

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates  
June 2010 Vol. 18, No. 6

ISSN 1525-2892



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*Santa Clarita MCI 240 on Line 757 in North Hollywood on March 22, 2010.*

*— Wayne L. Doran Photo*



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## ***Bulletin Board / Members in Action***

### **Bulletin Board:**

Our thanks to Shiraz Tangri of Los Angeles Streetcar for a illuminating presentation at our May meeting.

The June 12th meeting will feature a dialogue with David Lazarus, business columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*. This will commence at 1 p.m., with the business part of the meeting to follow circa 2:15 p.m.

Omnitrans has established a memorial fund for the family of Omnitrans Coach Operator Lawrence Kester, who died from stab wounds sustained while on duty on Friday, May 7th. Donations may be made payable to the "Kester Family Memorial Fund" c/o Omnitrans 1700 West Fifth St., San Bernardino, CA.

Save the date: the Mobility 21 Annual Transportation Summit will be held Friday Oct. 29th at the Disneyland Hotel.

Inadvertently part of the DAT trip report was omitted from last month's newsletter. After the sentence "Basically we were taking a long long ride to a far flung enclave without sight-seeing as a distraction" the following paragraph should have appeared:

Understandably our attention turned to the onboard surroundings and fellow passengers, engaging in conversation about our travels and the car we were riding. At 5:22 p.m. we reached Acton/Vincent Grade, where a decent number of folks boarded. 10 minutes later we reached Palmdale and 10 minutes thereafter were at the terminus, Lancaster where everyone aboard except our tour members got off.

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website. We have up-

graded the calendar and you can get an e-mail reminder 3 days before any listed event (the feature is included in the pop-up box when you click on an event listing).

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

### **Members in Action:**

At Brea Railroad Days May 1-2 Dana Gabbard staffed our booth, with J.K. Russell, Chaffee Yiu and Andy Novak dropping by to say hi.

National Train Day at Union Station on May 8th was quite busy. Members assisting with our booth or dropping by to say hi included Perias Pillay, Ken Ruben, Bart Reed, Charles Powell, Isa Kae-Meksin, Alek Friedman, Russ Jones, Andy Novak, Henryka Maslowski, Kent Landfield, John Andoh, Nate Zablen, Jerry Martin, Mark Panitz, Kymberleigh Richards, Jerard Wright, J.K. Drummond, Paul Castillo, Carlos Osuna, Craig Weingarten, and Dana Gabbard.

Jane Reifer's detailed comments on "Proposal for Fullerton Transportation enter Bus Terminal to be Moved to parking Structure" appeared in the Early May 2010 issue of the Fullerton Observer.

John Ulloth had a photo in the May issue of Wheel Clicks while a photo of Ken Ruben and Jerry Martin at National Train Day in Union Station appeared in the June issue. Also in the June Issue were photos taken by Andy Novak at the Metrolink press event for their new cars.

Ken Ruben attended Metro's Blue Ribbon Committee meeting on May 4th and June 1th and on June 1 attended the PUC hearing held at Dorsey High regarding the Farmdale Crossing. Other SOCATA members present at the hearing were Bart Reed and Jerard Wright.

*(Continued on Page 11)*

# Transit Updates

## **Marina Del Rey Shuttle Returns**

From May 28th to September 8th, the Marina Del Rey shuttle returns to the beach community. The Beach Shuttle will operate on Fridays, weekends, and holidays Friday and Saturday operating hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Sunday and holiday operating hours will be from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. In conjunction with the Thursday evening classical concerts at Burton Chace Park, (July 8 and 22; August 5 and 19) the Beach Shuttle will also operate from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. providing direct service to Burton Chace Park. The Beach Shuttle will also provide service for the Sunday, September 26th Abbot Kinney Festival between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The free Beach Shuttle buses will travel from Playa Vista every 30 minutes beginning at 10:15 a.m., carrying passengers to major points of interest including Fisherman's Village, Waterside Shopping Center, Mother's Beach and Venice Beach Pier. Please note that there will be a pause in service between 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. to allow for the shuttle drivers' lunch breaks.

Shuttle stops are also conveniently located near seven Marina del Rey WaterBus boarding locations. For more information on the Beach Shuttle, visit

<http://beaches.lacounty.gov>

or call the Marina del Rey Visitor's Center at: (310) 305-9545.

## **Metrolink**

Effective June 28th Metrolink will make a number of changes to their system. On the Ventura County Line Trains 105 and 114 will be canceled. New Train 907 will operate between Los Angeles and Burbank Airport on Train 105's schedule. Current Trains 907 and 909 will be renumbered 909 and 911. Amtrak

Train 799 will now depart at 7:35 a.m. and will no longer stop in downtown Burbank. On the San Bernardino line, weekday trains 306 and 323 will be canceled. Inland Empire-Orange County Line trains 857, 858, 859, and 860 will operate on Saturdays and Sundays from July 3rd to October 10th due to the summer season.



## **Metro**

On June 27th, Metro will make the following service changes:

- Line 31 will be canceled and Line 287 will be extended to replace the segment between Indiana Station and Collegian/Cesar Chavez. All Line 30 service (including owl) will terminate at Indiana Station.

- The Line 96 deviation to serve the Silver Lake Library will be made permanent.

- Select Line 217 trips will shortline at Hollywood/Vine Station on weekdays and Sunday between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

- Line 333 will be upgraded to new Rapid Line 733 and will operate between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. Line 33 will operate owl service from Union Station (Gateway Transit Plaza) instead of daytime downtown terminus.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***Metro (Continued)***

Effective July 1st, Metro will be increasing bus fares. Base fare will now be \$1.50 and 55¢ for Senior/Disabled (SD). Day Passes will increase to \$6.00 and \$1.80 (SD) and TAP cards will still be required. Zone fare now goes up to 70¢ a zone (2 Zone max) across the system. Prices for monthly passes will also increase. For more details on the fare increase visit [www.metro.net](http://www.metro.net)

### ***OCTA***

Effective June 13th, OCTA will be making a variety of minor service adjustments to their system.

-Line 1 will switch to summer schedule with increased service to handle summer crowds.

-Line 47 schedules on Saturday, Sundays, and Holidays will be the same.

-Line 472 will now travel on Red Hill to Main instead of MacArthur. The schedules will be modified to accommodate this change.

-Line 757 and 758 will now have a timed connection, and wait for each other, at Brea Mall in both directions for improved passenger connections. Line 758 will also no longer serve the Chino Park-and-Ride lot.

Other minor schedule adjustments will be made on the following lines: 25, 38, 50, 57, 59, 60, 66, 82, 86, 90, 129, and 188. Visit [www.octa.net](http://www.octa.net) for more details.



### ***Palos Verdes Transit***

Summer passes are now on sale at PV Transit or my mail for \$84.00. See posted summer schedules and note the valid dates. Also posted, is the summer pass application form which must be submitted along with your \$84.00 payment. After summer school is over, only the 225/226 lines will be running until school starts in September. For more information visit:

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

### ***Riverside Transit Agency (RTA)***

Effective July 1st, RTA Line 149 will become new CommuterLink Line 216 and Commuter-Link fares will apply.

Between June 21st and September 5th, weekday and weekend service will be expanded for Beach Bus service on Line 202.

### ***Torrance Transit System (TTS)***

On June 1st TTS unveiled 10 new gas-electric hybrid buses at a City sponsored event in Torrance. The new buses are built by Canadian based New Flyer and feature the agencies new green, blue, and bronze paint scheme. The new paint scheme replaces Torrance's classic red and white scheme. These new buses arrived during the agency's 70th Anniversary. 🚌 🚌 🚌



-Alex Leungkm Photo



## ***Metro Board Report for May 2010*** by Kymberleigh Richards

You may recall that last month we had reported on the continuing saga of the Bus Riders' Union's futile attempts to bully the Metro Board into setting aside the July fare increase in favor of holding a new public hearing.

As we reported then, Chairman Ara Najarian had announced at the beginning of the meeting that it would be necessary to break into closed session shortly after noon in order to deal with several matters that were held over from the previous month for lack of a quorum. When that time came, the BRU demanded that the motion on the special Board meeting be dealt with first.

Well, we had a repeat performance of sorts this month, and I will devote the bulk of my column to a report on the meltdown of the BRU.

It seems the BRU still believes they have some measure of control over Metro, to the degree that, midway through public comment on the agenda item regarding the 710 free-way tunnel study, Esperanza Martinez went to the podium, out of turn and unrecognized by the chair, to demand that Najarian reopen the general public comment period that had been interrupted by a quorum being present and the Board proceeding with scheduled agenda items.

(Those who read this column every month will recall that I reported back in August of last year that Najarian takes advantage of a parliamentary procedural loophole to convene the Board meeting as "the committee of the whole" in order to take general public comment – that is, comment on matters that are not on the agenda – until enough Board members arrive to form a quorum and allow the meeting to proceed normally. Since the question of the fare increase did not appear

on the May 27<sup>th</sup> agenda, it was this general public comment period that the BRU intended to use as a bully pulpit, and since they had refused to speak without a majority of the Board being present they were now looking at the likelihood of being heard only at the very end of the meeting, when the agenda had been finished with.)

Martinez' demand was followed by chanting by the contingent of BRU members in the audience – about three rows' worth – and went on for a couple of minutes before Najarian attempted to break through the noise and try (in vain) to reason with them. He told them that if they would wait until the current agenda item was dealt with, he would reopen public comment to hear their concerns. Not good enough, said Martinez, we want to be heard right now.

Amidst the resumed chanting that accompanied her answer, the Board went into closed session. From 12:10 until 2:45.

While the Board sat in their conference room, effectively isolated from the disruptions, the BRU ran the gamut of every chant they know. They demanded a 50-cent fare. They demanded a \$20 monthly pass. They demanded 1000 new buses. At one point, BRU founder Eric Mann, making his first appearance in the Boardroom since the 2007 fare increase public hearing, stood up and gave a speech on how it had all started, with their fighting against the first "unfair and racist" fare increase of 1993. He also called the Board's retreating to closed session in the face of their protests both "a victory and a defeat" because "we got their attention" but "we still aren't being heard".

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## *Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard*

Thanks to Ken Ruben I saw an extraordinary bit of news posted May 5 on [Politico.com](http://Politico.com).

"Training day: GOP tries to kill rail resolution" reveals Congressional Republicans tried to kill a proclamation for National Train Day because it contained boilerplate praise of Amtrak. Congress passes this sort of feel-good stuff every day with nary a ripple. I mentioned last night the growing partisan divide at the federal level; I guess this is a symptom of same...

Yesh, developer Rick Caruso of The Grove and The Americana at Brand fame is raising trial balloons again about running for Mayor of L.A. Do we really want Riordan redux? I was especially appalled that in an interview for [businessweek.com](http://businessweek.com) ("L.A. Mall Maestro Caruso Eludes Slump, Considers Mayoral Run") it is noted "He also imagines a monorail along Interstate 10 from downtown Los Angeles to the coast going up faster than a planned 'subway to the sea,' which could take decades to build." I pray if Caruso does run he uses some of his millions to get some advisors who know something about transportation and can educate him about why this monorail fever-dream is a bad idea.

We've discovered former Metro Westside/Central Sector General Manager Mark Maloney is Access Services' new Chief Operations Officer.

Just a spare thought: I hope the Bus Riders Union dedicates the same level of energy to the upcoming Wilshire Bus Lane meetings that they devoted to their failed campaign against Metro's fare increase. At least improving bus productivity along Wilshire is a realistic goal instead of fantasy pie in the sky.

At its May 28, 2010 meeting the Foothill Transit Executive Board was presented with a 4 page update on TAP that is jaw-dropping in its litany of continuing/persistent problems. Metro rather haplessly has asked Foothill to give it 6-12 months to fix TAP. I know some fixes for TAP are finally being brainstormed but how sad only now is that finally happening.

The appointment of Martha Welborne as Metro's new Chief Planning Officer is interesting. Welborne is a can-do type with loads of political connections. I think Art Leahy's memo announcing Welborne's hiring isn't exaggerating in promoting her as someone who can enormously help 30 in 10 to become a reality. Quite a coup for the agency.

I'll conclude by noting the good news via Ken Ruben quoting Gene Poon that Amtrak's Guest Rewards program is now going in house and no longer to be operated by an outside contractor, starting Oct. 1st. The separation often created poor integration as Amtrak agents had no means to amend reservations made through the program. Just the latest sign Amtrak seems to be less complacent and moving to address its long festering faults and shortcomings. 🚌 🚌 🚌



## Upcoming Excursions

Member Paul Castillo has planned a Torrance Transit System Study Tour for June 19, 2010. Below are the details of this upcoming tour.

Start on Route 2 from Union Station at 9:30 a.m.

Arrive at Del Amo Mall (Carson/Madrona) at 10:40 a.m.

Walk to Route 3 stop on Carson St. and take Route 3 west departing at 10:55 a.m.

Arrive Redondo Beach Pier at 11:15 a.m. and take eastbound Route 3 from Pier at 11:35 a.m. arrive back at Del Amo Mall at 11:50 a.m.




LUNCH BREAK at Del Amo Mall

Take Route 9 from Del Amo Mall at 1 p.m. to end of route (Vermont/Lomita) arriving at 1:25 p.m.

Take return trip arriving at Del Amo Mall at 1:50 p.m.

Take Route 3 eastbound from Del Amo Mall at 1:50 p.m. to end of route at Long Beach Transit Mall, arriving at 2:45 p.m.

Take return trip departing 2:55 p.m. arriving a Del Amo Mall at 3:55 p.m.

Take Route 2 at Del Amo Mall at 4 p.m. and arrive at Union Station at 5:23 p.m.   

<http://www.ci.torrance.ca.us/128.htm>



### Pacific Railroad Society's Metrolink Ramble

On June 26, 2010 the Pacific Railroad Society is operating a Metrolink Ramble trip to Lancaster and San Bernardino.

Trip participants will meet at Union Station at 8 a.m. and the first train of the day will be to Lancaster through the San Fernando Valley and Soledad Canyon. After a brief layover in Lancaster we will return to Los Angeles.

Upon our return to Los Angeles we will take a lunch break before continuing on to San Bernardino for the second half the excursion.

To reach San Bernardino we will travel through the San Gabriel Valley along one of the busiest Metrolink lines. In San Bernardino we will be guests of the San Bernardino Historic and Railroad Museum in the former Santa Fe Station.

After our tour of the museum we will return to Los Angeles and arrive at Union Station around 9 pm.

The cost of this excursion is \$25 person and that includes both round-trips on the train.

Checks for the excursion should be made payable to Pacific Railroad Society and mailed to the PRS Museum at 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas CA 91773.

Ticket orders should be in by June 15th. For more information or to arrange payment contact PRS Excursions at:

[prsexcursions@live.com](mailto:prsexcursions@live.com)

or leave a message at (626) 570-0033



## ***Metro Board Report Continued***

At 2:15, Najarian came out into the audience in shirtsleeves and tried to negotiate with Martinez, Manuel Criollo, and Barbara Lott-Holland. Again, he offered to take "a reasonable amount" of their public comment if they would only allow the Board to finish with the 710 item. Again, the answer was no, followed by chanting.

At 2:40, Najarian went back into the conference room, and CEO Art Leahy came out a few minutes later to announce that the Board had decided to continue the meeting from the conference room and feed audio into the Boardroom. That idea lasted less than five minutes before the BRU resumed chanting, drowning out the audio feed.

At 3:00, Najarian came back out and ordered the BRU members removed from the Boardroom. To her credit, Barbara Lott-Holland hustled the majority of them out of the room (Mann had sneaked out shortly after his "victory and defeat" speech) but several remained, seated in the aisle in front of the railing that separates the Board from the audience. When Sgt. Leo Bauer of the Sheriff's Department declared the BRU to be holding an illegal assembly, the remaining members began singing "We Shall Overcome, We Shall Not Be Moved". Wanna bet? Two members were arrested and the remainder ushered out of the room, where they proceeded to chant in the downstairs lobby for another hour before being removed from there as well.

This left a grand total of 16 people in the audience. After some confusion that inadvertently bypassed public comment on two agenda items (both reopened to accommodate same), the Board finally decided it was safe to return to the Boardroom to deal with the handful of items remaining. The meeting

adjourned a little before 4:00; did I mention that, except for the consent calendar and closed session items, the agenda had only eight action items ... which, with the disruptions, took close to six hours to complete?

I talked with Najarian after the meeting and he told me he "probably should have ordered the room cleared sooner". To that I say: Only hindsight is 20/20, and I must commend him on maintaining his composure even during the most trying moments of this debacle. The man deserves a medal.

As for the BRU: I am convinced that these 1960's protest tactics (do try to come into the current century sometime, Eric) erased what shreds of credibility they had left. Between their disruptive behavior reported on in April and this shameful display of poorly-executed "activism" they have created an atmosphere where the Board will no longer take their demands seriously and where they will be subject to removal at the slightest outbursts. And they brought it on themselves.

Oh, And About That 710 Tunnel Item: After considerable public comment, in which practically every city in the San Gabriel Valley, including their Council of Governments, spoke in favor of moving forward with scoping and alternatives analysis (the lone loud dissenter being La Cañada Flintridge, which seems to think there will be increased traffic and exhaust fumes over their 210 Freeway-adjacent city if the 710 gap is ever closed), the Board did precisely that, holding over amendments by Najarian, Mike Antonovich, Richard Katz, and José Huizar to the June meeting as "supplemental" to the process.

*(Continued on Page 10)*



On March 28th, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC) began two new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lines in Las Vegas Nevada.

The first of these two new routes in the ACE Gold Line which operates from the Government Center through downtown Las Vegas then along the east side of the strip to the Convention Center. From the Convention Center the line travels along the Strip, making limited stops, to the South Strip Transfer Terminal where connections can be made to local routes. This new service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The second new service is the ACEXpress C-Line which operates from Centennial Hills Transit Center in North Las Vegas and travels through downtown along US Highway 95. Then in the line travels along Interstate 15 then through the heart of the strip ended up at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This service runs from approximately 6 am to 12 midnight 7-days a week.

Premium service fares apply to the ACE Gold Line and ACEXpress routes: \$3 for a one way trip, \$7 for a 24-Hour All Access Pass or \$15 for a 3-Day All Access Pass.

For this service RTC has purchased a fleet of Wright Street Car buses that have stylish looks.

RTC's next BRT line is the ACE Green Line on Boulder Highway which is currently under construction and is expected to open in 2011.

For more information about these new services visit the RTC website at:  
[www.rtcsonthernnevada.com](http://www.rtcsonthernnevada.com)



*The new ACE Station at the Government Center on March 18, 2010.*

*-Wayne L. Doran Photo*



## ***Metro Board Report Continued***

We Have A Budget And It Isn't Pretty: It's a \$3.7 billion dollar budget, with \$2.2 billion of that being for transit (\$1.2 billion of that being operations, \$301.7 million going to the munis and \$1.5 billion going to local return, debt service and the like). 388,000 hours of service will have to be trimmed from the schedules during the fiscal year in order for the numbers to work.

As part of the budget approval, the Board requested yet another analysis of the agency's structure, recommendations from Art Leahy on further "flattening" of the organizational structure outside of transit operations, a review of the organizational chart to focus on the three statutorily required functions (operations, planning, and construction), and a focus on the LRTP and 30/10 implementation timelines.

The BRU, of course, spoke during the public hearing for the budget and read the same scripts a second time during the general public comment portion of the same meeting. Which makes me wonder if I should have used the next headline for this item instead ...

Like Dejá Vü All Over Again: Antonio Villarraigosa put forward a motion to have staff find a way to develop a weekly and daily EZ Pass "usable on all transit services within Los Angeles County". Although I pointed out in public comment that this trial balloon has been floated before and that the stumbling block is the additional accounting burden placed on the municipal and local return operators, which is why they have resisted any previous attempts at same, there are a few associated points in the motion which are worthy of study. Included are an enhanced pass distribution system, improved customer-oriented websites and smart phone/PDA information

sources, and the potential for time-based fare policies (you can thank LADOT's Rita Robinson for that last one).

Quote Of The Month: Once again, the honors go to Don Knabe, who responded to John Walsh's rant about the soon-to-be-installed quadrant crossing gates on the Gold Line Eastside Extension "racist" (remembering that Knabe assumes the Board chairmanship in July): "You and me are going to have a lonnnng year together, John."

As Super Chicken – not to be confused with Super Pasajera – used to say: You knew the job was dangerous when you took it.



## Members in Action Continued

Ruben, Reed and Jerry Martin attended the May 26th LOSSAN meeting.

Ruben attended the Westside Sector Governance Council Meeting on April 14th and May 12th and also attended the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting on May 26th; also present was Dana Gabbard.

Ruben, Martin Nate Zablen and Jerard Wright assisted Kymberleigh Richards in surveying ridership of Metro routes 902, 233 and 761 on May 28th.

Ken Ruben attended Connecting Communities: A Passenger Rail Symposium May 24-25 in Long Beach. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Thanks to Bob Liebow for the photo below of our booth at National Train Day.



National Train Day - Los Angeles Union Station - May 8, 2010

## The 2009-2010 Transit Guide is now available!

For anyone who uses public transportation in southern California, the Transit Guide is a must have. The guide has a complete list of all the bus and rail transit from Santa Barbra to San Diego.

You can purchase the Transit Guide on our web site at:

<http://socata.net/guide.html>

You can also order the 2009-10 Transit Guide by sending a check or money order for **\$15.00** to:

**Southern California Transit Advocates**  
**3010 Wilshire Blvd. #362**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90010**

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Are you interested in getting your SOCATA newsletter in PDF?

We are now offering the SOCATA newsletter in PDF format to our members.

The PDF newsletters will be available a week before the meeting and will be in full color.

If you would like to get the PDF newsletter instead of the printed version email us at:

[rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com)

**How to join SO.CA.TA:** Yearly dues are \$30.00 (\$12.00 low income). Dues are prorated on a quarterly basis.

**Submission of materials:** ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Andrew Novak at P.O. Box 2383, Downey California 90242 or to [rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com). Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

**Newsletter deadlines** are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 p.m. Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **June 12<sup>th</sup>** and **July 10<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

**June 2010 — Issue 211**



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