

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

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September 2010

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San Diego MTS Super Loop New Flyer 501 on the UCSD Campus on August 18, 2010.

— Andrew Novak Photo



Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Lauren Cencic for an informative presentation at our August meeting on the recent changes in the CityRide program for seniors in the City of Los Angeles. The members and residents of Angelus Plaza participated in a spirited discussion afterward and appreciated Lauren's insight and candor.

The speaker at the September 11th meeting will be Rick Peterson of Amtrak Thruway.

There will also be a discussion about a proposal the Executive Board has for restructuring of SO.CA.TA.

Friday Sept. 24th we will be testing operator's acceptance of transfers printed by Blue Line ticket machines on Commuter Express Route 142. We suggest obtaining the transfers at the Blue Line 1st Street station (35¢). Due to Transit Mall construction the 142 stop is on the south side of 1st east of Long Beach Blvd., which is near the station. Ride any trip between 4 P.M. and 6 P.M. The 142 runs every half hour at that time of day, departing downtown Long Beach on the hour and half hour. Afterward we will rendezvous at Bonello's New York Pizza in San Pedro, 832 South Gaffey Street (one and a half blocks south of where the 142 turns off Gaffey onto 7th Street). We can compare notes while breaking bread together.

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website for transit meetings and events.

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

All dues-paying members are entitled to access the member message board on our website. To request a password send an email to Kymberleigh Richards at:

krichards@socata.net

Members in Action:

Carlos Osuna will be a volunteer at Metro's annual Rodeo.

On August 9th "Ken" Ruben attended the San Gabriel Governance Council Meeting and Public Hearing. Ruben also attended the August 11th Westside Sector Governance Council Public Hearing and the Expo Authority presentation update in Culver City on August 26th. In the very early morning hours of August 30th, Ruben rode the first Culver City-Bus onto the West Los Angeles College campus after the return of service there.

Kymberleigh Richards presented SOCATA's position at three Council meetings: Westside/Central, San Gabriel Valley and South Bay. Nate Zablén did the honors at the San Fernando Valley Council meeting. Our comments for the Gateway Council were submitted electronically.

Present at the LA Streetsblog Re-Launch on August 25th were Ruben, Jerard Wright, Hank Fung and Bart Reed. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Are you buried in paper?

Are you interested in getting your SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF?

We are now offering the SO.CA.TA 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



Transit Updates

Big Blue Bus (Santa Monica)

A new fare structure and two new passes were introduced on August 29th. A new 13-ride pass and a 30-day pass are now available for Blue Bus Rides. The 30-day is available in local and express versions.

Below are the basics of the new cash fare:
Regular Fare: \$1 Local / \$2 Express
Senior/Disabled: 50¢ Local / \$1 Express
Day Pass: \$4 (Can be purchased on the bus)
30-Day Pass: \$60 Local / \$80 Express
13-Ride Pass: \$6

With this fare change Little Blue Cards are now longer available.

For more information visit BigBlueBus.com

Gold Coast Transit (Oxnard)

On August 15th GCT made several changes to their system. Below is a summary of those changes.

Minor adjustments have been made to the following Routes: 3, 4, 5, 18A, and 19.

Routes 6A and 6B have been replaced by new Route 6 which follows the old 6A alignment. Service on the former Route 6B is now provided by Route 40.

Route 10 now provides two-way service on Telegraph Road and will no longer serve Telephone Road or Main Street.

Route 11 now provides two-way service on Telephone Road and will no longer serve Telegraph Road.

Route 16 will now operate every 60 minutes, restoring service that was canceled in April.

Route 18B has been eliminated.

Route 40 has been extended to include stops between Johnson at Hummingbird and Telephone at Main that were previously served by Route 6B.

For more info: www.GoldCoastTransit.org

Omnitrans (San Bernardino)

On September 7th, Omnitrans started three new OmniGo circulator routes.

Routes 308/309 serve the Yucaipa area making connections with other Omnitrans routes at the new Yucaipa Transit Center. This service runs every 30 minutes Monday through Saturday and every 60 minutes on Sunday.

Route 325 serves the Grand Terrace area and connects with other Omnitrans routes in Loma Linda and with the Riverside Transit Agency (RTA) in Highgrove. This service runs every 70 minutes seven days a week.

Route 365 serves Chino Hills and connects with other Omnitrans routes at the Chino Transit Center. This service runs every 60 minutes seven days a week.

<http://www.omnitrans.org/routes/omniGo.shtml>



Aside from the new OmniGo Service, Omnitrans made several other changes. Some changes were reported in the August issue of the newsletter.

Routes 8/9: Now end at the Yucaipa Transit Center. Addition service in Yucaipa provided by OmniGo Routes 308/309.

Route 65: Now ends at the Chino Hills Civic Center. The southern portion of the line has been replaced by OmniGo Route 365.

Route 80: The short line trips from Montclair to Ontario have been eliminated.

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Omnitrans Continued

Route 82: Weekend service is extended to the Summit Beach Loop. Service along Walnut Avenue in Fontana has been eliminated. Service on the line west of Mulberry to Ontario and Rancho Cucamonga has been eliminated on weekends.

OCTA (Orange County)

Beginning in mid-September OCTA will charge \$1 for Bus Books in order to cover the cost of printing the books. Passengers will be able to purchase the books from the driver on the bus. The bus books can also be purchased at the OCTA store on Main Street in Orange, online or over the phone. A postage charge will be added to books purchased on the internet and over the phone. For more information call (714) 560-5932 or visit:

www.octa.net/1busbook.aspx

RTA (Riverside)

On September 12th several changes will occur to the RTA system. Below are a summary of the those changes.

Schedule adjustments will be made on the following routes: 1, 11, 15, 29, 40, 49, 51, 61, and 79.

The following routes have been modified to serve the new Corona Transit Center which opened on September 7th: 3, 206, and 216.

Routes 7, 8, and 22 will have schedule adjustments to improve connects at the Lake Elsinore Outlets.

Route 11: The loop at Riverside, Meyer Dr., 6th and N streets in Moreno Valley will be eliminated.

Route 12: The line will travel from the Galleria at Tyler to Pierce & Sterling using Hole Ave. and Pierce St. and will no longer travel on Indiana Ave.

Route 14: The route will terminate at the Galleria at Tyler and be combined with the revised Route 25. The service south of the Galleria will be replaced by a revised Route 12.

Route 15: The Route will be extended to Pierce St. and Sterling Ave. in Riverside via Magnolia and Indiana Avenues replacing a portion of the old Route 12.

The schedules on Routes 16 and 19 will be adjusted to improve connects with routes at the Moreno Valley Mall.

The schedules on Routes 18, 19, 20 (weekdays), and 41 (weekdays) will be adjusted to improve connections with routes at the Moreno Valley College.

Route 25: will be merged with Route 14 and converted into one new route.

Omnitrans Route 325 will replace RTA service in Grand Terrace along Michigan St.

Routes 29 and 49: will terminate at the Downtown Terminal no longer serving Pine St. and Tequesquite Ave.

Route 61: Service to Haun Rd. in Menifee will be discontinued due to low ridership.

Route 202: a new stop will be added at Highway 76 and Camino Del Rey/Olive Hill Rd. in Bonsall.

For more information visit:

www.riversidetransit.com

or call (951) 565-5002



*(Continued on
Page 5)*

Transit Updates Continued

San Diego MTS

On September 5th San Diego MTS made several changes to their service. Below are a summary of those changes.

The following routes had schedule adjustments to improve weekday service: 1, 4, 13, 15, 20, 30, and 832.

The following routes had schedule adjustments to improve Saturday service: 1, 7, and 15

The following routes had schedule adjustments to improve Sunday service: 4, 6, 7, 13, 15, and 703 (one trip added).

Other changes to the MTS System include:

Route 1: Midday service on Sundays has been extended to Grossmont Trolley Station.

Route 7: Short line trips on Saturday now end at College Avenue instead of 69th Street.

Routes 8/9: Have undergone major schedule revisions.

Route 11: Sunday service has been added between Hillcrest and Normal Heights as Route 11U.

Route 27: Effective Sunday, September 12, 2010, the summer-only Sunday service will be discontinued. Service on Saturday service resumes 90-minute frequency.

Route 30: Service between the V.A. Medical Center and UTC Transit Center on weekdays has been changed to operate on La Jolla Village Drive instead of Nobel Dr. and La Jolla Colony. Service on Nobel Drive and through La Jolla Colony will be replaced by a revised Route 201/202 (Super Loop). On weekends service has been extended from the V.A. Medical Center to the UTC Transit Center, via La Jolla Village Drive.

Routes 201/202: Both routes have been extended south from Nobel Drive to serve La Jolla Colony, replacing the weekday Route 30 and adding weekend service to the area.

Routes 832/833: Sunday service has been added with an hourly frequency from approximately 9am to 5pm.

Route 870: New reverse-direction service has been added, with two trips from Kearny Mesa to El Cajon in the morning, and one trip from El Cajon to Kearny Mesa in the afternoon.

Route 901: All Sunday trips have been extended to operate between 12th/Imperial Transit Center and Iris Avenue Trolley Station.

Route 929: Sunday service has been extended to operate to and from City College Trolley Station, instead of 8th Street Trolley Station.

Route 992: The weekday service has been extended from Broadway/4th to the City College Trolley Station.



El Monte Station Update

The current El Monte Station is scheduled to close sometime between September 10th and the 13th. During the two year renovation of El Monte station, passengers will board buses at the temporary terminal near Santa Anita Street. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

Fact of the month: OCTA CEO Will Kempton's annual salary is \$255,008 with an additional \$30,100 annually for deferred compensation, \$9,180 for a car allowance and \$81,923 in benefits, making his total compensation package \$376,211. (source: online salary database via Orange County Register August 18th article "Pay records online: Transit chief makes \$376,000")

Some attorney named Richard Lee Abrams is cluttering the Citywatch.com website with his yammering commentaries attacking density, evil developers and decrying mass transit as a failure for not eliminating traffic congestion. This guy sure has a high opinion of his opinion and the hysteria makes you shake your head in disbelief. Yesh!

I hope everyone realizes despite all the recent attention paid to TAP and its problems the real scandal at Metro is the misbegotten attempt to retrofit the rail stations with turnstiles. Trust me--month by month all the lies used to sell this are unraveling in plain view. How long before the Metro Board cuts its loses and tells Cubic to pull out the gates? I bet within a year.

A new low for the L.A. Times -- their Brand X culture giveaway posted online a poorly researched piece by Michael Shen on the agit-prop aspect of the Bus Riders Union. Get this --Shen is a transplanted New Yorker who has a blog about cars called L.A. Can't Drive. That is a credential for writing about transit? Double Yesh!

Remember last month I mentioned hearing Metro's route 217 announce its terminus is Washington/Fairfax Transit Hub? This jargon is spreading! When I recently boarded Rapid 750 at Universal City Red Line station, it announced its terminus as being Warner Center

Transit Hub (which like Washington/Fairfax has nothing to speak of beyond a few bus benches and shelters--no real amenities). This is worse than having the phrase "Short Line" appear on headsigns. Triple Yesh!

I'll conclude this month by sharing some memories of my good friend and fellow advocate Woody Rosner, who unexpectedly died last month. He had a hearty laugh and enjoyed life to the full. Many is the time I beheld in wonder his ability to take a fork and starting from the top work his way through a super staked deli sandwich with gusto. He was one of a kind.

In 2008 our annual Day After Thanksgiving trip was north to the Ventura area to ride Gold Coast Transit followed by a trying out the Coastal Express to Santa Barbara and riding some of the MTD service there. We were concerned when Woody was a no-show for our departure from Warner Center on the Conejo Connection. Several hours later after doing our riding in Ventura we made our way to the Transit Center at the Pacific View Mall to catch the Coastal Express. When we arrived at the Pacific View Mall, guess who was already there waiting for us? Woody! When he got to Warner Center and found we had already left decided to catch up with us via Commuter Express 422 connecting with the VISTA 101 at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center. It showed brains and moxie to do what he did that day, and all of us were duly impressed. He was a good guy and will be missed. 🚌 🚌 🚌



Woody Rosner — Remembered

On August 12th, fellow transit advocate and friend Woody Rosner passed away in his sleep from a heart attack, he was 59.

He was four weeks into radiation and (mild) chemotherapy for a malignancy on his neck while continuing his three times a week dialysis. He'd been ill since the end of May, and had been in declining health since the beginning of the year.

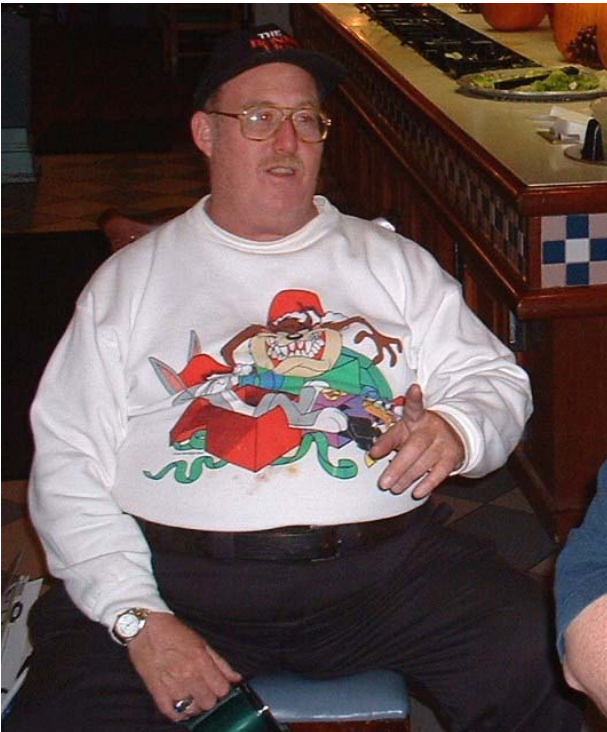
Woody worked as a security guard for many years which was interrupted by a stroke in 1995. After his recovery he went on to become a long-time volunteer (about 17 years) at Kaiser-Permanente Hospital and also for the annual Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy telethon at the local TV station. During one telethon he stayed up for the full 21-hours

and advanced to telephone bank supervisor. Woody also served as SO.CA.TA's election committee chairman and was also our sergeant at arms. Woody also spent a lot of time volunteering in our booths at various events.

In addition to his volunteer work, Woody donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the American Stroke Association, and the U.S. Humane Society. He loved animals and was blessed and delighted with several visits by therapy dogs while in the hospital.

Donations can be made to any of the above mentioned charities and the American Heart Association in Woody's name.

Thanks to Woody's sister for providing addition information. 🚌 🚌 🚌



Misc Transit Stories From 2010

U.S. House of Representatives and Senate Advance Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Appropriations Bills (from APTA, the American Public Transportation Association)

Near the end of July, both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate Committees on Appropriations approved their versions of the FY 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill. The two bills take a slightly different approach to funding transportation programs in the coming year.

The House bill provides \$11.31 billion for Federal Transit Administration programs, an increase of \$574.89 million over last year's funding levels. \$8.96 billion is provided for Formula and Bus programs, an increase of \$576.67 million over FY 2010. The bill also includes \$2 billion for the Capital Investments Program (New Starts). The Senate bill's appropriation in these categories is \$600 million less than the House bill, roughly the same as the President's recommendations.

A difference between the two bills is that the Senate also provides an additional \$100 million for Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) grants, whereas the House instead recommended that the FTA use unallocated Bus and Bus Facilities program funds (those not earmarked) to provide grants that meet the criteria set forth in the TIGGER program.

For Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) programs, the House bill provides \$1.4 billion for high speed and intercity passenger rail - \$400 million more than the President's budget request for FY 2011, but \$1.1 billion less than last years level. The bill also appropriates \$75 million for Positive Train Control

(PTC), a 50% increase over FY 2010, and \$1.79 billion for grants to Amtrak, for operating subsidies, capital improvements and debt service. The Senate version has \$400 million less for FRA but doubles the amount for PTC, the bill provides \$150 million, which doubles the House amount, and \$194 million less for Amtrak.

The House also provides \$400 million for the Department of Transportations National Infrastructure Investments Program (TIGER grants), \$200 million less than last year. (The Senate THUD bill provides double that amount.) Under the first round of TIGER grants, approximately one-third of funds were allocated to transit related projects, so if this trend continues, a significant amount of additional funds could be available to successful applicants, above the amounts provided for FTA programs.

During the full House committee mark-up, Representative Steve LaTourette (R-OH) offered an amendment to the bill that would alter the definition of capital expenditures under the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program to include the cost of fuel and electricity used to operate transit vehicles. The purpose of this amendment is to provide operating relief to struggling transit systems by allowing them to count fuel costs as capital expense, rather than an operating expense. THUD Subcommittee Chairman John Olver (D-MA) objected to the measure, but offered to amend LaTourette's amendment to make \$250 million of Bus and Formula Grants available for general operating costs if legislation authorizing the change is enacted prior to September 30, 2011.

(Continued on Page 9)

Misc Transit Stories From 2010 Continued

With both the House and Senate THUD Appropriations Committees completing their work on the FY 2011 bills, they are now set for consideration on the House and Senate floor. At this point, it is unclear whether there will be sufficient time on the schedule for both bills to gain final passage before adjournment in October for the fall elections. If time runs out before the bills can be considered on the floor and by a House-Senate conference to work out the differences in the legislation, it is likely that the THUD bill will be wrapped up into a larger omnibus appropriations package that includes multiple spending bills, either prior to adjournment, or during a lame-duck session after the elections. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Culver CityBus and West L.A. College by Dana Gabbard and Ken Ruben

There are 88 incorporated cities in Los Angeles county. Each has its own unique civic culture. Heck, in some of them various enclaves and sub-regions have their own separate flavor and politics. It can make for a tasty if at times volatile salsa as these elements blend and collide. As one of my professors at USC Cinema used to say, everything is political.

I wouldn't presume to venture insights into the ins and outs of governing and life in Culver City, but am the recipient of keen insights on same via Culver City resident (and SO.CA.TA Director) Ken Ruben and the acerbic observations of Ari Noonan shared via his online news site The Front Page:

<http://www.thefrontpageonline.com>

Recently Ruben was riding a Culver CityBus when he discovered a notice stating as of June 29th the agency would no longer serve West Los Angeles College's campus. Thereafter the bus stop nearest to campus would

be at Jefferson Blvd. and Overland (a bit of a schlep). There would also be a stop at Freshman and Overland, still a bit of a schlep.

The notice appeared only a few days before the 29th and Ruben was surprised at this action being taken with so little advance notice. He shared his concerns at the June 27th City Council meeting and Ruben phoned the college about the situation. After various back and forth telephone calls, he finally received a bureaucratic response from John R. Oester, Vice President of Administrative Services. Mr. Noonan reprinted Oester's letter on his site.

Some context to the whole situation would include my impression is the relations between the College and the surrounding community has at times been contentious. It seems things are especially unsettled at the moment since the College's President abruptly departed to take the job as President of Pasadena City College. There is now an interim president in charge while the school begins the slow process of selecting a successor.

Evidently the school had been hit with a number of complaints about the change including an inquiry from The Transit Coalition. On July 27th, the school formally requested that Culver CityBus resume serving the campus. The City Council in closed session at its August 2nd meeting discussed the resumption. Noonan quotes Vice Mayor Mehaul O'Leary as resolutely declaring "We will be resuming bus service onto the campus of West Los Angeles College before the start of the semester at the end of this month."

(Continued on Page 10)

Misc Transit Stories From 2010 Continued

Bart Reed attended the meeting and thanked the Council for its actions in facilitating the resumption. Ken Ruben was also present but didn't testify. One Council member, Jeff Cooper, was on vacation, and didn't participate in what was otherwise, a unanimous vote.

The upshot is Culver CityBus is now serving the West Los Angeles College campus as of August 30th (and Mr. Ruben rode onto the campus on a very early #3 bus on the 30th to confirm that service has resumed).

Kudos to Ruben and Reed for helping make this possible. 🚌 🚌 🚌



Bus Stop Bingo in Beloit

During the month of August as a way to attract new riders to the system, the Beloit Transit System of Beloit Wisconsin, ran a Bingo game that was free to transit riders. The bus riders would go to specific bus stops at specific times to get Bingo Stamps. Once their cards were full riders were eligible to win prizes that included flat screen TV's, iPod's and gift cards to local retailers. Beloit's Transit Director Michelle Gavin stated that it is too early to tell if the game influenced ridership, but did state ridership is up from this same time last year. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Western Light Rail on the move

Phoenix: Recently the Federal Transit Administration approved Phoenix Metro's request to

enter Project Development for the Central Mesa light rail extension. With this approval the agency is one step closer to getting federal approval on the 3.1 mile light rail extension and eventually Federal funding needed for construction. Engineering work can now begin on the extension that will run from the current eastern terminus at Sycamore to Mesa Drive along Main Street through Mesa. If all goes according to plan this extension could be open as early as 2016. For more information:

<http://www.metrolightrail.org/centralmesa>

San Diego: Earlier this year the San Diego MTS and the San Diego Association of Governments endorsed Alternative 1 for the 11-mile Mid-Coast Light Rail extension from the current Old Town Station to the University of California San Diego (UCSD) area of San Diego. The proposed extension would follow Interstate-5 North and serve the UCSD Campus and the University Town Center (UTC) mall. If Federal funding can be obtained for the project in a timely manner, the line could be open as early as 2015. For more information visit: Mid Coast Light Rail Extension <http://www.sdmts.com/Marketing/MidCoast.asp> 🚌 🚌 🚌

NCTD Opens new Transit Store

The new NCTD Transit Store is located in the remodeled Greyhound office on the eastern end of the Oceanside Transit Center. The store is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The old customer center at NCTD's headquarters has been closed permanently. For more information contact NCTD's customer service team at (760) 966-6500 or at www.GoNCTD.com 🚌 🚌 🚌



Photos of the Month



*MTS New Flyer C40LF
2610 pulls into the Plaza
Bonita Transit Center in
National City (San Diego)
on August 17, 2010.
-Andrew Novak Photo*

*MTS New Flyer C40LF
2714 at the Old Town
Transit Center on
August 18, 2010.
-Andrew Novak Photo*



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. 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.

Opinions: Unless clearly marked as "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all written material within, including all inserted flyers and postcards, are the expressed opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Sep 11th** and **Oct 9th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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