, knowledge of safety regulations and of bus equipment. Past performance and driving records of participants also are a factor. Operators can accumulate up to 650 possible points for various vehicle maneuvers, smoothness of operation and personal appearance.

The maintenance team event measures knowledge, skills, safety habits and abilities in four major areas of maintenance. A maintenance team can earn a total of 1,375 points for vehicle inspection and identifying defects in brakes and power trains. A bus driving contest, consisting of various maneuvers is included.

Competitors in the finals were selected during preliminary events conducted July 31 through Aug. 3 at Santa Anita.

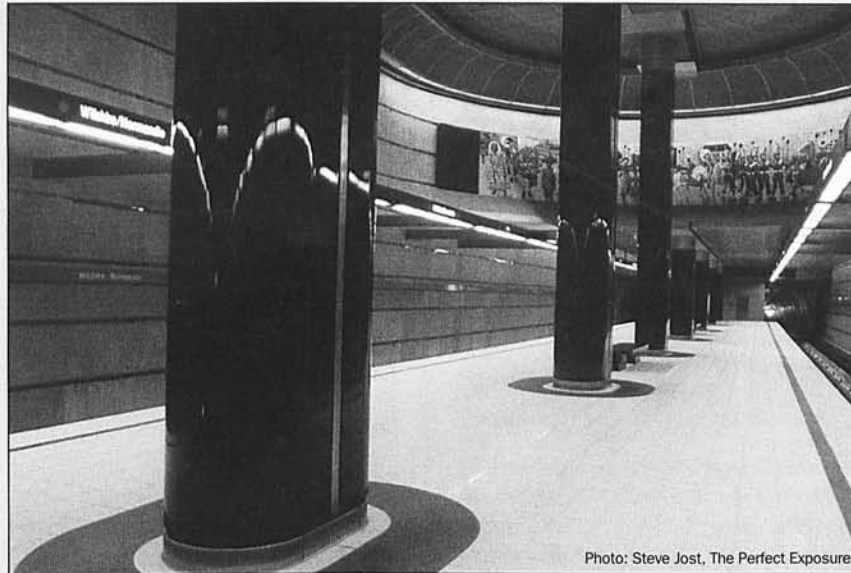


Photo: Steve Jost, The Perfect Exposure

**The Wilshire/Normandie station is an example of the striking architecture to be seen in the three new stations of the Metro Red Line's Wilshire corridor. Art is integrated with design at all eight stations on the line.**

## First "L.A. Standard Car" shell unveiled at Carson plant

The first light rail "L.A. Standard Car" shell for the Metro Green Line was unveiled, July 10, at the Siemens plant in Carson.

Siemens will build 54 cars for use on the Green Line. The first cars of the order

will be delivered in December.

The Germany-based company constructed the \$8 million Carson plant not only to build MTA cars but also to attract orders from other transit properties in the United States and abroad. Orders are expected soon from Salt Lake City and St. Louis.

Siemens currently employs 53 workers at the carshell plant, but expects that will grow to about 100 with a planned \$1 million plant expansion.

## New security system in use at Gateway Headquarters

A new security system using individually programmed key cards is now in effect at the Gateway Headquarters building.

Employees entering the building are required to use key cards for after-hours access to the parking garage shuttle elevators and to office floors. Some designated areas also require key card access during business hours.

Areas requiring key cards include freight elevators, the second floor computer room, the Bus Control Center, the fifth floor, certain areas of Human Resources, the security elevators near the Transit Police office and the P-2 Level Transit Police parking area gates.

Headquarters employees must carry their key cards in addition to identification cards. Contact the Building Services Help Desk at 922-4800 for further information about the new security system. ■

CM246 6/96 JS



Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza, P.O. Box 194  
Los Angeles, CA 90053

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