



INSIDE LANE

KANSAS CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Perseverance Keeps Metro Rolling

As Kansas City
shuts down due
to terrorist strikes,
the ATA gears up

attack on America might
be — when or if terror-
ists would strike else-
where.

Kansas City, like most
cities, essentially shut down

and went on full alert. Tall buildings were
evacuated. Government offices emptied. Stores
locked their doors.

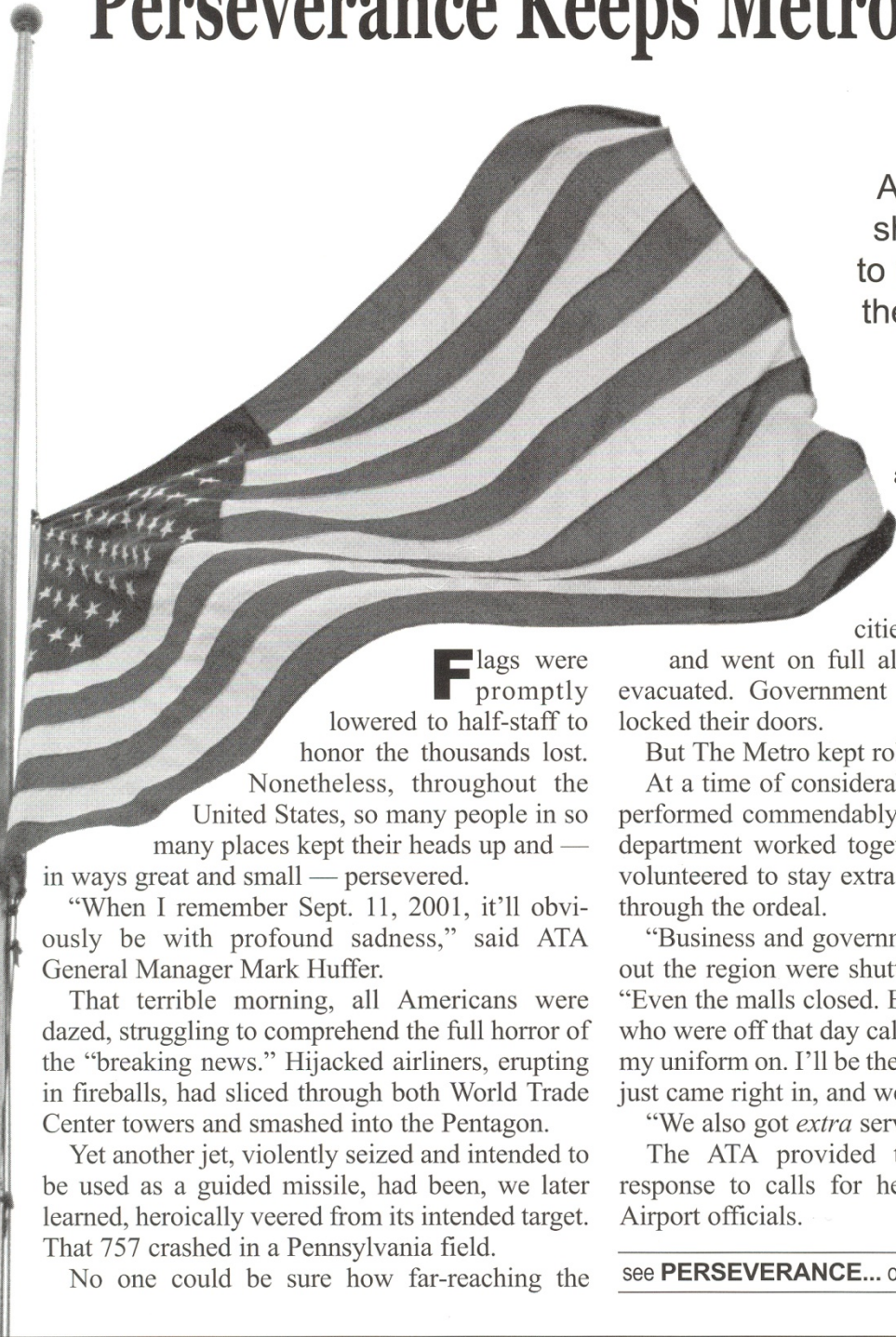
But The Metro kept rolling.

At a time of considerable uncertainty, the ATA
performed commendably. Employees from every
department worked together as one team; many
volunteered to stay extra hours to see the agency
through the ordeal.

“Business and governmental agencies through-
out the region were shutting down,” Huffer said.
“Even the malls closed. But we had bus operators
who were off that day call in and say, ‘I’m putting
my uniform on. I’ll be there in 30 minutes.’ Others
just came right in, and we kept our service going.

“We also got *extra* service out.”

The ATA provided that “extra service” in
response to calls for help from City and KCI
Airport officials.



Flags were promptly lowered to half-staff to honor the thousands lost. Nonetheless, throughout the United States, so many people in so many places kept their heads up and — in ways great and small — persevered.

“When I remember Sept. 11, 2001, it’ll obviously be with profound sadness,” said ATA General Manager Mark Huffer.

That terrible morning, all Americans were dazed, struggling to comprehend the full horror of the “breaking news.” Hijacked airliners, erupting in fireballs, had sliced through both World Trade Center towers and smashed into the Pentagon.

Yet another jet, violently seized and intended to be used as a guided missile, had been, we later learned, heroically veered from its intended target. That 757 crashed in a Pennsylvania field.

No one could be sure how far-reaching the

see **PERSEVERANCE...** on pg. 4

INSIDE LANE

OCTOBER 2001

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COVER STORY

ATA rises to the occasion in the face of adversity when terrorism strikes U.S. and K.C. shuts down.

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Reservist prepares for possible call to serve.

IN THE AIR.4

Special Services employee en route to Washington, D.C. at moment of attack.

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A 'quiet guy' wins Employee of the Month award for the second time.

DISTINGUISHED6

Metro operators recognized for a year — and years — of 'distinguished' service.



This is a monthly employee publication published by the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, 1200 E. 18th St., Kansas City, Mo. Comments and contributions are welcome. Contact the ATA Marketing Department at (816) 346-0368.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Plutarch, a Greek philosopher, wrote, "Perseverance is more prevailing than violence; and many things which cannot be overcome when they are taken together, yield themselves up when taken little by little."

I found that quote on the internet, seeking someone else's words to spark my own and get this column written.

We all watched from afar, yet still up close, via television, as the brave rescue workers in New York City sought to persevere over the horrifying violence that hit our nation Sept. 11, 2001. With tireless determination, they took on the monumental task of searching for survivors, removing the rubble one bucketful at a time. They fought desperately to keep hope alive, even as the odds dwindled with each passing day.

I suspect we won't ever again apply the word "hero" as frivolously as we once did.

All Americans are being asked to persevere at this time by returning to their "daily routines" and restoring a "sense of normalcy."

At the local level, the ATA demonstrated Sept. 11 it can persevere during adversity. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary*, persevere, a word used prominently in this *Inside Lane* issue, means "to persist in or remain constant to a purpose, idea or task in spite of obstacles."

We overcame obstacles that day — the streets being blocked off, the shock and grief that had you wishing you too could just shut down when you *had* to keep going on. We persisted, and, again, I want to thank each and every one of you. No one person carried the day or, afterwards, wanted the credit. We got the job done as a team.

Sadly, I believe we haven't seen the last of the threats like the one issued City Hall just prior to the special memorial ceremony scheduled for Sept. 14. That's why we will continue developing a comprehensive crisis management plan. A plan, we would like to hope need never be implemented, but will be tested and adjusted as often as necessary.

The better prepared we are, the better our response.

Meanwhile, we must be committed to improving our day-to-day operations. Life in our country, many pundits agree, may never be the same. But life must go on.

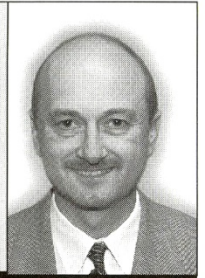
I certainly admire those of you at the ATA who are serving in the military reserves and are determined not to let your lives be "put on hold," even though you've been alerted that you might have just hours to report for active duty.

You have my assurance that should you be "called up," the last concern you need have is your job here at the ATA. This agency will fully support you, and your job will be waiting for you.

Again, thanks to all of you for your response and hard work.

FROM THE GM'S DESK

By MARK HUFFER
ATA
General Manager



Thanks For 27 Years

Jerry Duvall (R), the ATA commissioner from Cass County, pats the back of the long-time commissioner from Wyandotte County, Joe Bukaty (L). Jerry had to stand in line behind fellow commissioner Fred "Tommy" Thomson (center) of Clay County to bid farewell to Joe during the September ATA Board meeting. Joe retired from the board in August, after 27 years of service. He was presented a special plaque and a one-of-a-kind lamp that has an old Metro farebox for a base.



Ready To Serve

Procurement employee reflects on her duties as a reservist and mother

She won't hesitate, if — *when?* — she gets the call. There won't be enough time. Just two hours.

Tracy Gamble, a Buyer II, contemplates the impact her role as a staff sergeant could have on her role as a devoted mother. She has two little boys she adores, but she emphasizes, "I also have an obligation."

Her Army Reserve unit has been placed on alert. It might be activated at any moment as part of the military build-up in response to the Sept. 11 terrorists' attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Should the call come, she'll have exactly two hours to report for duty.

The single mom wonders what words could somehow explain the possible "call-up" to her sons, William (8) and Hunter (2). Yet she still attempts to focus on her responsibilities in the Procurement Department, only to be interrupted by a co-worker wanting to discuss her "situation" — as it stood Sept. 19.

"We're on 'full-alert,'" she says. "The orders are marked, 'Indefinitely.' It's the *indefinite* that bothers me most, so I'm keeping my gear in my trunk.

"I have to be prepared to go."

In the Reserves, Tracy works in logistics and is attached to a Belt-on-based transportation unit.

She had been through a similar "situation," while serving in the active Army. Her aviation unit stationed at Fort Hood, Tex., was about to be deployed to the Persian Gulf during Desert Storm, when a cease fire halted that war 10 years ago.

"But that was a different situation," Tracy stresses. "In the regular Army, that was my job full-time. My life evolved around it.

"This is different. I'm a mom now."

Tracy learned about the bloodshed in New York and Washington at a seminar she was attending in Iowa. She immediately contacted her reserve unit, although she was also terribly concerned about William, who attends an on-base military school at Fort Leavenworth.

"They locked the base down. They locked the school down," she says. "I was scared because Fort Leavenworth ranks fourth on the list of probable military targets because of the Command school there."

Tracy commutes from Leavenworth and has tried to explain to William why the stepped-up security at the Army complex there is



TRACY GAMBLE

see **READY TO SERVE...** on pg. 4

In The Air . . . Bound For D.C.

Vacation turns into nerve-rattling quest to get back home

During those hours when the full extent of the massacre was still unknown, there was perhaps no more frightening place to be, outside New York, Washington or Pennsylvania, than in the air. Which is exactly where Sarah Browne, an ATA Special Programs Coordinator, found herself Sept. 11.



SARAH BROWNE

Her jet lifted off from KCI Airport at 7:15 that morning. Sarah and her son Terry, an employee with DST Systems, were bound for one of the cities the terrorists targeted, Washington, D.C.

Within a half-hour, the tragic events began to unfold — one ill-fated airliner after another.

"I don't think our pilot used the word *terrorists*; I don't think he used the word *bombing*. Maybe he said 'explosion' — an explosion in New York. He just didn't go into any details," recalled Sarah, her voice trembling, one week after the attack on America.

The pilot landed in Cleveland, where the flight had been scheduled for a layover. Fortunately, Sarah has relatives living there. She'd need them.

"They were shutting down the airport immediately, and we were told to get out," she said. "No explanations. Just get out."

Everyone remained calm, though "puzzled," she added. Hundreds were herded out the doors, but Sarah caught a glimpse of the gruesome TV coverage.

"They kept the TVs playing, and the towers were shown over and over," she said. "Everybody was flabbergasted.

see **IN THE AIR...** on pg. 8

necessary. Added check points now make entering the base about a two-hour process.

"William understands there have been plane crashes and lots of people have lost their lives," Tracy says. "I haven't discussed my being called up yet. I won't unless the call comes.

"I have relatives in Alabama my sons would stay with. We're a close family. We visit them several times a year, so it won't be as if they're with strangers."

Tom Morgan, an ATA bus operator instructor, is also waiting for a possible call to action. The senior master sergeant is a 26-year Air Force veteran and has helped in mobilizing efforts before — for the air war against the Serbian aggression toward Albanians, for the relief efforts after Hurricane Mitch struck Central America and for post-Gulf War operations in Iraq.

"My part's mobilizing personnel and all sorts of cargo," he says. "Right now, it's mostly pilots being called up to secure our own air-space."

So, he, like Tracy, is waiting (and was, as of Oct. 1, still waiting.)

"People are angry," Tracy says. "It's easy, though, to yell, 'Let's go to war! Let's go to war!' We need to understand fully what that means. I've seen images of children in Osama bin Laden's camps. He's training children too. That means some children could be a threat.

"Our soldiers will have to realize that and understand what they might have to do, if they're approached by a child over there."

Again, Tracy's thoughts turn to her own children.

"I was prepared to go to Saudi 10 years ago," she says. "But I didn't have children then.

"I'll do what I've signed up to do, but my life's not on hold, just waiting. I've got two sons, and we still plan to do things.

"I'll serve my country, if called. Until then, I'm going to enjoy my kids as much as I possibly can." ◆

Helping The Stranded

Midway through the catastrophic morning, an ominous loop — the trail of a jet that took off from KCI, only to reverse course and land there — lingered in the sky above Kansas City. The Federal Aviation Administration had grounded all commercial flights.

The ATA dispatched buses to KCI to transport stranded airline passengers to hotels and a Salvation Army shelter.

"Planes landed at the nearest airport, so we had people who weren't expecting to be in Kansas City, even for layovers," ATA Manager of Road Supervision Jessie Ward said. "They appreciated our help."

Mayor Kay Barnes called the ATA's emergency service from KCI a demonstration of "true Kansas City respon-

reroutes inconveniencing them.

"Everyone on my (Troost) bus stayed pretty calm," said Metro operator Gaylord Salisbury II (badge #312), "but some anger about the attacks was starting to settle in."

A Flood Of Calls

Some vented that built-up steam on the phone. The ATA's Regional Call Center was flooded with questions — and heated demands for information.

When officials decided to enforce the traffic-free zone Sept. 12, commuters feared they'd be unable to get to work.

"A lot of people who called the 11th weren't patient at all," Call Center agent Brenda Canady said. "They were frustrated and angry. Most had never used The Metro and needed reassuring our buses would be there for them."

“We really came through for the city.”

siveness and hospitality.”

"At the time we were getting those buses ready for KCI," Huffer said, "we were already busy handling reroutes."

Keeping Calm

Kansas City Police officers quickly created a no-traffic quarantine downtown. Barricades denied all vehicles, buses included, access to streets near federal, state and municipal complexes.

"The perimeter would change, and we'd have to reroute buses that had already been rerouted," ATA Dispatcher Mike Kingrey said. "Bus operators who called kept their questions brief ... to the point. No one panicked.

"We've got a professional work force. Everyone performed admirably."

The ATA Marketing Department scrambled to issue news releases, giving radio stations the information necessary to broadcast The Metro routes suddenly being detoured. Road Supervisors Willie Bell, Marquita Lincoln, Sharon Teague and Tony Valdivia entered the restricted area on foot to direct Metro customers to alternative bus stops. Transportation Office Manager Rod Mann joined them.

Few customers complained about

The Call Center lines stayed open until 10 p.m. that Tuesday. Some agents worked a 15-hour day. Two former agents, Personnel Clerk Damon Daniel and Scheduling Clerk Sherian Fonseca, returned to the center and fielded calls.

That Wednesday, The Metro was there to get commuters to their jobs. About 1,000 rode special shuttles from Kemper Arena and the Downtown Airport.

"We kept the shuttles going an extra hour in the evening to accommodate all the commuters," Teague said. "We made sure everyone got home.

"We really came through for the city."

Although he's concentrating on plans being drafted to better prepare the ATA for "future crises," Huffer stressed keeping work in the proper perspective and appreciating more the time spent with loved ones.

Kingrey spoke for many ATA employees when he said, "I was anxious to know what had happened because I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was crazy.

"But I'm also *extremely* thankful that, on Sept. 11, I had a job to focus on." ◆

See The November 2001 *Inside Lane* For Follow-up Articles

A 'Quiet Guy'

Wayne Walburn wins a second Employee of the Month award

Wayne Walburn appreciates the sounds of silence, so he won't dispute that he's a "quiet guy." But he insists that doesn't mean he is shy or has little to say.

"I've got my spells when I talk a lot," said the ATA mechanic trainee. "Usually not in groups, though. I'm better one-on-one."

And that likely explains why Wayne hardly uttered a word as he stepped forward — in front of the crowd — to accept the September 2001 Employee of the Month award. He politely said his *thank yous* and shook hands, then went back to work.

"I just try to be an easy guy to get along with," he said later, during a one-on-one interview. "There can be a lot of bravado in Maintenance. I try to get away from it and find a quiet place."

ATA Maintenance Director Ted Stone almost found himself at a loss for words when he congratulated Wayne. With a chuckle, the new director candidly admitted, "I don't know the man," but he had pulled Wayne's personnel file and discovered it "overflowing with accolades."

Wayne appreciated that Ted "didn't bluff his way" through the Employee of the Month announcement.

"I got a kick out of him," Wayne said. "He's seen so many new faces in the three months or so he's been here, and being a 'quiet guy,' I don't necessarily stand out."

He sighed and added, "As for that file filled with accolades, Mr. Stone must have yanked the wrong folder."

But Wayne was wrong. His good work has made him a standout, his dedication during his 15-year ATA career speaking volumes.

"Wayne is an exceptional employee who is willing to take on any job asked of him — and without questions," said



ATA Maintenance Director Ted Stone (L) pats Wayne Walburn on the back as the two share a laugh just seconds after Walburn was named the September 2001 Employee of the

Maintenance Instructor Bob Sellers, reinforcing the sentiments Wayne's nominator, George Cordray, expressed.

Cordray isn't the first to appreciate what he described as Wayne's "110 percent effort." Wayne also received the August 1996 Employee of the Month award.

"I was real surprised, this being the second time around," said Wayne. "I'm sure there's a lot of other people more deserving of the award than me. Every week, I'm still asking, 'Nobody's got a pink slip for me yet?'"

Wayne began his career with the ATA in 1986 and has worked in both Facilities and Maintenance. He jumped at a chance to participate in the Mechanic Trainee Program.

"I was looking for something more complicated and to develop more skills," he said. "You know what they say about adults asking first graders what they want to be when they grow up? The adults are looking for ideas for themselves.

"That's me. I'm still trying to figure it out. What's just right for me?"

"I think being a good worker has a lot to do with keeping the job new." ◆



Finding Conclusive Evidence of Innocence

Jessie Ward, ATA's manager of road supervision, presents Supervisor Tony Valdivia with a Caught In The Act award for his keen eye as an investigator. When a Metro bus was involved in an accident recently, Tony spotted a near-by security camera. Sure enough, the accident was captured on videotape, and the replay revealed conclusively that The Metro operator had not been at fault, as the other driver originally claimed. Jessie praised Tony for vindicating a fellow Metro employee.

Distinguished Service



Transportation Office Manager Rod Mann assists Norene Hall (badge #173) as she slips into her new Grand Master jacket.

First female Grand Master puts the 'extra mile' into new 'Customer-Driven' motto

Norene Hall had already fulfilled her obligation as a Metro driver that night. As usual, she reported for work on time, kept her bus running on schedule and treated her customers with the utmost courtesy.

Simply put: It had just been another textbook shift.

She'd reached her last stop. Now it was time to head straight for the farebox island, park the bus in the barn and go home.

But ... But there was an elderly couple at that last stop, waiting for another bus — a bus Norene knew had completed its last run and wouldn't be coming. No, the couple wasn't going Norene's way, yet she still welcomed them aboard.

"They were in their 80s or 90s, and I just wouldn't want somebody to leave my parents out there — alone at a stop, after midnight," Norene explained. "Sometimes I come to my last stop and find people stranded there because they've missed their bus. I'll ask dispatch if it's OK to pick them up, instead of leaving them out there."

"In this case, that man and his wife were going so far out, I ended up bringing them back to the ATA and then driving them to their final destination in my own car."

Considering she puts the "extra mile" into the ATA's new commitment to be "Customer-Driven ...

Achieving "Distinguished Driver" status for the fifth time earns these Metro operators special recognition. They're the new Master Drivers. Front row: (L-R) Frank Bell (#42), Nathaniel Thompson (#85) and Gary Wyatt (#220). Back row: Gracie Fleming (#250) and Cynthia Harper (#207). Unavailable for photo: Ron Soderholm (#221) and Arthur Gallardo (#28).

Every Minute ... Every Mile!" it should come as no surprise to learn that Norene has never had a single viable customer complaint.

Combine that excellent customer service record with flawless on-time performance, perfect attendance and accident-free driving, and what do you have in Norene Hall? A Metro operator who has never failed to earn the Distinguished Driver award.

The ATA recognized 90 Distinguished Drivers on Aug. 28, with Norene being the first woman ever to step forward and slip on a Grand Master jacket.

"I was surprised and proud of that," Norene said. "When they told me, I said, 'You mean this year. I'm the only woman this year.' Then they said, 'No, you're the first woman ever to get Distinguished Driver 10 times.'"

"I was so proud, I hurried up and got my Grand Master patch sewed on my uniform."

Metro operator Larry Newport was delighted for Norene, saying, "That's fantastic — the first female to make it. Hopefully, she'll set a trend."

Norene and Larry joined Leonard Brown, James Ferguson, Paul Holt and Paul Newton as the 2001 Grand Master honorees. They will need to



meet the Distinguished Driver criteria five more times to reach the Meritorious Driver level.

This year, Dean Berkley, Robert Boyed and O.B. Jemerson earned their 15th Distinguished certificates and thus followed in James Horton's footsteps as Meritorious Drivers. A year ago, James became the first driver to achieve Meritorious status, and he is now a 16-time Distinguished Driver.

O.B. is, like Norene, battling a thousand with regards to the Distinguished Driver program. Year in, year out, they win the award.

"Usually, the only times I see my supervisors are for my annual reports and on Distinguished Drivers day," O.B. said. "I suppose that's a good thing."

Although Leonard Brown shrugged and dismissed the notion that the program's guidelines are rigid — "You just need to perform the normal duties you're supposed to perform," he said — his fellow Grand Master Larry Newport admires Norene and O.B.'s consistency.

"It's pretty difficult to earn this award, year after year," Larry said. "You can't be sick. Plus, with the miles we drive day in and day out, it's tough not to have accidents. People whip right out in

front of me all the time.

"So it's *not* easy."

O.B. could recall only being late once in his entire "work life" — to ensure his wife was OK after being in an accident.

"I've got a wife and four daughters. They spend my paycheck as fast as I earn it, so I've got to get to work each day," he joked.

He added that he likes "essentially being my own boss" — an aspect of the job Norene also enjoys.

"There's no one looking over your shoulder. You are your own boss out there," Norene said. "But with that comes a lot of responsibility. You're responsible for treating your customers with respect. You're responsible for being where you're supposed to be when you're supposed to be there."

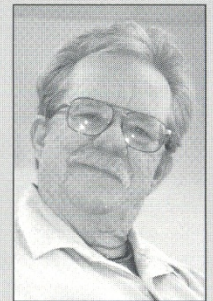
Norene wound up "in the last place" she expected when she embarked on her Metro career. She'd spent the previous 18 years in an office.

"I never thought I'd be a bus driver," she recalled. "Once I got out there, I liked it. I like dealing with the public — being around people.

"This is my 'retirement job.' This is my last stop." ♦



"Gabe" gets the autograph of Dean Berkley (#61), one of three Meritorious Drivers — the others being Robert Boyed (#116/R) and O.B. Jemerson (#128) — honored for 15 "Distinguished" years.



(Below/L-R) Paul Newton (#53), Norene Hall, Larry Newport (#54) and Leonard Brown (#16) display the jacket they received for becoming Grand Master Drivers. Others qualifying for "Distinguished Driver" for the 10th time were James Ferguson (#155) and Paul Holt (#6).



"Hundreds and hundreds of people were sitting in the street outside the airport, not knowing what to do. Eventually, we all had to walk out to the highway and get away from the airport. Older people using walkers. Other people in wheelchairs. Everyone."

Fortunately, Sarah had a brother-in-law she could call.

She and her son would be stranded in Cleveland until Friday, Sept. 14. That city closed down much the same as Kansas City did, and some gas stations there obscenely raised their prices in the hours immediately after the tragedy.

"I'd lived in Washington for years, but when we moved Terry was just 6 or 7," she said. "I was really looking for-

ward to taking him around D.C. and seeing all the sites he couldn't remember. Then we were going on to Ocean City, Md., for a family reunion.

"Of course, after what had happened we quickly lost all interest in going any farther east."

Finally, that Friday, Sarah and her son returned to the Cleveland airport, anxious to get back in the air.

"There were uniformed security people and police dogs as far as the eye could see," she said. "A woman padded me down. I felt safe flying again.

"I just wanted to get home."



Rounding Them Up!

Claire Swope (R), 9-year-old daughter of acting ATA Planning/Special Services Director Mark Swope, tosses a Metro "stress ball" to spectators at the Sept. 22 Raytown Roundup parade. The annual parade attracted a large crowd to the Kansas City suburb as thousands turned out to wave the America flag. The "special" Metro bus features banners promoting both the Raytown MetroFlex and the Lee's Summit-Raytown Express.

