

# New transit busses make wheelchair access easy

The Santa Clara County Transit District held a training session here Monday to let the handi-capped become familiar with the new busses that are equipped with wheelchair ramps.

There are currently 18 ramp-equipped busses servicing line 18. Line 18 runs from Hillview Airport, in East San Jose, to Stanford Medical Center and stops in staff parking lot "G."

The district, according to Susan Davidson, chairperson of the district's Handicapped Advisory Committee, will have these special busses running on all lines, but that line 18 is the first line to have these busses.

The district has 64 more such busses on order. These busses will be placed in service as soon as they are received, starting with line 64, which runs from Santa Clara through Willow Glen to Leland High School.

**THE SPECIAL** busses, built by Gillig, are equipped with extending ramps that lower and

raise at the front door. The busses also lower, or kneel, to bring them down to the level of short curbs.

As part of the demonstration, wheelchair students were run through simulations of the ramp and were shown how to lock their chairs and themselves into the modified seats.

The bus seats are constructed so that a handicapped person can easily raise the seat to expose a clamp built into the bottom of the seat. By backing up into the clamp, the wheelchair is securely locked into place and can be released by pressing down on a lever attached to the clamp. There is also a seat belt to hold the handicapped person in his chair.

Roberta Gray, transit district representative, said all busses in service will be modified to handle the ramps. The cost of these modifications will be about the same as putting air conditioning

on the busses, which is \$8000 to \$10,000.

**AS PART OF** the transition to a fully "accessible" bus system, the system's 500 drivers each went through a one-day training session to teach them how to operate the equipment and how to handle the handicapped and their special problems. All the drivers are trained not to help the handicapped unless absolutely needed.

The Handicapped Advisory Committee, consisting of handicapped people, insisted on not allowing the drivers to help. "This is to help the handicapped to be independent," according to committee member Jean Poelle. "It also helps to keep the drivers from looking down on the handicapped."

The transit district will be holding two more demonstrations in the near future at San Jose City College and Valley Medical Center.

# MEChA sets sights; drops political image

The time has come for De Anza's MEChA chapter to divorce itself from politics and move on to less abstract efforts in interest of educational advancement of Chicano students, according to acting chairperson Guadalupe Gil.

MEChA is an acronym for Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan, literally translated as Chicano Student Movement of the Southwest.

Its goals, as stated in its constitution, are: "to further the understanding ... to provide a common meeting ground ... to assume an active role in providing realistic and practical services directed toward the educational, social, cultural, and economic development of the Spanish speaking community ... to cultivate leadership ... and responsibility within that community."

**TO DO THIS**, said Gil in a Nov. 22 interview, MEChA needs more members. Although the movement carries 15 names on its rolls, only seven members are active and regularly attend the meetings.

Lack of membership notwithstanding, MEChA has two programs to be launched in early January.

For Mechists who demonstrate active roles in fund-raising and other mainstream club activities, MEChA plans to sponsor a free lunch program and a book scholarship program.

**THE FREE LUNCH** program is designed to help relieve some of the financial burden placed on many minority students when De

Anza's lunch card program was disbanded, according to Gil.

The book scholarship program entails the purchasing of texts by MEChA to be loaned to active members for the duration of the quarter in which they are loaned. At the end of the quarter, the books will be returned to the club, hopefully for reuse by another Mechista.

In order to fund programs like these, MEChA is planning a number of fund raising events, which are again hampered by a lack of membership, said Gil.

**ON WEDNESDAY**, Nov. 29, at the Club Fair held in the Campus Center, MEChA had a couple of booths. One sold Mexican chocolate and T-shirts and featured a costume display. The other, Gil said, was a "fun booth"—it being an experimental attempt featuring mock marriages, mock divorces and picture taking.

Tentatively scheduled for Feb. 10 is a dance in Mountain View, but the location, musical group and specific activities haven't been determined.

Gil stressed that there are no prerequisites for membership and that leaders and all ideas are welcome.

MEChA meetings are held every Friday at 11:30 a.m. in the Intercultural Studies Conference Room in L11b. For further information, call 996-4828 or 996-4769.

## Minolta stars holiday show

The Minolta Planetarium will present "The Stars of Christmas," a program which explores the skies over the Holy Land as they appeared at the time of Christ's birth.

The hour-long show will be held at 3 p.m. Dec. 16, 17 and 23 and at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 18 through 21 and Dec. 26 through 28.

Tickets will be available at the door: \$2 for adults and \$1.50 for students. Admission for children and senior citizens is \$1.

For more information and group showings, call 996-4814.



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