



The Equity Newsletter | March 2023

Office of Racial Equity & Belonging News

All-Staff Call with Inside SFMTA

The Office of Racial Equity & Belonging (OREB) was a guest at the All-Staff call with InsideSFMTA on March 15. OREB was able to give progress updates on the Racial Equity Action Plan, introduce our growing team and share what we will be working on for the rest of 2023. We introduced our OREB Equity Support Team and the work that they are doing both as individuals and as a group to achieve racial equity at the SFMTA. You can watch the event below.



Women's Herstory Month at SFMTA



Our 2023 Racial Equity Fleet for March Celebrated Women's Herstory Month. The SFMTA highlighted trailblazing women in transportation and beyond. The Herstory Month Launch Ride was on Wednesday, March 8, at the SFMTA Cable Car Division. Women from throughout the agency came to celebrate the advancements of Women in Transit and the future

ahead. The Women's Herstory Month Cable Car Gripwomen for the ride were Adja Johnson and Amber Jones, aka the AJ's.

If you couldn't make it out for the initial ride, hopefully you'll be able to find time to ride on the car with your family and friends as it rolls up and down the streets of San Francisco during the month of March.




Next month, be ready to ride with our Arab American & Middle Eastern Heritage Month Cable Car Ride on April 12.

SFMTA Celebrates Women's Herstory Month



In 1920, the 19th Amendment granted Women the Right to Vote, which Black Women fought for, but they were not allowed to vote until the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act

Katherine Cheung
First woman of Chinese ancestry to earn a pilot's license in 1931



Carmen Turner
First African American woman to lead a major transit agency in 1983

Jo Ann Tidwell
First Native American woman to work for a major airline as a mechanic for Continental Airlines in 1987

Ethyl Rutland
Muni's first woman awarded "Man of the Month" in 1951

Women In Transit History

Women have made a vast array of contributions in the history of transit and transportation infrastructure in the United States. From Rebecca Lukens taking charge of Brandywine Iron Works in 1825 to Nuria Fernandez becoming the first Senate-confirmed woman of color and first Afro-Latina to lead the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2021, women have achieved significant accomplishments in many transit industries, from the railroad industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to aviation, highways, buses, automobiles and light rail systems. Within the SFMTA, we have seen Dolores

Piluso become one of the first female railway operators during World War II and Fannie Mae Barnes become the first cable car gripwoman in MUNI history in 1996.

SFMTA Celebrates Women's Herstory Month



Evelyn J. Wells

First woman to be appointed as a Muni Inspector in 1979

Celebrity Cruise Line's made history with the first-ever cruise-ship sailing to have an entirely female bridge and officer team, numbering 27 women in March 2020



Dr. Ellen Ochoa

First Hispanic woman to go into space aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery in 1993



Ellen Evak Paneok

First Alaskan Native woman bush pilot in 1979



Dolores Piluso

During World War II, Dolores Piluso was one of many women who worked as a Muni "Motorman"

SFMTA Staff Attend Equity Summit

A variety of SFMTA staff participated in Smart Growth America's digital Equity Summit on Feb 7-9. The conference covered a range of topics with thought leaders and practitioners discussing how to ensure that racial equity is a key priority in any smart growth approach. The summit covered topics like Equitable Community Development, Reconnecting Communities and Equitable Carbonization.



Speakers like Kizzy Charles-Guzman, Executive Director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice and Keynote speaker Joy Bailey Bryant spoke of the need for equity minded approaches to the work being done all over the country to redress previous harms and to include and uplift communities that have previously been harmed by government action. Projects like 11th Street Bridge Park, and Segregation by Design were discussed and offered interesting perspectives on engagement and cities owning up to their past mistakes. SFMTA participants were able to fulfill their racial equity training goals and came away with a fresh perspective. Our work continues.

Cable Car Gripwoman Featured on Local News Story

Willa Johnson was featured on an NBC Bay Area news story, talking about her career as only the 2nd cable car gripwoman in the SFMTA's history. She detailed the challenges she faced early on in training, and the support she received from Miss Fannie Mae Barnes who was the city's first cable car gripwoman. Thank you for your years of service, Willa!



Advancing Women in Transportation

The Office of Racial Equity & Belonging encourages people from the SFMTA to learn more about WTS International. Their mission is to create a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable transportation industry through the global advancement of women. To fulfill this mission WTS works to provide its members with the tools for success. WTS is conducting a March Membership Campaign with a discount code offering 15 months of membership for the price of 12. Use code WHM2023. More information can be found at [WTS San Francisco Chapter](#).

The purpose of this publication is to provide information about ongoing equity work at the SFMTA, including upcoming events, trainings and suggested educational resources.

The Equity Newsletter is published by the
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