

Metro

EMPLOYEE MAGAZINE OF THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

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Family



Our vital link to customers

MTA honors its top frontline employees for 1996

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Cover Photo: Frontline Employees for 1996 are, from left, Bus Maintenance Specialist Alex Rocio, Rail Operator Ricardo Miranda, Bus Operator Juan Pena, Rail Maintenance Specialist John Barocca and Customer Information Operator Greg Pitts. See their stories on Pages 8 and 9.

Metro Family

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

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Sharing My Thoughts

By Linda Bohlinger, Chief Executive Officer



It's being called "belt-tightening," but the MTA's budget for Fiscal Year 1997-98 will include many positive elements. Among them will be funding for our top two priorities: improvements in bus service and continuation of Metro Rail construction projects. The budget also meets our principles of being fiscally responsible, customer-focused, community and regionally responsive and employee-supportive.

As this column was being written, the budget was in final preparation for submission to the Board. At \$2.8 billion, the budget represents an overall one percent decrease from FY 1996-97. That includes a five percent reduction — \$41 million — in operating and overhead costs.

Much of the cost reduction is being driven by an anticipated decrease in local tax and farebox revenues. Funding from state and federal sources also is expected to hold steady or be even less in FY 1997-98.

These and other factors required us to make some tough choices. We've had to reduce staff in a number of departments, primarily through voluntary retirements and separations, although some layoffs were required. We also decided to close Division 12 in Long Beach and merge it with Division 18 in Carson.

More new buses

At the same time, however, we will put 50 additional buses on the road in June and another 50 buses by September in a new service demonstration program. We've also programmed funds to order a total of 223 new buses in FY 1997-98. These expenditures will be matched by upgrades in operating division facilities.

We're also committed to improve the appearance of our buses. All new buses delivered in FY 1997-98 will have the new white and gold paint scheme and we'll repaint 250 existing buses. The Zero Tolerance anti-graffiti program for buses will remain in effect.

Funds for rail

Our capital budget recommends spending \$51.6 million for upgrading the Metro Red, Blue and Green Lines. It provides funds for completing Red Line construction in Hollywood and for continuing work on the North Hollywood extension.

In FY 1997-98, we'll release the first construction contract for bid on the Red Line Eastside extension.

The budget also includes funds for the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena and for the LA Car project.

We expect to program some \$592 million in funds to cities and local transit agencies. We're recommending funding for HOV projects, the Santa Monica Transit Parkway, the Harbor Transitway, the Smart Corridor and many other important transportation programs and projects.

In addition to improving bus service, our transit planners will look at ways to increase Metrolink ridership, give buses priority over autos on crowded roads, and open transit hubs in the San Fernando Valley.

You'll be getting more information about the FY 1997-98 budget in future

issues of *Metro Family* and *CEO Report*.

A pitch for charity

I want to close this column by reminding you that it's not too late to make your donation to our charitable campaign — *Committed to Serving Our Communities*.

Your contribution will support the Asian Pacific Community Fund, Brotherhood Crusade/Black United Fund, The College Fund/UNCF, Combined Health Appeal, Earth Share of California, Los Angeles Women's Foundation, National Hispanic Scholarship Fund, United Latino Fund and the United Way of Greater Los Angeles.

Please give generously and help us give something back to those in our communities who are less fortunate. See your department coordinator to make your pledge through a payroll deduction or one-time gift. It's the right thing to do. ■

April Employees of the Month



Greg Angelo
Administration



John Barocca
Transit Operations



Jack Claytor
Executive Office



Wendy Givan
Communications



John Given
RTP&D



Shaven Lowe
Finance



Gabriele Maul-Crumby
Procurement



Dennis Mori
Metro Construction

Editor's Note: The May issue of *Metro Family* mistakenly listed the March Employees of the Month as having been selected for May. We apologize for the error.

Rider survey cites need for improved communications

Editor's Note: This is the second of two articles on the Service Planning Market Research Project.

One constant thread runs through a massive survey of Metro Bus and Train patrons and non-riders: the MTA needs to improve communications with the public.

The survey, which included on-board questionnaires, telephone interviews and focus groups, found that — despite its wide-ranging role in regional transportation — the MTA is essentially “faceless” to the public.

“We have a great opportunity to improve public awareness and perception of the MTA,” says Dr. Robert Jackson, MTA transportation technical manager.

Jackson and Richard Steinbeck, senior communications officer, Marketing Department, managed Phase I of the Service Planning Market Research Project. Conducted in four languages, the survey also covered patrons of 10 municipal bus companies. Some 54,000 individuals participated in the survey.

County-wide study

The survey is the first scientific county-wide study that combines on-board and telephone surveys of MTA and municipal transit riders and non-riders. It will help the MTA identify ways to improve transit service, devise marketing and customer communications strategies, and evaluate the impact of new service programs.

“The data collected in the survey also is being used to develop a customer satisfaction index of our riders,” says Steinbeck. “We’ll survey them at regular intervals to note any changes in their opinion of MTA services.”

Jackson and Steinbeck also selected a representative group of 750 bus riders and 250 rail riders whose opinions and commuting habits will be tracked over time.

Among the results of the telephone survey were findings showing that 70 percent of those interviewed could not identify the MTA as the county’s transportation agency.

Boosting MTA’s identity

To boost its identity with the public, the study recommends that the MTA high-

light benefits the agency provides area residents, “from reduced traffic congestion, (to) increased mobility for the elderly and students, (to) access to jobs.”

The area’s multicultural, multilingual population, in which about one-third of residents are foreign-born, requires the MTA to make extraordinary communications efforts, the study says.

Researchers recommended an emphasis on direct communications through community meetings, talking with passengers on Metro Buses and Trains, direct mail to homes and contact with community leaders.

“The survey had an immediate impact on the way we provide information,” says Steinbeck. “Whether it’s our simplest brochure or timetable, our messages have to be straightforward so that the average person can immediately understand them.”

Using telephone information

Many of those surveyed had experienced difficulty in getting information from the MTA’s telephone information system. They rated their “ability to get through” and “speed of response” as “less than average” and “average.”

Researchers said the MTA should give high priority to information line service and establish more “customer-friendly” methods of handling calls.

Good communications also may play a role in attracting “choice” riders who have other transportation options. Survey respondents said the availability of schedule information was one of the two most important factors — along with travel time compared to auto — in their decision to use or not to use public transit.

To attract new “choice” riders to the system, the study recommends that the MTA give high priority to making such passenger information materials as system maps, timetables and schedule booklets, widely and easily available to patrons and potential riders.

“A significant percentage of people don’t know how to use our transit system or where to get information,” says Jackson. “We need to examine our options for fulfilling that need.” ■

“We have a great opportunity to improve public awareness and perception of the MTA.”

Celebration honors those who ‘Try Transit’



Pupils from San Pedro Street School were on hand to help celebrate Try Transit Week in May. From left are Jaqueline Delgado, Beyan Larwuo and Gilliam Parrish.

The MTA values citizens who are doing their part to relieve gridlock and clean the air.

To show its appreciation, the MTA observed “Try Transit Week,” May 12 to 16, to honor public transit users, transit employees, bicyclists and ridesharers, and to encourage car commuters to try transit.

The annual event is sponsored by the American Public Transit Association (APTA).

“We hope Try Transit Week will encourage those who have not tried public transit to join the more than one million boarding passengers who use the Metro System each weekday,” said Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger.

The MTA festivities commenced on Monday, with Bike Day at the Long Beach Bikestation. Bicyclists received valet parking, a free Metro discount token, a copy of the *Long Beach Press Telegram* and a cup of Starbuck’s coffee.

Transit Day

Tuesday’s event, Transit Day, helped to support local food banks. Riders who donated canned food items

received a Metro Discount token good for a regular one-way fare.

Metro Employees of the Year for bus and rail, maintenance and customer information were honored on Wednesday during ceremonies held on the Patsaouras Transit Plaza.

Radio station KRLA broadcast live from the Metro Green Line’s Norwalk station, on Thursday, May 15. In recognition of Carpool Day, free copies of the *LA Times* were distributed at the Norwalk and Harbor Freeway park-and-ride lots.

Friday’s event, billed as Ride Clean Day, featured a mid-day Transit Fair held at Macy’s Plaza in downtown LA. The MTA joined with Metrolink, Southern California Edison and LADOT to showcase new clean air transportation technologies.

According to APTA, Try Transit Week is an opportunity for transit providers to attract new customers.

By demonstrating public transit’s convenience and how it benefits the community — by congestion relief and cleaner air — non-riders can be encouraged to become regular transit patrons. ■

MTA assists FTA's substance abuse audit program

By Frank Harper

Recognizing the MTA's long-standing industry leadership in substance-abuse programs, the Federal Transit Administration recently invited the MTA to assist in field-testing its new FTA Substance Abuse Audit Program.

In mid-April, an FTA Audit team spent a week here conducting interviews, gathering data, examining records, and monitoring substance testing procedures.

The MTA is required by federal law to test employees in safety-sensitive jobs for use of drugs and alcohol. The law requires pre-employment testing, random and post accident testing, and testing if there's reasonable suspicion of use by an employee. The MTA also requires return to duty and follow-up testing.

Participating in the field test program proved beneficial for both the MTA and the FTA, according to Leila Procopio-Makuh, Human Resources manager, Special Programs. The FTA had an opportunity to iron out any "kinks" in the audit program prior to a full-scale nationwide launch in July.

In return for its participation, says Procopio-Makuh, the MTA was given the opportunity to correct any deficiencies in its own program, without prejudice, prior to a regular audit.

An excellent program

The results of the audit of the MTA's internal program underscored the agency's commitment to a substance-free workplace.

Among the comments the MTA received from the FTA audit, says Procopio-Makuh, were: "very impressed," a "model program," an "excellent program," "records in excellent order," and "people were cooperative and cordial."

"We're proud of the fact that the percentage of our positive test results has been consistently lower than the industry average," says Procopio-Makuh.

Requirement for funding

Compliance with drug and alcohol



regulations is a requirement for continued receipt of federal funds. The FTA has the authority, through Congress, to withdraw or suspend funding for non-compliance.

"We really need everyone's cooperation," Procopio-Makuh says. "It's important for managers and supervisors to comply in a timely manner when they receive random testing notifications, and to follow procedures outlined in the policy."

As HR's manager of special programs, Procopio-Makuh oversees the MTA Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program and the Employee Assistance Program (see accompanying story).

"We're proud that...our positive test results (are) lower than the industry average"

Enter the zone

To assist in educating employees, a new brochure, *Enter the Zone*, was developed with Internal Communications, to outline the agency's drug and alcohol policies and program. The brochure will be distributed to all employees along with the revised Alcohol and Drug Abuse Policy.

Procopio-Makuh is proud of the MTA's record of accomplishment in the area of substance abuse, nevertheless, she is realistic about the problem. Drug and alcohol abuse is a problem of society and the MTA employee population mirrors the larger society.

"Whenever and wherever we can control the problem here in our workplace, we're trying our best. Our employees and the public we serve deserve our best effort." ■

Back from the Twilight Zone

A story of hope by an MTA staff member

Most people don't worry when their workplace is declared a "drug- and alcohol-free zone." This is a story for those who do.

There was a time in my life when I drank alcohol everyday — before, after and on the job. It was the late '70s and I was a single mother who had been a top-notch paralegal. I lived my life from party to party, pay check to pay check, job to no job.

The "drinking life" was in, but I took it to the limit and beyond. I was raising my son alone, scared to death that we wouldn't make it, and booze became my solace.

Alcoholism is a progressive disease, and it pulled me further and further from reality. Fired and evicted, I hated myself for the desperate woman I'd become. My choice in "friends" changed from attorneys and other professionals to hookers and outlaw bikers.

By the time my son was a teenager, he had to fend for himself and I was using any mind-altering, body-numbing, feeling-stuffing chemical I could ingest.

Those who judge can't know what it's like. Sooner or later alcoholics reach a stage where they can no longer control their drinking. Control is never an issue for a normal drinker, but alcoholics cross a so-called "invisible line" when it becomes abnormal not to drink.

Who knows why this happens. The National Council on Alcoholism reports that one in four Americans has a problem with alcohol. Some of us grew up in alcoholic homes, but many did not. There is no blame for this disease, any more than there is for diabetes. You either have it, or you don't.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) believes that alcoholics are physically allergic to alcohol, mentally obsessed with its perceived powers, and lack a spiritual belief in a higher power. Underneath it all is extreme self-loathing. Sooner or later they can no longer function with or without alcohol. At that point, the only choices are death, insanity or recovery.

Employee Assistance Program

Finding help is not a problem; recovery resources are as close as the phone book, and at the MTA there is an Employee Assistance Program for referrals. The key is asking for it. My story may seem extreme, but anyone who wonders if they have a problem, probably does.

In 1982, I made a single phone call. Since then, my life has never been the same. With AA and psychological counseling in my corner (for both myself and my son), I finished college, changed careers, and I'm now a well-paid professional doing work I love.

My life today far exceeds my wildest drunken dreams, and it keeps getting better. No longer looking for love "in all the wrong places," I found it right where it was all along — inside of me. I have become a peaceful, creative and loving human being.

But until I traded the bottle and a hangover for sobriety, I didn't stand a chance. If you are an alcoholic or a drug addict, the same is true for you. ■

Editor's Note: If chemical dependency or any personal problem is affecting your worklife, please call the MTA's Employee Assistance Program at 1-800-221-0945.

A doctor in the house

Benefits of MTA tuition reimbursement? Ask Larry Conn, Ph.D.

FAN

Finance & Administration News

Deborah L. Craney, Editor

By Deborah L. Craney

The first thing you notice about Larry Conn is that he's the poster child for the "nice guy."

I first met Larry in 1990, a year after he began his career with the RTD as an administrative analyst in the Risk Management Department.

Our initial conversation revealed that he was attending graduate school under the agency's tuition reimbursement program.

Whenever our paths crossed throughout the following years, I always asked, "Did you finish school yet?"

Earned his Ph.D.

As it turns out, Larry also could be the poster child for the MTA's tuition reimbursement program. He recently

earned his Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from the prestigious Claremont Graduate School. And, for the first time since I met him seven years ago, he is no longer a student.

With the exception of two years, Larry worked full-time in Los Angeles while attending school in Claremont and commuting — first from Orange County, then Riverside.

The Conn family includes Larry and Gail — his wife of 12 years — eight-year-old Heather and a black Labrador retriever named Max. The Conns also are in the process of adopting a child.



Larry Conn, Ph.D.

Larry currently is an organizational program manager in the Strategic Planning Department. He is grateful to the MTA for the tuition assistance he received. (Please see tuition reimbursement chart.)

I asked Larry whether the completion of his doctorate has prompted a change in career plans.

"Right now I have no new career aspirations," he says. "I'm really enjoying my current job. I just want to relax for a while before beginning any new challenges."

A rest well-deserved, Dr. Conn! ■

Thank you, Vendor Fair Volunteers!



By Dave Hershenson

The Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair Organizing Committee is grateful to all of the MTA employees who volunteered to staff the very successful 1997 Vendor Fair.

The Vendor Fair — the largest public agency outreach event in California — was hosted by the MTA, County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, and LA Unified School District, April 16, at the LA Convention Center.

More than 2,000 vendors attended, including some 650 luncheon diners. The luncheon was highlighted by the keynote address from LA Dodger Vice President of Communications Tommy Hawkins.

Many participated in a special workshop on how business can utilize

The City of Los Angeles recently honored the MTA for sponsorship of the 1997 Vendor Fair. From left are Gail Charles, Carey Peck, Linda Bohlinger and Anne Fischer.

interns trained through the MTA's Transportation Careers Academy Program (TCAP) and the Transportation Occupations Program (TOP). MTA volunteers were critical to the smooth handling of this enormous event.

The Vendor Fair Organizing Committee will be meeting within the next few weeks to begin organizing the 1998 Greater LA Vendor Fair.

If you have any suggestions for improvement — such as new workshop topics, types of exhibits or additional ways to assist exhibitors, please call Carey Peck at 922-1062, or e-mail us at pecke@mta.net. ■

Tuition Reimbursement At-A-Glance

Common Questions	Represented Employees	Non-Represented Employees
Who is eligible to participate?	Full-time and part-time employees.	Regular full-time employees. (Part-time, as-needed, interns and temporary employees are not eligible.)
What school can I attend?	Accredited high school, college or university and other institutions.	Accredited college or university.
For how much can I be reimbursed?	Up to two courses taken simultaneously during any one semester, quarter or trimester. No limit to number of semesters, quarters or trimesters. Maximum for each undergraduate course is \$175 and for each graduate course is \$325.	Maximum of \$1,740 for FY 96-97.
What is eligible for reimbursement?	Registration/Tuition Text Books Required Study Materials Health Fees Student Association Dues	Registration/Tuition Text Books Health Fees Student Association Dues
What if I'm on probation?	Must complete probationary period before reimbursement will occur	Must complete initial probationary period before reimbursement will occur.

For more information, call Employee Development at 922-7111



Joya De Foer recently was appointed Acting Treasurer. She is responsible for day-to-day management and administration of the department.



Prestigious award for the MTA

Director of Real Estate Velma Marshall recently accepted the International Right of Way Association's "Public Employer of the Year Award." The award honored the contributions of MTA employees, who hold several offices in the Los Angeles chapter. Members include real estate and property management executives.

'With a little help from my friends'

MTA's diverse organizations provide career assistance

By Frank Harper

Achieving career success takes ability, determination, a little luck and a lot of help from others.

Successful people often credit a mentor, a teacher, a coach or a friend, the person who provided that first job opportunity, or guided them down a certain career path, with playing a crucial role in their professional life.

At the MTA, several professional organizations fulfill part of this function for minorities and women. They provide opportunities to develop contacts by networking with people throughout the agency and the transportation field. They offer training programs and community outreach projects to enhance job skills and sponsor social events.

Marion Colston-Fayyaz, manager, organizational development and MTA's Diversity Task Force chair, heads the local chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials (COMTO). She became a COMTO member early in her career at Philadelphia's transit agency.

Professional visibility

"COMTO gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my managerial and administrative skills," says Colston-Fayyaz. A national COMTO conference she chaired showcased her leadership abilities and put her face-to-face with senior management and industry leaders, including Gordon Linton, who now is administrator of the Federal Transit Administration. Colston-Fayyaz rose to become the president of COMTO's Eastern region.

Colston-Fayyaz cites another benefit of membership. She recently used her COMTO contacts at other U.S. transit agencies for their input regarding performance appraisal programs.

"I can call people at any transit agency for assistance on whatever project I'm working on," she says.

Scholarships and mentors

Opening doors for deserving students through scholarships and with educational outreach programs is a major function for many of the groups. Hispanics in Transit (HIT) has been particularly active in education outreach. The group has provided more than \$10,000 in scholarships

to USC, Yale, MIT and Loyola Marymount.

As a member of Hispanics in Transit, Maggie Cook, MTA Centrex operator, participates in many community projects. She's been active in fundraising for Plaza de la Raza's educational programs. Cook gets personal satisfaction by being a mentor to young people, offering career guidance through HIT's adopt-a-school program.

"Making presentations to students and community groups, as a representative of HIT and the MTA, has boosted my self-confidence," says Cook.

HIT and Asian Pacifics in Transportation (APT) are groups that serve as advocates on transit issues for their respective communities. Wes Tremor of APT says the group was instrumental in getting Metro transit information printed in several Asian languages and dialects.

Cultural focus

The African-American Employees Association (AAEA) sponsors professional development workshops and networks with other groups — engineers and public employees, says Naomi Nightingale, manager, Career Development and Training Center.

AAEA's mission also is to foster an awareness of African-American cultural heritage. The group holds commemorative events for Kwanza, Juneteenth, Black History Month and Martin Luther King Day. It regularly hosts forums with authors and speakers.

"The AAEA adheres to the concept illustrated by 'It takes a village to raise a child,' the African proverb," says Nightingale. "We promote collaboration and teamwork, values that carry into the workplace and the community."

Emerging from merger

At last February's Diversity Task Force meeting, a panel of representatives from the various groups gave presentations about their organizations. There's a renewed effort to encourage membership.

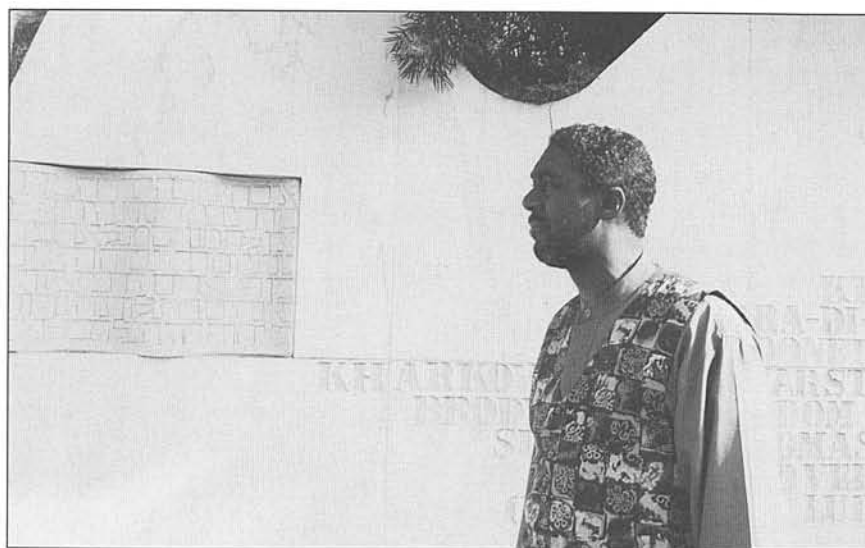
Several of the groups mentioned that participation and activity have been stalled in recent months due to the effects of the merger and the move to the Headquarters building.

Some groups, such as COMTO and

Women's Transit Seminar (WTS) are chapters of national organizations. Hispanics in Transit, Asian Pacifics in Transportation and others are local organizations.

"These organizations are our partners

in helping to develop our most valued resource, our employees," says Gail Charles, director, Equal Opportunity programs. "Employee-sponsored networks and affinity groups play a vital role in providing career guidance and support." ■



Time of remembrance and reflection

John Davis, Transit Police training coordinator, pauses for a moment of quiet reflection at the Wall of Remembrance at the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance. The Wall honors victims of the Holocaust. The visit to the Museum was sponsored by the MTA's Diversity Task Force.

List of organizations

Here's a list of the groups mentioned in this article. All the organizations are open to all MTA employees regardless of race, gender or ethnicity.

African-American

Employees Association (AAEA)

Contact: Naomi Nightingale (213) 922-5256
Professional growth and career development; cultural awareness; networking.
Meets: 2nd Tuesday of each month.

Asian Pacifics in Transportation (APT)

Contacts: Audrey Noda (213) 922-2238 or Wes Tremor (213) 922-4945
Professional growth and career development; networking; community advocacy; social events.
Number of members: 100

Conference of Minority

Transportation Officials (COMTO)

Contact: Amanda Vallejo (714) 560-5620 or Marion Colston-Fayyaz (213) 922-2260
National organization; professional development, education, networking, career advancement service, contract/procurement data bank.
Number of members: 25+ (now recruiting)

Hispanics in Transit (HIT)

Contacts: Maggie Cook: (213) 922-2000 or Tommy Elisaldez (213) 383-1277
Professional growth and career development, scholarships; community service; community advocacy.
Number of members: 50+

Women's Transit Seminar (WTS)

Contact: Rachel Vanderberg (310) 833-1002
National organization; Professional development through education, networking, maintains national job bank, scholarships.

On the Front Lines with MTA Public Affairs Staff

Metro Rail Construction

Wendy Taylor, Editor

Metro Red Line Public Affairs staff have a touchy job. They're the ones most likely to meet one-on-one with the public to address their fears or concerns about subway construction.

Senior Public Affairs Officer Stephen Sawyer, assigned to Segment 3, North Hollywood Extension, just happens to live across the street from the La Brea access shaft near the future Hollywood/ Highland station.

When he joined the MTA 18 months ago, a noise monitor was installed on his balcony so he could check the construction noise level during his off hours.

"The colorful sound blankets that hang from a 60-foot high steel frame surrounding the access shaft work really well to soften the construction noise — so everyone in my neighborhood can sleep," says Sawyer.

However, Sawyer faced a much more daunting assignment when he was asked to take steps to appease merchants on Hollywood Boulevard between Highland and Las Palmas in advance of a planned



A group of residents toured the Hollywood Hills Metro Red Line tunneling project in May. Pictured here at the entrance to the tunnel in Universal City, they seem to be enjoying their trek. Photo by George Gray.

three and a half-month period when the MTA would have to conduct 24-hour construction work.

Time limits

"The original agreement with the merchants called for only nighttime construction," says Marilyn Morton, Public Affairs manager, "but we needed to make up for lost time caused by the termination of the previous contractor, Shea-Kiewit-Kinney, in the wake of the 1995 sinkhole on Hollywood Boulevard."

The MTA brought in an independent mediator who helped fashion a deal with

the merchants.

But, it was Sawyer who was recently honored by the City of Hollywood for his "creativity...in finding a win-win solution" that gives fair compensation to the merchants directly affected (in the form of rent subsidies paid by the MTA's insurance carrier), shortens construction time and saves about \$3 million for the MTA.

The agreement calls for shutting down on weekends and restoring the street to use from Saturday at 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. on Sunday to accommodate weekend tourist business. The agreement ends on June 15.

location (known as "cross passage 18") to pour concrete into the tunnels for the track mountings.

Considerate of residents

In the three months that this contractor has been at the site, workers have been especially considerate of residents. Not only have they been careful, for example, not to block driveways, they've been known to help carry groceries, open garage doors, and generally assist some of the area's senior citizens navigate in and around the construction zone.

Of course, mitigating the impact of construction on residents and merchants is one of the MTA's primary concerns; public affairs personnel work directly with people who are the

Business owner Ike Perlmutter says that "so far the work has been basically clean and quiet, and the MTA is keeping their word."

Seeing is believing

But Sawyer can't rest on his laurels. Together with Public Affairs Supervisor Mark Pattison, and Public Affairs Officer John Mazzarella, he's been working with the Hollywood Hills residents who had originally opposed tunneling beneath the Santa Monica Mountains.

Last year, the MTA added environmental and residential protections because the area's residents and visitors to Runyan Canyon Park demanded that subway tunneling be as safe and unobtrusive as possible.

"My job is to educate and address these concerns on an ongoing basis," says Sawyer. Along with Pattison and Mazzarella, he began organizing tunnel tours for the area's residents.

"It eased a lot of my fears," says Sharon Childers, a Studio City resident who said she had been skeptical of the safety of the project because of the news reports about construction problems. She was part of a group tour, April 26, of the Universal City subway station at Lankershim Boulevard.

The tour also was exciting for resident Kim Furst.

"It was better than going to Universal Studios," she says. "I want to do it again, and I'll recommend it to all of my neighbors." ■

An Unexpected Alliance

A neighborhood warms to Metro Rail workers

By Wendy Taylor

Something unexpected is going on down at Fifth and New Hampshire in Hollywood.

Just the other day, Rog Stuart, a retired neighborhood gentleman, put on a clean shirt, a smile, left his apartment and sauntered down the street to present a box of chocolate chip cookies to the "boys" working on the Red Line subway project.

"Got milk?"

Sure, the cookies were "store-bought" — and the crew had received real homemade ones the week before

from a sweet-faced grandmother who lived two doors away — but it's the thought that counts.

Not only is this a far cry from the reception Metro Rail workers normally receive from residents, but it's occurring in a neighborhood where bulldozers, cement mixers and construction-site barriers have been a way of life for the past four years.

Currently, Segment 2 contractor Morrison-Knudsen is installing the trackwork for the Vermont corridor, which means that the project is nearing its final stages. The workers are using the emergency exit shaft at this

most affected by construction.

In this case, MTA Public Affairs Officer Richard Morallo, seeing the growing rapport between the neighborhood and construction workers, provided the residents with an underground tour of cross passage 18 on May 3. It was the first time they had seen what was going on under their street. Justine Belizaire, Parsons-Dillingham resident engineer, conducted the tour.

"It's nice to know that we are safe with this construction site so near us," said resident Guadalupe L. Martinez. "The tour showed me that safe working procedures are very important to the workers and the job site is safe for both them and the community." ■

Tops in their

MTA bus, rail, maintenance and customer information employees

Every table was filled during a luncheon in downtown Los Angeles, May 1, as the MTA honored its bus, rail, maintenance and customer information employees of 1996.

Some 40 employees who previously had been selected for monthly recognition were on hand with family members and co-workers to participate in the annual awards ceremony. All told, they represented more than 700 years of total service.

"You're not just a bus operator or a mechanic or a customer information operator," Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger told the group during her keynote speech. "You make an important contribution every day by helping the MTA serve our customers."

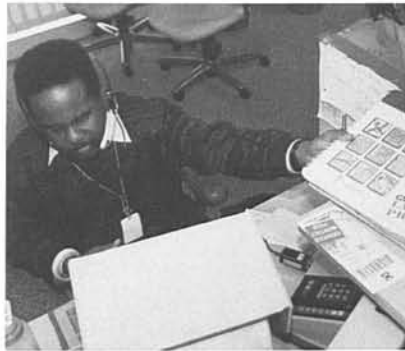
Gold medals

Before the honorees for the year were announced, each monthly winner was introduced to the audience and presented a gold medal on a red, white and blue ribbon.

To standing ovations, the bus, rail, maintenance and customer information employees for 1996 were announced. Each received a commemorative award and a large trophy intended for display at their worksites until next year's honorees are announced.

The five employees of the year — Bus Operator Juan Pena, Rail Operator Ricardo Miranda, Bus Maintenance Specialist Alex Rocio, Rail Maintenance Specialist John Barocca and Customer Information Operator Greg Pitts — also were presented to the local media during a May 14 news conference at Headquarters.

"You make me proud. You inspire me to come to work each day," Ellen Levine, executive officer, Transit Operations, said during her luncheon remarks. "You ensure that the people who ride our buses and trains, and even the people who don't, have a better quality of life because of what you do." ■



Greg Pitts, Customer Information Operator of the Year, reaches for a Thomas Guide to help a Metro Bus passenger plan a trip.

Greg Pitts Customer Information Operator of the Year

Winning the 1996 award for Customer Information Operator of the Year is something that comes naturally for Greg Pitts.

During his 22-year career at the MTA, Pitts has won the Operator of the Month award seven times. Last year, he was the first runner-up for the Operator of the Year award.

Pitts is very pleased with the MTA's Customer First Initiative. He applies it everyday in the Customer Information Center.

"We have to put ourselves in the customers' shoes," he says. "We have to meet their needs and also anticipate a few needs that the customers on the street didn't know they had."

Pitts and his fellow Customer Information operators are a key link in the region's transit system.

"We make the drivers' jobs easier, because the fewer questions that passengers have boarding the bus means more time that operators can devote to driving safely," he says. "It's a win-win situation for customers and the MTA."

Greg Pitts and his wife, Diane, have two daughters, Aisha 17, and Khamira, 9. They live in Los Angeles.

His interests include art history, architecture, world history and writing. He enjoys basketball, skating and gymnastics.



John Barocca, Rail Maintenance Specialist of the Year, has developed a number of innovations during his years at Division 11.

John Barocca Rail Maintenance Employee of the Year

Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Henry Ford...and John Barocca.

John Barocca, MTA Rail Maintenance Employee of the Year, has quite a bit of the inventor in him. Like the famous inventors, he has the knack for understanding a need and finding a solution.

"He's streamlined our operation and made difficult jobs easier and safer, and saved the MTA thousands of dollars in the process," says Jack Eich, Central Maintenance Superintendent.

Among Barocca's innovations are lifting harnesses for Light Rail Vehicle parts and equipment, a portable cart for heavy cable crimping equipment, a method for cutting steel tires off rail wheels, and special equipment for rail axle disassembly.

"We had to come up with something ourselves; the vendors didn't provide it," says Barocca.

Barocca attended Illinois State University and earned a degree in electronics technology from Long Beach City College. He came to the RTD in 1978 and has been with Division 11, the Metro Blue Line, since 1991.

Barocca and his wife, Karen, live in Long Beach. He enjoys tennis and Mexican cuisine.



Alex Rocio, Bus Maintenance Specialist of the Year, is a lead man at Division 8. His specialty is brake jobs and inspections.

Alex Rocio Bus Maintenance Employee of the Year

A 40-year MTA veteran, Rocio, age 64, has been a Mechanic A lead man at Division 8 since it opened.

Rocio's first job was as utility service attendant. He was a member of the first mechanic class offered to service attendants at South Park.

Rocio has many recollections of the equipment he's worked on.

"When I started we had Macks, 5100s, 5800s, 800s. We had buses that had the engine in the middle."

In fact, Rocio remembers the first bus he ever worked on.

"I'll never forget the first bus I rebuilt, it was bus 2020," he laughs. "A stick job."

Befitting his status as a lead man and given his seniority, Rocio says he does not miss doing engine rebuilds.

"It was kind of hard work," he admits. His favorite jobs are brake work and inspections.

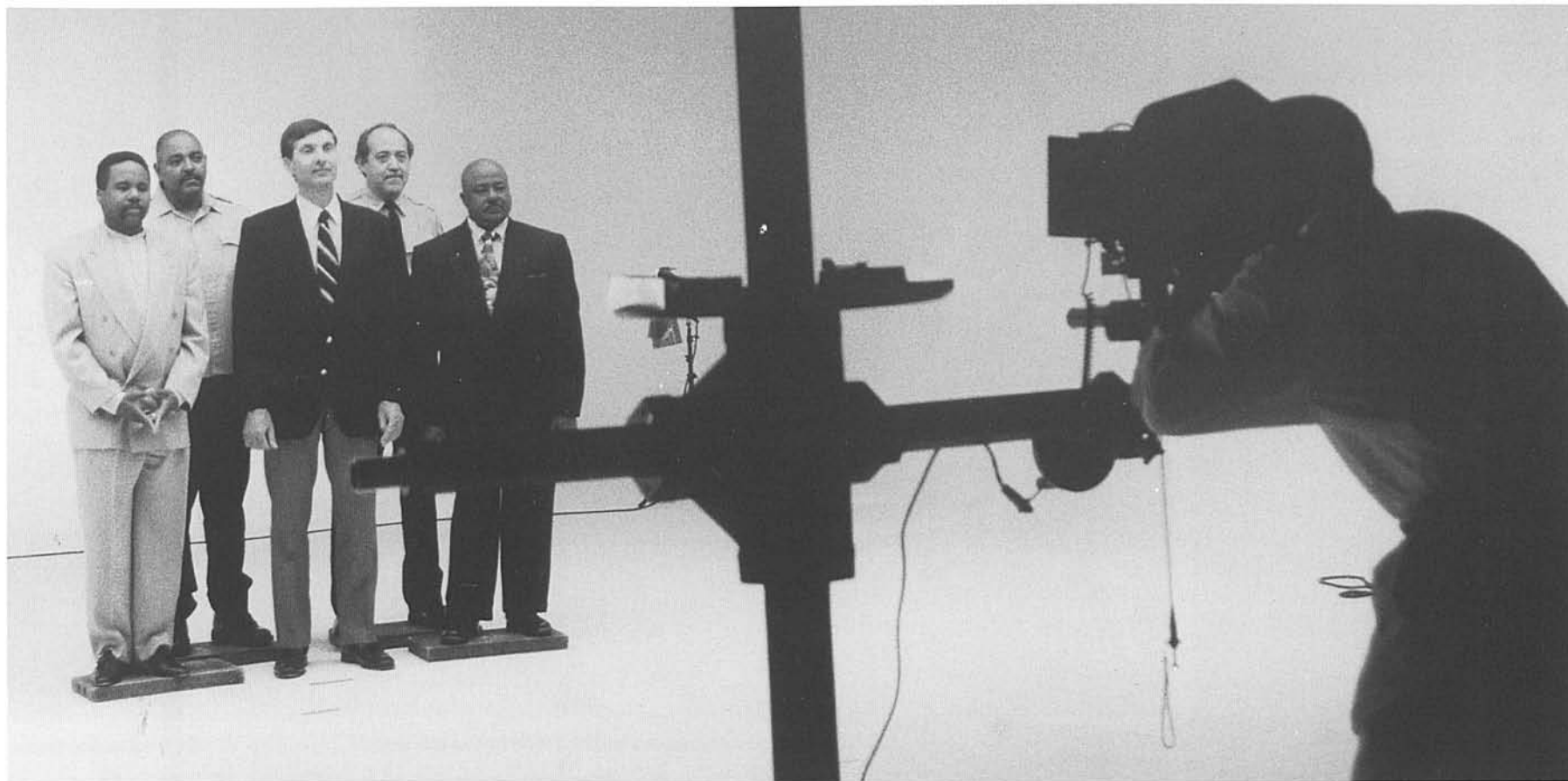
Over the course of his career, Rocio has had to adapt to new technologies, learning computer skills and the CNG bus maintenance systems on the job.

Rocio lives in Chatsworth. He has a daughter, Cheryl Denise, 35, and a son, Michael, 38.

Rocio enjoys lake and deep sea fishing.

r profession

customer information employees of 1996



The 1996 honorees posed for a group photo that will be used on a Metro Bus ad.



Ricardo Miranda, Rail Operator of the Year, projects customer service to his Metro Green Line passengers by operating safely and smoothly.

Ricardo Miranda Rail Operator of the Year

How does Ricardo Miranda, Rail Operator of the Year, project customer service from his isolated booth in a Metro Green Line train?

"I operate the train smoothly and safely so the passengers can relax, read a book," he says. "I try to project safety and

courtesy through the microphone as I tell passengers to watch their step or stand back from the edge of the platform."

Miranda joined the RTD in 1975, two weeks after the Uniroyal Tire plant where he was working closed.

He was a bus operator at Division 5 for 18 years and at Division 18 for two years before transferring to rail operations.

Miranda recalls the scary sensation of operating a vehicle, in this case a train, with neither steering wheel nor brake pedal.

"The instructor was telling me to pull the handle back," he laughs. "I tried to put my foot down on the brake, but there was none."

Miranda enjoys his job on the Green Line. He believes that the public likes the Green Line, too.

"Ridership is picking up daily," says Miranda. "Eventually, we'll need two-car trains."

A Rialto resident, he and his wife Shelia have a daughter, Tiffany, 16. Miranda enjoys motorcycles and camping.



Juan Pena, Bus Operator of the Year, once drove big rigs but prefers driving a Metro Bus and greeting the regular riders he sees every day.

Juan Pena Bus Operator of the Year

Before joining the RTD in 1974, Juan Pena was a truck driver. He drove big rigs throughout the Western states.

"My boss sold the business. I talked to a nice gentleman from the RTD," says Pena. "I took a test, and that next Monday, I joined the RTD."

Pena started at Division 6 in Venice. During the gas shortage of the 1970s, he transferred to Division 7 in Van Nuys to be closer to his North Hollywood home.

Does Pena ever miss the freedom of truck driving?

"I like people," he says. "Everyone who gets on my bus is important."

"In the morning and late afternoon you have regulars," says Pena. "You see the same people going to work and coming home. When they're sad or angry, you try to make them feel like somebody. They say thank you."

Pena's advice for new operators: Be courteous, be responsible, be professional, be safe.

"There's also nothing wrong with being a nice person," he says. "It pays off."

Pena and his wife, Maria Yolanda, have six children: Juan Carlos, 8; Esther, 11; Carlos, 24; Janet, 25; Juan Jr., 26; and Sonia, 30. Pena manages a Little League baseball team and enjoys travel. ■

Send in the clown: Koskela delights in putting on a hobo face

By Frank Harper

Several months ago, MTA Payroll Clerk Willie Koskela became a "happy hobo," a role in which he clearly delights.

Willie Koskela is a clown — a practitioner of that time-honored art of entertaining associated with the circus and pantomime. Clowns of some sort are found in all cultures and clowning as an art form dates back to the dawn of drama in ancient Greece.

The Hobo, in tattered, mismatched clothes, is a stock clown character, one of several recognizable clown types. Previously, Koskela was a Whiteface, the clown in the resplendent clown suit, but that character's makeup seemed to frighten little children.

A professional clown, who coaches the West Covina Elks clown group to which Koskela belongs, suggested the happy hobo character.

"It seemed to be a natural fit," says Koskela. Now, he performs as "I-Brow," the hobo clown.

Fifty events a year

Koskela has been clowning for the past two and a half years with the West Covina Elks. He entertains at 50 to 60 events a year throughout the San Gabriel Valley, at hospitals, senior centers, parades, picnics and fundraisers.

Among the venues at which he performs are Queen of the Valley Hospital, the Covina Christmas Parade and the Hacienda Heights Fourth of July Parade. Koskela has a special devotion to the Whittier Hospital Medical Center. His youngest son, Dan, who has cerebral palsy, resides there.

Koskela's clown career, though brief, is actually the latest chapter in a long, dedicated career of community service.

For more than a decade, Koskela was involved with his daughters' high school drill team. After his youngest daughter's high school graduation, he took up clowning at the urging of his Elks Club comrades.

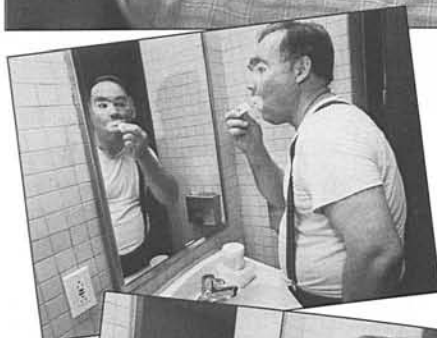
Balloon twisting

Performing as a clown required Koskela to develop and learn a range of skills and talents, among them, balloon



"As long as I can make somebody happy, that's why I do it"

Koskela makes a balloon poodle for Giovanni Sbragia, son of Ralph Sbragia, Construction Safety.



Willie Koskela puts on his clown face for a performance at the MTA Child Care Center. It takes 45 minutes to an hour to complete the transformation from payroll clerk to happy hobo.

twisting and applying makeup.

To transform himself into a clown, either Whiteface or the Hobo, takes 45 minutes to an hour's preparation time.

Balloon twisting, making assorted animals, swords and hats — something that Koskela has become adept at — has had an unanticipated payoff.

Five years ago, Koskela had cancer. As a result of the disease, his strength and endurance were sapped. Blowing up balloons helped him to regain his lung capacity and stamina.

"My doctor encourages me to blow up balloons," he says.

Koskela is learning the knack of face painting, an activity that's popular with children at fundraising events.

"I need to learn more magic tricks, too," he says.

24-year veteran

Koskela, who works in the MTA's payroll department, will celebrate his 24th year at the agency this July. He and his wife live in West Covina. They have five

children and two grandchildren.

Performing as a clown has provided Willie Koskela with many cherished memories, such as a birthday party for a 105-year-old woman.

He says that senior citizens take as much delight as children in his performances.

"As long as I can make somebody happy," Koskela says, "that's why I do it. It's a good ministry. I do enjoy it so much." ■

On track with the wheel rail task force

How MTA Operations employees made subway wheels last longer

Transit Operations

Maria Aguirre, Editor

The route of the Metro Red Line snakes its way from 7th and Metro to Westlake and on to Wilshire/Western.

Soon after service began in 1993, it became apparent that the curves along the route were causing unanticipated problems for the wheels of the Red Line subway cars.

The large wheels and wide axles of the Italian-built Breda cars excelled at high speeds along straight track, but the tunnel curves from 7th and Metro through Vermont, threw them for a loop.

Slowing the train on the curves did little to solve the problem. The wheel flange, the part of the wheel that grips the inside

of the track and holds the cars on the rail, was rubbing excessively against the side of the rail.

The wheels squeaked. And worse, wheels that were expected to last 250,000 miles were wearing out before 20,000 miles.

Squeaky wheels get grease

Consultants were brought in to solve the problem, but the best solution they could come up with was lubricating the wheels. Lubrication extended the life of the wheels only to 35,000 miles.

Walter "Bud" Moore, superintendent, Track and Rail Technical Support, was called on to solve the problem. Together with Rail Track Supervisors Keith Kranda and Dave Walker, the team found an ingenious solution.

They decided to change the shape of the wheel "tread" and alter the surface of the track accordingly. The effect was similar to a cone.

A cone rolled along the ground, rolls in a curve. By giving the "tread" of the wheels a cone-like taper and by grinding the surface of the track to correspond to the

direction, the wheels would self-steer around the curves.

Precision grinder

A state-of-the-art precision grinder that utilizes a total of 16 grinding stones and is computer controlled to operate to within one thousandth of an inch was employed in the process.

The grinder is equipped with a computerized system called "range vision." Range vision enables the operator to view an analog computerized picture of the rail with a picture of the shape, or profile, superimposed on it.

Results of the cone-shaped grinding process have been significant. The wheels have been running for 170,000 miles, so far, and have yet to be replaced. The cost savings are significant.

Moore is now in demand on the lecture circuit, presenting this new technology to transportation groups around the country.

In June, he was in Washington, D.C., to present a paper to the American Passenger Transport Association.

"We took a real lemon and made real lemonade," says Moore. ■

Commentary: Let's Pull Together

By Rick Hittinger, Regional General Manager, Central Region



There's a great story about an old smuggler. Every day he would drive his truck across the border. The border guards knew he was

smuggling something, so they searched the smuggler regularly and stripped down the truck. But they could never find any contraband.

Many years later, the smuggler, now a wealthy old man, met a retired border guard. The guard asked him to reveal what it was that he had smuggled for all those years.

The old smuggler smiled and said, "Trucks."

Too often we miss the obvious. So, pardon me if I state some obvious things:

1. The customer is king.
2. The customer makes pay days possible.
3. The people on the front line of the MTA deal directly with the MTA's customers.

My conclusion is that those who interact with our customers are the MTA's most important and valuable asset.

If we didn't have each and every one of these individuals, who would fulfill the diverse needs of our customers?

We need to cooperate; we need to be pulling in the same direction. Every person in this agency is a part of a proud team.

Just like a team of thoroughbred horses pulling a stagecoach, management needs to have an extremely light touch on the reins. This encourages freedom and a feeling of trust and the development of a high-stepping proud team, both in spirit and performance.

All obvious stuff. I promise that this old border guard will not overlook it. ■

Operator Jordan plays key role in preserving life of passenger

By Peter Freeman

Recently the MTA received a letter from the White family of Los Angeles. It was a "thank you" to Operator Nancy Jordan. It says in part:

"She is a credit to your company, and exemplary of the type of individual who we entrust with our lives when we ride the MTA."

Last April, while driving Line 111 on Florence Avenue, Jordan became aware that a passenger was ill and having difficulty breathing.

She quickly opened the windows on the bus and alerted paramedics. During the crisis, her professional demeanor, which showed no sign of panic, had a calming effect on her passengers.

Love and service

To quote the letter again:

"Because of Nancy, the paramedics came quickly and saved my mother's life. Our family would like her to know how much we appreciate the love and service she extended to our mother. Her actions



Nancy Jordan used the radio to alert MTA Bus Control that a passenger had become ill aboard her bus. Her quick actions saved a life.

demonstrated a deep concern and commitment to human life."

Nancy Jordan began her career with the RTD in 1979. Since 1980, she's been at Division 5, now the Arthur Winston/Mid-Cities Division.

Jordan, one of 15 children, with 10 brothers and 4 sisters, grew up in Mississippi. She attended Jackson State College before moving with her parents to Los Angeles.

She's an ordained minister in the Christian Tabernacle Spiritual Church. Jordan also works with young people and ministers to people who are hospitalized.

Remarkable actions

Ellen Levine, executive officer, Transit Operations, expressed to Nancy her personal appreciation:

"Unquestionably, your quick thinking will largely go unnoticed, except by those who will long remember the events of April 4, which resulted in one human being saving the life of another.

"I consider your actions even more remarkable in view of these troubled times when we, as a people, seem to have lost touch with each other and tend to not become involved. I am confident that the future needs of the MTA and our community will be met by individuals, such as you, who enrich society simply by their presence."

Jordan was introduced at the May meeting of the Board's Operations Committee. Afterward, she joined Levine for lunch.

The Whites closed their letter by writing, "People sometimes forget to say 'thank you' with all good intentions... Thank you and please don't change." ■

Customer Information puts customers first

New phone technology will help callers help themselves

By Frank Sahlem

Metro Information. This is Chris. How can I help you?

Seven thousand callers every weekday hear this message. That's how many inquiries are handled by the MTA's Customer Information operators as they help transit riders to find the right buses and trains at the right times.

From 15 to 63 operators staff the information lines at any one time. Shift assignments are based on the volume of calls expected for different times of each day.

Information callers come from all parts of the world, and they come and go from all parts of the Metro system. Some callers need to set out immediately, while others call days or weeks in advance.

Transit questions can range from finding the nearest bus stop to finding the best travel route across Southern California. Some trips require four buses or trains.

The operator's job is to understand the transit needs of the caller and then get information from the computer that best

meets those needs. The operator then can read the information to the caller or have the computer speak it directly to the caller through the Voice Response System.

Getting it to them faster

Delays in service can affect ridership as Tom Longsdon, Customer Information manager, points out.

"People aren't going to wait for 15 minutes," he says. "They are going to get into their car and go."

New technologies are coming on-line to assist the Customer Information department, promising to speed response times and make information more accessible and convenient for MTA customers.

In April, callers began to choose service in English or Spanish before waiting for information in their language.

Beginning in May, callers could arrange for Customer Information to call them back when an operator is available.

Operators can fax information to callers, eliminating the need for callers to make accurate notes.

Soon, the Voice Response feature will be expanded so that callers can adjust the time of their itinerary, get return-trip information and receive faxes directly from the computer, without going back to an operator.

'Information Busway'

But this is just the beginning, according to Douglas Anderson, senior systems analyst for Customer Information. In about two years, Internet users will be able to point and click on their origin and destination points and receive information for any itinerary.

"This isn't pie in the sky," adds Anderson, noting that a prototype of this system is already working.

Both Longsdon and Anderson speak of "off-loading" calls from Customer Information operators in order to make personal attention more available for those who need it.

"I don't think technology will ever leave our operators sitting around the room with nothing to do," says Longsdon. ■



Customer Information Operator Cynthia Gramajo and her co-workers handle 7,000 phone calls each weekday.

Take Our Daughters to Work Day attracts more than 400 girls

Daughters, granddaughters, nieces, cousins, sisters and friends — more than 400 girls — were on hand at the operating divisions and at Headquarters, April 24, as the MTA celebrated "Take Our Daughters to Work Day."

The day began with a continental breakfast and welcoming ceremonies. After a morning spent in various divisions and departments, the girls were treated to box lunches.

The afternoon program featured "Meet the Executive Women of the MTA," a question and answer session hosted by Government Affairs Director Gisselle Acevedo-Franco, with Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger, Transit Operations Executive Officer Ellen Levine and Transit Police Chief Sharon Papa as panelists. The girls also toured either the Metro Red Line or Division 10.

The day concluded in rousing style, with a make-your-own ice cream sundae party. ■



MTA daughters visited their parent's workplaces, thought about future careers and had fun during Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

Clockwise from top left. A group of happy visitors, from left, are Stephanie Alatorre, Kyrie Chappell, Ella Marie Almazan, Alexis Delgadillo and Brianna Delgadillo.

Division 15 Operator Reva L. Burns-Jones and daughter, Ronieshia Lee, take a ride on the Metro Red Line.

Shown with their daughters, from left, are Marketing employees Avis Brame and Tiffany, Edith L. Goff-Youngblood and Laurie Wright, Marisa Yeager and Ana, and Cathy Dickerson and Danielle.



Is Santa Monica Boulevard ready for a facelift?

"Classic Boulevard" — Gateway to West Los Angeles

RTP&D

Regional
Transportation
Planning &
Development

Donna Finn, Editor

By Lynne Goldsmith

Have you ever driven Santa Monica Boulevard from the San Diego Freeway to Century City? When you're stopped at an intersection on your way there, what do you see?

"A chaotic visual environment with billboards littering the right-of-way" is how Peter De Haan, project manager for the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project in Multimodal Planning, describes the existing roadway.

"The current layout of the boulevard

was designed to accommodate a railroad that is no longer there," he says. "Our task is to design a new layout which makes the most sense for the future."

"This project would make it the boulevard it's always wanted to be," says Hal Suetsugu, Westside Area Team project manager in Multimodal Planning. "It would be the gateway into West Los Angeles, Century City, and Beverly Hills."

"Big" and "Little" Santa Monica

What exists today are two, two-way roadways on either side of an abandoned railroad right-of-way, affectionately called "Big" and "Little" Santa Monica Boulevards by the local residents.

Improving the traffic flow on this stretch of roadway has been a goal of Caltrans, the MTA, and LADOT since the 1980's. A previous road improvement study met with significant homeowner opposition and was defeated.

The most recent planning effort, the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Major Investment Study (MIS), worked diligently to create the best road improvement while, at the same time, incorporating community goals for the area.

Classic Boulevard

This resulted in a recommendation to the MTA Board last February to continue further study of a proposed "Classic Boulevard," which has as its major features:

- A single divided center roadway to replace the two existing parallel two-way roadways and the current "double" intersections.
- Frontage roads on both sides of the roadway to separate parking and pedestrian uses from through traffic.
- Landscape and urban design improvements, including wider sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks, landscaped

center and side medians, and billboard removal from the former railroad right-of-way.

- Transit priority treatment at signalized intersections, advanced green signals for buses at two intersections (queue jumpers), and an eastbound bus-only lane in Century City.
- Ramp improvements at the Route 2/Route 405 junction with exclusive carpool/transit lanes bypassing the ramp meters.
- Class II bicycle lanes on the center roadway.

The success of this study and the concept of the "Classic Boulevard" were the result of a proactive community outreach approach.

"We are very sensitive to local communities," emphasized Suetsugu. "If there is to be a project, the residents want their neighborhoods protected." ■

Russ Wilson: An Olympic champion

Retired MTA scheduler planned transit routes at '84 and '96 Olympics

By Drena H. Graham

What do Carl Lewis, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Mark Spitz, Oscar De La Hoya, and Russ Wilson of the MTA have in common? They've all been to the Olympic Games at least once. And they're all winners.

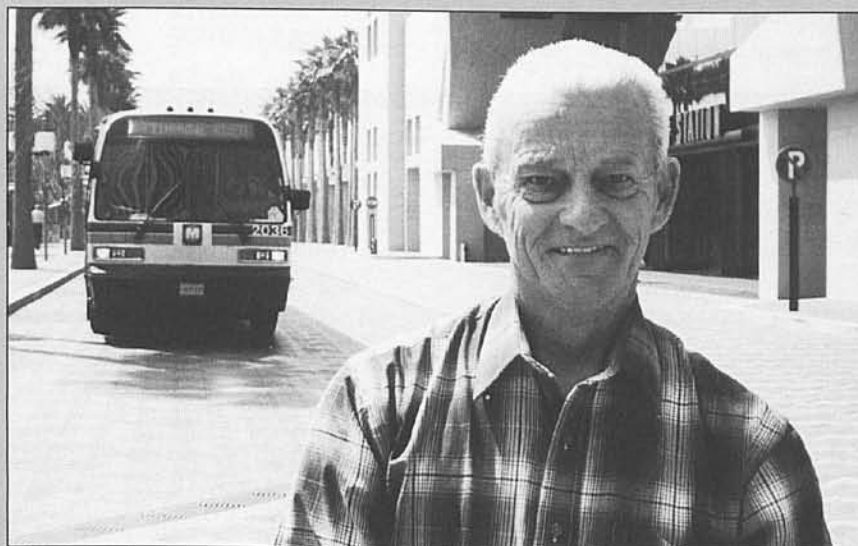
Russ Wilson, an alumnus of the Operations and Scheduling department of the RTP&D unit, has been an integral part of the last two U.S. Olympics.

Regarded as "The Bus Guru" and "The King of Special Events," Wilson's 33-year history with the MTA, combined with a special gift that enables him to visualize complex bus movements, has created an unrivaled ability to excel at major event planning.

Climbed the ladder

Where does one learn that kind of savvy? He started with the former RTD in 1959 as a bus driver and climbed the career ladder from scheduler to planner.

The 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles



MTA retiree Russ Wilson, an expert scheduler, was called upon to make buses run on time at the 1984 and 1996 Olympics.

launched his reputation as the man to call when Atlanta was chosen to host in '96.

Asked by the Olympic Committee to analyze the anticipated transportation nightmare and come up with a solution, Wilson flew to Atlanta to take a look at their situation.

He could see what they would be up against. Atlanta is a smaller city than LA, with narrower city streets. This created quite a challenge when planning to move millions of spectators and thousands of athletes and officials on a tight time schedule within strict security constraints.

Smooth transition

To further challenge him, Atlanta expected the largest attendance for the Olympics in 100 years. With its sports venues all over the city, staging and loading areas had to be carefully organized and tightly controlled to ensure a smooth and orderly transition from one event to another.

During the Olympics, Atlanta's transit system moved 17.2 million people in 17 days. With over one million people a day on public transit, "the key issue was knowing what to anticipate," says Wilson.

For Russ Wilson, the MTA is a family affair. Both his daughter, Leslie, and son, Raymond, work at the MTA. Leslie is a Worker's Compensation analyst and Ray is an engineering associate.

Wilson and his wife, Nola, will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this year. They have two grandchildren and are active in several philanthropic organizations. ■

Stalking the wild Blattidae Orthoptera

New eradication method frees Metro Buses of persistent pests

By Frank Harper

How's this for a summer disaster movie?

Blattidae Orthoptera, a 300 million-year-old creature. Eats anything. Immune to radiation. Invades the Southland. Attacks Metro Buses. Intrepid hero and scientist team up to vanquish the creature.

No, it's not *Jaws*, *Anaconda*, *Arachnophobia*, *Independence Day*, or even *Godzilla*. It's....

Flashback: Working late one evening at his computer, Mike Stange, manager of MTA Quality Assurance, pores over some data.

He's alarmed to discover that costs of materials and labor for controlling pests are \$125,000 annually. Every 6,000 miles, buses are sprayed and powdered with pesticides, yet the creatures endure.

"We're not very successful," he thinks as he mulls over ways to eliminate Blattidae Orthoptera — the cockroach.

The cockroach? Yes. And, for years, it has plagued MTA buses, resisting all eradication efforts.

Enter the scientist

Stange decides to investigate the matter. Eventually, his research leads him to James Harmon, an entomologist. The two team up — the intrepid hero and the sci-

entist — to tackle the problem.

"Jim has a different respect and appreciation for this bug that's been around so long," says Stange. Indeed, the cockroach vastly predates the dinosaurs, surviving basically unchanged for 300 million years.

Over the course of their existence, the pests have managed to adapt to toxic plants and other hazardous substances. Thus, they can build up a tolerance to pesticides.

Ranging from the tropics to Antarctica, cockroaches eat anything, can fit into the smallest cracks and crevices and, as a species, can withstand a nuclear bomb blast.

A rather formidable opponent, and an unwelcome passenger on a Metro Bus.

Literally everywhere

"We'll never eradicate cockroaches completely," says Stange. "They've been here too long, but we can control and prevent their infestation."

With over a million boardings each day, MTA passengers inadvertently transport cockroaches onto buses in foodstuffs, paper bags and other articles. Once onboard, they breed offspring. A gregarious species, they attract others to their midst.

In the past, the MTA employed fogging

and aerosol pesticides against cockroaches with mixed success. Unfortunately, the pesticide mist also was noxious to humans.

A new solution to the problem had to be found. Stange and Harmon formulated a non-spray approach. They decided to use gel pesticide products.

A high-pressure gun injects the gel behind cracks and corners and deep down into crevices — away from passengers and operators, who are never in contact with the pesticides.

The gels kill the cockroaches and also neuter the females that lay eggs.

High-tech method

Using data supplied by Stange, Harmon developed a computer model of a bus to implement their plan.

Harmon factored in such data as bus floor plans, temperature, weather conditions and driving conditions to develop a strategy of attack and to pinpoint exactly when and where to spread the gel.

The results have been spectacular. Based on examinations of traps, the new method has had a 98 percent success rate in eliminating cockroaches. In a survey, bus operators gave it a 95 percent approval rating.



Entomologist James Harmon squirts a pesticide gel under bus seats to rid the coach of cockroaches. The gel kills the bugs and neuters female cockroaches that lay eggs.

The dollar savings also are impressive. The cost for all buses in the fleet to receive an application of gel four times a year has been reduced from \$125,000 to \$25,000.

"Mike did a terrific job on this," says Tony Chavira, deputy executive officer, Service Quality. "He spent a lot of time researching and making contacts. The problem took that level of patience and dedication."

This summer, as passengers ride Metro Buses to movie theaters to see *Jurassic Park II: The Lost World* and other disaster epics, they can ride comfortably and with the assurance — thanks to Mike Stange and James Harmon — that their ride won't be shared with the Blattidae Orthoptera. ■

Linda Bohlinger's

CEO Hotline

Q. A man got on my bus today and was unruly. I called for Transit Police assistance and they responded with several units. They took the man off, but on my return trip, he got on my bus again and said the officers had given him a ride downtown. Shouldn't he have been cited for being unruly?

A. Transit Police officers are allowed discretion in the handling of such cases. Your report was reviewed by the Bureau Commander who believes that the officers acted properly by transporting the patron out of the area and preventing him from immediately boarding another bus. This defused the situation. Issuing a citation

isn't always the proper course of action. Thanks for reporting your concern.

Q. Recently, some racially offensive flyers were circulated at the MTA. What's being done to counteract such behavior?

A. These kinds of hateful activities are not tolerated at the MTA. Our Equal Opportunity Programs Department has provided diversity and sensitivity training workshops to management staff and to front-line supervisors. We will extend such training to all employees in the future. We also have formed a Diversity Task Force, chaired by Marion Colston-Fayyaz, which is developing several projects under the motto, "Our Differences Are Our Strengths." Thanks for your concern about this important issue.

Q. I catch a bus on Patsaouras Plaza every day, and almost every day I have to help people find the right bus stop. Why aren't the bus

stops marked with the number of the bus line? And, when will the little TV screens that are supposed to give bus line information be working?

A. You'll be happy to know that, since you called the HotLine, bus line numbers have been posted at each bus stop on the Plaza. A subcontractor also will be working on the TV information screens, but they probably won't be operable until August. Thanks for your call.

Q. Are we still recycling paper at Headquarters? We don't seem to be segregating paper waste from other waste.

A. Yes, we're still recycling. All trash and all recyclable material at Headquarters is sorted off-site by contractors. The MTA receives credit for a percentage of recovered material. Employees shouldn't deposit wet trash in office trash cans, but rather into the large trash bins provided in each floor's kitchen. Thanks for your call.

Q. The rules for the parking lot at the Regional Rebuild Center (RRC) across from Headquarters have changed. What's going on? Also, who can park free in the underground lot at Headquarters?

A. A new parking policy for the RRC lot was effective in January and employees assigned to the lot were asked to re-verify their vehicles in order to receive a parking pass. This was necessary because unauthorized people were leaving their cars in the lot. Our security force now is issuing warning citations to parking violators. As for free parking in the underground lot, our policy says, "Visitors who have been expressly invited to Gateway on official MTA business will receive validated parking if the hosting department notifies General Services at least 24 hours in advance...." The key words are "official MTA business." Thanks for your call. ■

All In The Family

TRANSITIONS

Aguirre, Maria A.
Sr Publc Aff Ofer
to Admin Anlst

Amos-Smith, Johnnie M.
Cust Serv Agnt I
to Cust Serv Agnt II

Barton, Rodger B.
Auditor to
Sr Contract Admin

Barsaga, Humberto
Bus Opr (P/T) to
Bus Opr (F/T)

Bendijo-Wong, Lourdes S.
Asst Admin Anlst
to Dept Sys Anlst

Berry, Deborah A.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Bustillos, Jesus M.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Branstetter, Brady A.
Gen Serv Supv
to Rev Equip Supv

Cabrea, Rosa I.
Typst Clk to Custd.

Castro, Simplicio L.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Chen, Patricia L.
Transp Proj Plnr II
to Transp Proj Plnr III

Chen, Xueming
Transp Proj Mgr III
to Transp Proj Mgr IV

Colcord, Jerry W.
Bus Opr (P/T) to
Bus Opr (F/T)

Colston-Fayyas, Marion J.
Organ. Dev Mgr to H.R. Mgr

Cueto, Arturo
Transp Proj Plnr II
to Transp Proj Plnr III

Davis, Walter
Transp Proj Plnr II
to Transp Proj Plnr III

Depompa, Rubi S.
Sec to Sr Sec

Dewater, Gary-Vance
Maint Speclst to Rail

Flores, Marta P.
Mail Carrier to Custd.

Gomes, George P.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Griffin, Edward W.
Tran Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Hernandez, Paul F.
Lead Mopr Waxr to Custod

Jackson, Latonia
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Jimenes, Jose
Shipping & Rec Clk
to Stock Clk

Jimenes, Luis M.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Johnson, Mary E.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Jones, Emertha N.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Jordan-Shepherd, Ava
Sr Career Dev Spee
to Sr Admin Analyst

Kong, Sse C.
Cust to Lead Mopr Waxr

Knemeyer, Matthew W.
Tran Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Leib, Ervin E.
Storkepr, to Stock Clk

Lewis, Arthur L.
Mec "A" to Mec "A" Lcdr

Lillard, Taffy M.
Serv Attnd to
Serv Attnd Lcdr

Love, Kevin E.
Trans Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Jose R. Martinez
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Mata, Fernando
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

McClairn, Phillip
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

McIver, Carlton P.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Mendoza, Steve E.
Cust to Lead Mopr Waxr

Micheline, Maureen A.
Transp Proj Plnr II to
Transp Proj Plnr III

Morgan, Leyton
Sr Auditor to
Sr Admin Analyst

Morales, Rene L.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Mosley, Bettye J.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Nebbia, Gerardo
Maint Speclst to
Rail Equip Maint Inst

Norman, Ryan S.
Tran Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Pachan, James D.
Equip Engrg Supv
to Chief Admin Analyst

Padilla, Thomas J.
Serv Attnd to Welder

Parker, Napolian
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Robnett, Susanne L.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Rodriguez, Carlos M.
Pub Affairs Ofer
to Sr Admin Analyst

Salgado, Alejandro M.
Tran Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Savage, Daniel
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Sifuentes, Leticia
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Sohal, Kamal
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Smith, Edmond K.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Smith, Melinda N.
Sec to Sr. Sec

Spivey-Coleman, Juanita D.
Bus Opr (P/T) to Bus Opr (F/T)

Taylor, Sandra D.
Mopr Waxr to
Lead Mopr Waxr

Tracy, Dennis A.
Tran Pol Ofer (TRN)
to Tran Pol Ofer

Torres, Lawrence R.
Transp Proj Mgr III
to Transp Proj Mgr IV

Urena, Mike J.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Valdivia, Miguel A.
Prop Maintr A
to Equip Maint Supv

Vasques, Laferr V.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Washington, Elaine A.
Janitor to Mopr Waxr

Watson, Emmerett B.
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Williams, Edgar R.
Mec "C" to Mec "B"

Wilson, Jessie L.
Bus Opr/Ex Sched Clk
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Winston, Michael W.
Stock Clk to
Shipng & Rec Clk

Woods, Victoria
Cash Clk to Payroll Clk

Yates, Robert J.
Transp Proj Plnr II
to Transp Proj Mgr III

Yazdani, Naim
Bus Opr (P/T)
to Bus Opr (F/T)

Solomon, Jerry M.
June 13, 1977

RETIREMENTS

Abby, Judy M.
Mar '76 to Apr '97

Aboulhosn, Samir H.
Sept '79 to Apr '97

Banuelos, Samuel M.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Berkowits, Carl F.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Bobadilla, Crus C.
Jul '73 to Jul '96

Coleman, Connie A.
May '74 to Apr '97

Flowers, Hansel
Mar '74 to Apr '97

Harris, Edward E.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Horta, Bonifacio J.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Helton, Charles W.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Hernandez, Daniel N.
Mar '81 to Mar '97

Homan, John M.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Jatica, Jorge A.
Apr '87 to Apr '97

Johnson, Johnny L.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

King, Kenneth L.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Martinez, Ivan J.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Maitino, Robert M.
Mar '74 to Apr '97

Medina, Eduardo E.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Rambo, Napoleon
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Reed, Rae S.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Richardson, Ervin
Jan '72 to Apr '97

Rivera, Harry W.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Rojas, Salvador
Apr '74 to Apr '97



In only five days, employees at the Regional Rebuild Center produced 72 of these aluminum boxes for use in collecting forms for the recent employee survey. Representing the 24 employees involved in the project are, from left, Robert Kang, Sheet Metal Shop; Daniel Roullier, Paint Shop; Cathy Kaminski, Production Control; and Sherman Atchison, Welding Shop.

Saens, Jaime J.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Story, Harold
Jan '93 to Apr '97

Sunfield, Nancy
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Tortuya, Larry T.
Mar '74 to Apr '97

Van Gordon, Arnold L.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Van Gundy, Albert R.
Mar '69 to Mar '97

Villagran, Salvador J.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Visian, Darrell D.
Oct '73 to Apr '97

Wake, Arthur S.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Washington, Johnnie L.
Jan '74 to Apr '97

Widman, George E.
Mar '74 to Apr '97

Wilson, Joseph L.
Jun '80 to Apr '97

Zarakowski, Zbigniew J.
Apr '74 to Apr '97

Zwick, Fred
Apr '74 to Apr '97

SERVICE AWARDS

30 YEARS

Castillo, Natividad R.
June 17, 1967

Evans, Mack
June 8, 1967

Flock, Linda G.
June 8, 1967

Harris, Lon
June 3, 1967

McKensie, Shirley A.
June 5, 1967

Mullen, Dennis J.
June 2, 1967

Williams, Wordrow
June 24, 1967

25 YEARS

Beffa, Nadine L.
June 12, 1972

Castro, Luduvico M.
June 23, 1972

Jacobs, Allen J.
June 9, 1972

Peres, Ricardo
June 23, 1972

Powell, Donald L.
June 30, 1972

Powell, Larry M.
June 23, 1972

Squalls, Michael
June 23, 1972

Wageman, Robert A.
June 16, 1972

20 YEARS

Sechler, Robert P.
June 13, 1977

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 99-13-8.

Metro Family News Briefs

MTA improves communications for Freeway Service Patrol

Good things come in small packages. The Freeway Service Patrol will soon have 20 suitcase-sized portable field offices to assist in clearing accidents and relieving congestion, thanks to recent Board action.

These Portable Incident Command Packages (known as PIC-PACs), contain a computer, fax, cellular telephone, digital camera and other equipment. California Highway Patrol and other emergency service providers responding to an incident will be able to print diversion route maps and transmit pictures to various agencies so the right equipment and personnel can be deployed.

PIC-PAC units have been used successfully by the U.S. Department of Transportation, FEMA, and at 50 public service agencies throughout the nation.

'Safety Matters Most' is theme of National Safety Month

June is designated as National Safety Month by the National Safety Council (NSC). The MTA Board also proclaimed June as MTA National Safety Month.

To mark the occasion, a month-long series of events was planned to increase safety awareness both on-the-job and off.

"Safety Matters Most" was adopted as the campaign's theme. The message appeared on buttons and banners at Headquarters, operating divisions and construction sites. Variable message signs about safety appeared on buses and trains along with safety car cards.

A safety calendar with daily safety tips was distributed to all MTA employees.

Traffic signal project yields dividends for South Bay drivers

An MTA-funded traffic signal coordination program in the South Bay is saving drivers time and money and helping clean the air.

The \$3.2 million MTA program, which involves signals at 300 intersections, has resulted in an estimated \$6.3 million savings benefit to drivers who regularly travel along Pacific Coast Highway, Western Avenue, Sepulveda and Hawthorne Boulevards.

According to a study, drivers are saving one cent per mile, or up to \$100 per



Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger leads the way by making her contribution to this year's MTA charitable giving campaign - "Committed to Serving Our Communities." The drive, which will fund a host of local agencies, ends June 20. Dominique Grinnell, (L) of Internal Communications, is campaign coordinator.

year as a result of better fuel economy and less automobile wear and tear. Time is being saved, too — an estimated 30 hours per driver. Tailpipe emissions have been reduced by 13 tons a year.

"Smoother traffic flow means less wear

and tear on automobiles and less stress on drivers," says Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger. "This program really has helped calm nerves and reduce congestion in the South Bay." ■

CM-386 JS 597



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

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