Transit

NEW YORK • DECEMBER 1956



St. Nick Visits TA

SEE PAGE 10

Transit

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

LEO CASEY
EDITOR

VOLUME 3, NO. 2

December 1956

In This Issue

	PAGE
Editorial	2
Good-bye to the Gandy Dancer	3
Old Hands at New Jobs	6
TA News in Pictures	9
Christmastime in the Yards	10
The Rubber-tired subway	12
Mr. Apollo . . . after 34 Years	16
Beauticians in Dungarees	18

Address all mail to:
The Editors
TRANSIT
370 Jay Street
Brooklyn 1, N. Y.

Christmas Is Something Special

COMING down the West Side IRT we overheard two lady passengers agreeing with each other that it's just disgraceful what people do nowadays on Christmas. They'd been reading about $17,000 chinchilla coats with matching capes at $1,200 to be worn by milady's pet dog, imported Christmas tree balls at $15 each, slightly higher with imitation pearls. Seemed to think this bordered on the sacrilegious. Seemed to think that people had forgotten the true meaning of the day, and the whole performance was redolent of paganism. Probably they would want to ban our dictionary since it defines Yule as originally "a pagan feast lasting twelve days." And they would look askance at their pastor if he explained the origin of many of the Christmas customs, the burning of the Yule log, for example.

Maybe we do absurd things at Christmas. But is it sacrilegious to have a manger in the dim, drab corner of a car repair shop? Or a cut-out of Santa Claus—a preposterous elf born in the brain of a professor nineteen centuries after Christ was born? Is it wicked to spend more than you can afford for a gimcrack that will make your wife happy? Or give pleasure to a child? Or go through all the absurdities that most of us do at this time of the year?

Everytime we hear this debated we remember a story told to us as a child —and that happens to be just about every Christmas for more than 50 years. The teller was the abbot of a monastery in the days when Christianity was very young indeed, and most of the people of Europe had never heard of it. To this monastery, lost in the mountain fastnesses, there came, one Christmas eve. a wandering juggler, hungry, cold and miserable.

He was taken in, fed at the common board, warmed at the fire. Afterwards he got out his juggling balls and insisted on performing to pay for his supper. He was a very poor juggler, as it turned out, and the monks soon dissuaded him, saying he owed them nothing, that it was God who provided the food and the fire. He had never heard of Christ, and he was told the story of Him, and shown the great statute of Him in agony on the crucifix which stood in the chapel. Then he was given a pallet for the night.

Rising early the next morning, the Abbot went into the chapel to make his early devotions. He was, as he told his friend later, shocked to find the juggler there before the crucifix, juggling furiously and fumblingly.

"But," argued his friend, "the poor fellow obviously meant no disrespect. There was no reason for you to be shocked."

"I know, I know," said the Abbot. "That wasn't why I was shocked. But I happened to look up and—doubtless, it was just a trick of the early morning light or these fading old eyes—but I could have sworn there was a happy smile on the face of Christ."

* * *

Most of us, we think, conceive of Christmas as Something Special. Some of us, like the juggler, may not do a very good job of observing it. But we like to think that for all our mistakes and inanities, in trying we'll be forgiven.

Good-bye to the Gandy Dancer



He was a picturesque soul. Barrel-chested, with mighty biceps. Railroads were built and rebuilt at the price of his sweat and aching back. He swung the six-pound spiking hammer for eight hours. Or plucked the great spikes out with a claw bar. Or tamped ballast—now there was a test of whether a man would ever make a TA trackman. You stuck a tamper in his hands and set him to pounding away. If he lasted the first day through—a great many didn't—he had possibilities. If he showed up for work the next day and could still move his arms and legs, he was a likely prospect.



Like the Buffalo

Now the gandy dancer is disappearing fast from the TA scene; probably, in time, from the American railroad scene. Tireless little gasoline engines and compressed air are replacing the bulging biceps and mighty back.

"The trackman of the future," said Harry Molese, who used to be a gandy dancer himself and is now superintendent of Maintenance of Way, "will probably be some undersized little fellow who'd collapse after ten minutes with a hand tamper. From now on, increasingly, the trackman won't sweat; he'll be a technician who knows which buttons to press or lever to engage, and when."

Perhaps the surest sign of the times came a couple of months ago when TA rebuilt the track and roadbed for approximately 1,000 feet between 25th St. and 36th St., Brooklyn, on the northbound express of the Fourth Avenue line.

By the standards of years ago, or even months before, this was a nine-week job, to be done in the late shift, and to produce, in addition to a new road bed, the usual crop of sprained ankles, cuts, bruises, a hernia or two, countless backaches and a lot of gallons of sweat. But this time it was different.

Into the tunnel, after rush hour Friday night, came new pieces of equipment, some brand new, some never seen before in a subway. By rush hour Monday the job was finished—no cuts, bruises, hernias—and, relatively, only a couple of pints of sweat.

Not only were nine weeks of work compressed into a single weekend, but it was done more easily, at less cost, with fewer men. Totting up figures later, the engineers discovered it had cost just 50 per cent of the cost of doing it by the sweat-and-muscle method.

Zip! They're Out!

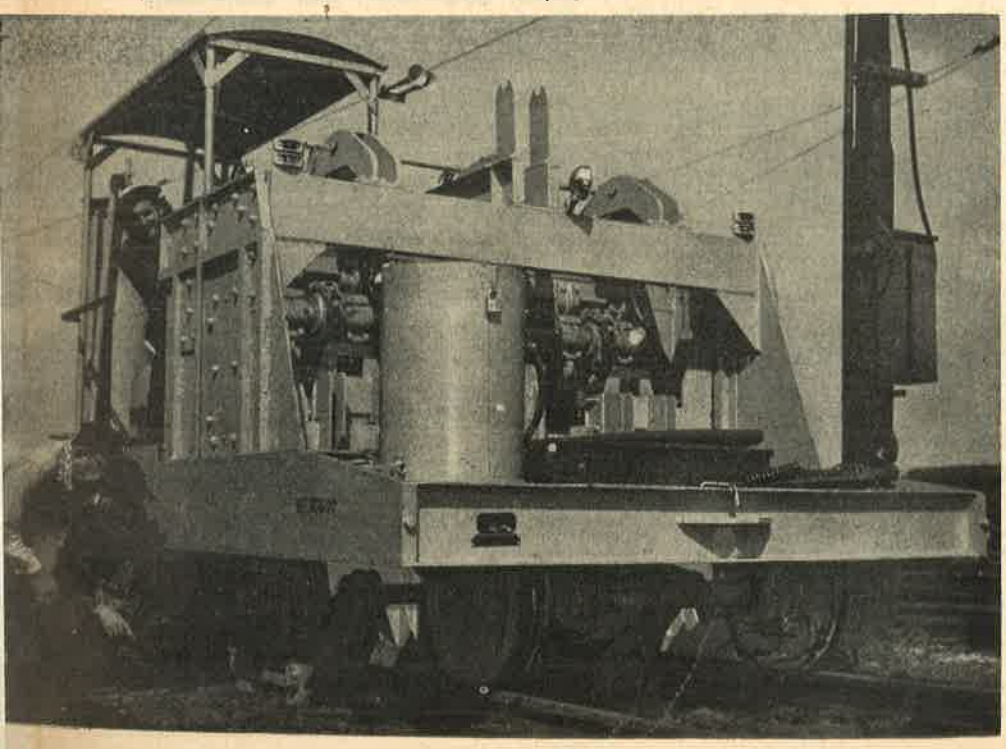
First the rails had to be taken up. The first of the new tools—a mechanical spike puller—yanked 425 spikes in an hour and a half. It would have taken five times as long using man-powered claw-bars.

The freed rails were pried out of their seats with crow-bars and lifted to the toe bench—biceps and backs were still used here. Also in the next

The Nordberg track liner (above) straightens wavy ties, using gasoline instead of muscle.

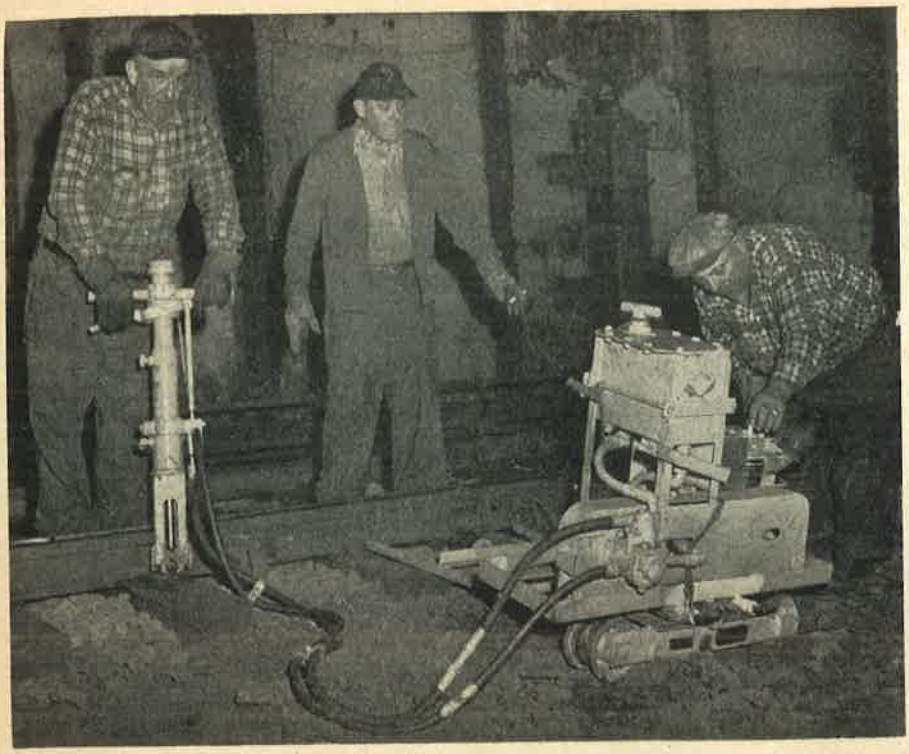
NO SWEAT, NO STRAIN

The new ballast tamper, shown here with Foreman Charles Izzo, John Alcure and Joseph D'Andrea packs ballast for one-sixth cost of hand-tamping.



Spike-driver was one of new gadgets spelling out doom of the old gandy-dancer with his six-pound spiking hammer. Here Trackman William Pafundi and Leo McBride use the new instrument on a new job.





This new spike puller extracts spikes easily and swiftly from old rails. Leo McBride handles the puller itself while Joseph Tartaglia operates the machine which generates pneumatic power. In center is William Pafundi. With new equipment, TA recently did 9-week rebuilding job in weekend.

operation: The old ties were removed by hand.

Something New

Payloaders and bulldozers—new to subway rebuilding — scooped up the old ballast, which, over the years, had become water-logged and soggy, using a timber ramp previously built in the TA shops. The roadbed was cleaned down to the concrete base. The flat-cars hauled away fifteen carloads of the old ballast. In the old days this stuff had to be cleared by laborious hand shovel.

Now came the rebuilding process. Tie plates had been laid on track ties in the yard at 38th Street and 10th Avenue. These were brought to the work area, set on the concrete base and the rails were lifted back in place.

The power-spike driver, the second new piece of equipment—drove spikes into holes previously drilled in the yards. Not a spike maul or muscle was called into play for all the spikes driven.

Track Raising

In came 15 hopper carloads of stone ballast (broken trap-rock) which was distributed over the rails. Then, by track jacks, the track was raised and ballast tamped under it.

Again, not a muscle was raised for this—ordinarily the most tedious and back-breaking of the jobs.

Instead, the third new piece of equipment came rolling through—a $45,000 mechanical ballast tamper, or mechanized gandy dancer.

This machine was built by the Pullman Standard Manufacturing Company to TA specifications. It rolls—like the spike puller and spike driver—on wheels on the track. It has sixteen spade-shaped tamping heads of special steel, which bite into the ballast and jam it under the ties to a firmness not possible with the strongest human muscles. Tamping with this machine cost one-sixth the price of hand-tamping.

Only the Beginning

Revolutionary as the Fourth Avenue operations was, it is just the beginning of a great new line of equipment which is writing doomsday for the gandy dancer. Now on order are mechanical adzers which groove the ties to receive the rails. Already, working on the road, is a mechanical rail-liner which does swiftly and effortlessly the job of straightening way rails. A dozen more ideas are incubating on TA blueprints.

Etymological Note: ORIGIN OF WORD "GANDY DANCER"

We thought you might like to know the origin of the term, gandy dancer, and went to a top authority on it.

"The term," he said, "derives from gander. Originally it was gander dancer. You'll find gander in the dictionary meaning 'simpleton' or 'fool.' Well, long ago railroads used to recruit their track crews from the flop-houses of the Bowery and skid rows elsewhere. They were pretty low specimens — weak minds and strong backs. Hence the term gander dancers, changed later to gandy dancers."

Doublechecking, we went to another top authority.

"It's an old term," he said. "Once upon a time there was a slave-driving track foreman who worked his men so hard that they practically had to dance. The foreman's name was Gandy. Hence the term gandy dancer."

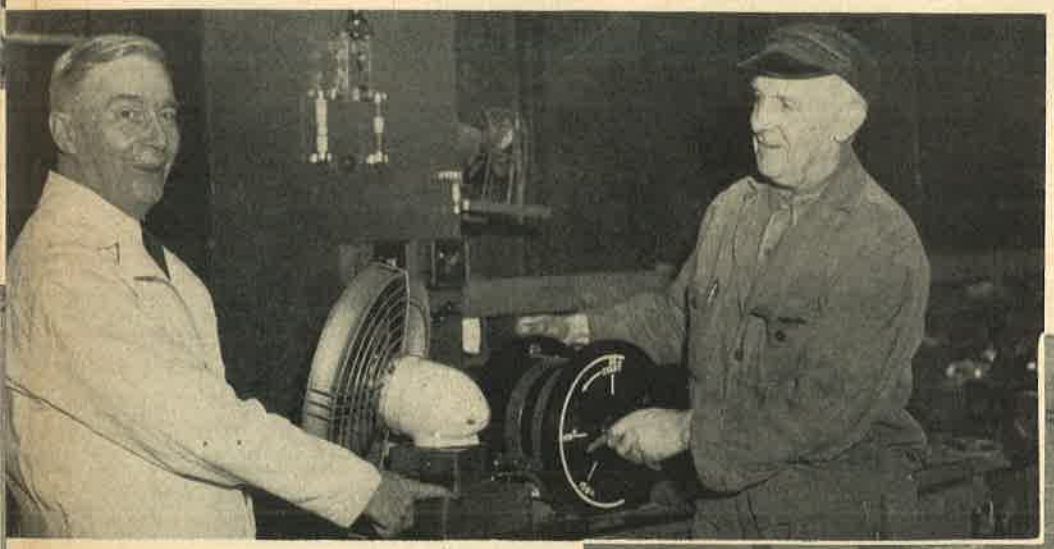
Triple checking, we tried a third authority.

"Sure I know the origin," said he confidently. "Whereas now it is applied to all trackmen, originally it referred only to those tamping ballast. Ever notice the way a male goose will turn slowly and stamp when upset—well it's remarkably like the old walk of the man tamping ballast by hand."

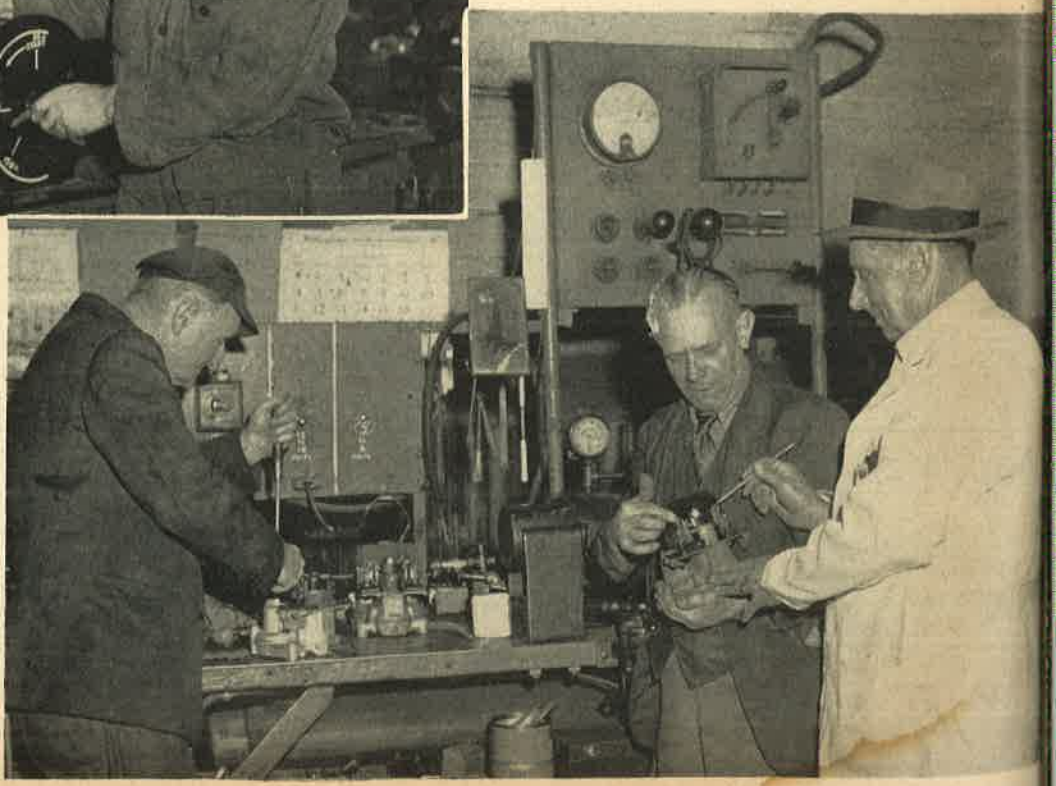
Glad we were able to straighten you out on this, because dictionaries don't carry it and the only glossary we found mentioning it said it was a "railroad term: one who tamps ballast."



Once this forge was used to shoe horses. Now, around it, Felix Ruzalski, Charles Gantert, Joseph Cotungo, Egbert Chandler, and Foreman Thomas Seifert make special tools for subway use.



Robert Morrison, an old hand at mending electrical machinery on trolleys, now studies the intricacies of subway fans. Foreman Alfred Erickson is at left.



AN OLD CARBARN GETS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Pneumatic devices of subway aren't too different from those of trolleys. L to R, Peter Seidle, Albert E. Whitehorse and Foreman John A. Trzasko explore subway variety.

Old Hands at New Jobs

TA went into a new business last month—manufacturing.

The move, among other things, saved the last of those great cavernous trolley car barns, once the source of New York's transportation, from extinction. The De Kalb Avenue depot, after more than a half century of servicing surface transportation, now is the De Kalb Manufacturing Shop, turning out new and rebuilt equipment, chiefly for the subway system.

The forge at which a blacksmith once produced shoes for the horses of the old Brooklyn City and Newtown Railroad today is turning out special tools for working on subway cars; the "curtain room," where once the trolley curtains were made and repaired, a lost art, is now reupholstering subway seats, and electricians, who learned their trade on old BRT trolleys, are now repairing the insides of subway fans. Even the wood-working equipment, designed for the repair of wooden trolleys, is now turning out windows for subway cars.

The shop is, presently, an experiment, worked out by management and TWU to absorb at least some of the TA's "excess" employes. At present 107 men are assigned there. And there is no shortage of room for expansion—the barn at one time serviced 1,700 trolleys.

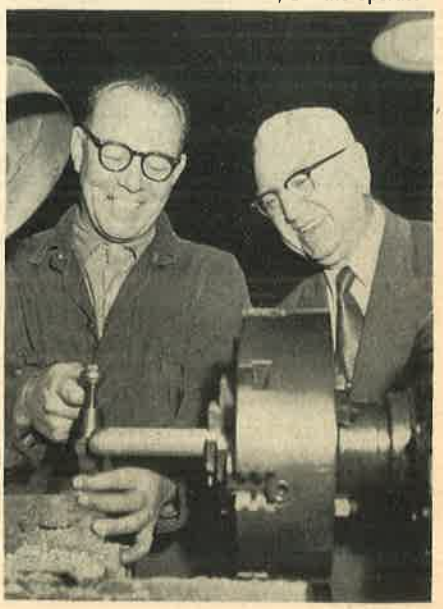
For six months or a year the project will be operated on a test basis to determine whether TA men can produce products and rebuild them at a saving over buying from outside suppliers, or, at least, as economically.

At the depot itself there was the fullest confidence that this requirement would be met.

"We'll not only do a lot of the work now being sent out cheaper—but we'll do it a lot faster," asserted Christian Van Zanten, assistant supervisor in charge of the project. "Jobs for which, ordinarily, we would have to wait weeks, can now be done overnight."

Very little of the equipment dates back to the horsecar days. In fact, the Brooklyn City and Newtown had electrified all its passenger trolleys when it built the first barn on the site in 1904. But automobiles were rarities, and all the line repair workmen and materials were horse-drawn. This necessitated the

Assistant Supervisor Christian Van Zanten (right) is in charge of project. Here he works with James McMurrer, a lathe operator.



The carpenter shop, originally designed to repair work on wooden trolleys, now turns out subway sash. Foreman Erickson supervises Dominic Provennzano, Charles Genis, Peter Jones, Frank J. Makowski and George Sliwa DeKalb depot dates back more than 50 years.





Idea of transforming old trolley barn into manufacturing center originated in brain of TWU Organizer Bill Kirrane (center). Here he talks it over with General Manager T. J. McLernon. Left is David W. Palmlund, performance and production expert.

building of a huge horse-barn and hayloft across the street from the carbarn, which is still standing but no longer owned by the city.

At that time—1904—the Brooklyn City and Newtown was leased to the Coney Island and Brooklyn Railroad and had been for six years. A few years later the Coney Island, enjoying great prosperity as the seaside resort became a favorite fun center, formally absorbed it.

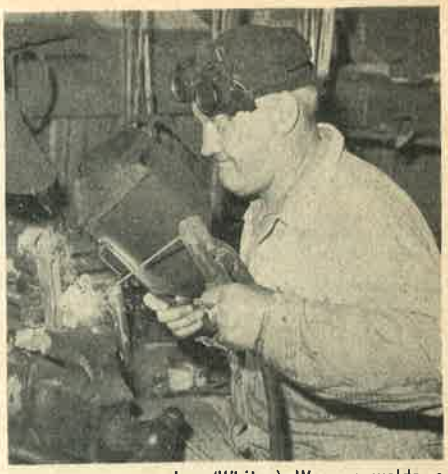
Later the Coney Island and Brooklyn was absorbed by the BRT, and, in the mid-twenties, this, in turn, became part of the BMT.

"The BMT just didn't believe in going outside for parts," Mr. Van Zanten explained.

And it was the BMT which greatly enlarged the barn, remodelled it and installed the tremendous equipment—still modern by today's standards—which could turn out any part for a trolley and which is adaptable to producing for the rapid transit system.

In the first few weeks the De Kalb Manufacturing Shop produced bushings, washers and insulators for subway use and rebuilt door motors.

"These men are all highly skilled mechanics, covering practically every field," Mr. Van Zanten explained. "I expect we'll be called upon more and more as we become better known. At the moment few people in the system know what we are prepared to do out here."



Joe (Whitey) Wagner welds a subway door handle, a new job.



Frank Diflo turns out strap hangers to be used in subway.

This was the "curtain room," once important in trolley maintenance. Now it sees subway seats being reupholstered by Walter Kucharski and Milton Strauss (foreground) and in the rear by (L to R) Noel Phillip, Angelo Lepre and Patsy Cassatta, all maintainers.





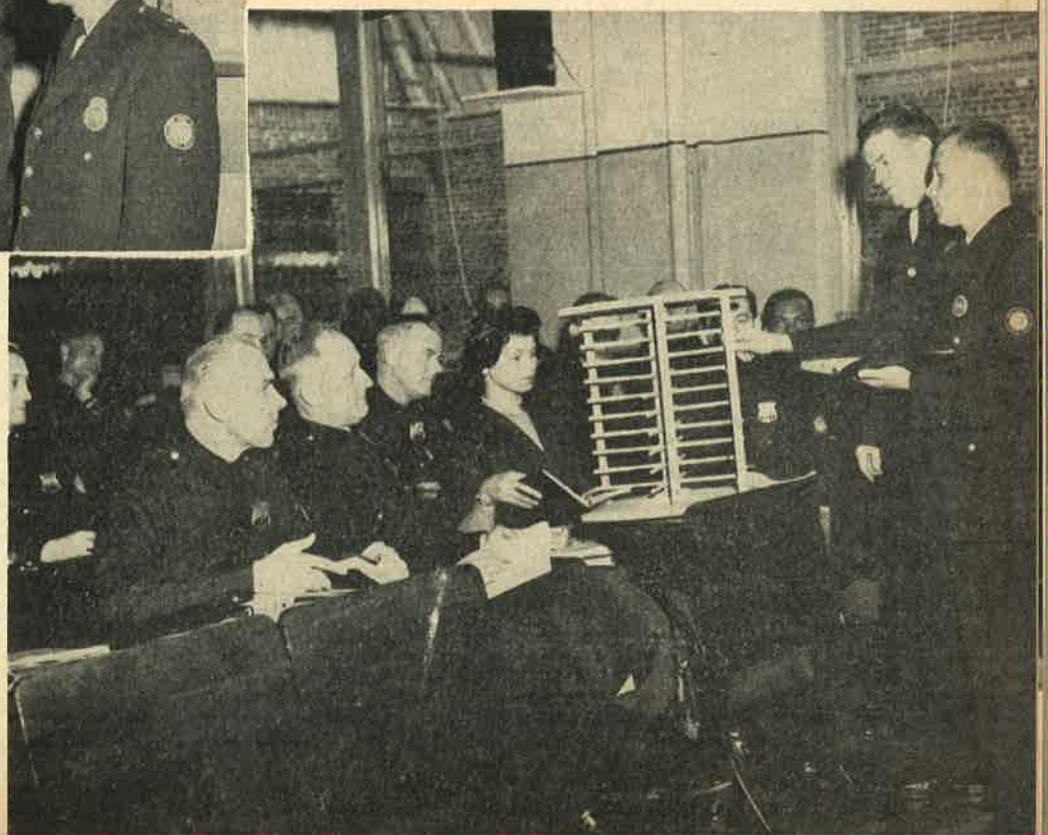
A NEW QUEEN reigned after annual ball of Harlem Transit Committee Inc. at Manhattan Center in person of Miss Ann Porter. L to R, Iola Hall, 1956 Queen, Yvonne Mullings, James A. Harper, committee prexy, Mrs. Anna C. Hedgeman, assistant to Mayor Wagner, Miss Minnie Coles, runner-up for title, Eyre Saitch and Harold Jackson, emcee.

TA NEWS IN PICTURES



ANOTHER VICTORY came to TA chess team in combat with Foster-Wheeler team. Clockwise around table are TA's S. Hirschhorn, M. Houchen, A. Henderson, I. Moglen and F-W's J. Vasko, G. Sorenson, R. A. McCallister, F. B. Fernandez. Standing, same order, V. Samstag, H. J. Farrell, I. Griffith, W. A. Ruy of TA and G. T. Abate and W. J. Sutton of Foster Wheeler, alternates.





HIGHER LEARNING for Transit policemen became a reality last month when the Transit Police Advanced Training Academy was opened at the 207th St. yards. Rookies will continue to train at regular City police academy, but specialized training will be given at new place for police transit work. At right Capt. Henry P. Donnelly and Lieut. Morris Wapner instruct students in mechanics of high turnstiles, in case these go out of order. Above Commissioner Curtayne introduces an interested visitor to Chief Thomas J. O'Rourke—his father, Daniel J. Curtayne, who used to be a cop himself, retired a deputy chief inspector.

Christmastime around the TA yards



Carol-singing is part of the seasonal festivities at the Coney Island Yards.



Santa Clauses, little trees and cheery hangings brighten Christmas Eve at 147th St. shop (right).

Christmas is important business at the 207th St. yards. Scene below is the paint shop's Xmas tree.



Chairman Patterson and Patrolman Nathan Stein dispense cheer to underprivileged youngsters at Roosevelt Hospital. Patrolmen's Benevolent Association sponsors this event every year at Roosevelt.



Veteran San whiskers at Straudenbau

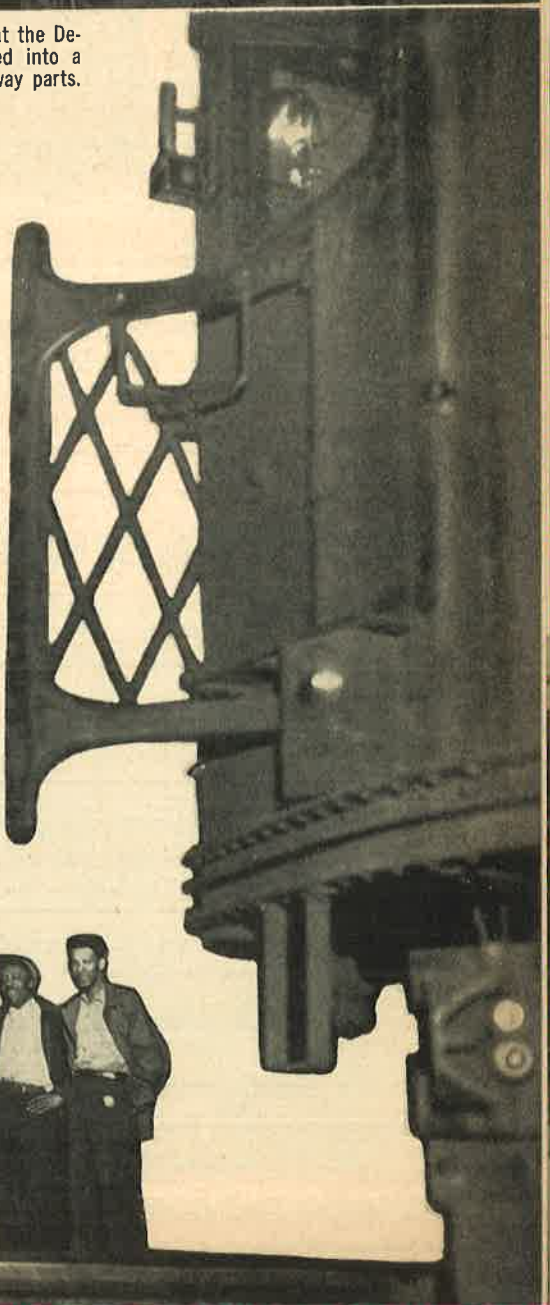
laus of the TA police, Detective John E. Murphy officiates behind
osevelt Hospital party for children. Clown is Patrolman Louis
ergeants Frederick Wertheim (left) and Paul Dilena guide traffic.





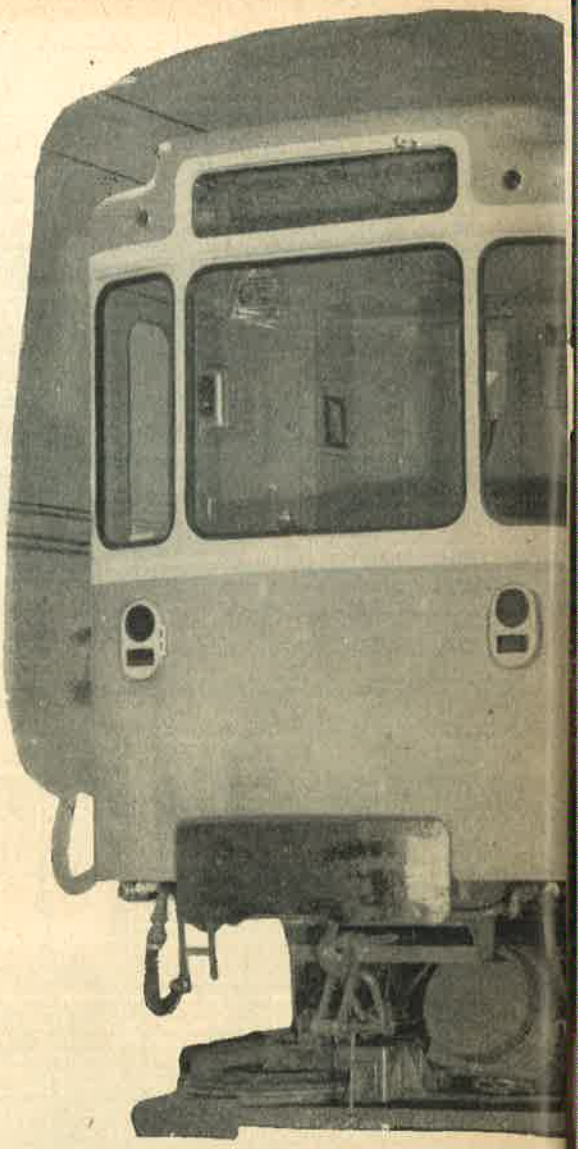


More carol-singing, this time at the De-Kalb Ave. carbarn, now turned into a manufacturing center for subway parts.



"Santa's Toy Shop" is the title of this set constructed in the 207th St. inspection shop.

The Rubber-Tired Subway



Paris, the city which introduced public transportation to the world nearly three hundred years ago, produced another "first" last month—a subway line equipped entirely with brand new rubber-tired trains. Eighteen glossy new trains of four cars each were placed in service on the Chatelet-Lilas route, shortest of the city's fourteen lines. The city thus may now boast, without challenge. that its riders enjoy the softest subway ride on earth. In fact, the smoothest ride of any railroad.

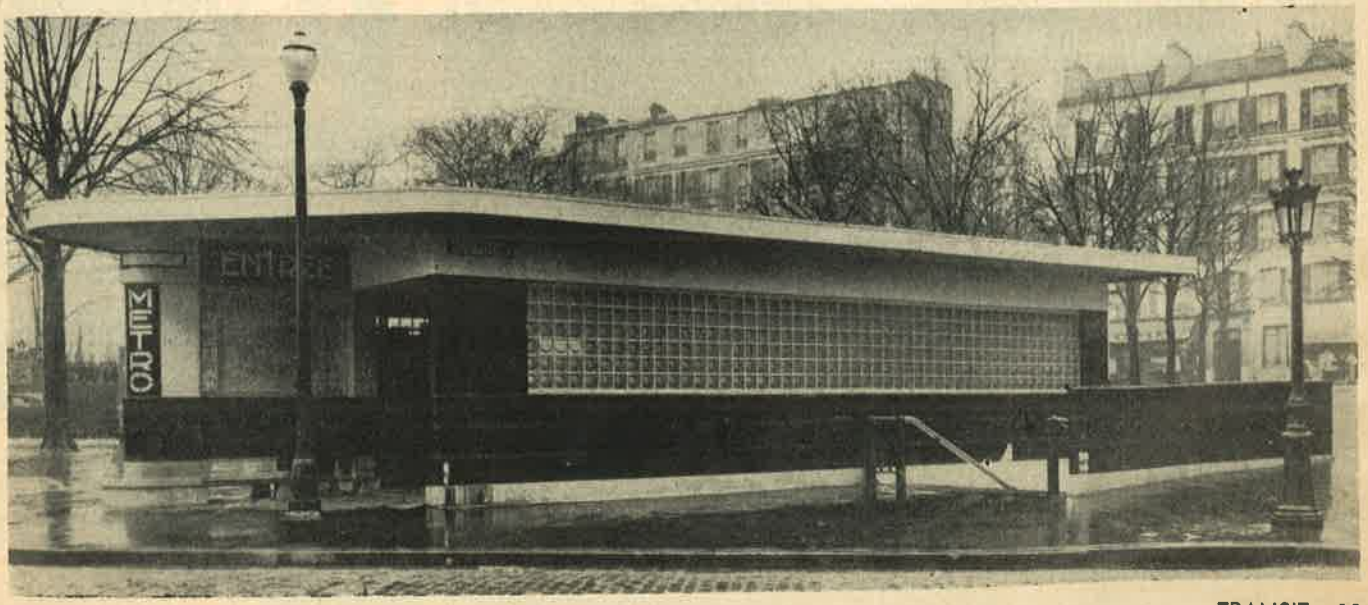
The emphasis is on passenger comfort. The new cars have twice the seating capacity of the old, improvised rubber-tired rolling stock, with which Autonomous Administration of Paris Transportation has been experimenting in recent years. This is due, in part, to folding seats which may be used in slack hours, and folded out of the way to provide more standee space during the rush hours.

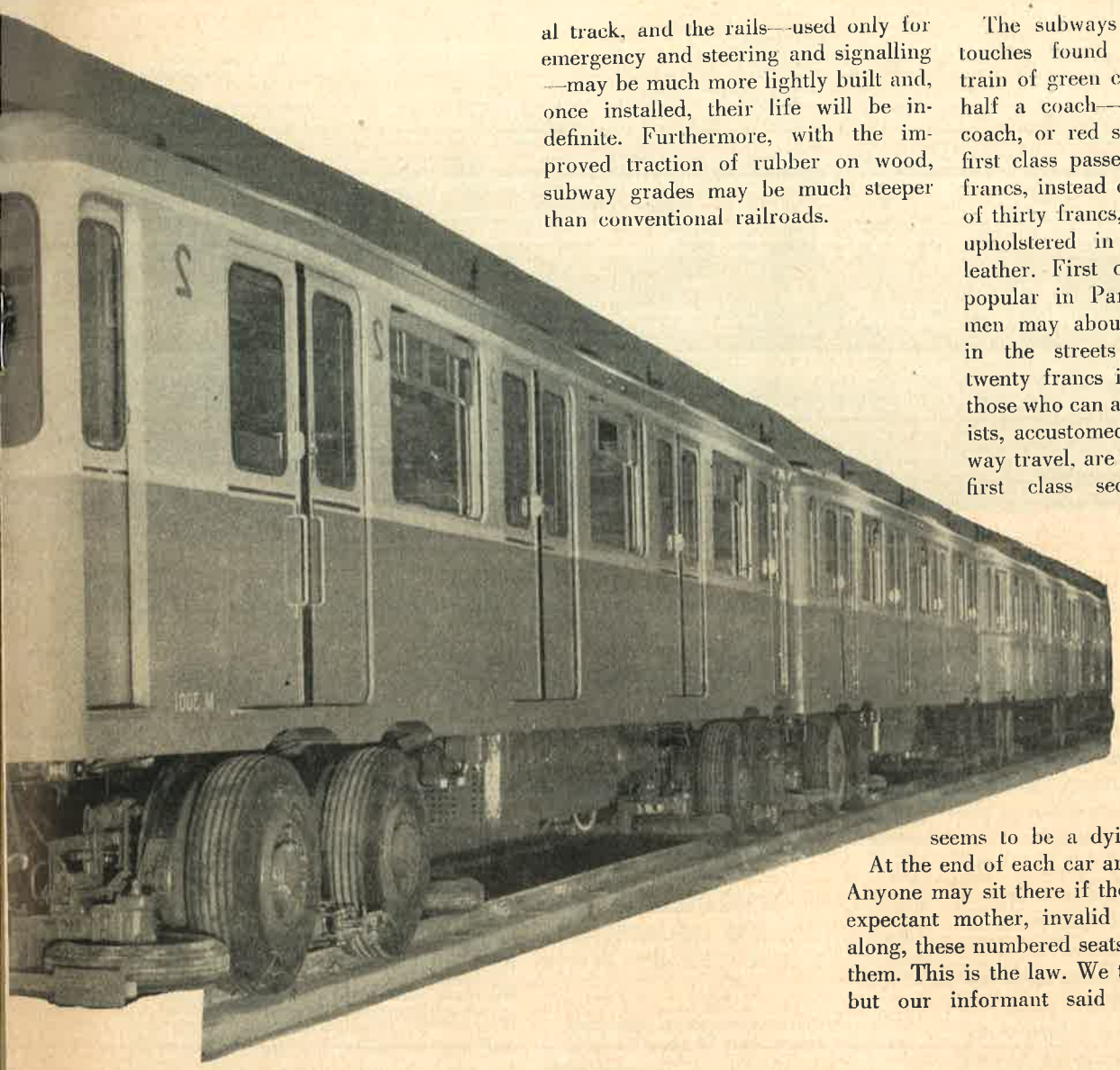
The cars themselves are completely unlike any other. Since the hard jolts and strains are absorbed by the truck-type pneumatic tires, the car bodies themselves are built much lighter. The tires, running on twin paths of azobe —a hardwood imported from the French Cameroons—have far greater traction than steel wheels on steel rails. Hence the increase in acceleration and braking is remarkable.

What happens in case of a blow-out? With hardly a jar, the light car settles an infinitesimal distance to permit a conventional steel wheel to come in contact with the rail. The rails, which appear conventional, but needn't be, otherwise serve to steer the car through rubber-shod lateral wheels.

The first improvised rubber-tired cars were murderously expensive to operate, and, at first, it was believed that this would limit the use of rubber-

Newest of Paris railway stations have a strongly modernistic flavor. Note the glass brick used here at the Place des Fetes.





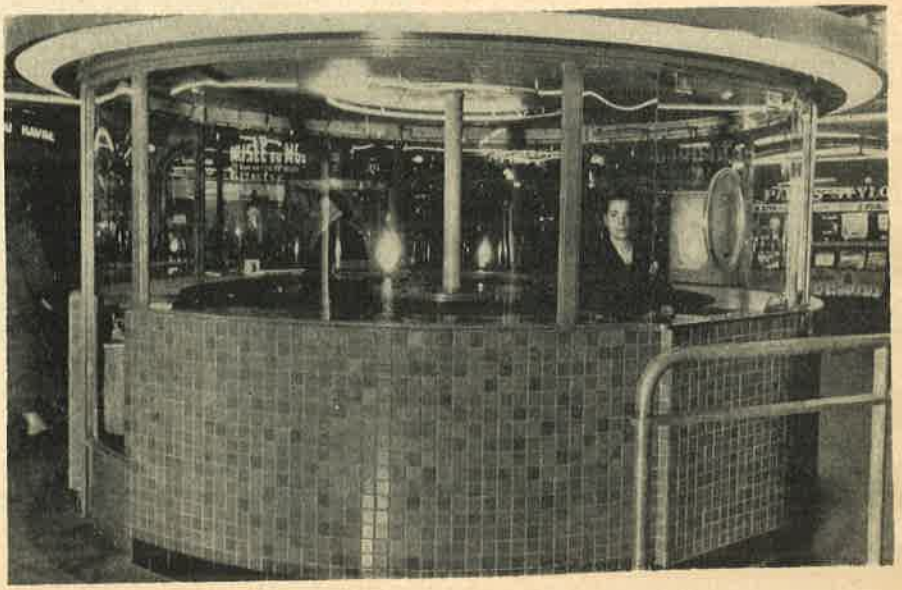
tired subway trains. For Paris, too, has been suffering losses of revenue to the private automobile. Last year, for example, the system operated at a loss of roughly 6,000,000,000 francs, or $16,800,000. But the Renault people, who built most of the new trains, are convinced that the rubber-tired train is the urban transportation of the future—and this, largely, because of low cost.

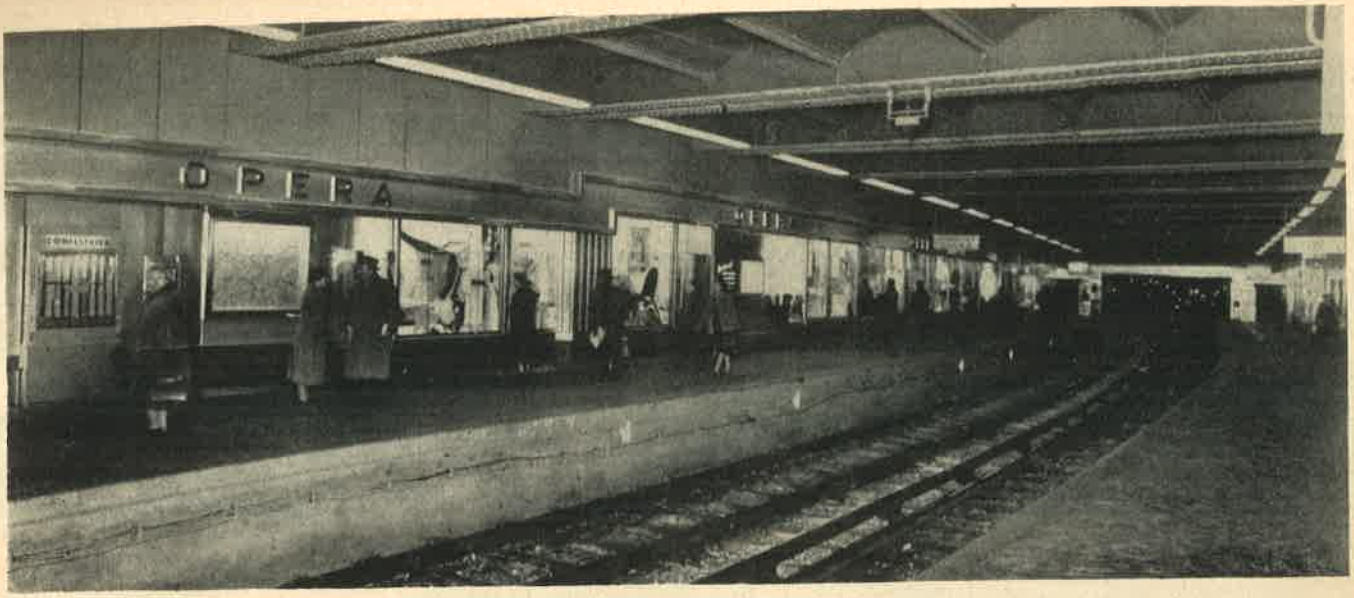
Since the cost of cars is geared to the weight of the car, the lighter vehicles will cost considerably less. But the really big savings are to be found in new subway construction. Tunnel sections for the rubber-tired trains may be reduced substantially, since there need be no space wasted on ballast or ties. The "rolling path" of hardwood will be cheaper than conventional track, and the rails—used only for emergency and steering and signalling—may be much more lightly built and, once installed, their life will be indefinite. Furthermore, with the improved traction of rubber on wood, subway grades may be much steeper than conventional railroads.

The subways of Paris have many touches found nowhere else. Every train of green cars has one coach—or half a coach—painted red. The red coach, or red section, is reserved for first class passengers. By paying fifty francs, instead of the second-class fare of thirty francs, you may ride in seats upholstered in somewhat softer red leather. First class passage isn't too popular in Paris. Profligate Frenchmen may abound in fiction, but not in the streets of Paris—the extra twenty francs is rarely paid, even by those who can afford it. American tourists, accustomed to the single class subway travel, are forever getting into the first class section by mistake. A Frenchman, caught in this act—and quite a few are caught at it—is arrested and fined 200 francs. Americans, though, get away with being escorted to second class, train crews having been instructed to deal tolerantly with provincials. The first-class subway passage seems to be a dying institution.

At the end of each car are eight seats, numbered. Anyone may sit there if they are unused, but if an expectant mother, invalid or war amputee comes along, these numbered seats must be surrendered to them. This is the law. We tried to find the penalty, but our informant said that, while Frenchmen

Pretty girl clerks sell single trip, round trip, multiple trip or commutation tickets at the Gare Saint-Lazare.





Paris, ahead of New York in many subway "firsts," was slow to grasp the possibilities of revenue by renting out subway space for display purposes. The Opera station (above) shows how they are going after this money now, to offset operating loss.

break laws like anybody else, they don't ever break this one; at any rate, in all his life, he never heard of it. The prefect of police issues certificates to the invalids, the amputees, and the ladies whose delicate condition is not yet visible to the naked eye.

Nobody holds doors open, thereby delaying trains. The Parisians have a system for this a great deal more effective than the pleas of the TA to its customers to cease and desist from this schedule-wrecking practice. As a train approaches a station, it operates an electric eye which closes gates leading from the entrance corridors to the platforms. Thus, only the people already on the platform as the train starts to enter a station may board it. There is, therefore, no rush for closing doors or hurrying down steps to capture a train and lose your breath.

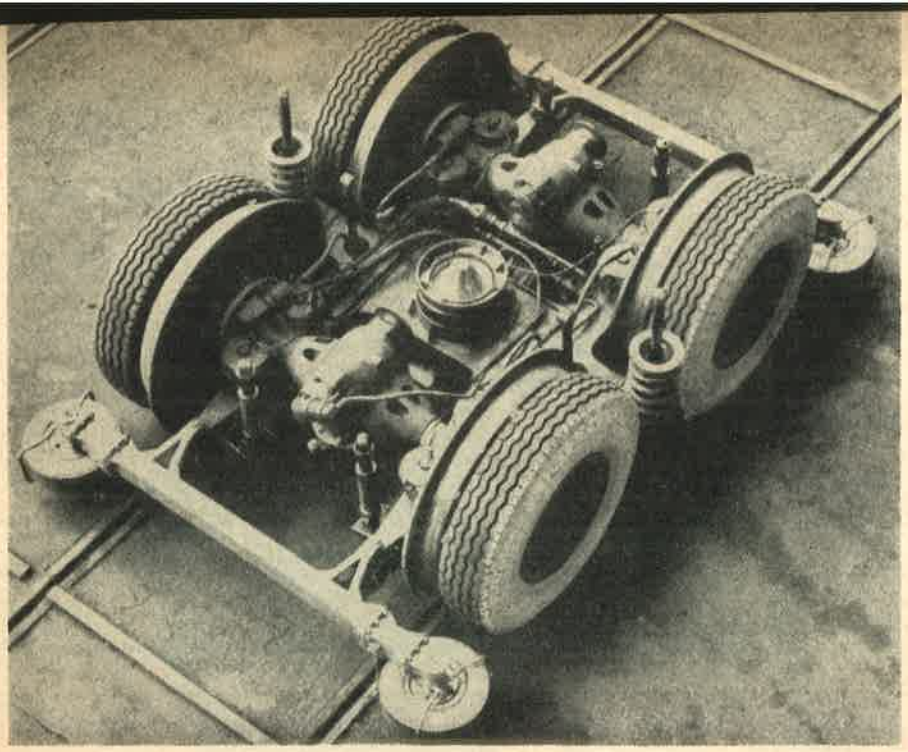
A famous "firster," France, which among other things gave the world its only wheelless train—also produced the genius, Pascal, who in 1661 conceived the idea of a public transportation system and called for its establishment. A year later, in 1662, the first public transportation—carriages which operated along given routes—was introduced to the world in Paris. The world paid little attention. Parisians walked or rode their own. The initial venture was such a monumental flop that it was discontinued within the year and for the next 156 years, any foolish notions about a public transportation system were promptly knocked on the head. In 1837 the French coined the word omnibus and soon afterwards these equipages were rolling through the streets of Paris. Fifty year later the French imported an idea from New York, laid rails in the streets and tried out horse-drawn trolleys. Parisians found the "American railroad" an interesting curiosity, but little more. It was not until electric-powered cars were devised that the trolley came into general use.

Electric destination indicators, new here, have been used in Paris for about 25 years.



Between 1800 and 1900 the population of Paris swelled from 600,000 to more than 2,700,000. Workmen walked an hour or ninety minutes to work in the morning and the same in reverse at night. Even those lucky enough to have horses found the going slow through the traffic-tortured streets. In the 1890s the first subway was laid out, and it opened in 1900. It ran from Vincennes to Maillot in 25 minutes—a trip that, by any other means, took an hour and a half. Since then a maze of lines has opened up.

Even at rush hour the Paris subways are uncrowded by New York standards. "But this is because our problem is wholly different from New York's," explained our informant. "We don't have the task of moving hundreds of thousands of people all in one direction, toward the heart of the city—as you do—in a relatively short time. The load is diffused and moves both ways. Furthermore, instead of two great railroad terminals dumping their commuter loads into the subway within a mile of each other, we have seven scattered railroad terminals bringing the out-of-town commuters to the subway system. We'd be jammed at



Here is the reason Paris can claim it gives the softest subway ride in the world. One very short line is equipped with pneumatique-tired trains. Photo shows complete truck.

least—if we had your concentrated, one-way traffic flow in rush hours."

Reason To Brag

Strangers to the city find their way around the maze of subway lines with considerable ease, while old Paris subway hands find New York's underground a baffling labyrinth, even for a skilled reader of rapid transit maps. In the first place, electric route indicators, responding to the touch of a button designating a desired destination, have been standard equipment at all Paris connecting points for a quarter of a century. These look and act like the machines now being introduced to New Yorkers.

Way stations all have large maps mounted on the walls.

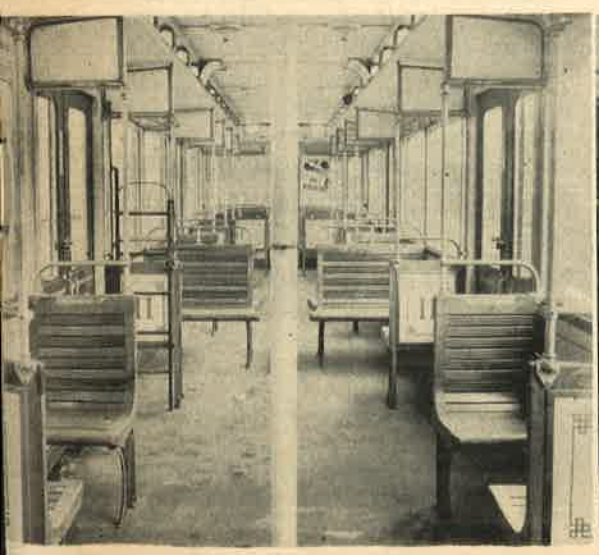
"I can figure out from your map," said our informant, "that a line runs to a point I want to get to. But it doesn't tell me whether to take a GG, A, D, or E train from the point where I happen to be. Our maps not only show the routes, but precisely the marking of trains going there."

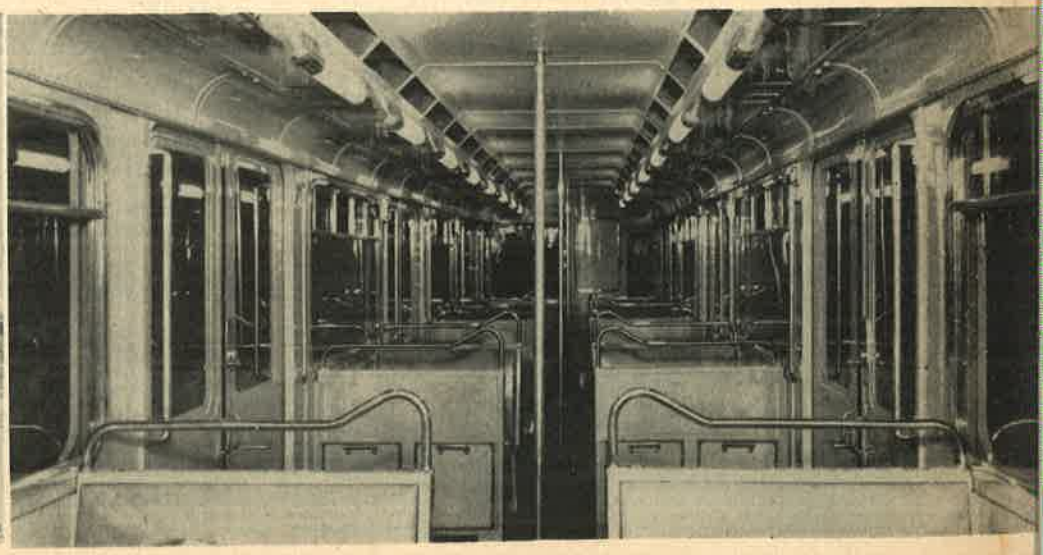
Paris subways now have 186 kilos of route and 362 stations on its fourteen lines. Its rolling stock ranges from older, slat-seated cars to flossy new jobs, upholstered in leather. In relatively recent years the Metro authorities started to develop revenue from concessions in the way of stores.

Labor costs in Paris are ridiculously low by New York standards, with the result that it is used far more extensively. Railroad clerks without rush sell one-way or return trip tickets, explain leisurely the savings to be had in twenty trip tickets, or weekly commutation. A ticket man punches the ticket as you enter the station, conductors go through the trains, checking on tickets. Practically every station has a station-master, distinguishable by his snowy cap, although the rest of his blue-and-brass uniform is similar to that of crewmen.

The station-master sits in a glassed little office from which he has a full view of the station. At his fingertips is a telephone system which permits him to contact instantly his counterpart in the station ahead, or on any part of his line, to notify of any unusual crowd, delay, or need for gendarmes. The last, though, is rare. Possibly because of the use of extensive manpower, crime is a comparative rarity in the Paris subway. When it crops up it is generally in the form of the ubiquitous pickpocket.

Old, wood seats are shown in the car at left. At right is the interior of a new car, one of those rolling on great rubber tires.





Mr. Apollo . . .

After 34 Years



The Mighty Motorman as he looked 34 years ago when he was runner-up in the Mr. Apollo Contest at Garden.

Girls no longer squeal and swoon when Motorman Ralph Rungo walks on the beach. This is strange, in a way, because Ralph can snap a heavy iron chain across his massive chest, or rip a telephone directory in two, as well as ever. But now when he does his stuff before a feminine audience there is merely polite interest. No gasping, ecstatic moan. It just isn't the same as back in 1922 when he came off second best in the Mr. Apollo Contest in Madison Square Garden, thus being adjudged the Second Most Perfect Man in America. This was enough to make Ralph very much in demand as a strong man. There were other strong men who could lift just as great weights, and snap just as thick chains, but none who were also Mr. Apollo No. 2. In his well-cut leopard skin, he was sort of a non-singing Elvis Presley of the 1920's. To touch his swelling (eight-inch expansion) chest really used to send the bobby-soxers. He was so much in demand he hardly had ıough time left over for his stint as conductor.

Motorman Rungo as he looks today, piloting a Lexington Ave. express.



The Mighty Chest

He can still puff his chest out the full eight inches, too, but, as we indicated, that no longer sends the girls, either. And there have been other changes. The thick, dark crop of tightly waved hair has thinned very much and grayed. The thirty-four years have added fifty-five pounds, not all to the massive chest. Indeed, nobody calls him "Chesty" any more. The leopard skin—he hasn't been able to squeeze into it for years. Could these things have something to do with the changed attitude of the feminine audience? We wonder.

Don't get the idea that Ralph misses the squeals and moans and that sort of thing. He doesn't a bit. He told us so, between runs of the Lexington Ave. express he now pilots.

"The girls were a confounded nuisance," he said. "Always getting silly ideas."

THE LEOPARD SKIN DOESN'T FIT ANYMORE, AND HE'S 55 POUNDS HEAVIER. CAN THIS BE WHY GIRLS NO LONGER SQUEAL AND SWOON OVER HIM?



He proves to the missus he's as good as he was in prime.



The Mighty Motorman still flexes a great bicep. Here he demonstrates for his son, Ralph Junior.

Anyway, in 1929, he married the prettiest of them, an auburn-haired girl named May Puppo, and therefore wouldn't be interested in that sort of nonsense. What he is interested in is keeping the motorman job for another four years. That he's got to do, even though he's got slightly over 40 years in the job now, because Ralph Jr. has just entered the Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry.

"It'll cost money to see him through," he said. "And then, of course, it'll cost more to set him up as dentist. But then I'm going to get out of this game."

Just Changing Jobs

He's not going to actually retire. What he hopes to do is to buy a place on a lake upstate somewhere and go into the business of taking puny, city-bred youngsters and turning them into strong men. The chap who beat him out by a hair in 1922, Charles Atlas, made a pretty good thing of that, and, in a smaller, more direct way, Ralph would like to get in on it.

After all, he could point with pride to Ralph Jr. as a shining example. Young Ralph was an Eastern collegiate swimming star and now can beat the old man's ears off at handball. "Not that I'm not as good as I ever was," Ralph Sr., points out. "But he's six-foot one, so it isn't hardly fair." Ralph Sr. was a swimming and diving exhibition star himself in the old days, and he attributes young Ralph's skill to his tutelage.

The Belt Buster

Ralph can't claim to have made himself a strong man out of a puny weakling. He always was a husky, barrel-chested youngster. As a gateman on the old IRT he got to playing around the Bronx YMCA with boxing gloves and dumbbells. He was also fond of fastening a stout leather belt tightly around his chest and bursting it by taking a deep breath. Owing to the high cost of leather belts, he never really got his fill of this exotic pleasure.



Beauticians in Dungarees

At the rate of two each day, the IRT shops turn out a rehabilitated car. Above a crew at the 147th St. yards tears into a beat-up, vandal-scarred 40-year-old car. L to R, John O'Loughlin, Lawrence Mahoney, John Rae, William Ennis and Howard Graham have stripped the old cane seats and are getting down to bedrock. Twelve to 15 days later, it will emerge like the car below, with new red plastic cushions, the interior paneling in soft blue and gray, replacing the old green paint. Martin McCarty and Ernest Finamore are giving a last touch to face-lift.



To the men and women

who keep the wheels of TA turning—



A Merry Christmas

and a

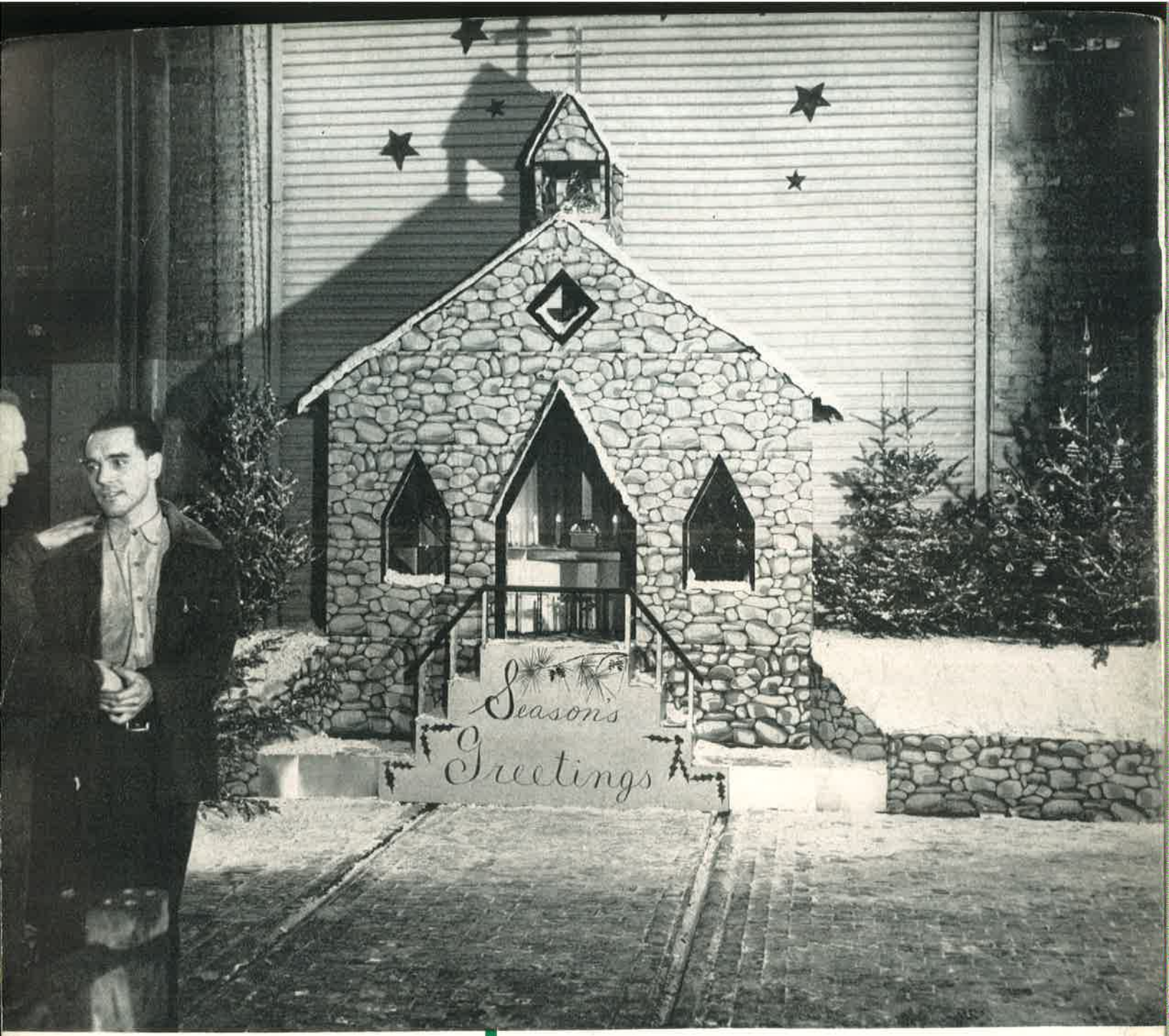
Happy New Year



Charles L. Patterson

Vincent Gaffney

Joseph E. O'Grady



A CHURCH GROWS IN THE 207th ST. SUBWAY YARDS

And even a gentle fall of snow lies on the ground when, in spare time, workmen at TA's big yard get ready for the Christmas season. This scene is in the Wheel Shop and Foreman James Hackett is wishing well to Felice Bica.

Transit

december, 1956

Transit
370 Jay Street
Brooklyn 1, N. Y.

Return Postage Guaranteed

Bulk Rate
U. S. Postage
PAID
New York, N. Y.
Permit No. 7446