

# **TRANSIT UPDATES** *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

**Big Metrolink news:** Metrolink will be adding two Saturday round trips on the Riverside line (via Ontario, Montebello, etc.) As a result, the number of Saturday trips between San Bernardino and Riverside may be reduced somewhat.

**Even bigger Metrolink news:** Metrolink, for the first time, will provide regular Sunday service on the San Bernardino Line.

These new weekend services will start operating June 24 (the same day the Red Line Extension to North Hollywood opens). In the meantime, Metrolink has added a weekday train on the San Bernardino Line, effective May 22. This new service leaves LA at 3:50 p.m. and is intended to relieve overcrowding on the later trips. (This same train returns to LA from San Bernardino at 6:13 p.m., providing an additional evening departure).

The MTA Wilshire/Whittier Rapid Bus will be designated Line #720, while the Ventura Blvd. Rapid Bus will be Line #750.

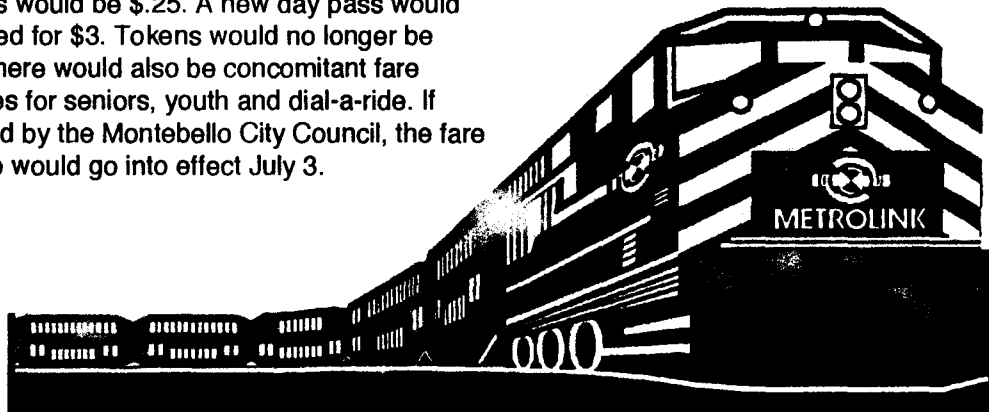
Montebello Bus Lines may be increasing its fares, according to member Frank Roldan. Regular fares would rise from \$.75 to \$.90, and express fares from \$.90 to \$1.10. Local transfers would cost \$.10 (currently free), while interagency transfers would be \$.25. A new day pass would be offered for \$3. Tokens would no longer be used. There would also be concomitant fare increases for seniors, youth and dial-a-ride. If approved by the Montebello City Council, the fare increase would go into effect July 3.

Riverside Transit Agency is acquiring as many as 94 new buses, with 25 of them arriving as early as September. These new vehicles will enable RTA to replace many older buses, as well as to start some new services (such as a new route between Sun City and Lake Elsinore via Quail Valley)

Member Ray Mullins saw one of the new El Dorado transit-type MARTA buses heading up to Big Bear on April 30th. By Friday May 5th, nos. 2 and 3 were there. Currently drivers are training on the new equipment and revenue service should begin definitely by Memorial Day. Surprisingly, the new buses have a smaller turning radius than the current cutaways.

Simi Valley Transit #C has been rerouted to serve Chatsworth Metrolink station. Instead of running along Devonshire to Mason, it now operates via Devonshire, the Metrolink station, Lassen and Topanga Cyn Blvd. This new routing is in effect both weekdays and Saturdays.

Thousand Oaks Transit is experimenting with a Smart Shuttle. The initial service operates in the area where TOT #2 operates (but has not replaced any bus routes yet). For more information, call 800-438-1112.



# BULLETIN BOARD

Our advance peek at the North Hollywood Red Line extension will be on Saturday June 3. It will start 10 a.m. at the Union Station Red Line platform. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and be prepared to have some fun! Members and their guests are welcome.

We have made arrangements with MTA to have a booth at the North Hollywood station for the June 24-25 Red Line extension opening.

At our May 20 meeting after finishing club business one of the breakout sessions will be devoted to analyzing the recently adopted OCTA route restructuring. To accommodate this the Transit Guide publicity blitz has been rescheduled for our June 10 meeting. We also will discuss a study tour of the IEC bus system (routes 100/110/149) Montclair/San Bernardino/Riverside/Orange.

Bob Huddy of the Southern California Economic Partnership will give a presentation at our July 8 meeting on Smart Shuttle and Transit Technology. Activities anticipated for meetings later this year include: a briefing on SCAG's proposed regional maglev project, a talk by John Meyer (administrator of three small systems: Palos Verdes, MARTA and Morongo Basin), and Ed Buckley of Western Transit giving an technical overview of transit service planning/scheduling. Plus a possible rapid bus presentation/demonstration.

Saturday April 22 we had an opportunity to share a booth at the Exposition Park Earth Day event with the East/West Transit Coalition. President Kris Sharp, Executive Secretary Dana Gabbard plus members Woody Rosner and John Ulloth joined EWTC co-chairs Jan Kidwell and Darrell Clarke in meeting attendees and answering questions about transit issues. Member Tim Adams came by with a group of young people he was chaperoning as part of his Transit People program. Other visitors included Vice-President Anthony Loui, Director Perias Pillay and member Roger Christensen.

May 3 Vice President Anthony Loui and Director Perias Pillay attended a talk by Carfree Cities author Joel Crawford at Eco-Village.

The weekend of May 13-14 SO.CA.TA had a booth at the 2nd annual Fullerton Railroad Days. The event was a huge success, and besides signing up new members and selling Transit Guides it was an opportunity to meet the public and hear their transit related thoughts and concerns. Members who helped staff the booth at various times during the two days included Woody Rosner, John Ulloth, Dana Gabbard, Joe Dunn, Charles Powell and Anthony Loui. Members who dropped by to say hi included (this list is incomplete): Juan Cornejo, the Guskys, Charles Hobbs, Jerald Russell, Phil Capo, Kirk Schneider, and Robert Gambling (who was visiting from Connecticut!). Member Jane Reifer was a few rows down from us staffing the booth for Auto Free Orange County. And member Barry Christensen was an essential part of the organizing committee for the event. A good time was had by all!

Members in the news: Roger Christensen in the May 7 Valley edition of the L.A. Times asked for Valley leaders to quit squabbling and support the Burbank/Chandler busway proposal. April 13 Mark Panitz in the Daily News described the difficulty disruptive events pose to transit buses. Member Jane Reifer had a letter in the April 9 LA Times Orange County edition and was quoted in the April 7 Orange County Register ("Authority Releases Bus Plan") expressing concerns about the subsequently (*to pg 10*).

I will not get into depth on the transportation funding situation in Sacramento, beyond to note trends are looking good for capital and even perhaps operational funds. The next developments will occur in the legislature as deals are cut on both sides of the aisle to ensure a 2/3 vote.

Jeff Morales, the new head of Caltrans, comes from a mass transit background. Most expect he will be a breath of fresh air and more friendly to multi-modal options.

There is growing concern sectional squabbling among the leaders of the San Fernando valley may again stall its chances of having a transportation project move forward. Despite Governor Davis' offer to fund 80% of the cost of a Burbank/Chandler busway the Valley bigshots have quickly resorted to the usual chest thumping. My May 7 Daily News letter suggested instead of another round of public posturing, why doesn't the San Fernando Valley elite sit down with new Assembly speaker Robert Hertzberg of Van Nuys and seek his counsel? Given half a chance I think he can come thru.

Worrisome government report quote of the month: "Challenges in Evaluating, Overseeing, and Funding Major Transit Projects" by the General Accounting Office: "Funds considered committed [to MTA's east side and mid-City corridors] may eventually be made available to a project that has met FTA's New Starts criteria and is closer to final design and construction."

A.B. 769 is an existing bill Assemblymember Bob Margett amended to address the El Monte busway situation during weekday peak hours. I quickly spread the word and was gratified to have various stakeholders join us in urging the legislature to support it. Hopefully we can get the votes to pass it as an urgency measure so it can take effect

immediately.

April 24 I informed the Pasadena City Council of our position against the extension of the 710 freeway and urged them to do likewise. President Kris Sharp and member John Ulloth also attended. In the wee hours (after I left) the Council voted to oppose the project, only to a week later decide to have the issue decided in November by a voter referendum. The 710 battle continues!

Did you know what George W. Bush said when was asked during a Univision town hall this February in L.A. by a resident who takes 2 buses to get to work how the public transportation system could be improved? "My hope is that you will be able to find good enough work, so you'll be able to afford a car".

Martha Welborne is at it again. She is leading another junket to Curitiba, Brazil May 29-June 2 (per her website [www.busways.org](http://www.busways.org)). This time she is taking representatives of various national policy and environmental-oriented organizations. Too bad none of us whom she wants to cram into these buses ever gets invited to see this alleged bus paradise.

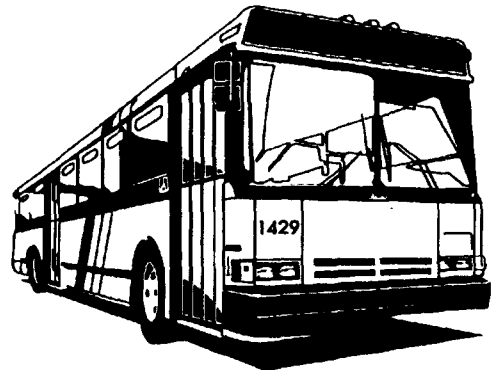
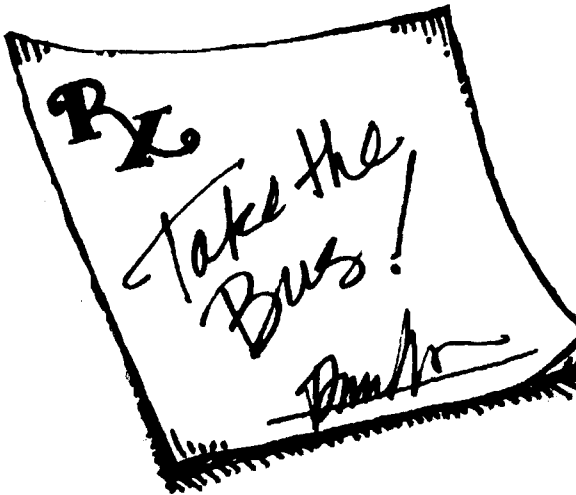
Per the May 11 Daily News FTA is investigating a complaint against ASI filed by the Western Law Center for Disability Rights. WLCDR contends ASI has ignored thousands of complaints made by ASI users and that MTA hasn't taken its paratransit responsibilities seriously enough.

A few months ago I mentioned a 1977 Coalition for Economic Survival lawsuit against RTD similar to the claim that resulted in the consent decree. Recently I learned what its outcome was: the court issued a temporary injunction that halted a fare increase. But at a subsequent hearing the judge reversed the injunction and dismissed the case. This reinforces my belief drawing Terry Hatter as the

presiding judge was the single most important factor in MTA deciding to agree to the decree. Speaking of the BRU, I finally saw the new documentary by Haskell Wexler when it screened May 11 at the Sunset 5 in West Hollywood. I don't know what surprised me more - that the BRU's usual market prowess fell flat as only 40 people paid \$10 to see it or that I was actually rather bored by the film despite it being about a subject I am intensely interested in. Perhaps I was put off by the bi-polar nature - talking heads ranting about the importance of the BRU counter-pointed with overlong coverage of the dog and pony show protests they mount at a drop of a hat. There were a portraits of a few members, but nothing in depth. You get some peeks at their Wiltern digs. Small samples of Planning Committee and staff meetings. Oddly I don't believe an actual monthly member meeting is ever shown. And not enough context is given for someone unfamiliar with Los Angeles to probably grasp much of what is talked about. It is essentially a long commercial, and is being shown around the country to raise their profile and bring more money into their bulging coffers.

I've seen reports that in Vancouver, B.C. when it screens at a leftist film festival two BRU organizers will be present to conduct community seminars on organizing and also recruit people to attend the LCSC's National School for Strategic Organizing, which is an intern program dressed up with ideological lectures but mostly involves handing out flyers on buses, as far as I can tell. Even the leftist oriented audience became antsy when the post-screening q&a was conducted by a National School student and the LCSC office manager, neither of whom were all that knowledgeable about the decree beyond its broad outlines. I guess most decree observers right now are more interested in which way the Ninth Circuit appellate panel decision decides the MTA appeal. Everything else is just a sideshow to the main event

May 10 I attended Foothill Transit's Annual Membership Meeting. It was a good chance to exchange information with various policymakers and observe the political process firsthand. I even had a chance to peek at one of the new low floor Gilligs that was on display. I also snagged extra copies of their Short Range Transit Plan for our transit service wonks to analyze.



When our organization joined the California Futures Network, we understood one of our chief obligations was attendance of the semi-annual affiliates meetings. Since our CFN liaison Perias couldn't attend the Spring meetings to be held May 8-9 in Sacramento, I volunteered to do so. Treasurer Juanita Dellomes and member John Ulloth expressed a desire to join me at their own expense. Our plane departed 7:10 a.m. and arrived promptly at 8:25 a.m. We had no trouble finding the bus stop for Yolobus route 42 and by 9:30 a.m. were in downtown Sacramento, hopping the light rail system 3 stops before continuing on foot to our hotel.

Originally the affiliate meeting was slated for that afternoon. To accommodate various concerns it was essentially compressed into the lunch to be held the next day after the policy briefing. But we made good use of the free day. In consultation with John and Juanita I had prepared a legislative briefing packet on key regional issues that we wanted to give every L.A. County legislator plus members of the Transportation Committee. Plus we had scheduled meetings with some key aides (with term limits taking effect making contact with legislative aides is important since they now are the institutional memory and likely will be around in Sacramento long after the official they currently work for has moved on). After a quick lunch at the hotel we set off for the Capitol.

I had made sure to get a map off the internet of downtown Sacramento, marked it with locations we planned to visit and handed out copies to everyone in our party. Essentially everywhere we planned to go was within 10 blocks of the hotel. The morning was spent visiting legislator offices distributing our packet and at John's suggestion requesting the name of the staffer who handled transportation issues.

1 p.m. we met with Bernie Orozco, consultant to State Senator Richard Polanco. We spent nearly an hour going over the newsbrief in the packet and discussed the key issues. It was a productive and frank discussion. After some confused wandering (the Capitol's layout leaves much to be desired, with winding hallways and a confusing room numbering system) we sat down about 2 p.m. with Frank Vega of Speaker Hertzberg's staff. I think he was impressed that our concerns were not fixated on the usual parochial desire for local project funding but encompassed truly regional concerns.

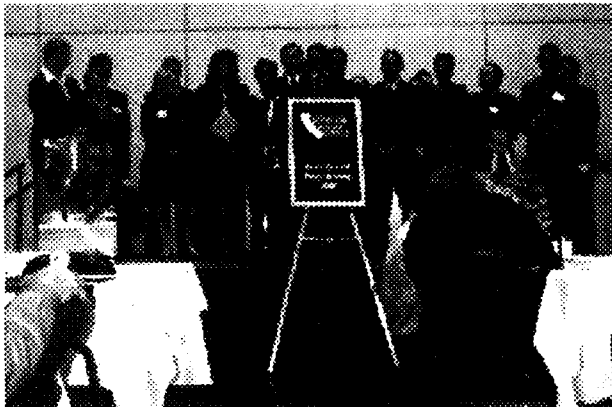
The balance of the afternoon was spent in continued distribution of the packet. After a brief break at the hotel we attended the California Summit of Transit Rider Groups organized by Kristina Egan of Odyssey 20/20. Attendees include Richard Silver of TRAC/RailPAC, Darrell Clarke of the East/West Transit Coalition and SO.CA.TA member Jane Reifer of Auto Free Orange County. I was a bit woozy from all the running around we had done, but was happy to note a number of user groups from all over the state were present (the only high profile groups absent were the Bus Riders Union and Rescue Muni). The hope is that Odyssey 20/20 can be a clearinghouse for user groups to share information, provide mutual aid and cooperate on statewide issues of concern. It is a wonderful concept and has my enthusiastic support. Tired but satisfied, we made our way back to the hotel for some rest and renewal.

By 8:15 a.m. the next morning we were at the Convention Center attending the CFN Policy Briefing. After a keynote by Senate President Pro Tem John Burton three panels of legislators were convened to discuss affordable housing, transportation and infrastructure. Then a press conference was held by the newly formed legislative smart growth caucus. During the tasty

lunch those of us who had signed up for lobbying were briefed on how to be effective advocates.

Our only CFN appointment was late in the afternoon. But at 2 p.m. we had our own appointment arranged with Joel Szabat, consultant to the Republican Assembly Caucus. We had a wide ranging discussion and exchange of impressions of where things stand in Sacramento. Afterwards we went back to the Capitol and finished distributing the packet (to a total of 58 legislators!).

The meeting with a staff person from Assemblyman Gil Cedillo's office was short since Cedillo didn't need any lobbying - he is with us 100% While Juanita went back to the hotel to rest in the lobby, John and I made our way over to Virga's, an eatery in downtown Sacramento, for a post-lobbying Reception. After about an hour Darrell Clarke (who stayed at the same hotel) joined us in walking back. We got our luggage, went to the airport and soon were on our way to L.A. satisfied overall at the success of our first foray into influencing policymaking at the state level.



Photos: J. Ulloth

# ELECTION 2000 AND TRANSIT-PT. 1 *Steve Crosmer*

(Editor's Note: Steve Crosmer was a co-founder of SO.CA.TA, as well as a former vice-president. This article represents his opinion only, not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates).

George Bush is a candidate that could be unpredictable for better or for worse on transit related issues. His close business relationships with many large oil companies leaves him vulnerable to supporting their causes. Also, he does not want to alienate his fellow right-wing conservatives who are eager to cut any spending programs, including transit, to save taxpayer money.

His home state of Texas has both bad and good examples of transit. While Houston sets a bad example, which is also Bush's home town, Dallas sets a good example. Both cities are among the ten largest in population in the United States. Also, San Antonio fits that category, and voters there are going to decide if they want to build light rail or not this month. However, the governor in Austin has been rather silent about the issue.

Houston sets a bad example because it seems like the only solution they are quick to settle on is building more roads. Up to eight beltways encircle the town, many of which are undeveloped, contributing to urban sprawl. H.O.V. lanes were built and there shuttle services, but few people are using them. Houston was rated the worst for air quality last year in the nation, and the automobile is definitely a factor in a city that has no rail, no ferry boats, or no bike paths to move people around. In fact, the bus company spent money they claimed to have fixed city streets in downtown, by converting two streets to one-way traffic, reduce the number of lanes from four to two, and set up passenger kiosks instead.

Dallas, on the other hand sets a good example. The D.A.R.T. bus and light rail network is very efficient and they even provide van pool services. The Trinity Railway Express is another success story and service will be extended shortly to Fort Worth. The light rail has been so successful in Dallas, city council has accelerated plans for further construction and called for double tracking which was not planned originally. Detractors of D.A.R.T. attempted to break the system up, but that attempt was thwarted by Dallas voters last year.

George W. Bush has made little contact with rail and transit supporters in his state. The only real thing to his credit was a rather risky project with Amtrak, when the carrier threatened to discontinue the "Texas Eagle" between Chicago and San Antonio, which would have left Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin without Amtrak service. The only rail service currently in Houston is the tri-weekly "Sunset Ltd." between Los Angeles and Orlando and a once daily train to Galveston. It seems that a state with the size and magnitude of population in Texas would have more rail service. The reason why the Amtrak project was risky is due to the fact being that Amtrak borrowed money from the state of Texas to keep the "Texas Eagle" operating and offered their Superliner cars as collateral for the loan. Texas may have used the coaches for commuter rail, but nothing was said about it.

For the most part, do not expect much in the way of transit improvements under a Bush presidency, let alone to fight to keep what is currently operating. It seems the only time he will give transit attention is when service is on the verge of extinction.

# AMTRAK PACIFIC SURFLINER

Amtrak is changing the name of the San Diegan trains (San Diego-LA-Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo) to "Pacific Surfliner". Over the next several months, new equipment will also start operating over this route. The first set of "Pacific Surfliner" equipment will operate as follows:

- May 26: Train 571, San Diego-Los Angeles
- May 27: Train 568, Los Angeles-San Diego  
Train 779, San Diego-San Luis Obispo
- May 28: Train 776, San Luis Obispo-San Diego  
Train 785, San Diego-Goleta
- May 29: Train 772, Goleta-San Diego  
Train 581, San Diego-Los Angeles
- May 29: Train 772, Goleta-San Diego  
Train 581, San Diego-Los Angeles
- May 30: Out of service at Los Angeles for training and maintenance
- May 31: Out of service at Los Angeles for training and maintenance,  
deadhead to San Diego on Train 580
- Jun 01: Ceremonial Inaugural Special, San Diego-Santa Barbara.  
Open for viewing at San Diego, 730am-830am, then proceeds north-bound  
with stops at major stations for public visits.



(Photo: Surfliner at Fullerton:  
[www.trainweb.com](http://www.trainweb.com))



(from pg. 3) adopted OCTA restructuring (see <http://socalta.lerctr.org/ocbrtf/> for more on this).

Transit advocates from throughout the state will gather Monday, May 22nd, at noon on the West Steps of the State Capitol in Sacramento to rally on behalf of public transit. Buses will leave from some selected places in California to carry supporters to Sacramento. For more information, contact Kristina Egan at Odyssey 20/20 at [kegan@gsy.org](mailto:kegan@gsy.org) or (916) 448-1687.

MTA is holding its first Pedestrian Symposium Thursday June 1 from 9 a.m. to Noon (with refreshments served at 8:30 a.m.) at the MTA Gateway Building, 3rd Floor. This is an opportunity to engage in a dialogue on pedestrian issues and policies and give input to the initial draft of the pedestrian element of the MTA's updated Long Range Plan. RSVP by May 22 to Dolores Roybal at [roybald@mta.net](mailto:roybald@mta.net) or (213) 922-3024.

The MTA has scheduled its first-round public meetings on the Exposition light rail/busway and Wilshire busway Environmental Impact Report. (Times and places of these meetings are in the Calendar). These are open house format-come any time between 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm. For further information, to be placed on the project mailing list, or to leave verbal comments, please call the project hotline at 310-366-6443. To send your written comments (due by June 23, 2000), please contact David Mieger, Project Manager, Los Angeles County MTA. One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-22-5, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone (213) 922-3040; Fax: (213) 922-3060.

Amtrak is undertaking a long range planning process for its California intercity passenger rail service. For more details see <http://www.amtrakwest.com/califuture/>

Riverside County is undertaking an integrated planning process (including transportation). <http://www.rcip.org/> provides information on this.

The new web address for SO.CAL.TIP (bus schedules from all over Southern California): <http://socaltip.tipnetworks.org>

Recently I stumbled across "A Puzzle of Policy Change: Federal Transportation Policy in the 1990s", a Public Policy Institute of California working paper by Paul Lewis and Eric McGhee. It deals with the question of why in the 1990s federal transportation law shifted policy making to regions from traditional highway oriented interests which had been dominant. I think their analysis is informed and provocative. A free copy can be obtained from PPIC's Research Administrator at (415) 291-4489. Well worth a look.

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010**. (or e-mailed to [transit@lerctr.org](mailto:transit@lerctr.org)). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date. ■