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Family



Under new management

Ellen Levine will head Transit Operations

In this issue:



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Cover photo: Ellen Levine spent a recent morning with Transit Operations employees at Division 6 in Venice. Front row, from left: Raul Aguiar, Yvonne Birch, Joe Medrano. Back row: Reginald Ables, Levanna Smith, Ervin Lavergne, Johnny Hardwick.

Correction: Cash McBride, 2, daughter of Denise Mora, Metro Art, was incorrectly identified in the October issue of *Metro Family*.

Metro Family

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CEO Thoughts & Thanks



For the MTA, the recent settlement of the fare law suit was a "win-win" situation for all parties involved. What threatened to be a financial knockout for everyone involved turned out to be an affordable ride for our passengers and for us.

The opening words of the consent decree say it best, "The MTA and the Labor/ Community Strategy Center, the Bus Riders Union, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocates and other bus riders in Los Angeles County share a strong common commitment to the improvement of bus service for the transit-dependent populations of Los Angeles County."

With those words, the MTA and the communities we serve, forged a new relationship and began a new chapter in bus service in Los Angeles County.

Basic principles

The consent decree makes legal what our board and our management team always wanted to do.

The basic principles and objectives of the consent decree say it well. The MTA is fully committed to ensuring that all transit patrons in Los Angeles County, without regard to race, color, or national origin, have equal and equitable access to bus and rail service.

The MTA Board is on record, stating that its "highest priority is the improvement of the quality of bus service in Los Angeles." Including instituting and maintaining a policy of charging equitable fares for transit services.

I join the Board in its commitment to bus service and I'm sure you do as well. This is what we do. We are a transit operator and it's time to get back to work and out of court.

An exciting time

This is an exciting time. We have proven to the courts and the plaintiffs that we are committed to improving our service, charging an affordable fare, and working cooperatively with our customers to get the job done.

Now, instead of being anxious about the outcome of a potentially impossible judgment, we can move ahead with the business of providing bus service.

Benefit to the MTA

Many of you have asked how I think this settlement benefits the MTA. To a lot of you, it looks as if the bus riders got everything they wanted and we, the MTA, got nothing.

That's just not so.

Thanks to the skill of our negotiating team, led by Assistant County Counsel David Kelsey our outside attorney Ken Klein, and Regional Planning deputy executive officers, Jim McLaughlin and Dana Woodbury, we developed relationships with the "other side" that built trust and confidence in our commitment to doing the right thing.

In a nutshell, here are the benefits to us and the plaintiffs in this case:

- The case is resolved.
- Reducing the load factor on our buses from today's 1.45 to 1.2 in 2002 is an achievable goal. A stretch but not beyond our reach.
- How we reduce the load factor and implement off-peak fares, is up to us.
- The Bus Service Improvement Plan will be continued.
- All the money goes into the bus system (not to a third party as is typical in law suit judgments).
- For 10 years no one can sue us as long as we adhere to the consent decree, as we intend to do.
- Until October 1, 1998, our fares are certain: \$1.35 base fare, 90-cent token, 25-cent transfer, \$42.00 monthly pass, \$21.00 semi-monthly pass, \$11.00 weekly pass, off-peak fares of 75 cents. Other passes for seniors, disabled and students remain unchanged.
- After October 1, 1998, we are entitled to pursue an increase in fare, if we choose to do so, and finally,
- A Joint Working Group (JWG), consisting of representatives of the MTA and the plaintiffs, will be established to foster cooperation and build consensus in the implementation of the consent decree.

Looking ahead

The consent decree gives us specific goals to go after. I believe the greatest success will come if both parties are working together to solve problems.

I look forward to the opportunity to involve the community in what we are doing. It gives all of us a chance to shine.

Regional Transportation Planning and Development and Transit Operations have the challenge to make it work.

The payoff for the MTA will be a better used system, with more buses, greater security and increased support from the community.

Other thoughts

I hope all of you join me in welcoming Ellen Levine as the new executive officer for Transit Operations. Ellen has the skill, intelligence and tenacity we need to make her department the customer-oriented, competitive outfit that it must become.

Let's all work together to make it happen! ■

MTA Employees of the Month for September



Regina Abernathy
Communications



Perry Blake
Finance



Arthur Brown
Reg. Trans. Plan. & Dev.



James Henry
Ex. Off., Transit Police



Brian Takamiyashiro
Transit Operations



Don Wong
Construction



Atsuko Yamada
Administration

"...to recognize the outstanding performance of MTA employees who contribute to the fulfillment of the agency's mission."

On the road to the future of transit

ATTB rollout starts high-tech bus on journey from prototype to production



An enthusiastic crowd welcomes the MTA's first ATTB prototype during rollout ceremonies at Northrop Grumman in El Segundo, Oct. 8. (Inset) The ATTB prototype is powered by an easy-to-maintain hybrid electric engine. A CNG-fueled electric generator delivers power to motors located at the rear wheels of the bus.

Facts about the ATTB

- Weighs nearly 9,000 pounds less than a conventional CNG bus.
- Wide doors ease passenger flow and reduce dwell time.
- Seats 43, with room for 29 standees.
- Low floor meets ADA standards.
- Easy wheelchair access with front and rear entrances only 14 inches above ground level.
- Kneeling feature lowers bus another 3 inches.
- Four wheels instead of six.
- Hybrid electric propulsion system featuring a CNG-powered generator.
- Up to 80 percent reduction in emissions.
- Meets California clean air regulations.
- Engine can be removed in 15 minutes by two-person maintenance crew.

Four years of research and development in the shape of a revolutionary new transit bus rolled out of a huge hangar at the Northrop Grumman plant in El Segundo, October 8, to the cheers of more than 1,000 onlookers.

A short trip around the parking lot marked the first of many miles the MTA's prototype Advanced Technology Transit Bus - the ATTB - will travel during an arduous evaluation process in Los Angeles, Phoenix, and at the Federal Test Center in Altoona, Penn. Six prototypes will be road-tested in all weather and road conditions in 20 partner cities across the nation.

Welcoming the introduction of the ATTB were U.S. Sen. Barbara Boxer and U.S. Rep. Jane Harman, U.S. DOT Secretary Federico Pena and FTA Administrator Gordon Linton. They were joined by MTA Chairman Larry Zarian, CEO Joe Drew and Kent Kresa, Northrop Grumman president and CEO.

Later in the week, the new bus was on display for MTA employees and the public at the Gateway Headquarters building. Hundreds turned out to see the ATTB and celebrate Rideshare Week.

The \$51 million ATTB project, which began as an engineer's concept in 1992, is a public/private partnership of the MTA, FTA and Northrop Grumman. The aerospace company put together a coalition of aircraft designers, MTA engineers, automotive sub-contractors and other technical specialists

to research, design and build a prototype of the ATTB.

The designers also gained Important information about bus operation, driving conditions and maintenance from discussions with MTA operators and mechanics. Their experiences were key to the design of certain elements of the bus.

"Their spirit of cooperation has resulted in a technological milestone that will benefit greatly the MTA's 1.1 million daily bus riders," said Zarian. "The ATTB is a means of transportation that's right for Los Angeles and right for the country."

To ensure continuation of the ATTB project, officials from the FTA, MTA and

Northrop Grumman took a moment from the rollout ceremony to sign what Linton described as "the first ever full-funding cooperative agreement." The agreement includes additional funding of \$9.67 million for the program.

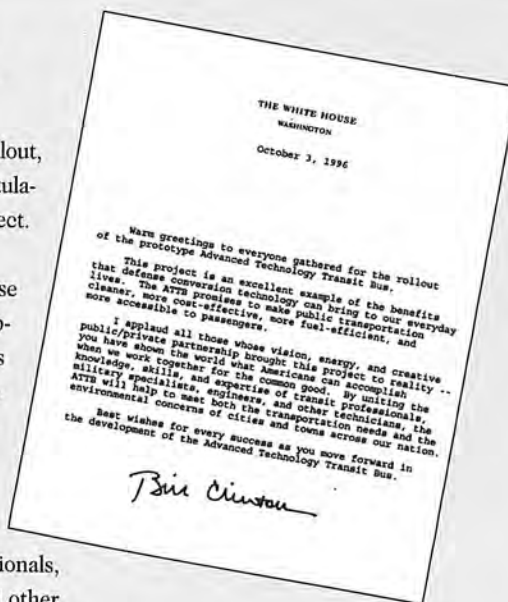
While enthusiastically greeting the new bus as a giant leap for safe, clean and cost-efficient transportation for American commuters, speakers at the ceremony also noted its potential as an export product.

"I believe...this bus will become one of America's leading-edge exports for the 21st Century, creating high-wage jobs for American workers," said Pena. ■

A letter from the President

In a letter read at the ATTB rollout, President Clinton sent his congratulations on the success of the project. Here's an excerpt from the letter:

"I applaud all of those whose vision and energy and creative public-private partnerships brought this project to reality. You've shown the world what Americans can accomplish when we work together for the common good. By uniting the knowledge, skills and expertise of transit professionals, military specialists, engineers and other technicians, the ATTB will help to meet both the transportation needs and the environmental concerns of cities and towns across our nation."



"Best wishes for every success as you move forward in the development of the Advanced Technology Transit Bus." ■

Partners in progress

Transit agencies in 20 cities across the nation are participating with the MTA in development of the ATTB. They are:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Atlanta | Milwaukee |
| Chicago | New York City |
| Cleveland | Newark |
| Dallas | Oakland |
| Dayton | Orange, Calif. |
| Denver | Philadelphia |
| Detroit | Phoenix |
| Garden City, N.Y. | San Jose |
| Houston | Seattle |
| Jersey City, N.J. | Washington, D.C. |

100 ways to improve bus service

Employees suggested many innovative ideas for giving Metro Bus riders improved service

As it turns out, there are many more than 100 ways employees believe the MTA can improve bus service. In fact, 260 employees suggested a total of 379 ways to do it.

The suggestions were made in response to a "100 Ways" contest launched July 15 and ending Aug. 30. Employees were asked to submit ideas and to briefly describe how they would benefit the agency and its customers.

The MTA offered a \$1,000 prize for the best overall idea, and \$500 each for the most practical, innovative, customer-friendly, time-saving, cost-saving and image-building ideas.

All entrants whose ideas made the top 100 list received a special T-shirt, a commemorative pin and an invitation to a special "100 Ways" luncheon.

A 13-member judging committee of operations, planning and communications executives was faced with a huge task when it set out to categorize, rank and reach consensus on which ideas were most likely to lead to better bus service.

"I was impressed by the considerable thought employees put into their suggestions," says Warren Morse, committee co-

chair. "They have the daily experience to judge what is most practical and what constitutes a service improvement."

The Best Overall Idea was judged to be a suggestion to place customer comment/suggestion cards on all buses. The idea was submitted independently by Wilfredo Atienza, Prem Duggirala, Bob Perez, Monique Ramos, Cassandra Ross and Beni Warshawski. The six will share the \$1,000 prize.

Also among the top 100 ideas were suggestions calling for route maps at bus stops, providing customer information service on the Internet, starting an Adopt-a-Bus program, redesigning bus interiors, reducing the number of bus types the MTA currently maintains and many others.

The "100 Ways" contest was a one-time program, according to Phyllis Tucker, "100 Ways" committee co-chair.

"In early 1997, the MTA will introduce an employee suggestion awards program that will pick up where 100 Ways leaves off," she says. "Employees will be asked to submit ideas that will save money, improve work processes, generate revenue, boost morale, improve working conditions and safety, and improve all types of service to MTA customers."

Best Overall Idea — \$1,000

Provide customer suggestion/comment cards on Metro Buses.

Suggested by Wilfredo Atienza, Prem Duggirala, Bob Perez, Monique Ramos, Cassandra Ross and Beni Warshawski. Each will receive \$166.

Providing customer cards will give us valuable customer feedback and will assure customers the MTA listens to their concerns.

Most Practical Idea — \$500

Metro Buses should operate with headlights on 24 hours a day to be noticed by other motorists and pedestrians.

Suggested by Michael Leahy.

With added safety as the first consideration, running with lights on also will attract attention to our clean, new Metro Buses.

Most Innovative Idea — \$500

The MTA should sell bus passes through ATM machines.

Suggested by Steve Brye.

Using ATM machines will increase sales of bus passes by making the service more accessible to potential riders.

Most Customer-friendly Idea — \$500

Publish system maps and bus schedules in book form.

Suggested by Ted Alexander, Elizabeth Arellano, Steve Brye, Phil Cegielski and Warren Peterson. Each will receive \$100.

Publishing a book would put all bus routes and schedules in one convenient package. The MTA also could provide other information of interest to passengers.

Most Time-saving Idea — \$500

Introduce a credit card-like fare instrument.

Suggested by Harry Bayless, Steve Brye, Julianne Fowler and Edbert Pickwood. Each will receive \$125.

Use of a fare "credit card" would save time, money and labor and would be more convenient for passengers. It also would reduce the risk of fare media theft and fraud.

Most Cost-saving Idea — \$500

Develop an overtime management system.

Suggested by Bruce Buck.

Successfully managing MTA overtime will save money, improve work efficiency and scheduling of operators, thus improving service.

Most Image-building Idea — \$500

Senior MTA management should use Metro buses and trains frequently.

Suggested by Deng-Bang Lee, Michael Leahy, Yolanda Rosales and Pablo Villicana. Each will receive \$125.

Riding Metro buses and trains will give senior MTA management an opportunity to experience, first hand, what our passengers experience each day. It will be a morale boost for employees and will let passengers know they are important to us. ■



A dozen contributors to the "100 Ways" contest take time out for a photo. Front row, from left are Jonathan Yu, Andre Leonard, Julianne Fowler, Beni Warshawski and Wilfredo Atienza. Back row: Edbert Pickwood, Monique Ramos, Bob Perez, Steve Brye, Michael Leahy, Deng-Bang Lee and Prem Duggirala. A total of 379 suggestions were submitted by 260 MTA employees. Photo by Tracey Mostovoy, The Perfect Exposure.



100 Ways Committee Members

Co-Chairs:

Warren Morse, Marketing
Phyllis Tucker, Internal Communications

Members:

Sonja Davis, Transit Operations
Grace Golden, Transit Operations
Jon Hillmer, Transit Operations
Dieter Hensing, Transit Operations
Dan Ibarra, Transit Operations
Ellen Levine, Transit Operations
Bill Lukens, Transit Operations
Jim McLaughlin, RTP&D
Scott Mugford, Customer Relations
Ralph Wilson, Transit Operations
Dana Woodbury, RTP&D

Conversation With: Ellen Levine

Ellen Levine was named executive officer, Transit Operations in early October — the first woman to head the MTA's bus and rail operations. She had served as Western Regional General Manager since April, 1995.

As executive officer, she is responsible for 7,000 employees, 2,000 buses and 100 rail cars, and for providing service to almost 1.2 million passengers each day. She has 17 years' experience in public transit.

In this interview, conducted Oct. 4, Levine discusses her new role and offers insights about the challenges and opportunities ahead for Transit Operations. She also speaks directly to employees and MTA customers.

Proud to be chosen

Metro Family: Ellen, you're the first female transit chief the MTA has appointed. What's your reaction?

Ellen Levine: I'm very proud to be leading the hardest-working, most dedicated, service-oriented group of employees in public transit. What they accomplish every day in putting our service on the street can only be marveled at. I have tremendous respect for our Operations employees.

MF: Given the nature of your new assignment, does it place a particular burden on you as a woman?

EL: I would feel very sad if I thought I was picked because of gender and not because of qualifications. But, I do think it's an additional challenge to leadership. I didn't come up through the ranks as a bus operator or mechanic. I never sat behind the wheel or turned a wrench. I think that's more of a challenge to some people than my gender.

MF: Does Transit Operations have the same opportunities for women as in other areas of the MTA?

EL: In areas other than Operations, there are fewer barriers to women. There haven't been many women in the ranks of Operations, therefore there aren't many in management. This phenomenon is a result of our historical promotional system. We're changing the way that we identify who should be recognized in jobs and the kinds of leadership talents we want.

Broad objectives

MF: Have you had an opportunity to think ahead toward your broad objectives for Transit Operations?



Photos by Tracey Mostovoy, The Perfect Exposure.

"I sat up in bed in the middle of the night and thought, 'Oh, my God, I'm now responsible for 7,000 families and their well-being!'"

EL: My goal is to develop programs that increase the personal pride and integrity of the employees for whom I'm responsible. I want to bring back the old values, the old work ethics. They were based on pride. We've lost the ability to communicate and we have to get it back.

MF: What's the key to leadership in this kind of situation?

EL: Presence. Caring. I just came back from an employee event at Division 1 and someone thanked me for finding the time to come. My answer was, "I will always find time to come." The employees are my priority because without them, the public won't be served. Most importantly, they need to know that I respect and appreciate them.

MF: Do you have any immediate organizational plans for Transit Operations?

EL: I've named Rick Hittinger, acting service operations manager at Division 10, as my replacement as Western RGM. We

Profile: Ellen Levine

- **Native of New York City. Currently a resident of North Hollywood.**
- **Graduate, State University of New York, Buffalo, 1971, B.A. Sociology.**
- **M.S., Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1974.**
- **Joined RTD in 1979 as a management analyst in the Office of Management and Budget. Promoted to Budget Manager in 1986. Since the merger, has served the MTA as Maintenance Superintendent, Labor and Administration; Deputy Executive Officer, Operations; and, since April, 1995, as Western Region General Manager.**
- **Family: Husband, Ed, and two married daughters, Shari and Marci; two grandchildren.**
- **Hobbies: Collecting antiques, exotic travel, gourmet cooking.**



have the same leadership style. He's someone who cares and who can personalize our large organization. Beyond that, we'll be evolving as an organization, changing our historical structure to help pull us into the next century.

Biggest challenges

MF: What are the biggest challenges for Transit Operations?

EL: The primary challenge is to bring the level of service and performance in our huge organization up to the levels provided by the best of the small transit properties. We made inroads into that with the regional concept, but it's time to evaluate our regions. I plan to convene a task force to look at what's working well and what's not. Is four regions the right number? Do we have the right groupings of divisions, and should we do things differently?

MF: How about opportunities ahead?

EL: They say the Chinese character for

"crisis" is the same as that for "opportunity." I don't know if that's true, but every crisis we face is an opportunity to be seized. Our biggest opportunity is to convince people that the MTA is a vital, valid and viable alternative to commuting in their cars.

MF: How will the settlement of the fare lawsuit against the MTA affect Transit Operations?

EL: We're going to provide the quantity and quality of service required by the settlement, not only because we have to, but because it's the right thing to do. It will be difficult, because there's only so much money to go around. For example, it will mean keeping buses in the fleet that should be retired. We'll have to become even more creative, more efficient and effective. We will succeed in doing that and when we do, both the people of Los Angeles and the employees of the MTA will benefit.

Customer first

MF: The MTA's theme this year is "customer first." What does that mean to Transit Operations?

EL: I'm going to steal the mission statement from the Western Region as the mission statement for Transit Operations. It says, "We exist only to serve the customer. If we do not serve the customer directly, we support someone on our team who does." I feel very strongly about that, because if we don't appreciate our customers and treat them with respect, they won't ride our buses.

MF: As their new boss, do you have a message for Transit Operations employees?

EL: Hang in there; we can do it. And, we'll do it together. I don't expect people to like me, trust me or respect me just because of my job title, I have to earn their respect. And I expect them to earn mine.

MF: Do you have a message for all MTA employees?

EL: We all have to be partners in our efforts to serve the public. You know, the vast majority of Transit Operations employees never come to Headquarters. But, when they do, they should be treated and respected like all members of the MTA team.

MF: Is there a message for our customers?

EL: We appreciate you. You have a choice and we want the Metro system to be your choice. We already provide safe, reliable service and we're working hard to achieve better quality — clean, courteous and on-time service. ■

Putting a human

Poster series will show commuters th

By Steve Chesser

The MTA is more than buses, trains and subway tunnels — it is people who are dedicated to serving the public and who have interesting stories to tell.

That's the aim of an MTA public art project, now showcasing employees in a series of interior bus posters on display throughout the bus fleet.

"Our employees and our customers are our most important assets," says CEO Joe Drew. "We think our customers could benefit from learning more about our drivers and other front-line employees who make our system work. The MTA is not a faceless bureaucracy. We're people who not only care about delivering quality transit service, but also care about our community."

Series of five

The first series of five posters features two bus operators, a customer information agent, a diesel mechanic and a transporta-

tion technical manager. They will remain on display for three to four months, when they will be replaced by another group of five.

Each poster shows the employee in an off-duty pose by photographer Willie Garcia and includes a short narrative by writer Marisela Norte.

The posters pay tribute to the dedication and humanity of each employee profiled.

"I wanted to give a voice to the people who go unrecognized, and to show the human element so others could relate to them on a personal level," says Norte. "Their lives are more than their jobs."

Self-taught writer

Norte describes herself as a self-taught writer who "did my residency at Clifton's Cafeteria." Buzz Magazine listed her among "The 100 Coolest People in L.A." and named her the "Muse on the Bus" because she uses the MTA for transportation and

inspiration. Norte has been writing professionally since 1982, and is working on a play commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum.

Photographer Willie Garcia learned his craft by apprenticing to professional photographers.

"I spent a great deal of time going to the different bus divisions and hanging out in the break rooms," he says. "When I found

someone interesting, I tried to capture his or her essence, more so than their jobs."

Garcia has documented youth subcultures and local music scenes, and his work has been shown at more than 20 local exhibitions and shows. Publications in Mexico City, Dallas and Southern California have featured his photographs. He teaches at the Los Angeles Photography Center. ■



Photos by Willie Garcia. Captions excerpted from sketches by Marisela Norte. Writer Marisela Norte and photographer Willie Garcia are the artistic team contracted for the Metro Art project.

Michael Ortiz, 23-year employee Metro Scheduler

Michael Ortiz now dedicates his spare time to tutoring "at risk" students in math as part of a drop-out prevention program. He also shares his love of music and chess with a growing number of kids as he goes back to school himself to earn his teaching credential. "I used to think it's what you know or who you know that matters, but it's who you help that makes the real difference."



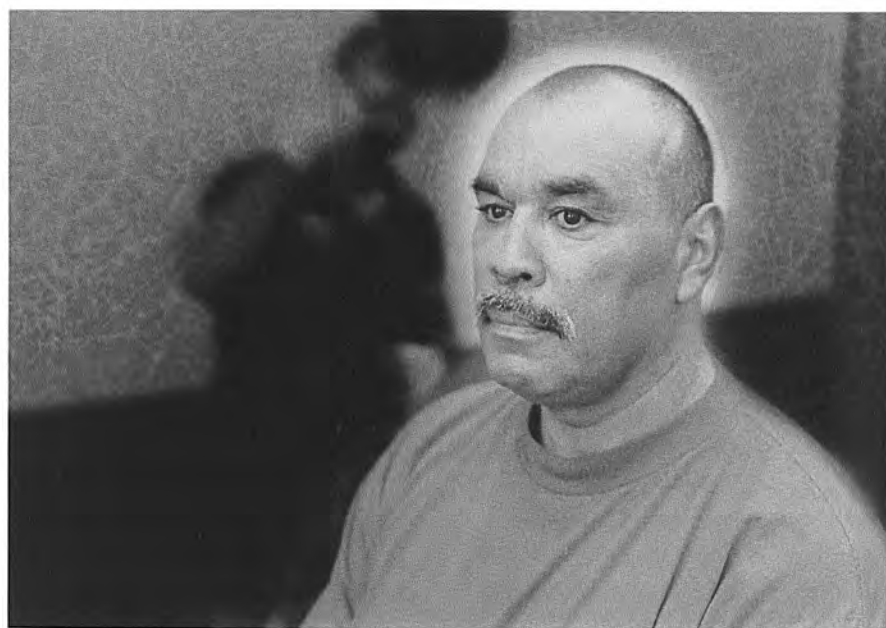
face on the MTA

the MTA is more than buses, trains



Hank Dixon, 17-year employee
Operator, Sun Valley Division

Detroit-born tenor Hank Dixon loves touring the country with Motown's own *The Originals* singing stone classic oldies to sold-out crowds he describes as "the best...really the best audiences...." When he's not on the road, he's driving a Metro Bus between the heart of downtown Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.



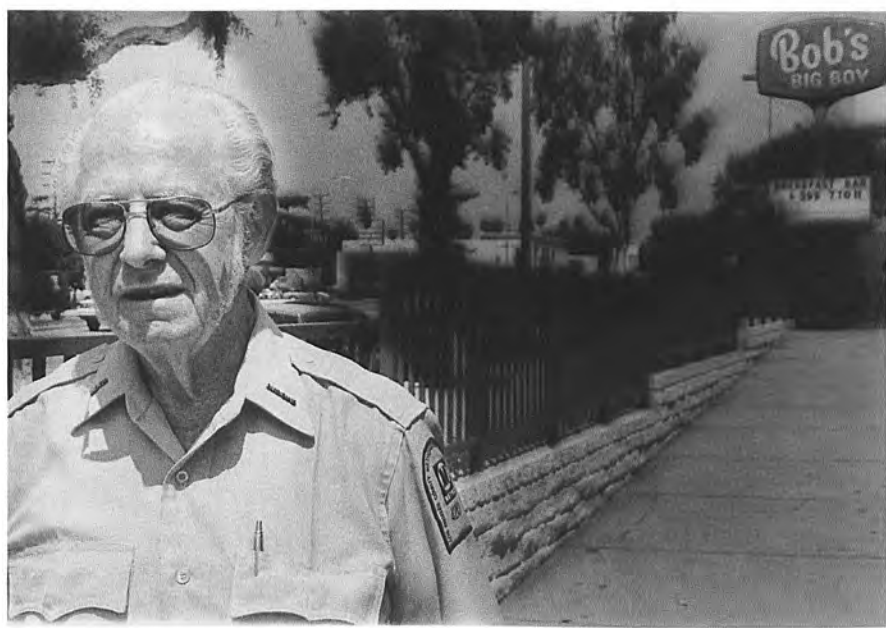
Ernesto "Roy" de la Fuente, 22-year employee
Service Attendant/Steamer, Division 1

It was the sound of the speed bag that hooked ten-year-old Roy de la Fuente to the sport of boxing. He grew up in the old 7th Street barrio downtown, learned discipline, trained hard, and eventually won the Golden Gloves title in 1959. After a ten-year career, he's back in the ring training the next generation of young fighters. He's especially proud of training the first female Golden Gloves Champ in Los Angeles.



Dyana Elorriaga, 11-year employee
Diesel Mechanic, Division 1

"Be focused in everything you do," Dyana Elorriaga advises the elementary school kids she meets as a volunteer for Metro's anti-graffiti program. Her own strong focus has enabled her to overcome the obstacles of growing up female in urban Los Angeles, where she's raising a family and excelling in a non-traditional career. When her hands aren't repairing an engine, they're learning how to play piano. "Sometimes I don't know where my enthusiasm comes from," she laughs. "It's all about choices."



Forest "Lucky" Churchill, 45-year employee
Operator, Sun Valley Division

He enlisted in the Navy on his 17th birthday, Dec. 7, 1941. While on night watch, he sat reading a comic book, illuminated by a single bulb, when a sniper's bullet grazed the top of his head. "'Lucky' just stuck after that," he remembers. After WWII, he settled in Southern California, drove the old type H-4 streetcars and later Metro Buses. Once voted "Favorite Driver" by his passengers, he holds court every morning at the same Bob's Big Boy in Glendale where everyone knows his name.

A win-win settlement for MTA, bus riders

Ten-year agreement will add buses and service; Joint Working Group important, MTA negotiators say

They went into court in 1994 with their dukes up, prepared to defend the MTA against allegations by a coalition of bus rider organizations that differences in bus and rail service amounted to civil rights discrimination against low-income minority commuters.

MTA negotiators came out of court two years later with a consent decree they call a "win-win" for both the agency and the plaintiffs. The agency along with the Labor/Community Strategy Center, the Bus Riders Union and others, announced a 10-year agreement at a joint news conference in late September.

"The plaintiffs were interested in improved bus service and so are we," says Dave Kelsey, assistant county counsel. "It's good for the MTA to have a resolution that allows us to do something positive."

Kelsey headed the MTA's negotiating team, which also included Ken Klein, outside counsel, Jim McLaughlin and Dana Woodbury, deputy executive officers, Regional Transportation Planning and Development. McLaughlin heads Bus System Improvement Planning and Woodbury is in charge of operations planning and scheduling.

Immune from lawsuits

Klein noted that the MTA is entitled to raise fares under certain conditions and is virtually immune from another similar lawsuit for 10 years, if the agency abides by the consent decree. The agreement does not affect the rail system.

"The plaintiffs originally wanted us to shut down the trains and stop all construc-



Passengers board a Line 489 Metro Bus on Wilshire in downtown Los Angeles. Settlement of the fare lawsuit will add 152 buses to the fleet over the next two years. The consent decree approved, Oct. 28, by the federal court, requires a three-year rollback in the price of the monthly pass, off-peak discount fares on some busy lines and improved security on the buses.

tion," he says. "But, as long as we fulfill our obligations under the consent decree, we can continue to build the rail system."

As for the charges of discrimination, McLaughlin says, "We presented enough evidence to prove that the charges were unjustified. Ridership on the Metro Blue and Red lines is no different from ridership on our buses."

With the agreement in hand, the team says, the MTA and the bus rider groups can work cooperatively to improve service quality and achieve specific goals and timelines for reducing the standing loads on MTA buses and for adding more buses to the fleet.

Expand bus service

"We've spelled out in some detail a program for the next six years that will expand

bus service by eight percent over today's levels," says Woodbury. "Lowering the price of the monthly pass will hold down passengers' out-of-pocket costs to no more than the change in the cost of living."

To operate the extra 152 buses required by the agreement over the next two years, Woodbury estimates a requirement for at least 200 more bus operators, most of whom will be needed by June, 1997. Reaching the service levels called for in the consent decree also will mean keeping old buses on the road longer.

More operators and higher maintenance costs for both new and old buses must be paid for, but Woodbury expects the lower fares and increased service to generate a five to six percent increase in ridership and some \$10 million in additional revenues.

Joint Working Group

Meanwhile, both parties in the fare lawsuit look to the Joint Working Group (JWG), a balanced committee of MTA and plaintiff representatives, as a means of ensuring cooperation and avoiding further litigation. MTA negotiators also believe the JWG will help the agency build stronger lines of communication to the community.

"We needed a mechanism that would help us deal with the many problems and issues that will come up during the 10 years of the decree," says Klein. "For the most part, the JWG has a consultation role, not the power to make decisions. That's reserved for the MTA Board."

If members of the JWG should deadlock on an issue, the dispute can be referred to the parties' lawyers, or to a "special master" appointed by the court. Donald T. Bliss, the mediator selected by the parties in the lawsuit, will be the special master.

"Over the course of the negotiations, we built trust and mutual respect between the plaintiffs and our staff," says Kelsey. "The payoff for the MTA will be better utilization of our system, an expanded system and increased support of the community." ■

The Joint Working Group

The settlement reached in the fare lawsuit calls for creation of a Joint Working Group, a committee with equal representation from the MTA and the bus rider groups. The consent decree describes its purpose this way:

"The parties shall establish a small Joint Working Group (JWG) consisting of an equal number of representatives of MTA and the plaintiffs' class. Each party shall select its own representatives. The purpose of the JWG will be to foster cooperation in the implementation of this Consent Decree.

"MTA shall work with the JWG in the development and implementation of bus service improvement plans and on fare adjustment issues.

"MTA shall engage in rider surveys, and shall seek the participation and concurrence of the JWG in developing the methodology and procedures for such surveys." ■

Major elements of the consent decree

The agreement calls for the MTA to reduce the number of standees on its buses to about half the current standard. By the year 2002, the loading standard will drop from 1.45 to 1.2, the agency's present off-peak ratio of standees to seated passengers. Other elements of the consent decree:

- 51 buses added to service by the end of December, 1996.
- 51 more buses to be put into service by June, 1997.

- 50 additional buses to be added over the next two years to improve access by transit dependent riders to medical facilities, jobs, schools and other destinations.

- Restructuring of police to provide equitable security on both buses and trains.

- Continue sales of monthly passes, and a rollback in price of the pass from \$49 to \$42 for three years, or unless a "needs-based" pass is established. Sale of a semi-monthly pass

at \$21 and introduction of a weekly pass at \$11.

- Off-peak discount fares of 75 cents on selected bus lines used heavily by transit dependent riders.

- A two-year commitment by the MTA to maintain the current \$1.35 cash fare and 90-cent token, with transfers remaining at 25 cents with fare increases permitted thereafter consistent with changes in the cost of living. ■

"Adventures of Oscar" stirs imagination at Division 7

Newsletter feature is based on real-life experiences of MTA Operator Peter Freeman and his colleagues

By Bill Heard

Oscar the Operator is a figment of Peter Freeman's imagination, a bus-driving Everyman whose daily runs are punctuated by situations that often tax Oscar's judgment.

In recent episodes of the Division 7 newsletter, *Daily Briefing*, Oscar wrestles with whether to file an accident report after an elderly woman falls on his bus. He worries that his inattention caused the accident.

When he is perplexed, Oscar seeks the sage advice of such fictitious co-workers as Mike the Mechanic, a senior instructor dubbed Gary the Guru, and Irma the Instructor. The advice often is given in the form of a parable.

Paul the Pool Player, for example, always wins because he won't allow himself to be distracted as Oscar was when the woman fell. Gary the Guru's story about two monks illustrates that the rudeness of a passenger is best forgotten.

Based on experience

"The Adventures of Oscar the Operator" is written in short takes by Freeman, who bases the tales on his 25 years of experience operating transit buses in his homeland of Wales, driving tour buses in England and Europe, and as an MTA operator.

Written to entertain, Freeman notes that each Oscar episode has a moral or rule book reminder that operators can apply on the job. And there's another element.

"Something that's always concerned me about bus operators," says Freeman, "is that they generally have a low opinion of the work they do. But, I believe that mass transit is essential to modern civilization and if you operate a bus correctly, it makes you a better person."

The Oscar saga is Freeman's second column for a division newsletter. He earlier wrote a popular column on the origin of words. So, when Steve Jaffe, former deputy service operations manager at Division 7, was looking for someone to contribute information relevant to operators, he turned to Freeman.

"We want operators to think about their jobs and how they interact with their passengers and the world around them,"



Operator Peter Freeman (R) and Jake Jacobs, Division 7 administrative analyst, share a laugh over the next installment of the adventures of "Oscar the Operator." Photo by Bill Heard.

says Jaffe. "But, if we just reprinted a rule in the newsletter, it probably would be ignored by the operators. They can laugh at Oscar, but they know that what he's going through rings true and they can take a lesson from it."

Born a Welshman

Peter Freeman was born in the town of Llanelli on the south coast of Wales some 400 miles west of London. For the first 11 years of his life, he spoke only Welsh.

Freeman completed his education at age 15, earning a secondary school certificate. At first, he worked on farms, marrying at 21 and starting a family that eventually grew to four children. In 1971, the farm was sold for a housing development and he was hired by

a local bus company in the nearby town of Swansea.

"I've found that no matter where you go, people are the same," he says. "I hear the same conversations on my bus here that I heard on my bus 6,000 miles away. Only the accent is different."

During his 10 years with the bus company, Freeman became intensely involved with the transit union and with the Welsh Nationalists, a political party advocating the separation of Wales from the United Kingdom.

A union executive

He served on the local all-unions trade council as an executive officer. He was

a delegate to the Wales Trades Union Conference, an organization similar to the AFL-CIO. He also worked for a reorganization of the British health and safety laws in 1974, and was a member of a committee that testified before Parliament.

By 1987, his marriage was on the rocks and he moved to London, where he was hired as a driver and tour director by a TWA subsidiary that conducted ground tours of the British Isles, France and Spain.

On a tour of England in 1989, he met Belinda Salgado, a tourist from Los Angeles. There was immediate chemistry, but Freeman was cautious until the last night of the tour when he invited Belinda and her friend out for dinner.

The friend pleaded illness and the two spent the evening together in the historic City of York. On the walk back to their hotel, the pair paused on an ancient bridge.

A fateful kiss

"There was the bridge and the river," he recalls. "There was a full moon and the stars shining down. There was the girl and a kiss. I was a goner!"

The couple married the next July in a bilingual - Welsh and English - ceremony in South Pasadena. The Freemans now have two boys, Rhys, 18 months, and Rhodri, 5.

At first, after moving to California, Freeman sold cars. Eventually, he met Harold Hollis, now Division 7 service operations manager, who talked to him about opportunities at the MTA. He was hired as a part-time operator in August, 1991, and was made full-time in February, 1994. ■

Oscar's Other Passenger

By Peter Freeman, Division 7

Oscar the Operator was working the second piece of his assignment. Everything was going well, and Oscar was feeling good about everything. Until he came to a bus stop where a number of people got on, and the very last passenger was (an) old woman.

He politely said, "Good afternoon," closed the door and pulled away. Instead of answering, the old lady looked behind her at the closed door, then looked at Oscar with a panicked expression and

screamed at him to stop the bus.

Oscar tried to calm her, but she continued to scream until he pulled into the next stop.

When he opened the door, everything became clear. Apparently, the old lady had tried to board the bus with a dog, and Oscar, who had not seen the dog, had closed the doors on the dog's leash. For the last two blocks, the dog had been jogging alongside the bus.

Now, the dog was on the sidewalk,

sitting on his tail with his front paws in the air in a begging position. His tongue was hanging out of the side of his mouth. He was panting furiously.

Both the old lady and the dog were giving Oscar that accusing look only the persecuted can give.

Pointing at Oscar's right-side mirror, she huffed, "Mirrors are to be used for purposes other than shaving!" Then, she picked up the dog's leash and marched off, with the dog limping behind. ■

Flexible Spending Accounts: Don't ignore this benefit!

Using pre-tax dollars for health and dependent care expenses is like giving yourself a pay raise

The MTA's annual benefits enrollment period began this month for non-represented employees, Transit Police, security guards and retirees — time to review your medical, dental, life insurance and other benefit plans.

A good time, also, to look at a way to save money and give yourself a "pay raise" by using pre-tax dollars to pay for certain out-of-pocket health care and dependent care expenses. It's called the Flexible Spending Account (FSA).

According to Ed Paull, pension and benefits manager, Flexible Spending Accounts, which allow employees to set aside up to \$5,000 tax-free, are one of the best benefits the MTA offers. Non-represented employees, Transit Police and TCU members are eligible.

"You can increase your take-home pay by taking advantage of the tax laws," he says. "Don't pay taxes when you don't have to."

Only 400 enrolled

Paull is disappointed that only about 400 of the MTA's eligible 2,800 employees are enrolled, but he acknowledges that HMO members generally don't need FSAs because almost all their medical costs — except eyeglasses and hearing aids — are fully covered.

Paull explains FSAs this way:

You sign up for a \$300 FSA. The money

is deducted, pre-tax, from your pay. Since about 34 percent of every dollar you earn goes for taxes, you've just given yourself a \$102 pay raise.

You then use the \$300 to pay for such medical items as eyeglasses. As the money is spent, you submit a claim form and your purchase receipts to Benefits Administration. If your claim is received by the 10th of the month, your reimbursement will be included in your last paycheck of that month.

For dependent care

You also can open a separate FSA for up to \$5,000 of dependent care, important for parents with young children or with elderly parents who need day care. Participants also submit claims, but may experience a month's lag time in reimbursements due to billing and payroll cycles.

One caution on both plans, Paull says: "There's a use it or lose it provision. You have to pick the specific amount you want deducted. If you pick too high a dollar amount and don't spend it all, that money is lost."

He quickly adds, however, that his department always notifies employees who have funds remaining in their accounts as the year's end approaches. So far, almost all FSA participants have spent their entire deductions.

Before the annual open enrollment period ends, Dec. 16, the MTA's Benefits

Administration will conduct two important open enrollment meetings. The sessions are set for Dec. 3 and 10, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the Board Room, 3rd Floor, Headquarters Building.

Editor's Note: The UTU conducted open enrollment from Oct. 28 through Nov. 5. The TCU's open enrollment period extends through November to Dec. 15. The ATU will conduct its open enrollment next summer. ■



Employees gathered on Patsaouras Plaza, Oct. 1, for a triple celebration: the public introduction of the ATTB, the first anniversary of the Headquarters Building, and Rideshare Week. Hundreds gathered for music, popcorn, ice cream and fun in the sun. Photo by David Ullrich.

Joe Drew's CEO Hotline

This month's calls reflect our continuing effort to settle into the Headquarters Building. Here are some of the latest concerns:

Q. Can some sort of information kiosk be installed in the East Portal? Commuters are always stopping me to ask questions about bus routes and rail connections.

A. The kiosk idea is being developed now. An evaluation will be conducted to determine whether it would be appropriate to locate one in the East Portal. Meanwhile, the Revenue Department is exploring other means of increasing customer information

services there. There already are two direct phone lines to Customer Information adjacent to the Customer Center office. Thanks for your call.

Q. The Headquarters Building loading dock off Cesar Chaves Boulevard seems to be wide open to anyone who wants to come in. Why aren't security personnel stationed there?

A. An extensive security system is in place on both the exterior and interior of the loading dock. This system is monitored around the clock from the security control room. Administration is investigating increasing the security measures, including assigning a full-time shipping/receiving person to staff the area.

Q. The two large structures that flank the front of the Headquarters Building could be used as memorials to MTA employees

killed in the line of duty. Is this idea being considered?

A. Your inquiry is appropriate. The idea of using the "ediculae" as a memorial is being discussed with the Union Station Gateway Board of Directors, which oversaw the design and construction of the building and which continues to govern its use. It is possible this project could be tied to the placement of flagpoles at the entrance, a "punchlist" item that still must be completed by the building contractor.

Q. Those of us who work in the divisions are subject to being moved around frequently. Is this based on seniority? There doesn't seem to be a real pattern.

A. The transfer of contract personnel between divisions or work locations is governed strictly by the provisions of the bargaining agreements with the UTU, ATU and

TCU. Transfers of non-contract personnel are based on the needs of the MTA and the experience and expertise of the employee. The primary consideration for transfers of non-contract employees is good business management, not seniority.

Q. Pay phones are located in the 3rd Floor lobby of Headquarters. Why can't we have phones employees can use to call in-house numbers without having to pay?

A. A phone and phone book are available at the security desks on the Plaza level and 3rd Floor of Headquarters. Security guards have been instructed to allow employees and guests to use the phones to make in-house calls.

Have an issue or concern? Call the CEO HotLine at 922-6282. Give your name and location if you want a personal reply. ■

All In The Family

SERVICE AWARDS

30 years:
Bolen, Helen M.
 11/8/66
La Cour, Elijah A.
 11/19/66

25 Years:
Matterer, Matthew D.
 11/6/71
White, Charles
 11/6/71
Burnistine, Joe L.
 11/8/71
Howard, Johnny H.
 11/16/71
Salamanca, Jose H.
 11/19/71
Kovach, William A.
 11/29/71
Garsa, Jose G.
 11/29/71
Duell, Leo J.
 12/6/71

TRANSITIONS

Acosta, Jessica L.
 Doc Contrl Asst to Genrl Clrk II
Acox, Kenneth A.
 Equip Engrg Tech to Equip Engrg Supv
Amaya, Gene A.
 Equip Maint Instr to Equip Maint Supv
Anderson, Johnnie
 Serv Attnd to Plumber
Beckvoort, Howard
 Mec C to Mec A
Bennett, Elisabeth T.
 Sys Proj Mgr to Asst Dir Info Sys
Brown, William R.
 Sr Cost Sched Anlst to Proj Contrl Supv
Barrett, Matthew B.
 Admin Anlst to Sr Admin Anlst
Bennett, Marian Ann
 Cash Clrk to Cash Clrk/Cntg Supv
Blankenship, Timothy S.
 Trans Pol Ofer (Trn) to Trans Pol Ofer
Bunch, Bernetta M.
 Serv Attnd to Serv Attnd Leadr
Canisares, Jino J.
 Microcomp Apps Asst to Engrg Anlst
Childress, Clorinda
 Gen Clrk to Accts Clrk
Davis, Alma L.
 Commun Ofer to Pub Affrs Ofer
Escalle, Michael
 Asst Contr Admin to Contr Administratr
Fleming, Derek De'Shawn
 Cust to Cash Clrk/Rel Vault Trk Dr
Francis, Rufus
 Engr Asst to Sr Trans Sys Safety Eng

Gero, Andrew J.
 Rev Clrk to Supv Contrl Clrk
Gonsales, David J.
 Serv Attnd to Mec "C"
Hawkins, Hendley
 Trans Pol Ofer (Trn) to Trans Pol Ofer
Kasan, Kevin S.
 Trans Pol Ofer (Trn) to Trans Pol Ofer
Lants, Stephen H.
 Area Team Dir to Dir of Syst Integratr
Lewicki, Paul C.
 Sr Material Supv to Material Mgr
Lowe, Gladys Lissette
 Transp Prog Mgr III to Transp Prog Mgr IV
Manning, Johnny W.
 Fac Maint Supv to Revenue Equip Supv
McClendon, Donna L.
 Cust Info Agnt I to Cust Serv Agnt I
Moore, Kevin A.
 Custod to Cust Serv Agnt I
Oquendo, Danicel
 Legl Sec to Legl Aide
Perry, Brian
 Trans Pol Ofer (Trn) to Trans Pol Ofer
Pittman, Juan A.
 Sr Finan Anlst to Sr Admin Anlst
Powers, Mary R.
 Telecom Anlst to Equip Engrg Tech
Sadro, Jim
 Fin Anlst to Admin Anlst
Salasar, Keith P.
 Traction Power Insp to Traction Power Insp Ldr
Sanches, Mark T.
 Trans Pol Ofer (Trn) to Trans Pol Ofer
Sanches, Susanna
 Commun Ofer to Pub Affrs Ofer
Scales, Phyllis P.
 Accts Clrk to Accts Payabl Clrk
Smith, Joann Y.
 Sr HR Anlst to Sr Admin Anlst
St. Cyr, John A.
 Sr Rail Trans Oprns Supv to Rail Tran Oprns Supv
Thomas, Phillip W.
 Microcomp Apps Asst to Wrks Comp Coord
Tran, Thang Q.
 Sched Makr II to Sched Oprns Planr
Turner, Michael T.
 Public Aff Ofer to Sr Public Aff Ofer
Vander Ploeg, William
 Bus opr to Sched Chekr
Wilson, Leslie A.
 Off Supv to Worker's Comp Coord
Yeung, Tak C.
 Custd to Mec "C"

Zeigler, Matthew R.
 Trans Police Ofer (TRN) to Trans Police Ofer

RETIREMENTS

Fair, Freddie J., Bus Opr
 Oct '80 to Sept '96
Goldblatt, Elias
 Mar '87 to Sep '96
Johnston, William J.
 Apr '79 to Sept '96
Jordan, William D.
 Sept '73 to Sept '96
Murai, Kasuharu
 Jun '73 to Sept '96
Peres, Eugene D.
 Sept '73 to Sept '96
Sharrow, Lloyd M.
 Aug '73 to Aug '96
Smith, Roy J.
 Aug '71 to Aug '96
Van Denbrink, Donald L., Utility A
 Aug '73 to Aug '96
Weihert, Thomas A.
 Sept '73 to Sept '96
Williams, Neal E.
 Dec '82 to Jan '96

IN MEMORIAM

Benjamin, Sidney I.
 Mec B, employed 2/1/46, died 8/5/96
Brown, Hoyt A.
 Bus Opr, employed 3/8/87, died 8/14/96
Davie, Francis T.
 Bus Opr, employed 7/11/60, died 8/2/96
Fleischman, Phillip
 Mec A, employed 3/4/74, died 8/16/96
Gedney, Cecil B.
 employed 4/3/56, died 9/8/96
Gasiukevics, Maria G.
 Utility B, employed 8/25/43, died 7/29/96
Levisce, George M.
 employed 5/17/29, died 6/11/96
Lund, Myron M.
 employed 11/16/58, died 8/3/96
Moore, Robert J.
 Bus Opr, employed 8/20/66, died 8/8/96
Price, Noel D.
 Equip Maint Supv, employed 6/25/84, died 8/17/96
Salasar, Joseph
 Locksmith Leader, employed 5/17/91, died 10/9/96
Smith, Marvin
 Bus Opr, employed 6/01/86, died 10/3/96
Webb, Neil A.
 Bus Opr, employed 8/28/73, died 10/18/95
Whitlock, Dorothy J.
 Bus Opr, employed 6/25/79, died 8/2/96



Michal R. Robinson (L) has joined the MTA as executive officer for Administration. He is responsible for Information Technology Systems, Human Resources, Procurement and Materiel, Real Estate, and General Services. Robinson replaces Terry Matsumoto, (R), who has been named executive officer, Finance. He is responsible for Risk Management, Operations; Treasury, Accounting/Controller, Office of Management and Budget, and Revenue.

Editor's Note: The next edition of Metro Family will be the December/January issue. It will be mailed to you in mid-January. Happy Holidays!



Bill Gay, head of the MTA's Vandalism Abatement Program, thanked Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg (L) and the Los Angeles City Council, Oct. 18, for honoring the agency's Division Advisory Committee volunteers for their efforts to clean up graffiti along Metro Bus lines. With Gay are Rosemarie Vasquez, Division 8; Operator Ed Hanger, Division 15; and Kim Turner, deputy service operations manager, Division 8.

Suggestion Box

Editor:

I thought the November 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

180 computers donated to area schools, colleges

The MTA donated 180 surplus personal computers, valued at \$50,000 to four high schools and three area community colleges in September.

The seven institutions all participate in the MTA's Transportation Careers Academy Program (TCAP). TCAP prepares young people for entry level jobs in the transportation industry through academic and work experience.

"We're very pleased to have MTA's support," said Sid Thompson, LAUSD superintendent. "These computers will provide a better learning environment for our students, and will enhance the effectiveness of the TCAP program."

The computers were divided among Locke, Wilson, North Hollywood and John Glenn high schools, and Los Angeles Southwest College, Valley College and East LA College.

LA City Council honors MTA's DAC volunteers

MTA volunteers who participate in the Division Advisory Committee (DAC) program helping fight graffiti and vandalism were honored, Oct. 18, by the Los Angeles City Council.

A dozen of the more than 175 DAC volunteers were on hand in the council chambers to receive certificates of appreciation for their work in a recent Atwater Community Cleanup.

The group worked with members of the community to help clear rights of way, landscape medians, clean streets and plant trees and vines in the Atwater business district and Chevy Chase Park.

The MTA's Vandalism Abatement Program has virtually eliminated graffiti from Metro Bus exteriors by working with

young people throughout the county to help them recognize the destructive effects of a dirty, graffiti-filled environment.

Rebuilt Arroyo Seco Bridge Rededicated at age 100

The historic Arroyo Seco Bridge, which served as a link for the transcontinental railroads that brought commerce and people to Los Angeles, was rededicated Oct. 19 in a ceremony marking its 100th anniversary.

The bridge was disassembled two years ago and rehabilitated to its original style by the MTA's Pasadena Blue Line team, headed by Dave Sievers, deputy executive officer, Construction. Overseeing the contractor's work were Jim Cohen, deputy project manager, and construction managers Ed Vargas and Fernando Quesada.

Rebuilt to provide two train tracks instead of one, the bridge will serve as a major element of the Pasadena Blue Line. The last trains crossed the bridge in 1994.

The Arroyo Seco Bridge was designated a Los Angeles City Historic-Cultural Landmark in 1988. A designation plaque was unveiled at the rededication ceremony. ■



Deputy CEO Linda Bohlinger (C) and Naomi Nightingale, manager, Career Development and Training Center (R) watch as a TCAP student tries out one of 180 computers the MTA has donated to area schools and colleges.

CM491 10/96 JS



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

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