

# TRANSIT UPDATES

As of Tuesday, November 4, transit services running during the MTA strike are as follows:

- First Transit contract routes #96, 125, 128, 130, 167, 177, 205, 214, 225, 226, 232, 254, 256, 266 and 270 (All of these routes except #96 and 167 had been stalled by an unrelated strike against First Transit by its operators)
- TCI-operated contract routes #218, 603, 605, 608, 625, 626 and 646
- MV operated #58, on a reduced schedule (some vehicles have been shifted to Pico Bl)
- #888, the Red Line Emulator (between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont. This service runs on weekdays between 5:30 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.
- "Lifeline shuttles" (Prime Time airport vans) running non-stop from Union Station to Warner Center, Artesia Transit Center, Artesia Blue Line Station and the East Los Angeles Civic Center
- Local shuttle services (using a variety of school and charter buses) running between Pico/Rimpau and Union Station (like Line #30) and from Union Station to El Monte via Garvey (like Line #70)

During the strike, all of these services will run fare-free.

Metrolink and most other LA County bus lines (notably Foothill, Santa Monica, Gardena, Torrance, Montebello and all LADOT routes) will honor October MTA fare media for the duration of the strike. These operators have also added service on their lines going into Downtown LA.

LADOT has expanded most DASH lines to operate until 8 p.m. In addition, a new DASH line operates in Boyle Heights, between USC Medical Center and Rowan/Dozier, primarily via Marengo, Wabash and Blanchard.

LADOT Commuter Express routes #438 and #448 will serve all Harbor Freeway stops along their routes during the strike. Also, #534 will make limited stops (major intersections only) along Olympic.

The City of Redondo Beach now provides a fixed-route between the Marine Green Line station and the Redondo Pier.

As of Nov 4, all Omnitrans and Victor Valley Transit service in the fire-affected areas should be back to normal. MARTA is currently running limited service in the Crestline and Lake Arrowhead areas (with the Off-The-Mountain routes on a Saturday schedule). Regular service will resume on Monday, Nov 10.

Another Metrolink train will be extended to Montalvo (near Ventura) effective January 2004. This trip will leave Montalvo at 6:45 a.m., arriving at Union Station at 8:30 a.m. In the evening, it will leave Union Station at 5:45 p.m, arriving at Montalvo at 7:15 p.m.

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

Our thanks to Sina Zarifi of SCAG for an enlightening presentation on the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan draft at our October meeting.

At our Nov. 8 meeting Lt. Michael J. Parker of L.A. Sheriff's Dept. will discuss security on the Red and Gold rail lines. We will also discuss the strike against MTA and its possible impact on SO.CA.TA activities (the day after Thanksgiving trip and annual banquet).

Nominations for next year's Executive Board members will also be held at the Nov. 8 meeting.

Upcoming speakers: Jan. 10, 2004--Ed Clifford and Haim Geffen of MTA will be making a presentation on MTA's hub and spoke proposal, Feb. 14 Tom Hines will discuss personal rapid transit and April 10 Chris Carson of the League of Women Voters will talk on transportation issues.

President Richards will be attending on our behalf the Center for Transportation Excellence conference on "Transit Initiatives in Communities" Dec. 7-9 in Tempe Arizona. Donations to help defray her expenses are welcome (and needed).

Reminder: The Mobility 21 Conference will be Nov. 17 at the Bonaventure in downtown Los Angeles.

Volunteers are needed to help update our website. Contact the Executive Secretary

if you can spare a few hours a month to do HTML markup.

Remember the date: Fullerton Railroad Days the weekend of May 1-2 2004.

From time to time the Executive Secretary sends cyber bulletins via e-mail with information on upcoming events, breaking news, etc. If you'd like to receive these send your e-mail address to: dgabbard@hotmail.com

The California Alternative Transportation Coalition has launched its official website -- <http://www.catransportationchoices.org>

Member David Davenport suggests amending section 4.4.2 of the bylaws as follows: "Members in good standing that have been members for six (6) months and have attended at least one (1) regular meeting in the previous twelve (12) months by the time of the election shall be eligible to vote by absentee ballot. The Election Committee shall be responsible for determining a method by which to conduct absentee voting."

Professor John M. Bachar, Jr. of CSULB, will give a talk on Oil & Transportation, describing the world oil crisis and a plan to create a fareless mass transportation system for Los Angeles, on Wednesday Nov. 19 starting at 7:30 p.m. in Santa Monica at Warszawa, 1414 Lincoln Blvd. Further information: (323) 852-9808 or [jbachar@csulb.edu](mailto:jbachar@csulb.edu)  
(continued on pg. 10)

The current strike by the Amalgamated Transportation Union local 1277 against MTA is such a muddled mess of bad blood, personality conflicts and sound bite braying as to leave me deeply discouraged at the very notion of human intelligence. There are no heroes in this sorry situation and many victims - the strikers themselves, the transit dependent, car users (as traffic snarls worsen) and our hopes for the future (the chances of passing the proposed six-year .5% sales tax increase for transportation purposes in L.A. County seem to be dwindling into oblivion). As we enter the third week both sides are hardening their positions and seemingly prepared to wait each other out. Unless some outside force intervenes as happened in 2000 I fear this stalemate may last perhaps into the new year.

On behalf of our members President Richards sent Mayor James Hahn of Los Angeles a letter expressing concern over the delay in Hahn's making appointments to the MTA Sector Governance Council for the Westside/Central area plus the MTA Independent Citizen Advisory and Oversight Committee I mentioned last month. In response we have been told appointments for the Sector are being readied to be voted on by the MTA Board. Of course the MTA Board presently is occupied with the strike so this matter will remain unresolved until the labor issues are settled.

Last month I discussed the road lobby's role in slowing down TEA21 renewal. In doing so I overlooked another factor -- a

divide between the Congress and the White House as to how much funding the legislation will encompass. There are few signs of progress and the initial 5 month interim measure may need to be renewed while this conflict is worked out.

Highlights from the Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Transportation Plan as summarized in a memo to the SCAG Transportation and Communications Committee as its Oct. 2 meeting:

"The Strategic Arterial Improvement concept could involve a combination of widening ... and grade separation at critically high-volume intersections to enhance flow speed and capacity..." (page 34)

"[The Regional Truckways] system would comprise upwards of 140 centerline miles of dedicated truck lanes... this strategy is proceeding with the assumption that all capital construction and yearly operating costs associated with this system must be supported through the collection of user fees... a per mile toll ... averaging \$0.56 over a thirty-year financing period" (page 38)

[Regional Rail Capacity Improvement Program] would be financed with a revenue stream raised on corridor traffic hauled by [Union Pacific and Burlington Northern/Santa Fe]" (page 40)

The Oct. Metro Investment Report reveals while Governor Davis signed the Kuehl bill (SB 504) creating an Exposition Joint Powers Authority he had the Senator promise

to sponsor follow-up legislation to ensure the JPA will not be a reimbursable state mandate. Which leaves the question: who will fund it?

Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger is quoted on his website [www.joinarnold.com](http://www.joinarnold.com) regarding mass transit:

"In many locales, strategic improvements or additions to bus, light rail, and subway lines can result in much greater use of existing mass transit, reducing highway congestion and air pollution. As Governor, I will ask the federal government to restore to California its fair share of gasoline tax money generated in the state, along with other federal funds, to assist with critical mass transit improvements."

Well, the other shoe's dropped in August at Sunline Transit in the Coachella Valley as General Manager Richard Cromwell III and Chief Financial Officer William Maier resigned after (quoting the Desert Sun in its editorial on Cromwell's resignation) "...an audit had uncovered a \$751,000 misuse of agency funds and questions were raised about [Cromwell's] relationship with a private energy company." Dennis Gilman is interim General Man and a search for Cromwell's successor seems to be waiting until after a more in-depth audit of Sunline is released, likely by the end of the year.

I wish all meeting minutes were as juicy as the Sept. 26 Foothill Transit Executive Board minutes. The tidbits include:

- an 11 1/2 year coach operator using

public comment to complain she was terminated without a hearing. Foothill Executive Director Doran Barnes promised to return to the board with a report on this matter after meeting with the contractor.

- former Foothill Executive Director Julie Austin has been retained by MTA to review bridge funding issues related to Foothill operating replacement service along a portion of MTA's line 471

- estimated ridership decreased 19.11% in August 2003 compared to August 2002. A working group has been formed to address low ridership numbers and research inaccuracies in Foothill Transit services

As some of you are aware, I have questioned Access Service setting up a non-profit Foundation for fundraising to support expanded same day service. Interestingly at the Aug. 25 ASI Board meeting Sandra Katzman, on behalf of the newly formed watchdog group National Society for ADA transportation, expressed their belief that raising private funds to augment Access Services' budget is wrong and NAST cannot support this.

I'll conclude by noting the Daily News in its Oct. 21 editorial; "A Strike Euphemism" levels the strongest criticisms of the Bus Riders Union I've yet seen in the general press, denouncing them for taking the side of the strikers, concluding "So much for sticking up for the little guy. And so much for the laughable pretense that the BRU represents riders at all". ■

After our initial exploration of OCTA's new owl service last year it was felt a follow up was in order to see how ridership had developed in since then. By a vote of the membership it was decided to do the trip Saturday Sept. 13.

Mark Strickert graciously volunteered to plan the itinerary, which included multiple ways of reaching the rendezvous point selected for starting the trip--the Brea outlet of The Hat, a local chain renowned for its hot pastrami sandwiches (this would make up for last year when we were literally turned away from eating there because we arrived mere moments after closing).

Woody Rosner and I originally planned to take the Pacific Surfliner from Union Station to Fullerton and make our way from there to Brea. But we ran late and Woody suggested we consider reaching Brea via MTA line 471, one of the alternatives outlined in the itinerary. So we took MTA Metro Rapid 745 from Gateway Transit Center to Broadway and 6th Street in downtown L.A., transferred to MTA Metro Rapid 720 eastbound on 6th Street to Garfield/Whittier, took Montebello Bus line 10 further east on Whittier to Scott and then took MTA line 471 from Scott/Whittier to the Brea Mall.

A 10 minute walk and we arrived at the restaurant around 9:45 p.m., with just enough time to greet the rest of the members partaking of the trip and wolf down some chow before making our way to the bus stop across the street (State College and Imperial) to catch the southbound

OCTA route 57 at 10:16

p.m. It was #5020, a New Flyer, with 6-7 passengers (all rider counts exclude trip participants). Participants included Andy Novak, Armando Avalos, Paul Castillo, Lionel Jones, Frank Roldan, Mark Strickert, Hank Fung, Woody Rosner and Dana Gabbard.

Frank described his pre-trip: caught #47 with Fung and Castillo; Strickert joined them at Harbor/Berkeley. After transferring to OCTA route 57 at Brea Mall, they reached The Hat where the rest of the riders (except Gabbard and Rosner) already had arrived.

As we traveled south the bus emptied out, also we encountered a BNSF freight train crossing the street (mercifully it didn't take too long to cross). Also we passed OCTA's Anaheim bus yard as the street became more commercial. This bus had an annunciator, which besides calling out the next stop would chime "stop requested" whenever the stop indicator was pressed. The phrase stop requested very quickly became annoying due to its repetition. As we continued boarding picked up, with 11 coming aboard at Katella. We even had a passenger with a bike. At 17th we had a timed transfer with OCTA route 60. At 1st Street there was a connection with OCTA route 64, resulting in 8-10 boarding the vehicle. Continuing along Bristol a crowd was spotted in the parking lot of a 24-hour eatery called the Bristol Burger. After going through the South Coast Plaza area we arrived at the terminal, Newport Transporta-

tion Center. After laying over we continued on the same bus northward and started refilling.

We deboarded at 17th and Bristol at 1 a.m. to take the timed transfer westbound OCTA route 60, #5114 a New Flyer D40 commuter [plush seats!] with 9 passengers. Hopping off at Harbor/Westminster at 1:06 a.m. we caught timed transfer southbound OCTA route 43, #2150 a NABI low floor LNG which had the night owl wrap (exterior decoration). There were 8 passengers and rather light ridership (although a large family boarded but only rode a short distance before getting off). We rode to the night-only southern terminus at 19th/Newport, then back north to Harbor/Orangethorpe.

There was some discord when a late night snack at a Denny's resulted in our missing the next bus. We dropped the

ball on coordination. Eventually we re-boarded OCTA route 43, this time an articulated bus #7302 NABI low floor D60. Since most were tired by this point (Strickert went on home and Fung/Roldan shared an auto) we connected with OCTA route 60 which took most of us to the Long Beach Transit Mall and an early morning Blue Line train to Los Angeles.

The chief impression was ridership is developing well during the late evening period (10 p.m. to midnight). Ridership during owl periods is noticeable lighter but developing. Overall OCTA's implementation of owl service has been successful, of which they should be justly proud.

My thanks to Mark Strickert for contributing to this report. ■

(Editor's Note: The following article is the opinion of its author and does not necessarily represent the official opinion of the Southern California Transit Advocates)

By now, the policies of the administration are all misguided answers to solving transportation problems. President Bush has slammed the gear into reverse and punched the gas pedal into solving the problem. He may be headed for a brick wall, too.

When it looked like transit was going to get some support, apparently it has come from the wrong people. Let us begin with Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta. What has he done? He has only succumbed to the big business interests and done nothing to oversee better transportation. He has been bullied around by other administration officials putting the emphasis on security and consumption of oil for solving problems. Also, it was uncovered recently in the California Rail News (Sept./Oct. 2003 issue) that Secretary Mineta was involved in a campaign finance scandal. It involves the Mineta Transportation Institute and conflicts of interest with the California High-Speed Rail Authority that is run by Rod Diridon, founder of Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority's troubled network of light rail. A recent abandonment was made by the system, and was the first for such a light rail system since the 1970s, what a shame!

Also to Mineta's discredit, the emphasis seems to be more on security at airports. I have noticed little change on security of public transit systems done on behalf of

his administration. Most transit agencies are trying to do it on their own, let alone being told that "money is not available" for state assistance, so the Bush administration uses that lie to cover up their desire to cut transit funding. Amtrak has taken some initiatives of their own, such as requiring a photo identification to purchase tickets or check luggage at major staffed stations, but not at the smaller unstaffed locations. The Bush administration wants to spend \$775 million for security during the Olympic games in Athens next year, and another \$303 million to rebuild Iraq's railroad but only \$891 million for Amtrak?

As for alternate transportation, it is the Segway, the motor scooter or anything else that has a gasoline engine in it! A massive toll road system is being built in Florida, and nobody is using it. So what does the administration propose? Rerouting truck traffic off the freeways onto the toll roads so they can pass the costs onto the consumers. The truckers pay the toll and do not like it, but it eventually makes its way around to the cost of goods sold. That's a high price to pay for curing the gas pedal blues of a few speed buffs to save them a measly couple of minutes driving to/from work every day.

It is time the country good ol' boys and speed buffs realize that the highway system is not their taxpayer-financed race-track to commute on. After all, nobody said they had to live in the country. Building all of these new freeways is also going to consume more oil, while the administration currently lets the current roads and

bridges on today's infrastructure deteriorate.

If President Bush were serious about creating jobs, saving the taxpayer money, and solving transportation problems, he would concentrate on fixing the current roads and maintain our present public transit systems since those provide good steady paying full-time jobs. Highway construction is only temporary, and in these days of swelling budget deficits the government has no business building new roads, since it cannot maintain what they presently have.

Fighting a war does not come with a price either. Public transit should not be a sacrificial lamb for it. Even shortly after September 11th occurred, a Gallup Poll indicated that Americans would be willing to pay more for gas, like a quarter per gallon, to finance the war on terror. Tell the President that pinching pennies and cutting service is not the answer, and on the contrary, it will bring in less revenue. If the jobs are not there, where is the money going to come from?

I don't even see throngs of people rushing to the store to buy Segways and self-propelled scooters. I think more people bought bicycles than Segways last year.

We need to back a President who will strongly support public transit so we can have clean air to breathe, less traffic congestion on our roads and highways, as well as transportation for those who can't afford to own a car or for other physical disabilities can't drive. Where is this President Bush thinking about transportation? That everybody lives in barn out in the open country? His policy is Houstonization of the nation, when it comes to large cities.

Perhaps a switch in the White House is desperately needed next year. If now, we may end up with only taxicabs and our thumbs (I'll point mine down at the President) for transportation. Any of the Democratic candidates for President have a more sensible plan that the President does. Better some plan than no plan.



## **MEMBERS IN ACTION**

Hank Fung was quoted in the Oct. 7 L.A. Times article "Southland Will Have to Wait for 511 Traffic Line"

Kymerleigh Richards was quoted in the Oct. 4 Daily News article "Valley likely to lose funds to MTA"

Ken Ruben met Amtrak CEO David Gunn Oct. 16. Ruben also had a letter published in the Oct. 30 edition of the Santa Monica Daily Press (the original unedited text is

posted on our website).

Among those attending the California Rail 2020 event sponsored by the Train Rider Association of California held Nov. 1 in Pasadena were Ken Ruben, Eric Griswold, Don Bing, Nate Zablen, Roger Christensen, Bart Reed, John Ulloth and Dana Gabbard.

D.E. Kessinger was a candidate for governor during the recent special election, receiving 259 votes. ■

(Bulletin Board, from pg. 3)  
Friday, November 21, 2003 the Westside Urban Forum presents a panel discussion titled "Let's Connect". Invited Panelists include:

David Grannis, President, Planning Company Associates  
Roger Snoble, CEO, MTA  
Mayor Corlin, City of Culver City  
Martin Ludlow, City of Los Angeles, City Council Member District 10/MTA Board Member  
Pam O'Connor, City of Santa Monica City Council, MTA Board Member

It will be held Friday, November 21, 2003 10900 Wilshire Blvd., 17th Floor (near Westwood Blvd. and Wilshire); registration begins at 7:00am. Cost is \$35 for WUF Member, \$50 for non-members. Additional information: (310) 394-0253, buteyn@westsideurbanforum.com

OCTA is holding Open Houses on the 2003 Supplemental environmental documents for the CenterLine project. All will be from

4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Nov 6 Santa Ana Performing Arts & Events Center, 505 N. Sycamore St  
Nov 12 Costa Mesa Hilton, 3050 Bristol St. Costa Mesa  
Nov 17 Irvine City Hall, 1 Civic Center Plaza, Irvine

Valhalla Video Productions has produced a DVD or VHS on the new Gold Line - \$29.95 plus \$4.50 postage (California residents add 7.75% sales tax). Valhalla Video Productions, 1100 Irvine Blvd., #325, Tustin, CA 92780-3534; 888-843-3698; <http://www.valhallavideo.com>. ■