

Bulletin Board/ Members in Action

Our thanks to Denny Zane for his eye-opening presentation at our August 8th meeting.

Upcoming speakers include:

-Michael Biagi of Los Angeles World Airports discussing Flyaway on Sept. 12th

-Brynn Kernigan of Long Beach Transit on Oct. 10th

-John Fong of LADOT discussing CityRide on November 14th




All presentations start at 1 p.m., with the business part of the meeting to follow at 2:15 p.m.

On Sept. 8th *Progressive Railroading* plans to launch HSRupdates.com, a new Web site devoted to high-speed rail.

Access Service now has a bilingual message line with a regularly updated recording on new developments at the agency: (213) 270-6110.

Pesach Kremen has started a Yahoo group to promote transit user equality in San Diego: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/transit_user_equality

Reminder: the Mobility 21 transportation summit is on Sept. 21st and the Alternative Car Expo in Santa Monica is on Oct. 2-3.

Rapid Transit Press now has a list of upcoming bus and rail excursions: <http://www.rapidtransit-press.com/excursions.html>   

Alek Friedman and Ken Ruben attended the July 29th Streetcars Open House for Broadway in downtown Los Angeles

Attending the August 4th Wilshire Corridor Subway meeting were Dana Gabbard, Mike Baron, Jerard Wright, and Joe Dunn.

Attending the August 5th Wilshire Corridor Subway meeting were Alek Friedman and Nate Zablen.

Attending the August 11th Wilshire Corridor Subway meeting in Beverly Hills were Ken Ruben, Bart Reed, and Alex Schaffer.




Attending the August 12th Wilshire Corridor Subway meeting in Westwood were Kymberleigh Richards, Nate Zablen, Ken Ruben, Jerard Wright, Bart Reed and Robert Meinert.

Kymberleigh Richards and Ken Ruben attended the Metro Westside Sector Governance Council meeting on August 12th.

Jane Reifer was quoted in the August 10th Orange County Register article "Bus ridership drops 20% after fare increase, service cuts".

Ken Alpern's two part Metro Planning piece "Left Hand Knows Not What the Right Hand is Doing!" and "LA's Extraordinary Transit Future" appeared in the August 11th and 14th issues of CityWatch.

Ken Ruben attended the OCTA event celebrating the opening of the underpass for pedestrians at the Orange Metrolink Station on August 27th.

Russ Jones' photo of a mysterious ad for Houston Metro's Airport Express that suddenly appeared among the interior overhead ad cards on Big Blue Bus vehicles illustrated the August 18th la.streetsblog.org post "Cartoon Tuesday: Take the Big Blue Bus to the Houston Airport"   

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website

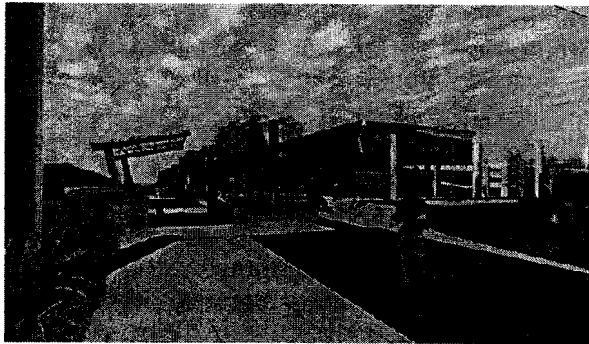
<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>



Transit Updates

Compton Transit Center

In July demolition began on the Martin Luther King Transit Center in Compton. The facility closed in June and was used by the Compton Fire Department for training exercises. A replacement transit center will be built on the site, construction is expected to last one-year. Aside from the transit center, several streets around the center will also be rebuilt.



Golden Empire Transit (GET)

GET will be making several changes to their system on October 4th. Below is a list of those changes.

Line 8 eliminate operation through Hillcrest Center west of Crestmont. Operation in Hillcrest east of Crestmont will remain.

Line 10 eliminate operation on Summerfield & Maybrook. Revise to operate on Panama Ln. to Stine Rd. The line will also be extend route to operate to Ridgeview High School southbound on Stine, eastbound on McKee, northbound on Akers, and westbound on Panama Ln.

Line 12 Combine with Rt. 15 on Saturdays and Sundays as new Route 25 to provide service every 90 minutes between Southwest Transit Center, Stockdale Village, Downtown Transit Center, GET Office, and Westchester.

Line 13 will be extended to Wal-Mart on Panama Lane and extended to operate on Wible between Planz & White Ln. and White Lane between Wible & Hughes Ln. Eliminate operation on Hughes between Planz & White Ln. and on Planz between Hughes & Wible.

Line 14 will be combined with Line 18 on Saturdays and Sundays as new Line 26 which will operate every 45-50 minutes on Saturdays and every 110 minutes on Sundays. The line will be revised to Cal State and operate westbound on Granite Falls from Northwest Promenade, southbound on Main Plaza, and westbound on Rosedale Hwy eliminating operation in Target parking lot.

Line 15 service after 7:30 pm will be eliminated and the line will be extended to service the Comprehensive Blood & Cancer Center on Truxtun Extension Monday through Friday. The line will be combined with Line 12 on Saturdays and Sundays as new Route 25 and will operate every 90 minutes between Southwest Transit Center, Stockdale Village, Downtown Transit Center, GET Office, and Westchester.

Line 16 eliminated and combined Line 10.

Line 18 will be combine with Line 14 on Saturdays and Sundays as new Route 26 and will operate every 45-50 minutes on Saturdays and 110 minutes on Sundays. The will also be revised to operate westbound on Granite Falls from Northwest Promenade to Main Plaza and operate southbound on Coffee Rd. to Rosedale Hwy., westbound on Rosedale, and Northbound into Northwest Promenade.

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Transit Updates Continued

GET continued

Line 25 is a new line that replaces lines 12 & 15 on Saturday and Sunday.

Line 26 is a new line that replaces lines 14 & 18 on Saturday and Sunday.

MTD

The Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) in Santa Barbara made several system changes that took effect on August 24th. Below are a summary of those changes.

Line 7 will connect the Fairview area with County Health and La Cumbre.

Line 8 will now continue along Calle Real to El Sueño from Pesetas Lane. At El Sueño, it will get on the freeway, exit at Turnpike, and return to Santa Barbara via Calle Real & County Health. This change will provide bi-directional service on Calle Real between Pesetas Lane & El Sueño Road.

Line 9 to accommodate requests for bus service on Patterson Avenue as well as on Fairview, the Calle Real-Old Town Shuttle will operate as a one-way (counter-clockwise) loop every 30 minutes.

Line 10 the westbound trip at 1:55 pm and the 4:55 pm round trip from La Cumbre will be eliminated due to low ridership.

Line 14 will have reduced service in the late morning and at the end of the day due to low ridership during those times.

Line 15X will have limited service in the summer between the end of UCSB's Spring quarter & the beginning of SBCC's Fall semester.

Line 22 will be modified from 12 roundtrips to 9 round trips and will serve both Orpet Park and the Museum of Natural History on all trips instead of alternating between the two destinations.

Line 23 and 24X will be modified to operate between UCSB to Santa Catalina Hall via El Colegio and will no longer take a circuitous routing with the creation of the new Isla Vista Shuttle.

Line 27 will be replaced with the new Isla Vista Shuttle. This service was created with the assistance of a CMAQ grant that will fund 3 years of service. The Isla Vista Shuttle will run every 15-30 minutes on weekdays and will run every 45 minutes on weekends.



Norwalk Transit System

The agency will be making several changes to their system on September 27th.

Below is a general description of the changes for more details contact Norwalk Transit.

Line 3 will have a major route change including discontinuing service on Pioneer Blvd to Norwalk Square. Several other portions of the line in Norwalk will also be discontinued.

A new section of Line 3 will be added on Orr and Day Rd, Telegraph Road, Carmenita Rd, and Greenleaf Ave to the Whittier Depot. This new alignment will replace a small portion of canceled Line 9.

Line 6 will be discontinued and portions of the line will be incorporated into restructured Lines 3 and 7.

Line 7 service east of Whittwood Town Center will be discontinued. The line will also be straight lined on Whittier Blvd from Whittier Quad to Whittwood Town Center. The frequency on Line 7 will also go from 60 minutes to every 30 minutes.

Line 9 will be discontinued due to low ridership.

(Continued on Page 7)

2008 Day After Thanksgiving Trip by Dana Gabbard

Continued from last month...

At 11:42 a.m. a Van Hool C2045L (#63206) pulled up for the Coastal Express and 7 boarded plus us--at that point it had 21 passengers. As we left it was learned three 20ish types who had been hanging around the Transit Center were asking people which bus they needed to catch to get to Oakland. As you can imagine, this created great amazement at how clueless they were (and seemingly unaware they needed to be in Oxnard to get Amtrak or Greyhound).

We passed parking lots filled with a gridlock of shoppers there for Black Friday. We then went on the 101 and passed scenic agriculture areas before arriving in downtown Ventura where 13 boarded--the bus by now basically had a seated load.

The sea! The sea! We continued on the 101 along the spectacular coastline. Traffic! Traffic! And also experienced gridlock as we crawled along. Spotted along the way was a golf range with teeing area. Only 1 got off at Carpinteria.

Entering Santa Barbara we had 6 get off at the East Santa Barbara Beach--this is a very very upscale area, as a Merry go Round and walking paths were spotted along with Chase Palm Park. 3 got off at Guiterrez/Garden and another three at Santa Barbara and De La Guerra. We passed the Santa Barbara Historical Museum before dropping 1 off at the Courthouse.

Some of us were puzzled at the numerous stops in Santa Barbara. But it appears all these stops before the transit center have been part of the Coastal Connection from the start; after the trip Kymberleigh dug up a 2004 timetable (which was issued not long after CC started operation) that shows them all. Anyway we finally arrived at the Santa Barbara Transit Center at 1:03 p.m. (about 20 minutes

late which was understandable considering the traffic we encountered). 3 riders had to be persuaded to get off because they had expected to continue North to Goleta, but the Coastal Express only runs there during rush-hour.

The delay cut into our time for lunch and some of us made do with snacks from the vending machines at the Center. We also explored all the amenities therein--pay phones, restrooms, a waiting room, information booth, machine that sells bus passes and a change machine.

MTD was running on Sunday schedule the day after Thanksgiving, and we had planned accordingly for our mini-tour of its system. At 1:30 p.m. we caught MTD route 17, a Gillig Low Floor #713 that had 8 passengers. We began going through an area of single family dwellings.

At Cano Perido and San Pascual 1 got off, then two got off at Ortega and San Pascual followed by 3 off and a child at Guiterrez and Rancheria. At this point we passed a community garden before deboarding at the end point on Loma Alta opposite Santa Barbara Community College at 1:40 p.m. Nate wandered off to see if there were any restrooms open on campus in the vicinity. He came back to report they evidently were too far away from our current location to be used without having to risk missing the next bus connection.

After a short wait (albeit in a barren location) at 2:02 p.m. we caught MTD route 5, a Gillig #712 with 4 passengers. During our time aboard it the bus had extremely light ridership, while running along the coast and through the Mesa District. After a stop at Arroyo Burro Beach County Park we went inland entering countryside with a loop by Hillside House, a care facility for people with developmental disabilities.

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Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

Transit TV is back. (why? why?) Transit Systems (<http://www.transitsystems.biz/>), the folks behind the plain white buses that serve the Hollywood Bowl, bought it through the bankruptcy court and are slowly getting the network up to speed. I guess its demise was too good to be true. (why? why?) At least it is running one charming segment that showcases photos of historic L.A. buses.

On la.metblogs.com ("In Which The TAP Card Saga I Previously Ranted About Comes To A Successful (If Ultimately Doomed) Conclusion") a posting noted the comments of a clerk at the City Hall in Culver City that made it sound like they are about to eliminate the stored value option for TAP on their system. With the assistance of Culver City resident (and life long rail and bus user) Ken Ruben I was able to contact Samantha Blackshire of Culver CityBus and confirmed the comments by the clerk were inaccurate. Ms. Blackshire kindly allowed me to post her statement on the thread, and the post author gave his thanks for the diligence in following-up.

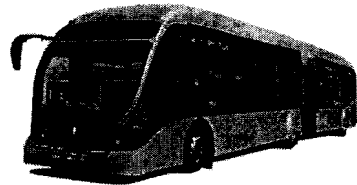
The Signal (<http://www.the-signal.com>) in its August 25th article "SCV moves toward high-tech transit" noted Santa Clarita Transit "saw a 10.5-percent spike in ridership over the past year ... Ridership totaled 4.2 million in the 2008-09 fiscal year, up from 3.8 million in the previous fiscal year ... Those numbers comprise local fixed routes, commuter service and Dial-A-Ride." Considering the dismal current state of transit funding with service cuts happening seemingly everywhere (even for West Covina's Go West!) those numbers are heartening. And at least sales taxes will rebound faster than property values, so local funding should recover in 2-3 years.

Desert Sun (<http://www.mydesert.com>) In-

sider columnist Erica Felci in her July 27th column reported that Richard Cromwell, ex-head of Sunline Transit who left under a cloud, has filed papers to run for a seat on the Mission Springs Water District. Cromwell grandiloquently announced that he was doing this out of concern that the district is "not being aggressive enough" and he plans on bringing "out-of-box thinking and innovative ideas" to the agency. Those describe the sorts of things that got him in trouble at Sunline--heaven help the water folks if he wins. Ahhhh! A tip of the hat to Charles Hobbs who first posted this on the member board.

salary of the month: Santa Barbara MTD Sherrie Fisher, MTD's general manager had her salary boosted 3.92% to \$145,255.00 (retroactive to Jan. 1) per the minutes for agenda item #14 at the July 14th MTD Board meeting.

I'll conclude by noting the latest TAP fiasco--switching to TAP cards is forcing Access Service (L.A. County's ADA mandated paratransit agency) to eliminate from its free fare program for fixed route providers the free travel formerly provided to the personal care attendants riding with the ASI certified users (per item #2 at the August 13th meeting of ASI's Transportation Professional Advisory Committee). TAP isn't flexible enough to accommodate this. Another triumph for the hapless TAPucrats! 🚌 🚌 🚌



Transit Updates Continued

Omnitrans

Effective September 8th, regular cash fare will increase from \$1.35 to \$1.50. Day passes will go from \$3.50 to \$4.00 and other passes will also go up in price.

Time points on Lines 11, 20 and 83 have been altered. The Euclid-D-Sultana loop has been eliminated from Lines 61 and 63 and corresponding time points have been updated.

Line 81 between Francis and Riverside Avenue has been aligned to travel on Vineyard instead of Archibald to better serve the Kaiser Permanente facility.

Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA)

On September 13th, OCTA will make several changes to their service.

The following lines will have their frequency decreased. Some of these lines will be operating on headways of 60 minutes or more: 20, 29, 33, 38, 43, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 62, 71, 72, 76, 82, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 145, 177, 178, and 721.

The following lines will have selected trips cut: 26, 38, 46, 54, 56, 62, 76, 83, 85, 91, 178, and 187.

Line 50 will have a new short line terminal at Los Alamitos and Cerritos for weekday trips coming from the Village of Orange.

Line 74 will operate weekdays, peak hours only with east and westbound trips operating at 6 am, 7 am, 8 am, 2 pm, 3 pm, and 4 pm.

Line 794 will now end at the La Sierra Metrolink Station n Riverside instead of at the Galleria at Tyler Mall.

During the first week of September, buses will return to the Orange Transportation Cen-

ter (OTC). Buses that serve OTC have been on detour for over a year during the construction of a pedestrian underpass at the Metrolink Station. An official dedication was held for the new underpass on August 27th.



SunLine (Palm Springs)

On September 6th, Sun Line will make several changes to their service.

Schedule adjustments will be made on Lines 14, 24, and 80.

There will be frequency reductions on Lines 30, 32, 50, 90, and 111.

The frequency will be increased on Line 70 from every 50 minutes to every 45 minutes on weekdays and from every 100 minutes to every 98 minutes on weekends.

Line 90 will be realigned in the City of Coachella from Vine Ave to Orchard Ave.

Line 91 will be realigned in the City of Coachella from Vine Ave to Orchard Ave. It will also provide direct service to College of the Desert Campus in Mecca. The frequency will also be increased from every 90 minutes to every 82 minutes.



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2008 Day After Thanksgiving Trip Continued

Then we entered Hidden Valley, an area of winding roads amid steep hillsides. We had another loop, this time by the Valle Verde retirement community. The route eventually exited the hilly rural-like area and at 2:33 p.m. (18 minutes late) we arrived at State and La Cumbre, in a commercial district.

At this point Andy Novak and Charles Powell decided to go off on their own to do some personal exploring. Since we had missed our connection with route 3 the rest of us improvised and caught route 11, a Nova Bus LFS #426 with 18 passengers. It had some interesting features - a mesh box holding schedules, a seat behind the driver that required you to step up to sit on it, plus a seat toward the back of the bus that faced the rear.

Our trip along State Street was very productive, with the bus becoming standing room only with every seat taken. It was noticed in examining the MTD bus book that unlike many agencies they use height (45 inches or less) not age as the criteria for children riding free. We arrived at the Transit Center at 3:05 p.m., with 12 passengers discharging at that location.

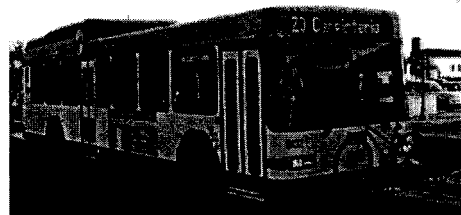
We had now caught up with our trip schedule so we were able to take the MTD route 20 (Gillig Hybrid low floor, #902) that departed at 3:45 p.m. with 16 passengers (plus 2 bikes on the rack). The bus operator was John Jackson. The bus soon filled up to almost be a seated load. We noticed some bus stops had benches with space for only one to sit, evidently designed to discourage the homeless from trying to sleep on them.

Among the riders were a man and his son who had been on the VISTA bus with us earlier; Kymberleigh learned they take their bikes and transport them on the Coastal Express from Ventura to ride around in Santa Barbara. After a brief jaunt on the 101 we entered

the upscale enclave of Montecito--along Hot Springs Road 3 deboarded, on Coast Village one got off and 1 got on. At the last Montecito stop we had 2 get off, 5 get on along with one bike leaving and one bike coming. Then we did one last sprint along the freeway. Exiting the 101, we passed through another upscale enclave--Summerland, where minimal on and off boarding occurred. Continuing south to Carpinteria, the bus now mostly started to unload as we approached the end of the route. We deboarded at Carpinteria and Palm at 4:38 p.m.

We just missed the Seaside Shuttle; Mr. Jackson saying he would have radioed the shuttle if we'd told him we were trying to make a connection with it, a reminder that MTD is one of few remaining operators that still can facilitate radio communication directly between operators. We caught the next Shuttle at 5:05 p.m. A sign above the front windshield noted the operator was named Pat. The vehicle is a battery powered eBus (built in Downey, CA) with parameter seating, large windows and an airy open feeling. Its winding route goes through residential areas of the seaside village. While by now it was dark the trip was still a treat as we spotted and enjoyed the holiday decorations many residents had festooned their front lawns with, the lights aglow in the warm autumn California evening. At 5:35 p.m. we hopped off at the stop in the downtown Carpinteria shopping district adjacent to the Amtrak platform.

(Continued on page 11)



FirstGroup brings Greyhound to the United Kingdom

On August 19th, the FirstGroup unveiled the first bus for their new Greyhound service in the United Kingdom.

The new service is scheduled to begin on September 14th and will be a low-cost carrier to compete with rivals National Express and Megabus.

The new non-stop service will operate between London and Portsmouth and Southampton with plans for additional routes planned for 2010. The service will also be integrated with ferry service to the Isle of Wight.

Passengers book passage for the new service at www.greyhounduk.com and start at £1 with a 50p booking fee.

New 41-seat Scania Irizar buses will be used on the new service. These buses have leather seats, wi-fi, power sockets, and air-conditioning. Free newspapers will also be offered on board the new service. 🚌 🚌 🚌

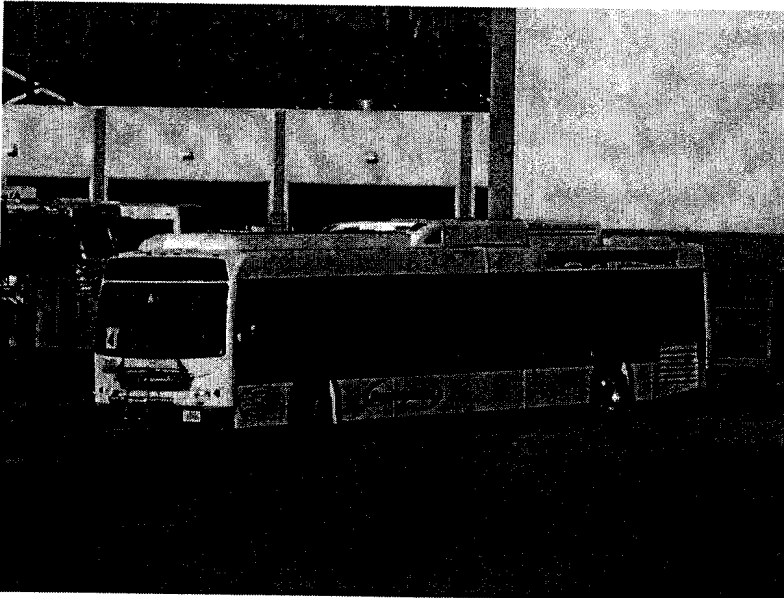
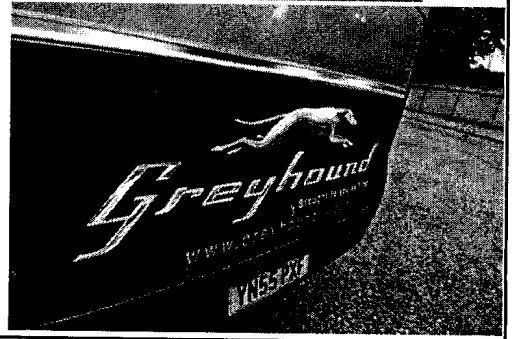


Photo of the month

One of Norwalk Transit's new New Flyer GE40LFR 7087 at the Norwalk Metrolink Station on August 25, 2009. This is one of 4 new buses for Norwalk Transit.

(Andrew Novak Photo)



Transit Updates Continued

Santa Monica Big Blue Bus

From August 30th to September 28th, the following service changes will go into effect:

Sunset Ride will operate every 15 minutes on Mondays-Thursdays and every 20 minutes on Fridays.

Lines 2 & 3: The stop on northbound 4th St. at Colorado Ave. before the intersection will be moved to after the intersection.

Line 4: The stop on southbound 26th St. at San Vicente after the intersection is being moved south to midblock

Line 10 will have a couple stop changes in downtown Los Angeles. Eastbound there will be a new stop on Vignes St. at Cesar E. Chavez Ave. Westbound the stop on southbound Grand Ave. at 12th St. is being removed and there will be a new stop on westbound Temple St. at Los Angeles St. before the intersection.

Tide Ride: On Labor Day, service will operate on the Sunday schedule. After Labor Day, Tide Ride will be reduced from 7-days a week to operate on weekends only beginning September 8th.

Beach Ride: September 27th will be last day of service for this season with the Annenberg Community Beach House being closed most weekends after summer.

VISTA (Ventura County)

On August 17th, VISTA made a series of changes to the network of routes that serve Ventura County. Each route will have minor schedule adjustments to improve transfer connections and adjust for traffic congestion.

The Conejo Connection will no longer stop at Las Posas Park and Ride in Camarillo but most trips will stop at the Camarillo Metrolink Station instead.

The Highway 101 line stop at Ventura County Government Center will be moved to the Gold Coast Transit stops on Victoria Avenue near Telephone Road. (Southbound stop near Citibank,

northbound stop near the Veterans Memorial.) The Highway 101 line will no longer stop at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center on Saturdays.

Weekday service on the County East Line will have commute hour stops will be added at the Park and Ride near Farmers Insurance in Simi Valley (Cochran Street near Galena Avenue) and at Amgen (Amgen Court at W. Hillcrest Drive) and Conejo Industrial Park in Thousand Oaks.

To reduce travel times on the line the first southbound morning trip stops at Moorpark College and Princeton and Amherst, the first two morning southbound Thousand Oaks Library stops and the Westlake and Townsgate stops at 4:10pm and 5:47pm. Passengers needing to travel to or from these stops can utilize Thousand Oaks Transit buses.

The first Westbound bus of the day on the Highway 126 Line will leave Fillmore 10 minutes earlier to provide a connection with the Highway 101 Line.



West Covina (Go West Shuttle)

On August 17th, the City of West Covina made several changes to the Go West Shuttle due to a decrease in funding. Fares on the fixed-route service were raised from 25¢ to 50¢.

The Baldwin Park Metrolink Shuttle and the Green Line extension to the Covina Metrolink Station have been eliminated.

The weekend and holiday service on the fixed-route service has been eliminated.

Reductions were also made on the Red and Blue Lines. 🚌 🚌 🚌

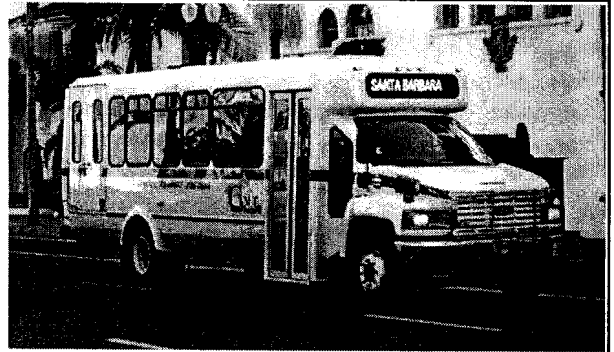
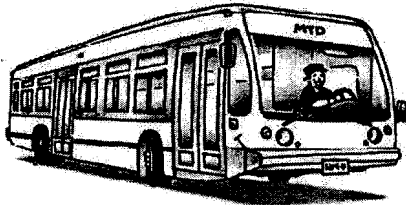
2008 Day After Thanksgiving Trip Continued

During the Pacific Bus Museum tour of Santa Barbara earlier in the year I had at the request of Kymberleigh scouted out Carpinteria regarding dining, mindful that the trip plan she was preparing to propose for DAT had its dinner break there. I was able to find an excellent source of pizza (Giovannia's) down the street from the platform and a famed hamburger place (The Spot) right next to it. We opted to eat at The Spot which turned out to live up to its reputation as signified by the gushing reviews posted on various internet sites.

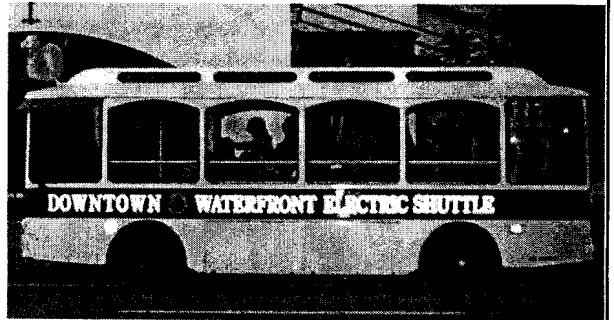
After eating we made our way to the very barebones platform--which had a small shelter and benches plus some parking and a nearby bathroom. Thankfully the message board at the Surfliner stations are now giving real time information so we had a heads up that our train was running late. Andy Novak and Charles Powell were on the same train we caught, and we all enjoyed a peaceful uneventful trip back to L.A. before dispersing our separate ways.

Afterward we sent a thank you note to the good folks at MTD, noting our enjoyment of their service and of our dinner. They kindly replied "Our supervisors, who assisted that day commented on what a fun group you all were! Glad that you had a good time and yes....The Spot is awesome!"

My thanks to Kymberleigh Richards and Andrew Novak for suggestions and corrections that improved this trip report. Where shall we go this year? 🚌 🚌 🚌



▲ COLT bus from Lompoc in Santa Barbara



▲ Waterfront Shuttle near the Amtrak Station



▲ Amtrak's Coast Starlight to Los Angeles

The above photos were all taken in Santa Barbara on November 28, 2008 by Andrew Novak.