

TRANSIT UPDATES

Several MTA bus lines will change, effective December 19. Among the most notable changes:

- #362 has not been extended into Norwalk Metrolink, and the limited stop area has not been changed
- #265 ends at Beverly/Durfee, rather than Beverly/Workman Mill as proposed
- The route of #180/181 will remain the same, although the frequency has been cut back because of the new #780 Rapid Bus along this route. Midday service on #780 will run every 15 minutes, while #180/#181 will have a combined headway of 15 minutes.
- Fairfax Blvd. Will have a new limited stop route #317. (Originally the Pasadena-Eagle Rock-Glendale-Los Feliz Rapid Bus was to run down Fairfax too, but that route was thought to be too long).
- Line #105 along La Cienga Bl will gen-

erally run every 15-20 minutes, fixing the problem of unbalanced service along La Cienega (formerly, #105 ran only every 40 minutes, so these buses were full, while the frequent #705 rapid buses were nearly empty)

Interesting note. Line #378 does not stop between Mission and Garfield Ave. in Alhambra (a distance of about a mile and a half). Line 78 shortlines some trips in the early PM peak eastbound at Main and Garfield. Line 378, as is usual, operates the long lines. Therefore, there is no service between 4:08 and 5:15 PM between Garfield and Mission if you are boarding between the limited stops. Oops....

Phase II of the LADOT DASH community meetings have been postponed until after the holidays.

Thousand Oaks Transit will provide weekend service during on Dec 11-12 and Dec 17-18. ■

BULLETIN BOARD

At our Dec. 11 meeting we will hold the election for our 2005 officers and directors. The Election Committee consists of Woody Rosner (Chair), Charles Powell and John Ulloth. Nominees include:

Directors-at-Large (3) - Paul Castillo, Armando Avalos, Ken Ruben, Hank Fung

Treasurer - Craig Barnes

Recording Secretary - Edmund Buckley

Executive Secretary - Dana Gabbard

Vice President - Lionel Jones, Ken Ruben

President - Mark Strickert

Prior to the election from 1 p.m.-2 p.m. we will hold an informal forum for members to present their ideas on where SO.CA.TA. should be headed in the next year.

Afterward we will travel via the Red Line and Gold Line to Shakers in Pasadena, site of this years holiday banquet.

Reminder - 2005 dues are \$24 regular, \$9.60 limited income. ■

SO.CA.TA. Annual Holiday Banquet Details

SHAKERS RESTAURANT

240 S. Arroyo Parkway, Pasadena -- Phone (626) 449-4514

2 short blocks from Del Mar GOLD LINE STATION

December 11th at 5 PM (Following the meeting)

Most will travel on the Gold Line together at the end of meeting but parking is available at the restaurant for those who are driving.

Cost: \$16.

Advance reservations preferred but payment accepted on day of banquet

Menu Seletions:

Chicken Monterey (Grilled Chicken Breast topped with Swiss Cheese)

Filet of Sole

Chopped Steak

Vegetarian Alternatives

Mashed Potatoes, Rice, or Baked Potato

Assorted vegetables and Zucchini bread

Dinner salad

Choice of Dessert - Chocolate Cake or Carrot Cake

Choice of Beverages: Soda, Iced tea, Hot Tea, or Coffee

(Wine and Beer are available, but must be paid for separately; you must be 21 to drink alcoholic beverages)

Old town Pasadena is only a few short blocks away. Trains depart Gold Line Station approximately every 15 minutes until 8:40 PM and then about every 20 minutes afterwards.

"Bus Combat" is the title of a commentary written by Bus Rider's Union co-chair Barbara Lott-Holland. This is perhaps the most surreal flyer ever produced by the BRU, consisting of Lott-Holland's rambling comments on her dis-comfort at the behavior of men on the bus. This one has to be read to be believed! (a tip of the hat to Ken Ruben who discovered a cache of these on a bus he was riding and gave me one subsequently).

In promoting its proposed 10 year contract for having TVs on the buses MTA staff state when tried in Milwaukee "the vast majority of passengers enjoyed the information and entertainment provided". While that may be true the National Public Radio program Morning Edition on May 23, 2003 broadcast a report that Milwaukee riders and drivers were complaining about the advertisements that are part of the transit network, as exemplified by these comments of rider Justin Edwards: "Frankly I think it's ridiculous that we're forced to listen to advertisements as well when we could be having conversations with friends instead of something". I may well attend the Dec. 13 MTA Board meeting to comment on the contract proposal (which by the way was not presented to the Sector Councils for their input).

Could Governor Schwarzenegger finally be getting the message that neglecting our crumbling infrastructure is bad for business? That is just the message he got from Japanese businessman during Arnold's recent trade trip to Japan according to James Flanigan's Dec. 6 L.A. Times column ("New Thinking is Needed to Unclog Roads and Ports"). Also a meeting was recently held in

Sacramento of key stakeholders interested in the protection of Proposition 42. This was in response to rumors the Dept. of Finance is again eyeing transportation trust funds to help close the state budget gap in the forthcoming fiscal year. How these various factors play out should be interesting.

Remember the saying "Put your money where your mouth is"? Santa Monica is proving its intense support of the Exposition light rail project by drawing down \$30 million in reserve funds to buy a parcel for a future terminus station adjacent to the Promenade.

I am glad to see a cooperative regional approach being taken to goods movement aka the MultiCounty Goods Movement Action Plan. My one qualm is the list of stakeholders for consultation has mostly the usual suspects. Hopefully we ordinary mortals will also have a chance to provide input...

question of the month - what is the new name for MTA's Universal Fare System (UFS)? TAP-Transit Access Pass.

Following up on my comments last month on Gold Line uber-opponent David Margrave the Oct. 3 Pasadena Star-News in a profile titled "Crossing the Line?" contemplated possible conflicts of interest in Mr. Margrave's railing against the Gold Line. One revelation is Margrave's ex-wife has several properties along the alignment slated for development (with Mr. Margrave as the developer). The article describes the Margrave divorce as precipitated by Mr. Margrave's desire to renounce state in-

volvement in the marriage bond, a belief in the using precious metals for currency and "a hint that at one point in his life he feared bankruptcy or some form of litigation". All this although the Margraves live together and David Margrave makes constant reference to "his wife". No wonder the Star-News headline termed Margrave "Citizen, Activist, Enigma".

puzzle of the month--why did MTA assume the fare restructuring that went into effect Jan. 1 would result in a 10% increase in revenue? (actual result was 2.5% per agenda item #22, Nov. 18 MTA Finance and Budget Committee).

"You can't allow a few hundred people to inconvenience hundreds of thousands of people". Who said that? Richard Close, President of the Sherman Oaks Homeowners Association, in the Oct. 31 Daily News ("Valley Mourns Traffic Plan") describing community opposition killing a reversible lane on Sepulveda Blvd. in the Sepulveda Pass. This is dumfounding because Richard Close was the chief agitator against the proposal to add lanes to the 101 thru the San Fernando Valley, rallying residents to stymie the original project. Why would Close be a vehemently NIMBY when it comes to the 101 but anti-community when it comes to the 405 corridor? Turns out Close lives next to the 101 freeway but commutes daily to the westside on the 405.

In late 2001/early 2002 30 homeowners located on Elder Avenue, east of Perris Blvd. and north of SR 60 in Moreno Valley were given an opportunity as part of a HOV lane project to request soundwalls be built adjacent to their properties. To re-

ceive federal funds for the soundwalls 100% of impacted homeowners had to vote yes. 18 property owners voted yes, 2 voted no and 10 did not respond. July of this year property owners belated requested reconsideration of having a soundwall constructed. This was the subject of an extensive discussion at the Oct. 13 Riverside County Transportation Commission meeting. The upshot is residents claimed to have been confused by letters sent them by Caltrans (although a phone number to contact Caltrans with any questions had been included with the voting materials). Politicians representing the affected homeowners requested RCTC fund the soundwalls (the feds won't fund a soundwall after the process of polling homeowners is complete). RCTC Executive Director Eric Haley warned re-opening the process would set a dangerous (and expensive) precedent. On a narrow 14-13 vote the request was denied.

I'll conclude by offering my congratulations to the Pacific Railroad Society on the recent return of their historic ex-Union Pacific sleeping car the National Forum. The car spent nearly a year in Seattle (thru freezing weather) after being damaged in a switching accident. Hopefully soon the Forum will return to providing trips as a private car with Amtrak legal status (attached to the rear of Amtrak trains). ■

MEMBERS IN ACTION

CORRECTION - the Steam Locomotive on display in San Pedro mentioned last month is #3751.

Chris Flescher on Nov. 9 attended a lecture/discussion in San Francisco about the possibilities of future improvements in Caltrain service put on by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (Spur) and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). He also recently went to a meeting sponsored by the Monterey County Department of Health on making cities more pedestrian friendly and a Monterey Salinas Transit forum on future plans for transit service.

Robert Meinert attended the Oct. 20 SCAG Mag Lev Task Force meeting.

Michael Milroy attended the Nov. 10 Tier two 710 Corridor Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting

Nate Zablen had a letter to the editor published in the October 13th LA Times advocating the extension of the Red Line subway along Wilshire Blvd. if a study determines that tunneling is safe.

Nate also attended the December 1st meeting of the San Fernando Valley Service Sector Governance Council.

Roger Christensen had a letter in the Oct. 18 L.A. Downtown News.

Joseph Schwieterman, author of the new book, "When the Railroad Leaves Town: American Communities in the Age of Rail Line Abandonment, Western U.S.", made a presentation Dec. 3rd at L.A. City College. Members attending included Ken Ruben, Perias Pillay, Bart Reed, Mark Strickert, John Ulloth, Robert Meinert

Ken Ruben attended the Dec. 1 meeting of the Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) and on the same day, joined by Kevin Devlin, attended the MTA Westside/Central Sector Governance Council meeting. In addition Ken represented SO.CA.TA on the inaugural run of the new second Surfliner round trip to San Luis Obispo (a photo of Ken riding the dome car can be seen on the front page of the RailPAC website - <http://www.railpac.org/>).

Ken Ruben, Charles Powell and Dana Gabbard attended the Nov. 17 MTA Citizen Advisory Council meeting.

Reminder: if you attend a meeting, have a letter published in a newspaper, are quoted in the media or otherwise engage in active advocacy please inform the Executive Secretary so he can be sure it is noted in the next edition of this column. Thank you! ■