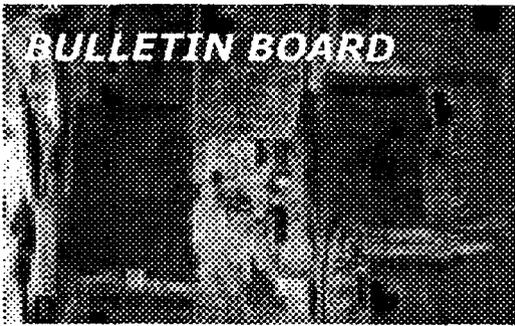


BULLETIN BOARD



At our September 8 meeting there will be a presentation by a representative of the Western Law Center for Disability Rights on the Americans with Disabilities Act and transportation. Our thanks to Director Kyle Minnis for arranging this program.

Besides the upcoming OCTA study tour described in this issue's Orange County Committee Report upcoming trips include an further exploration of owl service in October (principally being planned by Director Phil Capo) and our annual day-after-Thanksgiving trip. For the latter we are eager to hear ideas from members about where we should go.

We have an opportunity to participate with the local chapter of the Sierra Club Transportation Committee and Friends for Expo Transit in staffing a booth at the L.A. City Hall Rededication Celebration Sunday Sept. 23 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Contact our hotline [(213) 388-2364] if you wish to be involved.

Our thanks to member Harold Katz for his generous donation toward the cost of our newsletter in response to the request in the last issue. Don't worry: it isn't too late to join Harold in helping us with these expenses with your donation. Thanks!

Jack Gabig (director of Transportation in

Montebello) is extensively quoted regarding the value of preventive maintenance for maintenance facilities in the July/August issue of Mass Transit ("Preventive Maintenance for Facilities").

The Sept. 20 Amtrak Reform Council meeting announced in our last newsletter will be held at the Wilshire Grand Hotel (930 Wilshire Bl. in downtown Los Angeles) from 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Save the date: the Electric Railway Historical Association banquet celebrating the 100th anniversary of Pacific Electric service will be held Saturday Nov. 17 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Original Pantry Bake Shop (875 S. Figueroa in downtown Los Angeles). Cost for ERHA members is \$34.95; non-members \$38.95 (meal choices are steak or chicken). Tickets can be bought on-line at <http://www.erha.org/banquet.html> or send check/money order (with name and address, number of tickets being purchased plus 8% CA sales tax) to: ERHA of SC, P.O. Box 32161, Long Beach CA 90832-2161.

Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo's professional city and regional planning program is offering under an award from HUD two year graduate fellowships. For further details contact David Dubbink at (805) 756-1315.

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. ■

**PUBLIC &
LEGISLATIVE
AFFAIRS**



Our latest batch of correspondence included letters to all members of the state Senate Transportation Committee in support of A.B. 1419 (regarding the financing of a new transbay terminal in the bay area) and to the California Transportation Commission that it consider Sarah Catz to be its new Executive Director.

The judgement of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals affirming the ruling of Judge Terry Hatter that MTA must purchase 245 additional buses to comply with the consent decree doesn't surprise me. The law does not deal in whether agreements are reasonable or realistic, merely whether compliance by the parties has occurred. In making pie in the sky promises the MTA Board proved their unsuitability as steward of the agency. Now they are reaping the whirlwind of their manipulations and venality. I wish new L.A. Mayor James Hahn could step in and use his key position (on the record as supporting the BRU demand that MTA drop the appeal) to craft a compromise in which MTA doesn't appeal to the Supreme Court (a dicey prospect) while having the bus advocates accept a more reasonable fleet expansion (e.g. 100 additional uses over 3 years for consent decree access enhancement pilot routes). But

complicating matters is comments by bus advocate lawyer Richard Lawson regarding the load standard targets of 2002 and 2002. Which means demands for hundreds of additional buses. No one exercises adult responsibility to bring order to this destructive process while the various parties play out their selfish agendas. How can our elected officials in Sacramento continue to turn a blind eye to this on-going train-wreck they created by handing MTA's governance to a political elite that has shown no inclination to rise above petty parochialism.

Best news of the month: appointment of John Catoe, General Manager of Big Blue Bus, to the #2 post at MTA as part of Roger Snoble's incoming team. Catoe promises to continue the emphasis on customer input and satisfaction that made his tenure at Santa Monica a great success. Also: "Trust me, in a year from now, those [MTA] buses won't be dirty" (as quoted in the Aug.29 Santa Monica Mirror; a tip of the hat to member Ken Ruben for bringing this article to my attention).

Jane Matsumoto, MTA's Project Manager for the Universal Fare System, made a presentation at the Aug.22 general meeting of the MTA Citizens Advisory Council which answered some of my questions about the status of this process. The key bit of information is the smart card's programming will be able to simultaneously handle an MTA pass and a "purse" into which funds can be deposited to pay for interagency transfers and fares for municipal transit and Metrolink. Which is not a one price regional pass a la San Diego County (to pg 4)

(from pg. 3) but at least a step in the right direction. Ms. Matsumoto has agreed to make a presentation on UFS at a SO.CA.TA meeting early next year.

August 16 I attended the 2nd Annual California Transit Leader Summit at MTA along with members Jane Reifer, Anthony Loui and Bart Reed. Kristina Egan facilitated the meeting, with other attendees representing Friends for Expo Transit, United Explorers Group of Retirees, Rescue Muni and Peninsula Rail 2000. Overall it was a productive session in building connections among rider groups.

obscure entity of the month: Los Angeles Transportation Board (a group that regularly meets to consult on traffic issues consisting of the L.A. Dept. of Transportation, L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, L.A. County Dept. of Public Works, Southern California Regional Rail Authority, Southern California Association of Governments and Caltrans District 7).

The Planning and Conservation League has greatly revised their proposed transportation initiative: to placate powerful interest groups by having the plan dedicate only 30% of state's share of sales tax on motor vehicles for transportation (about \$800 million/year). Many other changes to the program have also occurred. To review the current version of the plan see <http://www.pcl.org>. If sufficient funds for an initiative campaign can be raised PCL intends to file the measure around the end of this month for the Nov. 2002 ballot.

query of the month: does a map exist of the various former rail rights-of-way MTA owns?

I nearly feel out of my chair when I heard Karen Cutts of NOBLAG during her appearance on KPCC's Airtalk show on Aug. 14 answer host Larry Mantel's question about the cost of the grade separations her group is demanding by stating "There is a lot of money in Los Angeles and Pasadena. If they wanted to they could find the money." Words fail me.

I was also astounded at the list of Congresspersons and local officials who attended a July 19 meeting in Washington, D.C. with U.S. Secretary Norman Mineta and FAA Administrator Jane Garvey on developing a regional aviation system. Mineta in his concluding remarks agreed to establish a Federal inter-modal task force to work with SCAG, the Southern California Regional Airport Authority, and interested parties on Southern California ground and air transportation issues.

Agenda quote of the month: item IX-C, ASI July 13 Board of Directors' meeting describes problems Access Service had with 200 low floor minivans it purchased in 1994 from National Mobility Corp. which resulted in lawsuits: "As it became clear that Access Services would prevail [in its counter-suit], National Mobility attempted to sell their remaining assets to another firm and declare bankruptcy."

As promised Assemblymember Robert Pacheco has introduced a bill (AB 1348) to fund road repairs at Cal Poly Pomona. We will discuss supporting the legislation at our Sept. 8 meeting. (to pg. 5)



New member Eddie Anthony regularly rides MTA route 646 ("City Nightline") and posted on our member board a message detailing numerous problems he has encountered riding it. These were passed along to Scott Page at MTA who oversees this contractor operated service. Page is conferring with Anthony regarding specific details and pledges to investigate further. Also Page informs us MTA is currently issuing a Request for Proposal to consolidate operation of MTA lines 625, 626, 631 and 646 with a single contractor; new slightly larger vehicles with bike racks will be purchased by the agency to be used on these routes.

Kymerleigh Richards' San Fernando Valley Transit Insider website has a new much easier to remember URL:
<http://www.transit-insider.org>

Ken Ruben, Alan Michelson, Anthony Loui and Dana Gabbard all attended the

August 18 Santa Monica Big Blue Bus presentation on its proposed Bus Service Improvement Program at the Ken Edwards Center. Attendance was an impressive 30+ riders plus Prof. Donald Shoup of UCLA.

Phil Capo was a guest August 23 on the local public affairs discussion program Which Way L.A. The show has been posted on the radio stations website (<http://www.kcrw.org>).

Roger Christensen in a lengthy letter published in Aug. 30 New Times L.A. ("Jill can eat car exhaust") blasted Jill Stewart's column on the valley busway and its many inaccuracies. Christensen also attended the Aug. 30 California Public Utility Commission preliminary administrative hearing regarding protests by Mt. Washington and Pasadena NIMBY's against granting the Blue Line Authority's applications for at-grade crossings along the rail line.

The Fall 2001 issue of The Transit Times, written by David Davenport and covering San Diego County, can be read at <http://www.netcolony.com/members/dld/fall2001.html>. ■

(Public Affairs, from pg. 4)
In October we will participate in a 3 day pilot of California TransitVote, to get more transit riders involved in the political process through voter registration. This is being done in concert with Odyssey. Call our hotline if you are interested in being involved.

I'll conclude by offering best wishes to Doran Barnes, the Deputy Executive Officer of Foothill Transit who has just accepted the position of CEO and General Manager of the Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority. Good luck, Mr. Barnes.
(Dana Gabbard) ■



OCTA Board Positions Open

OCTA will have vacancies for their public member and the alternate. The Board will soon begin accepting applications from interested parties. We are seeking suggestions for transit oriented nominations.

Contract Settled At Last

After long negotiations and a rejection of the first offer, in late August the drivers approved a 3-year contract effective May 1st, 2001. Besides a pay increase, drivers hired prior to the last contract in 1996 will get a bonus check to recover some of the benefits they lost from the post-bankruptcy contract. They are also supposed to be fazing out the two-tier driver plan...drivers hired since 1996 had been brought in at a lower pay and benefits scale.

It was pretty much a formality, but I found out the OCTA board did approve the new contract as well, during their closed session on Monday.

Bus Bookings

The 9/9/01 Bus Book was in full distribution by Saturday, September 1. As Hank Fung noticed on the OCTA website, there have already been some riders' alerts to correct schedules and maps, but (so far) at nowhere near the

level or frequency of previous books. One thing to note, they already have the NCTD #395 noted as a connection for the OCTA #1 and #191. It has since been announced that the change from #305 has been put off until further notice.

I knew something was up when, even before I stepped on board the 167 last Thursday, I could see a dozen riders all intently studying bus books. Looked at the rack behind the driver and found a distinctly different cover.

I will try to have a batch of Bus Books with me at the SO.CA.TA meeting, but again will likely only have a couple of system maps. The maps, by the way, have their own errors, such as the 424 still being on the Fullerton Transportation Center inset, the 53 between Taft and Mall of Orange (!), and an old deviation on the 173.

When I boarded the #70 for the short ride from the future Tustin Metrolink station to Red Hill Rd., I found a couple of September #57 schedules. Yes, a pilot project for what could be a full set of individual timetables! Everyone a TAOC member has mentioned these to so far have not been happy, especially those folks who also have to deal with Los Angeles' MTA and all the individual schedules one has to track down and drag around for a trip.

Barring a corrective "Rider's Alert", this reporter will be at Fullerton Park & Ride by 7:24am on 9/9, for the first run of the new 25 Sunday service.

Last-Minute September Changes

The eastern terminus of Line 72 has been extended to Dyer/Red Hill to allow connections to the 74, and the 42A will now stay on Crescent Ave. to Beach Blvd., eliminating the small piece of Stanton Ave.

There Will Be A Written Test Afterward

TAOC will be hosting SO.CA.TA's study tour of OCTA territory, on Saturday September 29th. Final schedule will be set next week, covering these routes:

- 43 - a former cross-county route which lost an arm and a leg
- 53 - heavily-used, but has connectivity problems
- 57 - major route just west of downtown Santa Ana, but no longer connected with the Transit Terminal, and missing former connections south of South Coast Plaza
- 59, and 205 - routes that could easily serve the Santa Ana train station but only come close
- 180 - a "community" route with full-route ridership
- 47 (comparison to the old 43 beach connection)
- 64 (Transit Terminal and 1st/Main connections)

Also to include "Hot Spots" such as:

- Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center - tour starts here at approximately 9:30am, just after the arrival of Amtrak #560 from Chatsworth and Los Angeles. The so-called "SART" is a multi-modal facility (Amtrak, Metrolink, interurban buses) but lacks significant OCTA presence.
- Santa Ana Transit Terminal - an OCTA-

only facility, but OCTA seems to be afraid to use this anymore?

- 1st and Main in Santa Ana - if/when the 53 and 64 get yanked out of the Terminal, this will be the connecting point...if you dare!
- Harbor and Wilson in Costa Mesa
- "Triangle Square" in Costa Mesa
- 1st and Bristol in Santa Ana
- En route on buses, will point out the worst "pass-by" bus stops (where buses are consistently too overloaded to take on more passengers).
- Artics!

Please e-mail <zineland@yahoo.com> or call me (714.393.4206) with other suggestions, though please note this is supposed to be a one-day Study Tour.

Rail Time Tours

The Friends of CenterLine has changed its name to "Rail Advocates of Orange County", in part to reflect the fact that OCTA is considering changing the name of their light rail project. RAOC has two light rail study tours lined up:

- Los Angeles Blue Line - Saturday, September 8th, meeting at Fullerton train station at 8:00am, and at the Los Angeles Union Station fish tank (the "east side", back by Gateway/Patsaouras/Bus Plaza) at approximately 9:00am. The riding schedule will end in time for lunch prior to that afternoon's Southern California Transit Advocates meeting.
- San Diego Trolley Blue Line (Mission Valley leg) - tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 27th. Will meet at the Fullerton train station at a time to be determined. (to pg. 8)

(from pg. 7)

TAOC's First Lecture

About 30 people attended TAOC and Auto-Free Orange County's Transit Talk lecture in Santa Ana on August 15th. Kristina Egan of Odyssey gave a talk on transit advocates becoming more politically active in Sacramento. Jay Laessi of Auto-Free OC gave a history of the group. David Armijo, OCTA head of Transit Operations, told of activists helping to start a bus system in Santa Fe, NM. Thank you to SO.CA.TA members and TAOC regulars Jaime Alcoba, Barry Christensen, Martin Corona, Tina Erickson, Jane Reifer, Kirk Schneider, and yours truly for their attendance. Also thanks to OCTA staffers, drivers and CAC members.

TV or not TV

Check out the new OCTA commercial during the "Real Orange" program on KOCE/50, and online at <http://www.octa.net/news/center/video.asp> (You must have QuickTime on your computer). It's pretty funny to see them highlighting an articulated bus on route 116 (a neighborhood route in Brea and La Habra). OCTA has promised to only run articulated buses on the most deserving, overcrowded lines as of September.

IRVINE ON WHEELS

Congratulations to the city of Irvine for its continued interest in improving transit. They will soon be holding a series of resident focus groups to come up with ways to encourage more people in Irvine to use the bus.

Meeting & Event Calendar:

- Transit Advocates of Orange County (TAOC) - Thursday, September 13th, 6-8pm, Knowlwood restaurant in Fullerton. Please send in agenda items by Weds. the 12th at 4:00pm.
- RAOC (formerly Friends of CenterLine) - Wednesday, September 5th, and on Wednesday, September 19th, 7pm, Knowlwood, 150 S. Harbor, northeast corner of Santa Fe. One block west of OCTA's Fullerton Transportation Center, served by OCTA 26, 43, 47, 111, 116, 147 and 213, and Amtrak/ Metrolink]

ORANGE APPEAL

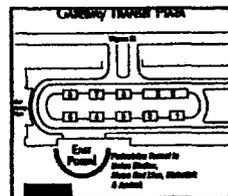
Orange County Transportation Tidbits are always a welcome addition here! E-mail to zineland@yahoo.com, or call (714) 393-4206. Thanks, and see you again next month if not sooner!
(Mark Strickert)

Transit Tip...

Not all buses whose schedules show Union Station as a stop run into Gateway Plaza.

Express buses #480-499 (both MTA and Foothill) use the busway stop at Alameda (south of Union Station) as a Union Station stop.

Routes #70,71,78,79,378 and 379 use the stop at Cesar Chavez and Vignes (north of Gateway Plaza) as a Union Station stop.





TRANSIT UPDATES

Member Joe Drummond reports on the following Long Beach Transit changes:

Long Beach Transit's schedule booklet with a magenta cover is out. It shall be effective until February 2nd next, unless they decide differently.

The major changes on land are with routes using small buses. All "Passports" will be a "new" shade of red and be an even spiffier new design. There are already some are in service.

"Passport A" will use Pacific Coast Highway both ways, to Alamitos Bay Landing. It will serve the "Market Place" and the Aqualink. The former "Passport B" will be replaced by the purple "Pine Avenue Link"; still free, running every 8 minutes and connecting with the new AquaLink and AquaBus. The "Passport C" will become an express skipping the Convention Center, Shoreline Village, and the Aquarium. It will go directly between 1st St. downtown adjacent to the transit mall and the Queen Mary. The "Passports A & D" will increase weekday midday frequency to every 12 minutes.

On sea the 60 foot 75 passenger closed cabin catamaran water taxi will compliment the open air 49 passenger AquaBus. Boat fares and operating hours will vary. There will be no transfers issued to or from boats.

Maps and schedules effective September 4th, 2001 are on line now at Palos Verdes

Transit's website:

<http://www.palosverdes.com/pvtransit/>

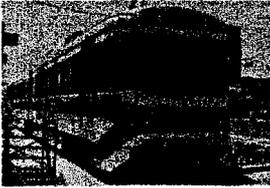
August 2 the Board of Directors of the Antelope Valley Transit Authority in a 90 minute meeting terminated AVTA's Transit Services Agreement with Laidlaw, effective Aug. 4. MV Transportation with an emergency services contract took over operating AVTA service until June 30, 2002. Laidlaw representatives despite being present made no public comments, perhaps assuaged by AVTA's plans to purchase assets, equipment and supplies from Laidlaw for a price not to exceed \$50,000.

The new "Coastal Connection" bus service between Ventura and Santa Barbara, operated by VISTA is now in service. Service between the two cities, with a stop in Carpinteria, operates seven days per week; four peak hour trips (two a.m. and two p.m.) are extended to Goleta and UC Santa Barbara.

VISTA has also modified service on the Route 101 and Conejo Connection routes. Perhaps the most notable (and infuriating) change is that the southbound Hwy 101 trips no longer stop at Oaks Mall but instead continue to the new Thousand Oaks Transit Center at Rancho Road. There, passengers must wait for a northbound VISTA bus, or Thousand Oaks Transit (which now stops at the new transit center as well as the Oaks Mall) for service to the Oaks Mall.

The Conejo Connection now runs only four round trips (two a.m., two p.m, reverse commute included) to Warner Center, also stopping at the new Transit Center on Rancho Road.

New Thousand Oaks Transit schedules are at <http://www.ci.thousand-oaks.ca.us/totransit.htm> ■



BLUE LINE HEARING

On August 30 I attended the California Public Utility Commission's PRELIMINARY Hearing regarding protests to applications of at-grade crossings of the Pasadena Light Rail Line. The meeting at Downtown L.A.'s newest State office building, the Junipero Serra, former Broadway department store at 4th and Broadway with a 4th St entrance that faces the 4th/Hill Red Line Stop. When I arrived at 9:30am, about a dozen NIMBYs were carrying signs that said they wanted the line only underground. I saw several yellow shirts that I thought at first was Bus Rider's Union but turned out to be "Save Mount Washington".

The Hearing began at 10:00am. There was no public comment scheduled but the presiding Judge Sheldon Rosenthal (from San Francisco) allowed it. About 25 people spoke, essentially from the Mt. Washington Homeowner's group and other groups like NOBLAG - the group that lobbies for underground grade separations in Pasadena. I was the only speaker in favor of At Grade, was called third to speak, and was jeered at the rest of the morning as the "Outsider" and even "Future Murderer of Our Children". The judge did not put time restrictions on the comment period so it went all morning.

After a lunch break, most of the speakers left, and the Hearing commenced. Note that this was just a Preliminary "pre-hearing conference" to all parties | to

identify themselves and state what they believe the issues are. A major issue is to "Consolidate or DeConsolidate" the applications. Since the the beginning part of the line from Union Station to about 45th Ave is basically grade separated as well as the end portion from Del Mar Station in Pasadena to Sierra Madre Villa, the area of protest is essentially the middle portion. The Construction Authority would like to Deconsolidate the grade separated portions from the contested portions so they can proceed without delay. The Judge did not rule on this today, saying simply "I'll rule on this when I rule on it". This ruling on consolidation may come as early as a week when the Judge's "Scoping Brief" is released. Members of the construction authority seemed disappointed that they did not get a ruling today.

The Evidentiary Hearing will commence November 5 in Los Angeles. The Judge expects prepared testimony to be delivered 10 days in advance - the hearing is expected to last about a week. The Judge expressed concerns about the EIR and how these applications relate to specific clauses of the EIR. He also raised the issue of "practicability" and wants evidence on it. It should be noted that protests come only from a handful of NIMBY groups, all the involved cities (Pasadena, South Pasadena, Los Angeles) were there to support the at-grade applications. Watching the action of the lawyers representing the protesting groups, their strategy seemed to be stall, stall, stall. Some of them balked at the Nov. 5 date as being too early, but the judge wouldn't hear of it.
(Roger Christensen) ■