

CTT Clearwater Transit Times

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Dashing through the snow

The post office may promise service through "snow, rain, sleet or gloom of night," but Metro could develop a similar slogan. Buses kept going through four days and nights of snow, an enormous rush hour traffic jam and 10 to 60 percent increases in ridership. Maintaining service the week of January 7 meant lots of extra work for Metro employees. The storm cost Metro \$175,000 a day for the first three days of the storm.

"The performance of our people was outstanding," said Transit Director Jess Dawson. "Not only the drivers but base operations and service control personnel put in long hours under high pressure. Mechanics and dispatchers were on 12-hour shifts, and employees in other areas were working two or more shifts in a row."

"We were well-prepared for the emergency," Dawson said. "Dearborn crews were called on to sand icy city streets, and maintenance shops changed tire chains 1,264 times."

The good news was that 540 sets of chains, ordered only the week before, arrived on Monday in time for the snow. The bad news was that the snow hit when all the buses were on the road. Not one coach had chains on Monday, but only 57 got stuck.

DISPATCHERS RAN from one stuck bus to another and supervisors sanded to help many get out. Line crew trucks from the trolley overhead division and power and facilities employees in electrician vans were out helping also. But despite the extra efforts of many, some drivers had long waits. One driver, waiting for help in a residential area, had dinner at a nearby house, borrowed a sleeping bag and slept on his bus.

Information operators normally cover up to 14 phone stations and handle 60 to 75 percent of the calls offered. On Tuesday they covered 22 stations, logged 126,471 calls and answered 8,526 -- only 7 percent. Operators were camped out



Passengers (above), transit operators like Greg Orr (right) and other transit personnel took the weather in stride as nine inches of snow disrupted schedules during the week of January 7.

in the Exchange Building working double shifts and calmly responding to questions such as "Why is my bus late?"

MANY DRIVERS stayed at bases overnight to be available for duty. At about 2 a.m. Tuesday, a mysterious bus rolled out of East Base signed 1-X/Denny's. The base vending machines were empty, and the bus, equipped with chains, was full of hungry drivers headed to the restaurant for a bite to eat.



Riders write: "Thanks for the safe ride home"

Although riders experienced trips up to six hours long on Monday, they wrote to thank drivers for getting them home safely. Here are some of their comments:

"The streets were slippery and cars were swerving and sliding on the hills. Miss Brown handled that big bus with just the right degree of caution and skill." -- E. Canfield, route 13

"I want to praise Mary Quinn for being so concerned, polite, efficient and a very good driver. We were very happy to get home." -- L. Kirchner, route 130

"He was great. It was incredible he did not blow his stack or even register disgust as cars cut in dangerously close. A true example of a defensive driver." -- L. Knutsen, route 306

"Please pass on my appreciation for his informational and good-humored approach to the weather-caused chaos." -- M. Creveling, route 226

"My commendations on a superb job bringing a busload of anxious riders to the Queen Anne area through the snow." -- K. Wendt, route 2

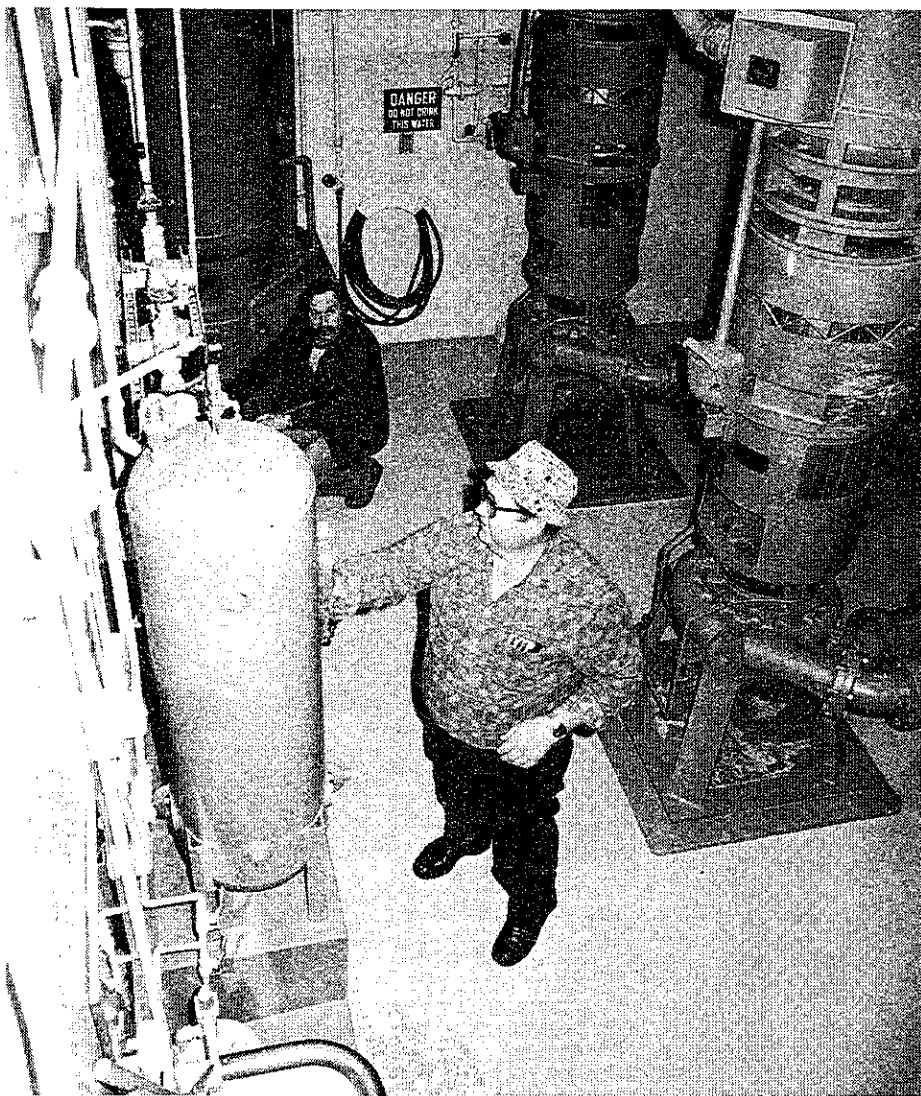
"Despite the snowfall he (Mitchel Germaine) persevered and was able to get his passengers home safely. He deserves much praise and has my heartfelt thanks for a job well done." -- O. Scarpelli

"The driver did an outstanding job of driving the bus under extreme conditions. The driver made people happy and some of us were on that bus for what seemed like forever." -- M. Readnour, route 108

"James Mathews was truly superb as a driver and gave confidence and courtesy to a packed bus of commuters." -- E. Ulman, route 152

And P.D. Beaton sent a telegram to the Customer Assistance Office with three cheers for "A job well done from all the people that would like to say thank you."

Some commendation letters don't name the operator. Using route and coach numbers, times and locations, base supervisors and customer relations personnel try to identify the commended driver. Copies of identifiable letters are sent to the operator and included in personnel files. A record of each driver's commendations is also kept on the computer.



Senior Operator George Plemons (right) and Operator Ed Franceschina comprise one of the five pump crews that keep Metro's off-site facilities running smoothly. Here they perform a routine inspection of the Yarrow Bay pumping station.

Pump crews flooded with wet weather work

It was two o'clock in the morning on Friday, January 11. Suddenly a red warning light flashed on the main control board at the Renton treatment plant, and a buzzer began ringing. The alarm signaled trouble at the Yarrow Bay pumping station.

Outside a driving rainstorm was flooding the area. It may have caused the problem. What could be wrong? A high wet well reading, perhaps. Or maybe loss of compressed air to the instruments, poor ventilation, too much water for the pumps to handle or even a power outage caused by a fallen tree limb.

Trouble alarms don't tell the shift crews what a problem is. A pump crew has to check the site in person.

WHEN GEORGE PLEMONS, the pump crew senior operator on stand-by, and Dave Peterson, an operator from the shift crew, arrived at the Yarrow Bay station, four feet of water was flooding the area outside the door. They removed a leaf-clogged storm drain cover to let the water escape. Inside the pumping station the problem was obvious.

Four to five feet of water covered small motors and other equipment in the dry well.

The pump crew began draining the well and called in the major maintenance people. By 10 a.m. the next morning the ruined parts had been replaced, and the dry well was dry again. The pumping station was secure.

WITH 34 PUMPING stations and 18 regulator stations in the Metro system, there is plenty of work to keep pump crews busy. Wet winter weather increases the workload even more. There is more strain on the pumps because of high stormwater flow levels and more chance for flooding.

The two-person crews -- three crews in the east division and two in the west division -- check all off-site facilities two or three times a week. They check a list of meter readings and observations, hose out pump stations and perform minor maintenance.

Pumping stations don't flood very often. But they would if the pump crews weren't there to keep them operating smoothly.

Man convicted in driver assault

A Seattle man found guilty of assaulting a Metro bus driver has been sentenced to 180 days in jail.

The man, tried in Seattle Municipal Court on December 4, was convicted on two counts -- for assaulting his wife and for assaulting the transit operator. He was sentenced to 360 days in jail, with half the term suspended pending certain conditions.

The Metro operator was assaulted on November 16 in south Seattle while on a layover. The driver suffered a broken nose and other injuries.

Metro goes to Olympia

Transit financing is one of the major issues being considered by the energy-conscious 1980 session of the Washington State Legislature.

Metro ridership increases of 10 percent in 1978 and 17.8 percent in 1979 have added \$3 million a year to transit department operating expenses. With ridership expected to grow even faster next year, Metro will need to have the Legislature approve additional state funding if the agency is to meet the demand for bus service.

A BILL INTRODUCED by Representative John Martinez, D-Everett, co-chairman of the House Transportation Committee, would provide the needed funds. The Martinez bill would increase transit's share of the state motor vehicle excise tax (MVET) from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. The total MVET is 2.2 percent. Since Metro's share, collected in King County, is credited to the agency from the state general fund, the proposed increase would not require a new tax. Legislative approval would provide immediate new revenue for transit.

The Legislature could also increase the amount of MVET collected in

King County. This approach might require voter approval, which would delay the response until 1981.

Or, the Legislature could vote to increase the sales tax by .5 percent in King County. This action would increase revenues from Metro's .3 percent share of the tax. This option might also require voter approval.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY is what increased state tax support would buy. Most new 1980 passengers will ride during rush-hours, when Metro buses are almost eight times more fuel-efficient than private cars. During rush hours, Metro buses average 125 passenger-miles for each gallon of fuel. Under identical circumstances, automobiles average only 16.2 passenger-miles per gallon.

A FARE INCREASE, which was written into Metro's 1980 transit operating budget this month by the Metro Council's Finance/Personnel Committee, would also provide revenue for more bus service. Combined with the additional tax support proposed in the Martinez bill, it would allow Metro to provide a full response to the projected public demand for service.

Red cards prompt safety action



George Tague (left) and Al Blanes, automotive sheet metal workers, inspect a prototype wind-deflector that keeps mud and spray away from the rear-view mirrors and side windows of 1600-series buses.

"Mud in your eye" may be fine as a barroom toast, but it's no joke when the mud obscures a transit operator's view through the rear-view mirror.

REDCARDS from drivers recently alerted the fleet safety section to a muddy problem with the left-side mirrors on Metro's 1600-series Flyer Industries coaches. The airflow around the front of the bus creates a vortex that carries spray and mud from the left-front wheel onto the mirror and side window.

To solve the problem, Art Nichols, fleet safety supervisor, and Ben Gilberts, fleet safety chief, attached strips of yarn to the edges of a 1600-series coach and took the vehicle on the road to observe the airflow patt-

erns. Then they helped automotive sheet metal workers George Tague and Al Blanes design and build a wind-deflector to keep spray and mud away from the mirror and window.

A PROTOTYPE wind-deflector has been tested for several weeks on coach #1664. Red cards and driver comments indicate that the deflector works very well. Three more deflectors have been mounted on buses so that drivers at each operating base can comment on the design.

If red cards continue to show that the wind-deflectors are doing the job, they could be added to each of the Flyer coaches. No more mud in your eye.

CTT

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Public awareness protects salmon



An obstacle course game at the Pacific Science Center Circus helped teach people about salmon enhancement. This girl is learning that litter and debris in small streams can block the passage of salmon migrating upstream to spawn.

Public awareness programs like the Pacific Science Center Circus and Metro's display at the Seattle Boat Show are important parts of the salmon enhancement program.

On January 23, 24 and 25, cooperating agencies and citizens will plant half a million salmon eggs in Kelsey, Juanita and Thornton creeks. The eggs will produce as many as 1,000 adult sockeye salmon that will return to spawn in each stream. Salmon incubated in the streams last year should return in 1982.

But unless people learn what salmon need to survive, and unless communities take action to rehabilitate the small urban streams, the

fish will not find a liveable home waiting for them.

FORTUNATELY, THOUSANDS of people are learning about water quality problems that can affect small streams and their fisheries.

Visitors to the Pacific Science Center Circus in December played a salmon migration game that dramatized the obstacles salmon must overcome during their four-year life cycle. Children who played the game carried wooden models of sockeye, Chinook, coho and pink salmon through a life-sized obstacle course. They learned about erosion, sedimentation, litter and debris in stream

beds, high water temperature, misplaced culverts and other impediments to fish passage.

THE BOAT SHOW in the Kingdom from January 18 through 27 included a Metro information booth about salmon enhancement. Metro staff members handed out free "Clear Water Fun Books" and "Even Cold Fish Need Love" lapel buttons. Boaters and fishermen visiting the booth learned about preserving the water and salmon resources they enjoy.

The salmon enhancement program is jointly sponsored by Metro, King County, the cities of Bellevue and Seattle and the state Department of Fisheries.

Subscription routes serve outlying employment centers

Metro now operates 18 subscription bus routes serving manufacturing plants, office complexes, schools and hospitals that are located outside of the downtown Seattle area. But what, exactly, is subscription service?

Subscription routes are "custom designed" for groups of employees who live near each other and work in the same office or plant. Buses pick them up near home and follow express routes directly to the work location. The bus schedules are timed to correspond with work shift start and stop times.

PASSENGERS PAY a premium fare of \$25 to \$50 a month for the tailored service. The fare covers

Metro's entire cost for operating the bus.

Subscription service passengers are guaranteed a seat on the bus, and receive a full-fare refund if no seat is available.

Subscription bus service was established to serve areas that are not easily served by regular transit. Metro coordinates the service with each employer and seeks approval for close-in loading and unloading.

EMPLOYERS HELP publicize the service and distribute surveys, passes, timetables and other information. Metro encourages employers to subsidize fares, making the service more attractive to employees, but this is not a requirement.

Subscription routes now serve employees working as far south as Auburn and Federal Way and as far north as Everett. Seven routes serve various Boeing plants.

Thirty-three prepaid subscribers are required before Metro will implement a subscription route. For the service to continue, ridership must grow to 38 passengers after three months and 43 after six months.

Monthly passes for subscription routes are over stamped with the route number and the notation "premium," i.e., "950 premium." A premium pass is good on any regular route. Non-subscribers can use the service by paying the \$.75 to \$1.40 premium cost of a one-way ride.

In the news

Almost half the people making their way to downtown Seattle in the morning rush hour travel by bus. Now, however, transit officials face a new problem. Explains Neil Peterson, executive director of Seattle's Metro: "We no longer have to sell people on using buses. Our problem now is meeting demand."

--U.S. News and World Report

Civic visionary James R. Ellis was honored at a civic dinner in tribute to his role as the "father of Metro" and a dozen other key projects that have helped qualify Seattle as the coun-

try's most livable city. C. Carey Donworth, Metro chairman, who served as master of ceremonies, said that Ellis had "forged a partnership between government officials and private citizens" to produce hundreds of civic betterments stemming from his activities over the years.

--Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Metro's program to provide fully accessible transit service for elderly and disabled riders is under way with wheelchair and lift-equipped buses in service on nine routes.

--Beacon Hill News

Metro Transit advises bus-riders many buses are running behind schedule because of the snow and are often too full to stop. Routes through steep areas may be re-routed. Riders are advised to move from bus stops on steep inclines to level areas.

--Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Juanita high school kids, under biology instructor Gib Moore, are doing their part. Last year they built and installed an incubation box to hatch sockeye salmon eggs and re-

Metrograms

Metro employees are planning a river float trip on the Skagit River to see one of the largest concentrations of bald eagles in North America. Two hundred to three hundred eagles from Canada and Alaska winter on the Skagit each year. The trip, planned for Sunday, February 10, will be conducted by Pacific Northwest Float Trips. The cost will be \$25 for adults and \$15 for children ages 8-12. Contact Lonnie Sewell at 447-6858 for details.

Passengers can now ride for free on downtown Bellevue's Bel-Hop circulator bus system thanks to a program sponsored by the Bellevue Downtown Association and Bel-Square. Merchants identified by counter cards and window signs as "Bel-Hop Bonus Stores" are giving away 20,000 free-ride coupons that can be used on Bel-Hop buses.

A reduction in the premium cost for the United Benefit Disability Plan went into effect January 1. Full-time employees represented by ATU Local 587 are automatically covered by the plan. Premium costs are shared by Metro and the employee, with Metro paying 80 percent. The new premium cost is \$6.85, so the payroll deduction has been reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.37.

The Ryerson facility, 4th Avenue South and Royal Brougham Way, will soon become an interim operating base for the storage, partial maintenance and operation of up to 150 diesel buses. The Metro Council recently awarded a \$1.9 million contract to Butler Construction Company to build a maintenance building, a fuel and wash facility, a paved storage yard and an operations building on the site. Existing buildings will be used in completing the site. The interim base is scheduled to begin operations in the fall.

Because the printing of 1980 employee parking decals was delayed, they will not be distributed until the May shakeup. 1979 decals will be honored through May. The customer assistance office will issue 1980 decals to new employees. The decals permit parking in employee lots at Metro transit bases.

The Metro Council has awarded a \$560,000 contract to Ironwood Northwest, Inc. to construct 24 specially-designed passenger shelters and 34 litter receptacles in the Seattle central business district. The shelter designs are free-standing, but somewhat different from the standard shelter design. Construction should be completed late next fall.

leased several thousand tiny "fry" into Juanita Creek. It will be two or three years before the kids know how successful that project was. But if their dream is to come true, residents of the area will have to cooperate.

--Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Worldwide literature searches recently completed for Metro have concluded that three out of four popular herbicides proposed to combat milfoil in area lakes are unsafe for both humans and the aquatic environment.

--Daily Journal-American

Metro ridership doubled since 1973

Metro's transit ridership in 1979 jumped 17.8 percent over 1978 totals -- an all-time record for the agency, Metro Executive Director Neil Peterson announced recently.

Year-end figures show that Metro's 1979 ridership reached 58.3 million passengers, an increase of nearly 9 million over 1978. The exploding ridership in 1979 continues Metro's rapid passenger increases of recent years. Since 1973, when Metro assumed transit operations in Seattle and King County, ridership has increased by 100 percent. Nationwide during the same period transit ridership has increased by about 15 percent.

"THE RIDERSHIP SUCCESS has been the result of being able to provide new bus service to meet the demand," said Bob Neir, chairman of the Metro Council's Transit Committee. "The Metro Council had the foresight two years ago to begin ordering new buses when many transit agencies were not. As a result when many people began turning to the bus because of energy concerns and inflation, our equipment was here and we were able to provide the service. The people of Seattle and King County who are riding the bus also deserve credit for their efforts to conserve energy," Neir said.

Peterson said Metro, as an organization, has been able to cope well with the rapid ridership increases. "Last year, for example, we hired and trained 600 new drivers. They are now operating buses in our system and they are doing a very good job."

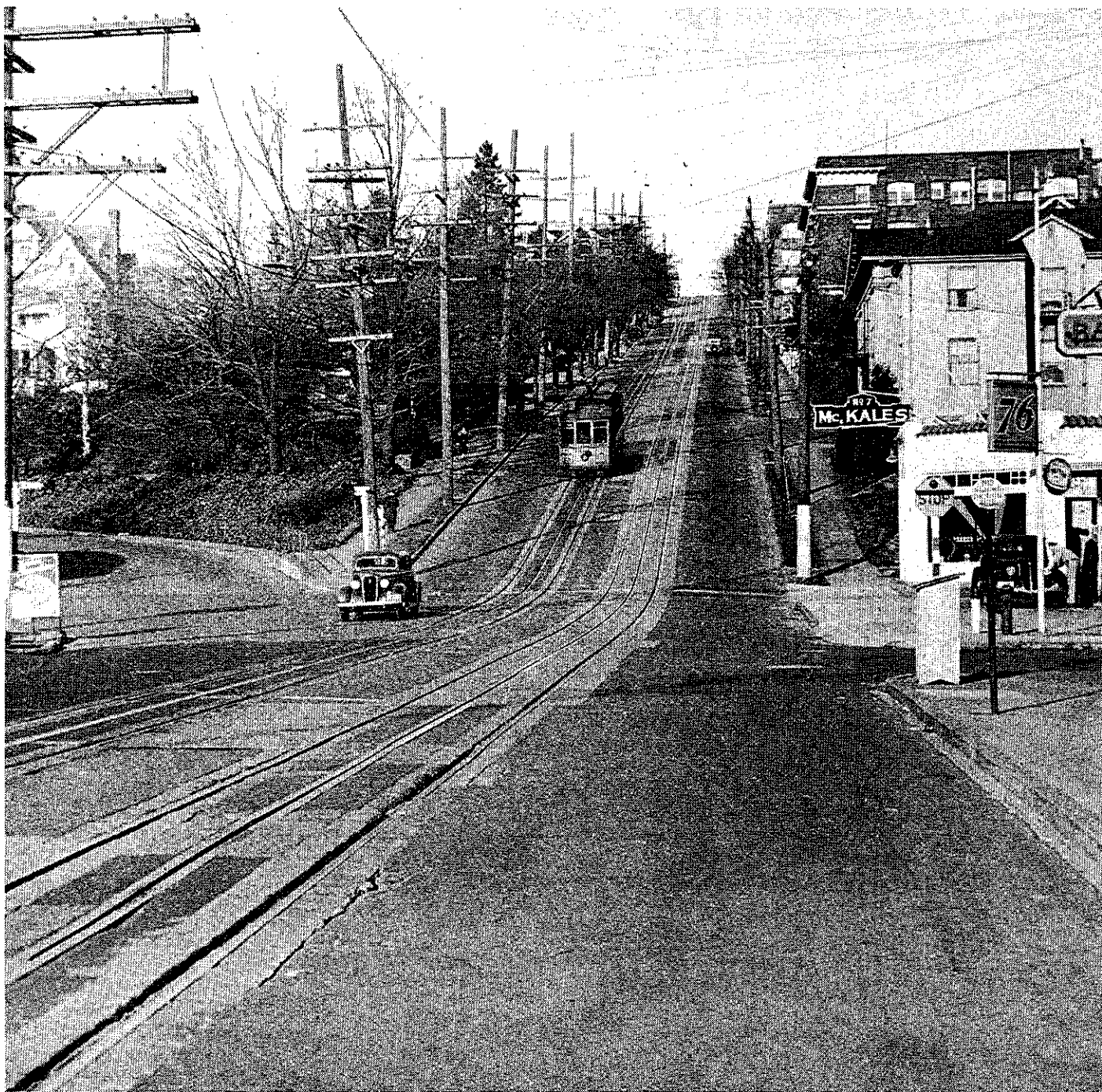
PETERSON SAID demand for new transit service in 1980 is expected to continue at or even exceed last year's record pace. "The issue we are facing today is how to respond to the demand and provide that needed new service," he said.

The 1979 ridership figures show that ridership within the city of Seattle totaled 46.5 million passengers -- up 12.8 percent over the previous year. In the county, ridership increased by 43 percent over 1978, from 8.2 million to 11.7 million riders. The passenger increases in 1979 marked the second straight year Metro has set ridership records. In 1978, Metro's 49.5 million passenger total was 10 percent over the previous year's figure.

Suggestion awards

Vern Cavin, transit operator at South base, was awarded \$15 and a merit certificate for his suggestion to remove doors from time schedule racks at bases because they are constantly breaking. The base operations division reported that the idea will be tested. Cavin was also awarded a merit certificate for his suggestion to move trash bins to the side of bus shelters opposite the direction of approach by coaches.

Lawrence Shine, transit operator at East base, was awarded a merit certificate for his suggestion to eliminate a bus zone at the intersection of N.E. 103rd St. and 1st Avenue N.E. The transit development division reported that as a result of the suggestion, the Seattle



Backward glance

In January 1940 there was no snow on the Queen Anne counterbalance. But if there had been, would the cable cars have made it to the top?

December "Operators of the Month" named

Guy Reynolds, Carl Owens, Robert Perri, Clifford Tabb, and Willis Burton all enjoyed reserved base parking spaces during the month of December.

RESERVED PARKING SPACE at operating bases is one of the benefits earned by winners of Metro's "Operator of the Month" award. Winners, chosen from each of the five bases, go on to compete for the "Operator of the Year" award.

Guy Reynolds, Atlantic base, has a 10-year safe driving record in his twelve years of service. Guy has also established good attendance

and public relations habits.

Carl Owens, East base, has a 13-year transit safe driving record. He has a near-perfect discipline record as well as a large number of commendations.

Cliff Tabb, North Seattle, has earned a 30-year safe driving award during his 39-year career. Cliff has excellent attendance and discipline records and has had many commendations for neat appearance and professional attitude.

Robert Perri, Jefferson base, has perfect safety, attendance and discipline records in a career of just over one year.

Willis Burton, South base, received

a 13-year safe driving award. Willis also has a fine discipline record and has earned two commendations.

TO BE ELIGIBLE for the "Operator of the Month" award, transit operators must meet minimum qualifications in six areas. These are safety, attendance, customer complaints, discipline, uniform and experience. The criteria are as follows: no preventable accidents in the last 12 months, constant driving time for the last three months, no unexcused absences or late reports in the last six months, no customer complaints in the last six months, no adverse operator reports from service supervisors in the last six months, consistent authorized apparel and good grooming and an experience level of pay step two or above.

The selection process begins with a computer that lists all drivers who are eligible. Base supervisors review the list and nominate five operators from their bases. Winners are named by a selection board that includes the five Operators of the Month from the previous month.

Operators of the Month get many rewards: lunch with the director of transit and manager of base operations, a reserved base parking space for the month, coverage in the *Clearwater Transit Times*, a letter of commendation from the transit director, an "Operator of the Month" pin, an inside-coach card explaining the award and an opportunity to compete for "Operator of the Year."

Engineering Department has been requested to establish a bus pull-off zone at this location.

Charles Tiebout, transit operator at the North base, was awarded a merit certificate for his suggestion to paint an arrow in the second lane on Fourth Avenue along with the word "Only." Base operations said the suggestion would help the flow of coaches along Fourth Avenue.

Yvonne Turner, transit operator at South base, was awarded \$25 and a merit certificate for her suggestion to place flip-up covers over the destination panels on the articulated buses in order to prevent glare. The service control division reported that

the cover, to be installed, would help prevent accidents.

John Unrein, auto machinist at East base, was awarded \$25 and a merit certificate for his suggestion to use "road test" signs when buses are being tested. Transit operations reported that a sign saying "Road Testing Coach" would be used in the dash holder and the rear advertising space when a bus is being tested.

Carey Young, transit operator at South base, was awarded a merit certificate for his suggestion to add to timetables rider information on transfers and when to pay. Transit marketing said the information was inadvertently left out of the May schedules but will be included in future timetables.