

TRANSIT UPDATES

In Downtown Los Angeles, several streets near City Hall that were closed after Sept. 11 have now been reopened. MTA buses serving this area (#33, 40, 42, 55, 92, 93, 333,340,410 434,439,444,446 and 447) have been restored to their original routes.

Due to problems with the track at the Harbor Fwy (I-605/I-110) Green Line station, the schedule will be modified so that repairs can be done. During peak hours, a change of train will be required at Harbor Fwy. station. Trains will also be somewhat less frequent (17-20 minute headways). In addition, a special (free) shuttle bus will connect the Imperial/Wilmington, Avalon, Harbor Fwy and Vermont stations, again, during peak hours only. This construction project will continue throughout the month of April.

Next month (May) there will be substantial changes to Metrolink service:

- On the Antelope Valley line, several weekday trains will be extended to Lancaster. There will also be several all-new trains, including early morning and late evening reverse commute trips.

- The Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo station will open. This station is served by the Orange County and Inland Empire-Orange County trains. Certain trains on these lines will extend to serve this new station; others will be extended as far as Oceanside.

- Finally, "real" (peak-direction) commute service on the Via Fullerton line. Trains will leave Riverside at 5:40 a.m., 6:45 a.m. and 2:30 p.m, returning from L.A. at 12:45, 4:20 and 5:25 p.m. This is in addition to the existing reverse-commute service.

- No changes on the Riverside, San Bernardino or on any weekend service. Only minor schedule tweaks (less than 10 minutes or so) on the Ventura County and Burbank Airport routes.

As of April 29 Amtrak's Southwest Chief will serve the downtown Riverside Metrolink station. The Riverside Press Enterprise reports there will be no baggage service or ticket sales at the station. Passengers can bring carry-on luggage and need to make reservations or purchase tickets in advance. ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

At our March 9 meeting we undertook a letter writing campaign on the Board of Equalization regulation 1533.2 issue. Members writing letters included Robert Meinert, Edmund Buckley, J.K. Drummond, Charles Powell, Nate Zablen, Dana Gabbard, Phil Capo and Mark Strickert.

Foothill Transit held a meeting on proposed service changes March 25 at the Pomona Transit Center. Members attending included Charles Hobbs, Hank Fung, Juan Cornejo and Dana Gabbard. Total

attendance was over 30 persons!

Henryka Maslowski and Dana Gabbard attended the March 22 Women's Transportation Coalition event at MTA at which MTA Deputy CEO John Catoe spoke.

Public Affairs co-chair Kymberleigh Richards was quoted twice in the past month in the L.A. Times: on whether the Valley busway will withstand legal scrutiny ("Valley Busway Plan Advances, March 1) and whether a Gloria Molina motion on posting schedules at bus stops might be too expensive ("Years Later, MTA Dispute Back Where It Started", March 29). ■

BULLETIN BOARD

At our April 13 meeting a representative from MTA will make a presentation on service sectors. Ed Simburger has offered to bring one of his new videos for screening at our May meeting. A VCR has been offered by Mark Strickert, so all we need is a volunteer to bring a TV for the screening. Contact the Executive Secretary if you can help us.

The weekend of May 4-5 SO.CA.TA and Rail Advocates of Orange County/Transit Advocates of Orange County will both have booths, sharing information with the public. The event is free and open to the public and includes displays of model trains, vendors selling railroad themed merchandise and lots of great food vendors. Best of all since the event is held at the Fullerton Train Station (124 E. Santa Fe St.) you can reach the event easily via Amtrak or OCTA bus. Further information: (714) 278-0648 or <http://www.trainweb.com/frpa/rdays/> Hope to see you there.

The weekend of April 20-21 the Transportation Committee of the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club will have a booth at the Whole Earth Festival 2002, to be held at Lake Balboa (6300 Balboa Blvd.) Some of our members will be volunteers helping staff the booth and engaging in outreach with the public on transportation issues. More information: (310) 455-3977 or <http://www.wholeearthfestival.net/>

Our next study tours will be of the Pacific Coast Highway from San Clemente to Malibu on Saturday May 18 and the North County Transit District on Saturday June 1 (the latter is co-sponsored by the Western Transit Society). An ad-hoc group will discuss planning these trips during the work session portion of our April 13 meeting.

Tuesday May 14 at 7:30 p.m. Executive Secretary Dana Gabbard will give a talk on regional transportation issues, as part of the Science in the Public Interest lecture series sponsored by the Southern California Federation of Scientists at Midnight Special Bookstore on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica (between Santa Monica Blvd. and Arizona).

Metrolink is holding public meetings to receive comment on a proposed 5% fare increase. Check the calendar for dates and times. Comments can be e-mailed to: valdezl@scrta.net or addressed to Lupe Valdez, Metrolink, 700 S. Flower St., 26th Floor, Los Angeles CA 90017. Further Information: (213) 452-0288.

Access Services also this month is holding public meetings. They are to explain the service changes the ASI Board recently adopted. Check the calendar for dates and times.

The public hearing on Foothill's proposed service changes for Sept. will be held Friday April 26 at 8:00 a.m. during the monthly meeting of Foothill's Executive Board at 100 N. Barranca Ave., Suite 100 in West Covina.

Member Ken Ruben informs us the Big Blue Bus fare increase is due to go before the Santa Monica City Council the evening of Tuesday May 14. Base fare would increase to 75 cents with similar increases for other fare categories (senior/disabled, student).

The Bus Riders Union is holding a city-wide event for its Student Pass Campaign Saturday April 20 beginning at 10 a.m. at Los Angeles City College (Melrose and Vermont) at the Faculty Center Further information: (213) 387-2899
(More Bulletin Board items on pg. 5)

PUBLIC & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Dana Gabbard
(dgabbard@hotmail.com)

I sent a number of letters this month on behalf of SO.CA.TA, catching up on a backlog. Copies of the correspondence will be available at our April meeting.

Thanks to pressure from transit users such as our members agricultural interests compromised over Board of Equalization Regulation 1533.2, substantially reducing its impact on the Public Transportation Account.

Now that Proposition 42 passed (with an impressive 69% margin) the Planning and Conservation League is shifting into high gear to place on the November ballot their measure for transportation funding. We'll discuss at the April 13 meeting whether to endorse this. Perhaps also one or two legislative bills that seem to merit support.

interesting fact of the month #1: retroactive to July 1, 2001 Metrolink CEO David Solow's salary has been increased to \$160,000 (Feb. 8 Metrolink Board Meeting, item #3).

No one was surprised the Supreme Court didn't take up MTA's appeal of the Ninth Circuit ruling on the consent decree. This leaves us with a return to the same old dance: special master asks the parties to negotiate while Mann continues his public grandstanding. The difference is now Special Master Bliss and Judge Hatter may face ticklish issues. On its face compliance with the consent decree is impossible. Yet Mann has no incentive to allow one inch

from his demands. If MTA refuses to take a knife to its budget will the Judge actually issue an order that would dictate spending? Tricky stuff.

Amidst his good fortune Mann is probably seething at the Charles Rappleye's opinion piece in the March 29 L.A. Weekly "Derailed Dreams - Bus Riders Union is bad for L.A.'s transit future" which critiques Mann's persistent use of the race card. This can hurt Mann right in the pocketbook since many of his Westside funders undoubtedly will see the piece.

Another problem for Mann is MTA's most exciting improvements that benefit bus users have nothing to do with the consent decree. These are Metro Rapid expansion and the impending introduction this summer of the first countywide transit pass (good on MTA plus Culver CityBus, Foothill Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, Gardena Municipal Bus Lines, Commerce Transit, Long Beach Transit, Norwalk Transit, Big Blue Bus, Torrance Transit, Santa Clarita Transit and LADOT).

interesting fact of the month #2: the 2000 income tax return of the Labor Community Strategy Center shows Eric Mann as earning a salary that year of \$95,000 plus \$113,640 in deferred income and \$10,000 in benefits.

Had an interesting conversation with member Isa Kae Meksin regarding the service changes Access Service has implemented which has met fierce opposition from users and advocates of the disabled. My take on the situation is the problem stems from ASI chief honcho Rick DeRock having the initial design of the system include services in excess of what the Americans with Disabilities mandated. Once people use a service it is very hard to take it away. One wonders was DeRock too fixated on pleasing disability advocates while forgetting his core mission was providing ADA compliance service? If so DeRock has no one to blame but himself

for his current predicament.

Excellent article by Jason Kandel on LAPD's transit bus policing unit appeared in the March 17 daily News ("Bus Cops See Work Paying Off".) We hope soon to have as a speaker Capt. Kenneth Garner, who recently assumed command of the unit. Some may remember his predecessor Capt. Vance Proctor spoke at one of our meetings (kudos to member J.K. Drummond for suggesting Garner as a potential speaker).

In the latest chapter of the Southern California Association of Governments' maglev mania SCAG has formed a Western States Maglev Alliance with the proponents of a Las Vegas to Orange County project to "cooperate and coordinate efforts to [obtain] general federal funds and to deploy maglev systems in California and Nevada". Also the Maglev Task Force has requested SCAG's request to Congress for maglev study funds during the 2002 Fiscal Year be increased from \$2 million to \$7 million.

Meanwhile in good news from SCAG, a two year \$1.3 million consulting contract has been awarded for a region-wide Growth Visioning project. This could be the catalyst for our region (and its leaders) to finally get serious about the challenges we face.

Several SCAG Planners have authored an interesting paper on "Population Aging: Implications for Regional Transportation

Planning" to aid the Regional Transportation Plan Technical Advisory Committee. It outlines the impact retiring baby boomers will have on the labor force and transportation demand. I must confess this is an aspect of planning post-2010 I had not contemplated before.

I've only recently learned Frances Banerjee, General Manager of the L.A. Dept. of Transportation, has retired. During her tenure LADOT became more cooperative regarding mass transit, especially by allowing MTA's Metro Rapid access to Los Angeles traffic controls to speed up service. Our best to Banerjee for a job well done!

At the request of the City of Calimesa the Attorney General has issued an opinion on whether it is appropriate for Riverside Transit Agency board members to accept free bus passes. Opinion No. 01-802 [March 8, 2002] concludes that free passes do not constitute an attempt to influence policy but rather are "given so that the directors of the transit agency may perform their official duties in monitoring the agency's transportation services."

I'll end this month by noting Andre Colaiaice, formerly handling governmental affairs for Foothill Transit, has moved to Culver CityBus. We worked with Andre on the El Monte busway and look forward to working with him again, now on issues impacting the Westside. ■

(Bulletin Board, from pg. 3)

Save the date: the Torrance Municipal Yard Open House this year will be held Saturday June 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 20500 Madrona Avenue in Torrance.

The Surface Transportation Policy Project has started a new series of research and education briefs, called "Decoding Transportation Policy and Practice." These short papers will educate readers

on complex transportation issues, and will often be the first place to learn of STPP's latest research findings. It can be found at <http://www.transact.org>

The California Transit Riders Federation now has a website with updates on legislation and other public policy matters: www.geocities.com/tp_odyssey/ridersfed.htm. ■

ORANGE COUNTY EXCURSION

(Dana Gabbard)

For some time there had been interest among our members in a study tour of transit service in Orange County in the aftermath of OCTA's straightlining and subsequent adjustments. Mark Strickert (with input from Phil Capo) prepared an itinerary while the date of the tour was set for Sept. 29, 2001. So it was on that date I boarded Amtrak Pacific Surfliner #560 southbound departing Union Station at 8:30 a.m. Onboard I ran into RailPAC Director Matt Meltzer who was on his way to Trainweb's offices at the Fullerton Amtrak station. I spent most of the Amtrak trip sightseeing and munching breakfast from the Cafe Car.

At 9:23 a.m. I arrived at The Depot (aka Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center), meeting up with several members of SO.CA.TA and TAOC (Transit Advocates of Orange County). For a 15-20 minutes we indulged in an exploration of the station (I was impressed how many OCTA schedules were in the rack) before a hurried dashed through the parking lot in front of the station to reach the streetside bus stop at Santiago and Santa Ana Blvd. [Mark Strickert in his notes for the itinerary states direct service to the station is limited to weekday "StationLink" shuttles for Metrolink users, and a few off-hour shortlining #205s]. The bus we wished to catch (line 205) was already at the stop and we barely had time to cross the street and board at 9:54 a.m. It was a 1997 New Flyer low floor (#5328) with 20-25 passengers [all ride counts in this report exclude study tour participants]. After a quick five minute trip we arrived at the Santa Ana Transit Terminal (SATT).

SATT is one of my favorite transit facilities

in the region. There are places to sit, a roof over your head, bathrooms and phones in the vicinity, an information board with schedules and during the daytime a food cart that sells hot dogs, snack foods and sodas. It almost constitutes bus rider heaven compared to the conditions we usually endure waiting for a bus. I luxuriated while glancing over the itinerary (6 pages including maps!). Phil Capo had now joined our merry band which consisted of: Russ Jones, Armando Avalos, Mark Strickert, Barry Christensen, Jane Reifer, Phil Capo, Dan Dalke, T.J. Stiller, plus Jose Solorio of OCTA with his son Michael.

One thing I noticed early was all the bus operators wore ribbons to honor the victims of Sept. 11th. (which had happened only two weeks prior).

After exploring/using the facilities/getting a quick snack we boarded line 155 at 10:20 a.m. The bus was a 1980 GMC RTS 03 (#3047) with cushioned seats. Our trip became a rolling colloquium on land use and transportation issues as Phil and Jane pointed out various features along the route. My impression was we were moving thru a commercial district. There was a great deal of transferring at Edinger and Standard to route 70 (the portion of the 155 we were riding used to be part of route 70). As we continued the surroundings became more industrial. At 10:47 a.m. we arrived at MacArthur and Main where we debarked.

From the same location we caught route 180 at 10:55 a.m. This vehicle was another GMC RTS (#3062). There were only 4 passengers (besides us) but as the bus traveled along the route it began picking up passengers: 4 at Bristol, 3 at Callen's Common, 6 (and a bike!) at Sunflower plus many more boardings at South Coast Plaza. By the time we reached Baker there were 28 passengers. Along

Baker many riders deboarded until at Mendoza only 8 passengers remained.

Now we had steady boarding and deboarding while passing thru a landscape of swap meets and schools. At Fairview & Arlington (adjacent to Orange Coast College) 8 passengers boarded. Shortly thereafter at Harbor and Wilson we bid farewell to Jose and Michael and as they hopped off thanked them for joining us. As we continued I noticed many shopping locations along the route. After fairly stable ridership the bus started to empty out with a large number of deboardings at Placentia and 19th. Tina Erickson informs me most of the people deboarding at Placentia and 19th used this shared stop to board the 47. Prior to "Straightlining," the southbound 43 turned west on Wilson to Placentia, south on Placentia to Hospital Rd. Since the 45 was routed south on Fairview to Wilson, west on Wilson to Harbor and south on Harbor to Victoria, OCTA wishing to simplify routing, "straightlined" the 43 on Harbor and the 45, (now the 47) on Wilson. After the change, people tried to connect the 43 with the 47 at Wilson. Now, since the 55 (was 180) shares stops on Harbor, people avoid walking between stops by going 43, 180 (55), 47. IMHO, staying at a shared stop is much safer than walking from one stop to another. As we continued I noticed we were in an industrial area that transitioned to commercial by the time we reached Orange and 17th at 11:35 a.m.

With 30 minutes until we caught our next bus members of the group fanned out to take a break. I ended up at a Koo Koo Roo with several of our group and in the midst of our animated discussion of transit issues we were surprised to note the song being played as background music was Judy Garland singing the Trolley Song from the movie Meet Me in St. Louis. This seemed to us a good portent for the tour.

At 12:05 p.m. we caught route 173, an Aerotech cutaway (#8217) with 3 passengers. Our interest in this route is because it is slated for elimination (it averages 20 boardings a day). We deboarded at Placentia and Hoag Drive about 12:10 p.m., adjacent to Hoag Hospital.

We were supposed to catch at this location a route 71 bus due by at 12:20 p.m. Instead for 40 minutes we waited with the bus a no show. After a bit I found seating on the entranceway to the building we stood in front of (there was no shelter or bench at this stop) since it was looking like we might be there a while. Attempts were made to contact OCTA via cell phone and ascertain what the status of our bus was to no satisfactory effect. Finally at 12:47 p.m. the bus belatedly appeared, an RTS with 18 passengers (#3013). Among those already on board was a passenger in a wheelchair (who deboarded soon after we got on). There were also some riders carrying surfboards with them. We arrived at Balboa and 23rd in Newport Beach about 1 p.m., half an hour behind our original schedule. Most of our party ate at Taqueria Tia Rosa, a Mexican-style eatery owned by a supporter of improved public transit! Phil Capo went down the street to the Crab Cookery, another highly regarded Newport eatery. While we ate our homemade tacos, quesadillas and burritos we were delighted to have a new TAOC member join our tour: Tina Erickson.

After finishing the repast some wandered to briefly explore the beach while the rest of us crossed the street to wait at the bus stop. Thankfully our party regrouped before the route 47 bus pulled up at 2:02 p.m. It was a New Flyer D-40 high floor (#5016). The bus operator was knowledgeable and quickly answered questions posed by boarding riders. (to pg. 9)



TRANSIT ADVOCATES OF ORANGE COUNTY - Mark Strickert and Jane Reifer - 866-476-2282 ext.4, or zineland@yahoo.com

SEPTEMBER SERVICE SHIFTS PUBLIC HEARING

The OCTA has issued its public hearing notice for service changes expected to take effect on September 8th, 2002. (OK, so it actually says September 2nd) Anyway, the biggest items for consideration will be:

- 20 (Imperial Hwy.) - to be extended east to Imperial/Kraemer, with additional peak hour service to Yorba Linda and Imperial. Will remain weekday-only
- 29 (Beach Blvd.) - to be re-attached to the Brea Mall to Beach/La Habra portion of route 116. Short turns will still go only to Beach/Artesia
- 43 (Harbor Blvd.) - would be combined with route 111 (north Harbor Blvd.), with "short turns" north only to Fullerton Transportation Center. They intend to change the routing in Fullerton, effectively reducing service to downtown Fullerton north of Commonwealth Ave., including all route 43 service to Fullerton High School and Fullerton College. Would operate 24 hours, hourly midnight-4am (unofficially, would likely have timed transfers with route 60.
- 47 (Fairview/Anaheim/Lemon) - to be combined with the Fullerton-to-Brea part of route 116. Short turns would be at Fullerton Transportation Center, resulting in service reduction to Fullerton College
- 50 (Katella) - service extended to 2am

- 57 (Bristol/State College) - service extended to 2am. Full route, maybe?
- 59 (Grand/Glassell/Kraemer) - extended on weekdays to UC Irvine, via Dyer, Von Karman and Campus
- 60 (17th/Westminster) - 24 hour service
- 62 - new route, from Golden West Transportation Center to Grand/1st via Goldenwest, Hazard, 5th, Civic Center and Grand. Weekday only (5am-8pm) to start
- 75 (Jamboree) - discontinued, with some pieces covered by the new 170 and 171.
- 131 (Riverdale/Lakeview) - currently serves Kaiser hospital; to be canceled
- 164 (Lampson/Edwards) - losing Saturday service
- 170/171 - new loopy routes in Irvine, both serving Lakeview Senior Center (with timed transfer even), taking over much of the 175 and a bit of the 75. 170 will go to Tustin Metrolink, Tustin Market Place, and Irvine Valley College. 171 would serve Irvine City Hall, Mariposa Villa, and UC Irvine. Both will run weekdays only, 630am-830pm.
- 175 - discontinued, with much of the service taken up by the 170 or 171

Please come to the public hearing on Monday, April 22nd, 9:00am at the County Hall of Administration, 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana, across from the main bus terminal. If you can not attend, send written comments to OCTA Customer Relations, 550 South Main Street, P.O. Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863-1584. Or, call OCTA Customer Relations at (714) 636-RIDE, extension 2, or e-mail to customers@octa.net

SUCCESS: ESSENTIAL DOWNTOWN FULLERTON BUS STOP RESTORED

Due to local construction, a critical bus stop on eastbound Chapman, just east of Harbor was removed without any notice to the bus-riding public. Five routes served this stop - 24, 43, 111, 203, and 213.

Riders who inquired were told that it might take up to 8 months to restore the stop, because of continuing construction and the need for parking. Thanks to Terry Galvin, Redevelopment Operations Manager with the city of Fullerton, the stop was recently replaced. He worked with the Traffic Engineering department to determine that the stop could be restored ahead of schedule, saving hundreds of bus riders the burden of long walks through a construction zone, and possible missed connections. It was nice to see a difficult problem resolved so easily. A new bus turn-out will eventually be put in at this location. Now, about that eastbound Chapman/Malden stop...

UNIQUE RAIL-THEMED ART EXHIBIT

Rail Advocates of Orange County, in association with the Fullerton Railway Plaza Association is producing an exhibit of rail-themed art by such notable local artists as muralist Emigdio Vasquez and photographer David Styffe. The art celebrates all aspects of rail; trains, stations, and workers. Some of the artists

will be present to discuss their work. The exhibit is part of the annual arts-oriented "A Night in Fullerton", this year on Friday, April 26 from 7 to 11 p.m. The show will be at the Fullerton Post Office, Commonwealth Station, 202 E. Commonwealth Ave. Sorry, the building is not wheelchair accessible.

VISIT US AT FULLERTON RAILROAD DAYS

The Transit Advocates of OC invite you to stop by our booth at Fullerton Railroad Days. The annual event will be on May 4th and 5th at the Fullerton Transportation Center, 124 E. Santa Fe. 9-6 Saturday, 9-5 Sunday. You will also get a chance to visit our affiliated organization, Rail Advocates of Orange County, and hear the latest on Orange County bus, rail, bike and pedestrian issues. Metrolink, Amtrak, and OCTA will be there, too, so bring all your questions.

TAOC MAY MEETING - Thursday, May 11th in Fullerton. Please call or write for location and details. (866) 476-2282, ext. 4, or taoc@railadvocates.org ■

(OC Trip Report, from pg. 7) By Placentia the bus began to fill up. While passing a swap meet we had 23 riders and with continued boardings we eventually had a seated load. Along McFadden there was heavy boarding/deboarding activity. We stayed on until Fairview and First, getting off at 2:50 p.m. Barry stayed on to go home and we gave him a fond farewell as the bus pulled away.

At this point our original trip plan was being adjusted to compensate for the late running route 71 (thankfully just such "wiggle room" had been built into the plan). From Fairview and First we caught route 64 at 3:07 p.m. It was a high floor Gillig Phantom (#4142) with 20+ passengers. We deboarded at First and Bristol at 3:15 p.m.

This intersection had been chosen to highlight an issue relating to safety for bus riders. It was a desolate locale and I easily grasped at night time it would be a dark and scary place to wait at to catch a bus. Mark Strickert tells me OCTA occasionally talks of setting up lighting for bus stops, but so far it's still just talk. At 3:27 p.m. we caught another route 64 bus. It was a New Flyer low floor (#5347) with 23 passengers. The seating layout was odd with many side facing seats at in the front half of the bus. Tina Erickson tells me all of OCTA's New Flyer low floors numbered from 5300 through 5410 or so have this "odd seating layout." Presumably it was designed this way for easy wheelchair access. The side facing seats on the right side allow for a wider aisle. *(to pg. 10)*

(OC Trip, from pg. 9) The L-shaped configurations of four seats are where the wheelchairs go. We pulled into the Santa Ana Transit Terminal where most of the riders debarked. I have since learned from Tina that most of the passengers on the eastbound 64 debarked at SATT because, prior to "Straightlining," the route terminated there. Passengers who board the eastbound 64 between SATT and 1st and Main used to take discontinued routes like the 65 and the 61. They eventually discovered that the eastbound 64 took them to the same area. After mostly emptying out some new riders boarded at the terminal and further along the route, refilling the vehicle by the time we reached First and Main.

This was another location chosen to allow us to view first hand the difficulties OCTA users face. Strickert's notes state this could be the transfer point between routes 53 and 64 if the trend toward pulling service out of the Santa Ana Transit Terminal continues. Especially eye-opening was the southwest corner. Strickert in his notes asked "feeling claustrophobic?" regarding this locale. It has an extremely narrow sidewalk abutting an office building that one must negotiate to reach the bus stop on that side of Main. I couldn't even conceive how someone who used a mobility aid (cane, wheelchair) would be able to access the stop.

We next caught route 53 at 4:10 p.m. It was an RTS (#3002). The bus filled up as we went along, then had many debarkings at Warner. We got off at Columbine and Main. Then we took route 155 at 4:27 p.m., an RTS (#3078) with 6 passengers, to Bristol and Sunflower. From there we took route 51, yet another RTS (#3104) which took us through a cluster of fast food outlets, then an industrial area where we ran on a street beside a flood control channel with a walled in residential area opposite. Ridership was low on this route.

Upon reaching the Santa Ana Transit Terminal Jane and Tina debarked to go home. We said our goodbyes, had six passengers board, then departed and stayed until 17th and Bristol. Here we caught route 60, an RTS (#3129) with 24 passengers. TJ and Dan stayed on this bus while Mark, Armando, Phil and I debarked to have a quick dinner before starting the optional late service exploration. Via routes 59 and 64 we reached Larwin Square, where we had a snack. Due to a no-show route 60 we had to hastily make our way to a stop served by route 64 then at Santa Ana Transit Terminal slipped onto route 205 to make our way the Disneyland Bus Stop. Mark Strickert bailed at Katella/Harbor to catch the 43/Harbor back to Fullerton. The rest of us should have arrived at the Disneyland stop in time to catch a downtown-L.A. bound MTA route 460 but instead as we approached the stop we spotted the bus down the street pulling onto the freeway, which meant it had departed early. The four of us had no choice but to wait an hour for the next 460. After 20 minutes the bus we would be taking pulled in. The driver turned out to be an acquaintance of Phil's, and came over to talk transit with us during his layover. I got to downtown L.A. only to have the final indignity: MTA line 20 service on Wilshire had melted down with two no show buses (when service is every 30 minutes). As you can expect the bus that took me home even at that late hour was crowded!

Our thanks to Strickert and Capo for planning a fun and informative trip. Special thanks to Jane Reifer, Mark Strickert and Tina Erickson for their helpful suggestions/corrections for the draft of this trip report.■

HIDDEN FISHBOWLS OF PERRIS

(John Jay Ulloth)



There's another transit collection in Perris... no, not the largest remaining fleet of Red Cars plus a few electric trolley busses, but out where tumbleweeds blow and acreage is not too dear, there is a significant collection of General Motors Truck & Coach (GMC) transit busses of the 1950's & 1960's- "Fishbowls" fans call them- for their massive, curved windshields.



Admired for their dependability, riders may also remember Fishbowls' forward-leaning side- & rear windows, narrow center-exit doors, and ribbed sides. Fishbowls were the backbone of many municipal fleets for decades and after production ended; most So.Ca.T.A. members probably rode them in their younger days.

Phil Capo and this reporter found them on a late afternoon commando run to that other museum in Perris, passing a yard with 4 old busses, one with a paint scheme Capo recognized from Washington State. From the house behind the chain link fence, an arm beckoned we enter the rear driveway, where we met Dreamliner Bus Leasing's owner Loren Joplin.



We were surprised to learn Dreamliner had no less than 65 busses (almost entirely Fishbowls) on another piece of property, and we could see them and help out by giving Joplin a ride back to the house after dead-heading the Washington bus to the big yard. Yes, of course! We were even more surprised to learn that unlike that other transit collection in Perris (where most of the equipment still awaits restoration), all 65 of Dreamliners' are fully functional, & get regular exercise!



...Their "Wide 30-footer", from Dayton, Ohio- so wide it feels like a shortened subway car. They have the last Fishbowl built (Chicago Transit Authority). The wildest is a 1959 L.A. model with angular lime-green seat pads- think of sitting on a gum eraser styled for George Jetson. Joplin says the seats were unpopular and shortly removed; as L.A.'s busses weren't air conditioned then!

With transit agencies represented from San Diego to New York, the collection is leased out & used for film production. Dreamliner sells &



trades, has a pit for servicing, swaps, engine rebuilds, etc., which keeps a crew of 4 busy.



Loren B. Joplin
Owner

DREAMLINER BUS LEASING
SALES • SERVICE

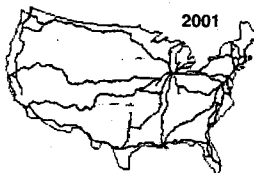
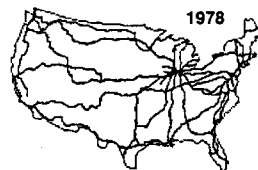
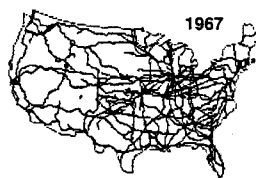
23365 Edwards St.
Box 951
Perris, CA 92572

909-943-2354

Asked about the potential of a stop on a So.Ca.T.A. tour, Joplin refused. With busses parked just inches apart, "not really set up for tours". And "things disappear." But, he said it's possible to arrange visits "for 2 or 3 at a time".

TRANSPORT EXHIBIT AT CSUN

April 8, California State University Northridge (CSUN)'s Oviatt Library is hosting Transportation in the Los Angeles Area, 1900-2000. At the opening of the 20th Century, an Angeleno could travel about the city by rail, motor vehicle, horse- or mule-drawn vehicle (photo at right). Motorized transportation replaced animal, automobiles and busses replaced rail, and paved roads were built to connect a city that continued to spread outward as its population grew. In 1933, the City issued a rapid transit plan, an issue with which it is still dealing today. This exhibit is an effort to show these changes through books, photo-graphs, and other documents. The exhibit is located at CSUN's Oviatt Library (18111 Nordhoff Street, in Northridge) Exhibit area, 2nd floor, West wing. The show will close August 9th.



NARP ASKS HELP TO SAVE TRAINS

National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) asks the public's help in preventing Amtrak funding cuts that could end nation-wide passenger train service October 11th, by sending a post card, fax, or e-mail to the President, Senators, U.S. Representatives, mayors, and Chambers of Commerce. A picture is worth a thousand words (their graphics above), but for more, contact NARP at 900 2nd Street N.E. #308, Washington, DC 20002, or narp@narprail.org.



The following is late-breaking news from April 1st:

TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY ROUNDUP

Western States Trails Foundation, in a joint news conference with Ventura Transit Authority, have announced new routes, service barns, and intermodal transfer stations for their Horse Rapid System (HRS) mode. "HRS uses underutilized fire roads and trails while giving Southern Californians a taste of their history." The United States Postmasters in the area, considering gridlock in coastal areas during peak summer months, are considering reinstating pony express service between Ventura & Camarillo. But the Air Quality Management District (A.Q.M.D.) superintendent for the region said she will ask the State for guidelines to measure air quality compliance for well, the exhaust byproduct of this mode.

STRICKERT'S SIDING

There is a 1/8 mile gap in double tracking of the Coast Line south of Fullerton, used by Amtrak and MetroLink. That's where Rail Advocates of Orange County's Mark Strickert always gets stuck, delaying his train back home up to 20 minutes each day. According to Amtrak Chairman Michael Dukakis, "he was calling our 800 number in Washington D.C. from his cell phone every day for 3 years while his train stopped to wait for a freight... became our number 7 complaint... we realized it would be cheaper to send out a track crew to connect the 220 yard gap between the 2 sidings so trains could run through, to get (Strickert) off our backs...." S.C.R.R.A. officials are so pleased, "Strickert's Siding" will appear on MetroLink maps printed throughout the rest of 2002.

NIMBY NETWORK

Nimbys (those Not-In-My-Back-Yarders) have formed a region-wide coalition whose single goal is "to abolish all transit service throughout Los Angeles County, and paralyze the region". Current membership is estimated at 295,000. In other news,

NOT SO FAST

"NSRB" is the new acronym for unlimited stop service or "Not So Rapid Bus". All NSRB stops will get new snail-shaped street signage so passengers can tell them apart from the Rapid Bus' "flying drop of blood" logo. In contrast to the electronic "next bus" signage planned for Rapid Bus lines, NSFB will get beautifully-enameled informational signage with the words: "Watch This Space."

DOWNSIZING HITS IN A BIG WAY

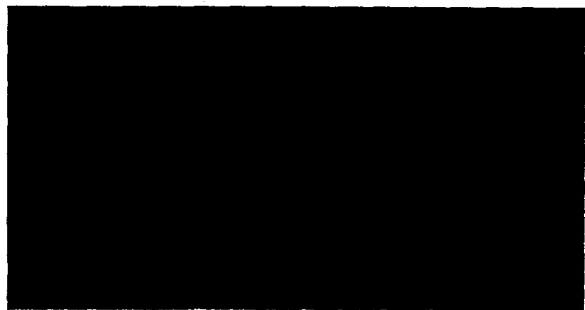
The biggest news of the year is transit vehicles will be getting smaller fast, Amtrak's existing Thruway service will be replaced by GTC (golf cart-sized transporters like those that now take passengers to station platforms beneath L.A. Union Station). The units carry the driver, plus 7, but cost only 1.2% of a 38-passenger NABI bus. Servicing is easy, driver retraining takes less than 5 minutes, there are no windows to attract graffiti. Their narrower width (under 5 feet) and sharper turning radii allow them to use bike lanes, sidewalks, and culverts, shortcutting through parking lots (not their far edges) delivering passengers on time whether urban streets are jammed or not. The Amtrak Reform Council (the agency created by Congress to dismantle Amtrak) has told Congress though sleeper and dining car service would be lost, vehicles could almost beat most long distance train schedules, padded up to 19 hours to allow for waiting on sidings for freight trains to pass... Since news spread to the other end of Union Station, L.A. County's M.T.A. will implement GTC replacement service immediately & widely, until its newly created 60-member Bus Down-Sizing Task Force completes a study whether service cutbacks can still be justified with the pint-sized transport, and if the vehicles will satisfy the requirements of the Bus Rider Union's Federal Consent Decree (there are no standees: "not many people fit, and you just can't stand up in them") M.T.A. has temporarily suspended all new bus purchases until Task Force findings can be made public, in about 28

years. Asked whether M.T.A. had considered that the transporters carry less than 20% of the passengers of a standard bus, a key M.T.A. boardmember (who'll remain anonymous for personal safety) replied, "So?"



NEW SO.CA.T.A. REGALIA COMING

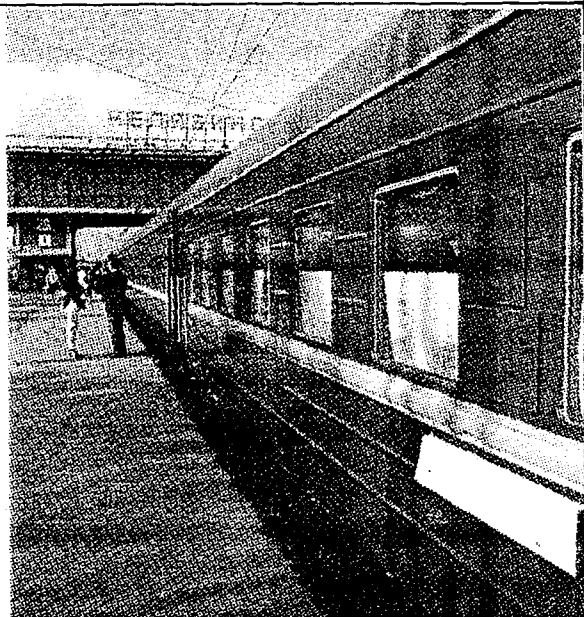
Last Wednesday, So.Ca.T.A. regalia chairman Woody Rosner won \$45 million dollars in the State Lottery, ending So.Ca.T.A.'s regalia problem forever. For starters next month, every member will receive a membership badge, dress shirt, Italian silk tie, 3 piece suit, leather jacket, and top hat with a 4-color So.Ca.T.A. logo embroidered on each one. Please call in your ring, neck, sleeve, waist, and hat sizes to Rosner as soon as possible so his tailors can prepare your order in time for delivery before our next monthly meeting; Operators are standing by. Thank you Woody!



OWL CORNER

Zzzzzzzzz... (well, perhaps there'll be a report later in the evening)

Hope you enjoyed this April 1st edition, & not taken much of it seriously!



EURO TRAINS IN VAL PHONE BOOK?

While it's true the San Fernando Valley is underserved by rail, why does San Fernando Valley's Local Area pages of Pacific Bell/ SBC's Smart Yellow Pages feature this photograph on its "Public Transportation" page? The railway appears to be electrified, locomotive-hauled, cars maroon with a red band through the windows, off-white stripe below. Judging from the lettering atop the station over the tracks, is the railway Scandinavian? Russian? And what is it doing in a U.S. phone book? The only known So.Ca.T.A. member who works for SBC (K.R.) denies having anything to do with it....



Late evening rush hour, Green Line