

BULLETIN BOARD

At our August 12 meeting Mr. Juan Levy returned to give us further details about the MTA plan to provide restrooms at some transit centers and rail stations. Our members passed a motion to support the concept, which was communicated to the MTA Board at its Aug. 23 meeting by our spokesperson, Kymberleigh Richards. Our thanks to Mr. Levy for his presentation. Also at the Aug. 12 meeting Mr. Albert Perdon presented information (and a video) about the proposed SCAG regional maglev system. The question and answer session afterward was informative and illustrated how truly engaged and knowledgeable our members are. Our thanks to Mr. Perdon for his informative presentation and handouts.

At our Saturday Oct. 14 meeting John Meyer, Managing Partner of Mobility Advancement Group since 1990, will give a talk on "A Journey in Transit Management - from large to small systems". Mr. Meyer will reflect on his 30+ years as a transit executive and how administrators view the delivery of services in smaller markets. Mr. Meyer's company currently manages Palos Verdes Transit (since 1991), and Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority (since 1998) and is on retainer at Carson, Whittier and some private firms. His background includes Deputy General Manager at San Diego Transit (1970-1981), Executive Director of NE Florida Transportation Authority [which includes Highways, Bridges & Transit] (1981-86) and Executive Director of Orange County Transportation Corridors (1986-90) plus numerous consulting jobs overseas.

A return to Ventura County is the choice members made for our annual day after Thanksgiving trip. Director Kymberleigh Richards is handling trip planning. Tentative plans are using the Red Line and Metro Rapid line 750 to connect with the Conejo Connection in Warner Center, ride several SCAT lines and the Ojai Trolley, and return on Greyhound.

Member Woody Rosner has investigated purchasing a second batch of shirts with our logo. These would be Hanes 50/50 T-Shirts with the logo in two colors; cost would be \$11-\$13 (depending on size). Woody seeks input on whether this is acceptable. Likely we would take orders at the end of the year so a single check can pay for the shirt and renewing your membership.

The Rail Passenger Association of California is holding its 19th Annual Meeting and Luncheon on Saturday, October 14 at the Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant in Fullerton (Next to the Fullerton Amtrak Station) beginning at 11:30 AM. There will be presentations on MetroLink and the California High Speed Rail Authority. Cost: RailPAC or TRAC members \$20, nonmembers \$25; Questions or Information 916-498-9662.

Oct. 21 the Planning and Conservation League Foundation will hold a workshop on General Plans and the California Environmental Quality Act in the Claremont/Pomona area and Oct. 22 in the Carlsbad/Oceanside area. Cost is \$45 and seating is limited. Further information: (916) 444-8726 or <http://www.pcl.org>

The Southern California Transportation & Land Use Coalition presents a free presentation/panel discussion: "From Enraging to Engaging: How 1.6 Million People Became Part of the Solution" Tuesday, November 14, 6:00 p.m. at the Roosevelt Hotel, one block west of Hollywood/Highland Red Line station. (continued on pg. 7)

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

The current MTA strike has left many people scrambling for alternative means to get around. No MTA rail service is running and only a few bus routes are currently available (all contractor operated):

- #96 (Los Angeles to Sherman Oaks)
- #125 (El Segundo to La Mirada via Rosecrans)
- #128 (Compton to La Mirada via Alondra)
- #130 (Artesia Blvd.)
- #167 (Plummer Street to Coldwater Canyon)
- #177 (Pasadena/Arcadia/Monrovia/Duarte)
- #205 (Willowbrook/Harbor City/San Pedro)
- #225/226 (LAX/Aviation Blvd./Palos Verdes)
- #232 (Long Beach/PCH/Sepulveda/LAX)
- #254 (Willowbrook/Gage Ave./Lorena St.)
- #256 (Eastern Ave./Ave. 64/Pasadena)
- #266 (Altadena to Lakewood)
- #270 (Monrovia/El Monte/Whittier/Santa Fe Springs/Norwalk/Cerritos)

On weekdays, Metrolink is providing bus service designed to replace the Red Line subway service. Line #888 operates between Union Station and Wilshire/Western, stopping at the subway stations along the route. Line #877 operates along Vermont between Wilshire and Prospect, again stopping at subway stations.

Additionally, the following lines run weekends only:

- #218 (Fairfax-Laurel Cyn-Studio City)
- #603 (Rampart Bl.-Hoover St.-Colorado St.)
- #605 (Grande Vista Ave.-USC Hospital)

Also members report a number of contractor operated shuttles for the Green Line [#631 (Lakewood/I-105 Metro Green Line Station Shuttle) and Line 625, an LAX airport area shuttle] are operating. #213 in Inglewood might even be operating, but that is not confirmed.

Beginning Monday Oct. 9 an additional shuttle will begin operating from Wilshire/Alvarado running south on Alvarado (7th Street to Pico) and on Pico (Alvarado to Rimpau), connecting with Santa Monica Big Blue Bus lines #5, 7, 12

and 13.

Additional service is being provided to Downtown LA by the following operators: Santa Monica (Line #10), Torrance (#1 and #2), Montebello (#40 and #50), Gardena (#1) and Foothill Transit (#486, 492, and #699). LADOT is running later service on its DASH lines (until 10 p.m. in some cases) and has added reverse commute service on #409, 413, 419, 431, 437, 438, 448 and 549 as well as limited midday service on #409, 413, 419, 431 and 534.

#888 can be boarded at the Patsouras bus loop behind Union Station. Other services (Torrance, Santa Monica) may not stop there if there are any pickets. In that case, board Torrance and Santa Monica buses on Alameda, near Olvera St...El Monte Station is also closed off, so the El Monte hub has been moved to Ramona/Santa Anita, across the street for the station.

Also, Montebello has also extended its #10 to Uptown Whittier and Whitwood Center (via the route of MTA #18).

Metrolink (within LA County) and most of the municipal operators in LA County are accepting MTA passes for the duration of the strike (except Gardena which will accept MTA tokens only).

RTA will begin operating a Mead Valley circulator Monday Oct. 16 with 45-60 minute headways, centered on the Mead Valley Community Center.

We regretfully note the death of James Grey of Long Beach, struck by a MTA rt.205 bus (operated by First Transit) while at a bus stop waiting to board. The Daily Breeze reports the District Attorney's office will decide whether charges should be brought against the driver.

The MTA strike enters its 4th week with no end in sight. The lack of urgency to reach a settlement on the part of the MTA Board and the unions seems to speak volumes about their priorities. Everyone from Eric Mann of the Bus Riders Union (Sept. 15) to Robert Poole of the Reason Foundation (Sept. 20) have used the strike as an excuse to spout off their various ideologies in L.A. Times op-eds. The only public figure to sincerely express concern about the long term impact of the strike on working class people has been Channel 2's loudmouth consumer affairs reporter Bogy!

Sept. 26 I appeared on KCRW's public affairs program Which Way L.A. (available in Real Audio via the web at: http://www.kcrw.org/cgi-bin/db/kcrw.pl?show_code=ww&air_date=9/26/00&tmpl_type=Show) when the strike was still just being threatened. I spoke about the lack of accountability of MTA Boardmembers and their tendency to view the agency solely in terms of how it can advance their careers as councilman, County Supervisor or L.A. Mayor. This mindset is illustrated by their habit of speaking of the MTA in the 3rd person and during board meetings referring to each other by their "other" title such as Mayor Roberts, Supervisor Molina, etc. which shows their lack of allegiance to the agency. I find most disturbing the failure of attempts by the Governor Davis and Assembly Speaker Hertzberg to get the talks back on track. In the past such external pressures eventually forced the Board to act responsibly. I can't even imagine what is needed to break the stalemate. But it is clear as long as grandstanding and rallies persist, any movement toward compromise, which neither side seems sincerely interested in at this time, will be frustrated.

I am happy to note SO.CA.TA has risen to the occasion with a helpful page on our website (<http://socata.lerctr.org>) listing transit alternatives for stranded MTA bus riders. Also of note are the efforts of SOCAL TIP (<http://www.socaltip.org>) and Elson Trinidad's Metro Angels message board (<http://members2.boardhost.com/metroangels>) to aid bus users in need of assistance. And the municipal operators adding service, dropping restrictions and accepting MTA passes for the duration. Thank you!

<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~fungus/> is member Hank Fung's "Strike Watch" webpage with links to media coverage of the strike.

MTA Salary facts: 2 percent of MTA drivers earn more than \$80,000 a year, 6 percent make \$70,001 to \$80,000, 22 percent make \$60,001 to \$70,000, and 32 percent make \$50,001 to \$60,000 (source: "MTA wants new mediator in bus strike", Daily News September 28)

I will bring to our meeting a three page letter the BRU sent their membership recently that some friends shared with me. It is a remarkable document whose basic message is BRU members should tow the party line ("transit racism", etc.) or stop coming to meetings. "White chauvinism" is the euphemism for accusing white members of various racist transgression at meetings. I guess to Eric Mann diversity doesn't include diverse points of view when the views disagree with his.

The CenterLine project in Orange County isn't dead yet. OCTA's latest means of appeasing cities critical of the project is to invite them to be part of a process to evaluate options. Meanwhile even Irvine now has had NIMBYs sprout up opposed to the project!

fact of the month: base salary of the Chief Executive Officer of Metrolink: \$146,000 (per 8/11/00 Metrolink Board meeting minutes).

You are probably familiar with the Shaarey Zedek Congregation temple on Chandler in the San Fernando Valley. They're the ones who had former lawmaker (and felon) Alan Robbins pass a bill mandating a subway in the median of Chandler. Now they are organizing against the busway Mayor Riordan and Zev Yaroslavsky propose on the alignment.

Choice quotes from a fax an ally shared with me publicizing a recent meeting at the Temple to organize against the busway:

"Rush directly to 12800 Chandler Blvd. on Sept. 20 or you may never be able to get there directly again.

"Learn everything the MTA is afraid you'll ask about their newly fast-tracked Burbank-Chandler '55 MPH Beast-Bus' plan..."

"Detours, Danger, Delays, Destruction, Devaluation, Devastating Pollution of Every Kind...and what YOU can and should be doing about it..."

"If you don't get angry and involved immediately, don't get angry when it happens!"

Evidently Senator Richard Alarcon has told the Congregation he is opposed to the busway. Once again Alarcon proves himself a political master by this act: 1) mending fences with the Jewish community angry at a divisive flyer sent on Alarcon's behalf during his primary campaign against Richard Katz, 2) possibly facilitating the siphoning of the rest of the Governor's money to a north/south busway in Alarcon's district (does everyone remember the last minute switch Alarcon pulled during the budget negotiations earlier this year that stole \$100 million from the Chandler busway for a n/s busway that Alarcon is angling to have run thru his district?)

Meltdown is all one can call what happened to AVTA commuter bus service during the past few years. Angry that their complaints of late buses, constant breakdowns and broken air conditioners were ignored riders finally were heard at a Sept. 16 forum. AVTA executive director Bill Budlong apologized and explained the complaints had not been forwarded by contractor Laidlaw (which operates and maintains the buses) and that AVTA's administration had been in the dark about what had been occurring. The Laidlaw manager who had been overseeing AVTA operations left a week before the forum and Budlong pledged to quickly have Laidlaw improve its performance or get a new contractor.

Speaker Hertzberg has appointed Nick Bollman, President of the California Center for Regional Leadership (<http://www.ccrf.org/>) to chair the Speaker's Commission on Regions. Also appointed: Sylvia Patsouras, a regional planner at SCAG.

Laughable idea of the month: Encinitas' desire to move the rail line used by the Pacific Surfliner inland beside I-5 due to NIMBYism. Cost: 1.8

billion!

End of session state legislation roundup: signed: A.B. No. 1703 (extends the life of the California High Speed Rail Authority thru 2003); A.B. 2140 (adds performance indicators as part of regional transportation planning process); S.B. 1101 (protects MTA unions from transit zones)

vetoed: S.B. 2019 (mandated a study of the SCAG maglev)

stalled: A.B. 2643 (would have transferred \$20 million from MTA operations to the municipal operators); S.C.A. 3 (would have allowed renewal of local sales taxes for funding transportation with majority vote)

scary idea of the month: SCAG proposes double decking freeways as part of its Regional Transportation Plan.

To read the responses sent to the Federal Railroad Administration to the maglev proposal of SCAG and the six other contenders from around the county see <http://dms.dot.gov/search/> and search docket 7472. I have very critical comments available for viewing, as does the city of Claremont. In addition consultant Louis T. Cerny provides eloquent comments on why maglev has many problems that are being glossed over in the current rush for \$950 million from the federal government. James Flanigan's Oct. 4 LA Times business section column ("Maglev' and L.A.'s Needs May Be on Opposite Poles") also reflected grave misgivings about this proposal.

To conclude this month, I was surprised to read in the Sept. 22 Riverside Press Enterprise about a group of seniors calling themselves Urban Explorers Group of Retirees who undertake lengthy bus and rail trips to explore service and sightsee (sound familiar?). I am making contact with the ringleader of the group, John E. Prichard, and hope to soon share their experiences via our member only trip report board. ■

ELECTION 2000 AND TRANSIT-PT. 3 *Steve Crosmer*

(Editor's Note: Steve Crosmer is 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).

THIRD PARTY CANDIDATES

Ralph Nader, GREEN PARTY: Certainly, the Greens do favor better transportation and place emphasis on buses, trains, and bicycles. Nader has selected Winona LaDuke, a Native American Indian activist as his running mate. Although third party candidates have little chance of winning, Nader would be a wise choice for transit advocates seeking to support a third party candidate, taking the party platform into consideration. If the Green Party can achieve a five-percent count of the popular vote for president, they can qualify for federal matching funds in the next election.

Pat Buchanan, REFORM PARTY: Has very strong reservations about any social spending issue. He has spoken out against transit. Reform Party founder Ross Perot even has disagreements over Buchanan being on the party ticket. Supporting Buchanan would be a big mistake for better transportation.

Harry Browne, LIBERTARIAN PARTY: It is quite odd that with the anti-tax and anti-spending issue of this political party they are so mum

about highway spending and using bond monies for more roads. Unless there is support to coerce everybody into driving a car everywhere, the only form of public transit the Libertarian Party will support will require everybody to dig deep into their pockets for taxicab service. Taxis are good for on demand service, but you never know how much you are going to end up paying. Conversely, taxis add to highway congestion and pollution with all of the deadheading between runs with no passengers.

Alan Keyes, CONSTITUTION PARTY: He is likely to be this party's candidate if he decides to withdraw from the Republican Party. His platform on transportation is unknown at this time. Costs of driving will definitely go up if he is elected as he favors abolition of the Internal Revenue Service and establishment of a "National Sales Tax", as that tax will put the pinch on the costs of buying cars, gas, auto repair services, but could also include tax on the cost of a transit fare, so nobody is really out scot-free.

John Hagelin, NATURAL LAW PARTY: The name of this party seems very deceiving for good or bad. They are based in the Northwest area of the country and little is known about them. Hagelin is the likely candidate for the Natural Law party if he does not get the Reform Party nomination. ■

TRANSIT CONFERENCE *Dana Gabbard (dgabbard@hotmail.com)*

Saturday September 30 SO.CA.TA co-sponsored with Odyssey 20/20 a California Public Transportation Conference in downtown Los Angeles at the MALDEF building . The morning session include presentations by Kristina Egan and Claudia Acevedo of Odyssey 20/20 on transportation funding and Joshua Shaw of the California Transit Association on how to lobby elected officials. During the lunch break a panel moderated by Gloria Ohland of the Surface Transportation Policy Project discussed approaches to Transit-Oriented Development with comments by Joyce Perkins of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative, Blake Roberts of the Orange County Business Council and Katherine Perez of the Southern California Transportation and Land Use Coalition.

The afternoon session had presentations on transit in the mid-city and westside. These included Metro Rapid Bus described by project manager Rex Gephart of MTA, the MidCity/Westside Corridor Study described by David Mieger of MTA, the Santa Monica transit mall plans presented by Paul Casey of Big Blue Bus plus Samantha Blackshire of Culver CityBus and Phil Aker of LADOT outlining their agencies' operations and plans.

The final portion on smart growth was keynoted by Tony Vazquez of the California Futures Network. Paul Casey (Big Blue Bus) presented slides of a visit to Ireland to illustrate options; Darrell Clarke (East-West Coalition) gave an overview of rail as an ingredient of livable communities. Martha Welborne (Surface Transit Project) showed a video on the Curitiba inspired busways proposed for our region.

Despite the bus strike and conflicting religious observance attendance was excellent and the audience obviously interested in the presentations. We are already discussing follow-up events with our partners.

Our thanks to sponsors Washington Mutual and the Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club; Cooperators California Futures Network, L.A. Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the L.A. Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Urban Design Committee; and co-organizer Odyssey 20/20. Special big thanks to Kristina Egan and Vice President Anthony Loui (assisted by member Cara Rice) for coordinating the event. And a thanks to all the SO.CA.TA members who volunteered! ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

Bob Clark, Jr. had letters in the Sept. 13 and Sept. 27 editions of the L.A. Independent. In the first missive Clark laments long ago decisions that resulted in no Red Line station being located at Third and Vermont. Both letters outline defects in MTA governance as exemplified by the actions of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

Jane Reifer was quoted in the Los Angeles Times Orange County edition on Sept. 12 ("Day 3 as OCTA Plays it Straight") on the difficulties riders have had adjusting to OCTA's route restructuring.

Vice President Anthony Loui continues to be involved with providing oversight of SCAG as it undertakes updating the Regional Transportation Plan. ■

(Bulletin Board, from page 2)

This focuses on the Envision Utah process and lessons it may hold for Southern California. For more information or to RSVP, call SCTLIC at 213-629-2090 or e-mail gritzner@sctlc.org

Wednesday November 15 Access Services is holding an all day (8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.) Americans with Disabilities Act Training Workshop conducted by Marilyn Golden of the Disabilities Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc. The workshop will explore regulations governing public transportation for people with disabilities. To make reservations for the event (held in Downtown Los Angeles) or for further information contact ASI at (213) 270-6000

Save the date! March 29, 2001 Plains, Terrains and Automobiles II will be held in Oxnard at the Residence Inn. The conference will focus on how to implement smart growth strategies to address growth and environmental challenges. A nominal registration fee will be charged. For more information contact Chuck Thomas at chuck@vcapcd.org or (805) 645-1427.

The Attorney General's office offers a free pamphlet of the Brown Act (which regulates open meeting requirements for public bodies). Call 800-952-5225 to request a copy.

Friends 4 Expo Transit (www.friends4expo.org) is a new group supporting construction of a fast, comfortable, safe, high-capacity public transit line from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica on the MTA-owned Exposition right-of-way. Further information: P.O. Box 64943, Los Angeles, CA 90064 or 310-395-3025 or Fax 310-393-9810 or friends4expo@aol.com

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@lerami.lerctr.org). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date. ■