

# THE TRANSIT STORY

PUBLISHED MONTHLY  
FOR THE EMPLOYEES  
OF THE  
LOS ANGELES TRANSIT LINES

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NO. II

## Operation

### "Big Dew"

Since the last issue of TWO BELLS "A lot of water had gone under the bridge," to clip a phrase, in fact a lot of bridges have gone under the water here in southern California.

For the first two weeks of January, Los Angeles experienced the "most unusual" weather in 65 years. In fact, during the last four days of the "Big Dew" a total of seven and thirty-eight one hundredths inches of rain fell. That's a lot of water even in a bucket.

The "Big Dew" was costly to our company. First, the loss of revenue due to our passengers staying home, totalled approximately \$70,000.

One expensive item came when lightning struck a high line and traveled to our Huron substation where it played havoc with the insulation of the No. 2 motor generator set, on the generator side, necessitating a rewind job on the generator.

Lightning put the Electrical Emergency Crew to work when it struck our 16,500 volt high line at Avenue 26 and Workman on Sunday afternoon, January 13.

The following Friday during the heavy downpour a telephone cable fell across the trolley coach overhead at 48th and Ascot, burning positive wires on both north and southbound lines.

The downpour damaged some 33 street car motors and water which poured over treadle door mats shorted out eighteen of them.

Some lines were out during the height of the downpour. Some three feet of

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## Return of the Token

The resurrection of the token, a coin good for a certain transit fare, brought smiles to token collectors and a bargain rate to more than ninety per cent of our riders.

The token is back in use in Los Angeles after nearly five years. Like everything else it costs more today than it did in 1948. Tokens have been a medium for payment of fares off and on since transit began. During the horse car days there was a period when a shortage of coins developed and the Los Angeles transit company issued a token which was good for a 5 cent fare. The story is that this token was widely used by merchants of our town as a medium of exchange for beer, bread and all sorts of merchandise.

The return of the token will perhaps bring back the usual requests from token collectors over the world for samples, for every token is different in design. Ours has a shield cut out, many companies have cut out letters, generally the initial of the city where the token is issued. Token collectors tell us that every letter of the alphabet has at one time been used except the letter "Z."

The return to use of the token brought with it considerable amount of hard work. It necessitated the resumption of the token barrel on changers, the publishing of a new type of trip sheet and rearrangement of certain accounting procedures. The counting of the initial issue of tokens was no easy task. Five counting machines were used and eight men from the Checking Department spent nearly three days on the job.

On the morning of January 24, all available persons in the Transportation

Department joined the Supervisory staff and furnished additional tokens to operators on the lines as they were needed. Operators who ran short were quickly supplied with additional rolls by the fifty-two people out in the field. By nightfall of January 24, it was estimated that over 600,000 tokens had been distributed. It was also estimated that over 90% of fares were paid through the use of tokens, which means the average fare is very little higher than 12½ cents.

### We Opposed Use of Tokens

During the fare hearings representatives of the Los Angeles Transit Lines opposed the suggestion for the use of tokens which had been proposed by the staff of the Public Utilities Commission and the City representatives. We pointed out that the tokens would cause some confusion and we made every effort to acquire a straight 15 cent fare. We felt the 15 cent fare would enable us to grant the employees some sort of a wage adjustment thus keeping pace with the rising cost of living. The Public Utilities Commission, however, did not consider any wage increase which had not already been contracted. In their Decision No. 46618, under the heading "Opinion," the paragraph referring to the situation reads as follows:

*"The expenses set out in the estimates of both the City of Los Angeles and the Commission's staff were based upon wage scales currently being paid by the applicant, with no allowance for future increases not already contracted for, whereas applicant's estimates include an additional 7 cents per hour effective June 1, 1952. The record is clear that this wage increase is not in the form of a definite commitment but is merely the subject of present negotiations between applicant and the Union, and will not be allowed in our estimates of expenses herein."*

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## In Appreciation

I WISH to thank each and every member of the Los Angeles Transit Lines for their splendid cooperation during the month of January.

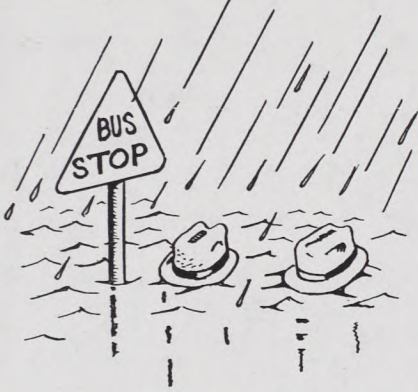
The manner in which our safe, courteous service was maintained during the flood period reflects a most outstanding job. Also, the manner in which every employee handled himself when the fare adjustment became effective was remarkable.

E. C. HOUGHTON

## The Big Dew -- Cont.

mud washed down from the hills over our tracks on York Blvd. and buses were substituted for street cars. Some six to eight feet of water on Van Ness, Line 60, and four to six feet of water on Line 27, Vernon Avenue, caused discontinuance of service. The freeway construction at 6th and St. Paul kept our crews busy hauling in rock in order to keep that line moving.

Supervisors walked carefully through the streets for many man-hole covers had been blown off by the pressure of water in underground storm drains and man-holes sprayed their geysers high into the air in all parts of town.



## Death Benefit Fund Revised

The former Wives' Death Benefit Fund which dates back to March 1, 1930 has proved its worth down through the years.

The Fund was set up so that employees could become members upon agreeing to an assessment of 25c each time a member's wife passed away. This 25c was deducted from the payroll.

This voluntary plan has at the present some 1900 members, and during the year 1951, 17 deaths were reported for which a total of \$8,990.75 was paid out. The average cost per member last year amounted to \$4.25.

Because of the great number of women working, not only as operators but in many other departments, the Benefit Fund has been revised, effective January 1, 1952, to permit any married women employee to have the benefit of this mutual fund in the event of the death of her husband. Any full-time, married employee of the Los Angeles Transit Lines whose spouse is in good health and is living with the employee, or if living apart and is receiving chief support by the employee, is eligible to become a member of this mutual plan. Any employee interested in entering the Plan should contact his or her Superintendent, Department Head or the Industrial Relations Department.

## Major Traffic Check Under Way

With the close of the first month's operation of 1952, the Schedule Department embarked upon an exhaustive traffic check involving the major lines of our system. The check is to ascertain the passenger load factors on each line, the street traffic conditions on all streets over which the line operates, and all schedule idiosyncrasies effecting the line.

This major traffic check is to form the basis for new schedules which will be tailored to fit the lines. The huge freeway design prepared for Los Angeles winds its bulky way like a giant concrete ribbon over various parts of our city and has changed not only the passenger load factor but also the automobile traffic pattern in certain locations. The movement of the freeway across the horizon has eliminated the passenger potentialities in

some areas, having moved houses bodily to other sections. East and west lines beginning at Temple are greatly affected by this passenger change.

Point checks are made on each line at approximately one-mile intervals and the passengers going past these points are counted and recorded. The time of the vehicle is also noted. Checkers ride the vehicles too. They not only count the passengers boarding and alighting, but take into consideration any unusual loading factors or operating peculiarities prevalent on the line.

In all, twenty-six lines will receive the attention of the Schedule Department at this time. After these checks are made running time and schedules will be adjusted to fit the needs. Line 4, the Melrose Avenue-West Olympic, will be the first to receive this treatment.

## Where Are We Going on One-Way Streets?

What do we gain from one-way streets?

You, the men and women who operate the trackless trolleys, cars and coaches, certainly know.

You know that it takes you five minutes more during the rush periods to squeeze through the downtown district, than it did before Fifth and Sixth Streets were established as one-way arteries.

You know, too, that since 8th became a one-way race track during rush hours matters have certainly not improved.

Did you ever stop to think why this is true even though there has been considerable publicity acclaiming one-way streets as a great medium for expediting traffic?

The answer is simple!

Sure the fellow who takes the center or through lanes benefits because he is going straight through, but how about the guy who must line up for a block to make a right turn in order to get into a one-way street, or is forced to travel around two or three extra blocks to go in the direction he wishes to travel.

An example of this was given by the President of the Biltmore Garage at Fifth and Grand, who pointed out that in order to deliver an auto across the street to the hotel it is necessary to travel three blocks.

This statement was made at the hearing before the Traffic Engineering Commission where a proposal to make First and Second Streets one-way arteries was up for consideration.

Many others, including your company representatives, opposed this latest move toward adding to congestion and con-

fusion.

Why did we oppose the proposal of the City Traffic Engineer to make First Street one-way carrying westbound traffic and Second one-way handling eastbound traffic between Glendale Blvd. and Vignes?

*First, the cost:*

Estimated at \$185,000. This initial outlay is for abandonment costs of one track on First and costs on Second Street for suitable reconstruction. There would be additional operating costs on both the P and 44 lines due to slowing of schedules.

All of these costs must be borne by the people who depend on our system.

*Second, added inconvenience:*

Patrons of both Line P and 44 would be discommoded.

It was pointed out that more than 20,000 riders each day would suffer added travel time.

*Just imagine! If each person was affected by three minutes additional travel time this would amount to 1000 wasted hours!*

Of this 20,000, seventy-five hundred whose destination is the Civic Center would be forced to walk one extra block each day between Second and First Streets. Likewise, those many passengers who patronize the well established business section on East First at San Pedro would be greatly inconvenienced.

The same situation would prevail at Second and Figueroa for patrons using Line 44.

*As you are well aware the surest method which can be devised to drive our*

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Courtesy Crusade

H. E. Flanigan and L. G. Hartford win courtesy awards for December and January.

Our "Nice guys and gals" department keeps growing by leaps and bounds. At this writing 74% of our operators are members of the "Courtesy Club," having received at least one customer commendation. Five hundred and seventy-seven wear the courtesy insignia on their right shoulders which represents three or more commendations.

During December an act of courtesy paid a dividend of fifty dollars to H. E. Flanigan of Division Seven when he was named "Operator of the Month" by an independent body of judges, consisting of F. J. Donnelly, representing the Union; Henry B. Mann, International Representative, sitting in as an interested spectator; T. M. Chubb, General Manager of the Department of Public Utilities and Transportation, representing the City of Los Angeles, and Dr. Walter Cole, Assistant Medical Director of Occidental Life Insurance Company, representing the L. A. Junior Chamber of Commerce.

"Operator of the Month" for January was Lenore G. Hartford, an attractive blonde from Division 4, who was chosen by judges, consisting of Bernard Caldwell, Deputy Chief of Police, John Grover, Chief Editorial Writer, L. A. Mirror and Henry B. Mann, International Representative of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees of America.

Flanigan's photograph was posted in all the cars and coaches during January and Mrs. Hartford's picture is now shown in the vehicles.

The letter which won the award for Mr. Flanigan was written by an autoist whose car caught fire at Grand and Temple. Flanigan stopped his coach, put out the flames with a fire extinguisher and went on about his business. This whole procedure took but a moment, however,

it reflected the fact that courtesy was part of the operator's makeup.

Mr. Flanigan has worn the courtesy patch since October 10, 1951 when he received his third commendation. His accident record is also outstanding and if he has no avoidable accident by May 1952 he will receive the coveted shoulder patch of the 150,000 Safe Miles Club, which represents six years of operation without a chargeable accident.

Flanigan is married and has one child, sixteen years of age. He has operated on Line 11 since July 1946, or practically since the line was inaugurated.

Lenore Hartford is a newcomer, having joined us in March 1951. However, during the war she drove a vehicle for the Los Angeles Motor Coach Company for some fourteen months. She was commended by a passenger who wrote of an incident which happened during the rush

## Get Set For The 1952 Safety Rally

The date:

FEBRUARY 16th

The place:

HERMAN HALL—120 E. 25th St.

The time:

8:30 P.M.

DOOR PRIZES!

TOP NOTCH VAUDEVILLE!

DANCE CONTEST!

Dig in and win an engraved trophy



"Operator of the Month" for December, H. E. Flanigan (center) shows his Superintendent, R. J. Corbett, fifty dollar check he has just received from Vice President Cone T. Bass (left).

hour on the "P" line at 6th & Broadway. It seemed that a confused lady passenger who had previously inquired about transferring on West 6th, had alighted from the "P" car at 6th & Broadway, when Mrs. Hartford observed her and followed the lady to the curb, explaining that in order to transfer on West 6th it was necessary to make the change at Fifth & Broadway, because of the one-way street operation.

Lenore Hartford has an interesting background. She was at one time a ballet dancer, working professionally at it for three years and traveled extensively. She was associated with the famous San Francisco Junior Ballet.

## Where Are We Going? (Cont.)

*passengers into their own automobiles is to add unnecessary delays, and changes to their travel habits.*

We share the views of a representative of the Downtown Business Men's Association who stated in part at the hearing:

... "Any change in street use should be made with the goal of increasing the total capacity of vehicular and mass transportation facilities; the emphasis here being that 'capacity' relates to the number of *people* moved and not the number of vehicles." ...

Therefore, in view of the vast freeway program under construction, particularly, the completion of the Hollywood Freeway, and the opening of Third Street and Fourth Street as a pair of one-way streets through construction of the Fourth Street tunnel, it is our opinion that if any need exists at this time for First and Second as a pair of one-way streets, it will disappear.



J. A. Madigan, Superintendent of Division Four sews a Courtesy Patch on the shoulder of Lenore G. Hartford, while M. Edwin Wright, Superintendent of Transportation, gives her award for becoming January "Operator of the Month."

# Return of the Token (Cont.)

## Increase Offered

It does not take a mathematician to figure out that when further wage increases are granted to the operators the company will be forced to reappear before the Commission for further fare adjustments. As you know, the Management of Los Angeles Transit Lines had agreed with representatives of the Union that immediately after a decision by the Commission granting a fare increase a wage offer would be made. Even though the fare adjustment was not considered adequate the company offered a 7 cent per hour increase retroactive to January 1, with an 8 cent per hour increase effective June 1, of this year. The offer made a total increase of 15 cents per hour after June 1.

This offer was conditioned upon the Union's agreement to extend the present contract to May 31, 1953.

As you know the offer was rejected by a vote of Union membership.

## Delay in Relief—A Major Problem

No other business is as carefully regulated as is the Transit Industry. Controls placed upon our operations many years ago when railways had little competition quite often cause financial hardships to operating companies. In the face of spiralling costs of material, taxes, equipment, and wages, delays in granting needed relief greatly affect the earnings of the company.

On December 10, 1950, a fare zone arrangement was put into effect by authority of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California. You will remember this zone arrangement resulted

in no increase in fare to a majority of the people, but was simply a rearrangement of fare areas so it would be possible to collect from the passenger a more proportionate rate for the distance travelled.

*When this zone arrangement in 1950 was presented to the Commission we stated emphatically that we did not believe it would furnish necessary revenue and begged that the Commission continue their study of our operation, keeping active the application.*

However, their decision for the zone change was made final and it was necessary to prepare and file a new application for a further rate increase as soon as our studies of the zone change proved conclusively we needed it. This application was filed on April 20, 1951.

After a long delay and following an increase in wages, effective June 1, we filed an amended application asking for an interim rate as quickly as possible.

Eight months had elapsed before hearings were held. Three days in October were allowed by the Commission to cover both sides of the case. Because of the volume of testimony and exhibits it was necessary to continue the hearings to the middle of November.

After the hearings were concluded on November 19, 1951 the staff and examiners of the Commission continued the study of the testimony which had been presented at the hearing, together with factual information which the staff had gathered from a review of the company's books and operations. Decision was handed down on January 4, making the effective date of the change February 24.

*Thirteen months had passed between*

*the fare zone change on December 10, 1950 and the much needed fare increase of January 24, 1952.*

## Costs Continue Upward

During that thirteen month period our operating costs increased day by day. Everything we purchased spiralled skyward. There was an increase in wages of 3 cents per hour, there was an increase in overtime paid to employees due to the employment turnover, and due to this same factor there were additional costs in the training and hiring of new operators. Increased also were Federal Excise Taxes on materials and fuel used by the company. Also during 1951 there were more employees who had accumulated twenty years of service thereby receiving an additional week's vacation. Coupled to all of this there was the continuing decline in passengers carried which was estimated by the Commission to be 9.56% per annum during the 1951 period.

During this period of delay many strict economies were introduced in order to keep operational expenses within available income. This factor was brought out in our testimony at the hearings.

Los Angeles in comparison to other cities of its size has a low basic fare, the basic fare practically being 12½ cents. Sixty-one cities throughout the United States have a 15 cent cash fare.

*Twenty-one of these do not have any token or economy rate.*

The Cities of Chicago and Philadelphia have 17 cents; Kansas City recently received authority by the City to raise fares to 20 cents. Keep this in mind when discussing our problems with your friends and neighbors.

## Picture of the Month



Tokens by the tub full. J. W. Thompson operates one of the counting machines which were used in rolling and wrapping over one million tokens.

## Two Bells

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Sec. 34.66, P. L. & R.

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