

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

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Amtrak P42 156 at 8th Street Yard in Los Angeles on April 3, 2011. This is one of four P42's that Amtrak has painted in the railroad's historic paint schemes. Unit 156 represents Amtrak's first paint scheme.

— Andrew Novak Photo

Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Gordon Robinson's presentation at our April 9th meeting on OCTA's transit system study was informative and resulted in a spirited Q&A session.

Stephen Villavaso of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition will be the speaker at our June 11th meeting.

If your workplace could benefit from participating in Metro's employee pass program contact Stephanie Henderson at 213-922-6031.

Save the date: Saturday June 11th the city of Torrance will be holding its annual City Yard Open House at 20500 Madrona Avenue from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

As of June 30, 2011 1-800-COMMUTE, the regional transit information number will be discontinued. Replacements include 323-GO-METRO and 511.

Members in Action:

The April/May issue of Metrolink Matters includes comments Charles Hobbs first posted on Metrolink's Facebook page.

Tom Rubin's article "Los Angeles: The MTA's Bus Stop Strategy", analyzing Metro's rationale for its June service cuts, appeared on Newgeography.com.

Addenda to last month's column: co-founder Steve Crosmer was among those attending the "Steel Wheels in California" RailPAC/NARP meeting on March 19th, held in the Metro Board Room.

Andrew Novak had a photo in the March 2011 issue of Western Transit.

Dana Gabbard and Joe Dunn staffed our

booth at National Train Day held May 7th at L.A. Union Station. Among the members who attended and/or dropped by to say hello were Erik Griswold, Craig Weingarten, Nick Matonak, Bart Reed, Jerry Martin, Chaffee Yiu, John Ulloth, Ken Ruben, Charles Powell, Dave Snowden, Alek Friedman, Dominick Falzone, Perias Pillay, Joe Dunn and Andrew Novak.

Ruben, Griswold and Novak attended San Bernardino Railroad Days, held April 16-17.

Ruben attended the Metro Westside/Central Governance Council and the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council meetings, held respectively on April 13th and 11th.

Among those participating in the Pacific Railroad Society April 2-3 excursion between L.A. and Bakersfield were Andrew Novak (who was the assistant excursion director), Ken Ruben, John Andoh, Hank Fung, and Russ Jones.

Joe Dunn attended the April Green Line extension community meeting in Torrance.



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

Norwalk Transit

Norwalk Transit has postponed the proposed changes that were reported on in last months newsletter. We will report on the changes if and when they occur.

Metrolink Angels Express Trains

Starting April 26th passengers can purchase the special Angel Express Train tickets at Orange County Ralphs Supermarkets.

In mid-May Metrolink will begin offering a \$4 youth ticket (ages 6-18) for the special Angels Express Trains. Since the service began on April 8th Metrolink reports close to 1,000 passengers have used the special Service offered for 7:05 PM home games.

Additional Metrolink changes

Effective May 9th Metrolink will make several changes to their service aside from the two new express trains reported on in last months issue.

Ventura County Line (Monday - Friday)

-The Montalvo Station will be renamed East Ventura.
-Trains 150 and 155 have been added to the schedule.
-Trains 901 and 900 have been extended to the Burbank Airport.
-Changes have also been made to Train 908.

Antelope Valley Line (Monday - Friday)

-New express trains 282 and 285 have been added to the schedule.
-Trains 281, 283, 284, and 286 to Santa Clarita have been added to the schedule.
-Changes have also been made to Trains 202,215, 217, 220, 222, and 223.

San Bernardino Line (Monday - Friday)

-New express trains 383 and 384 have been added to the schedule.
-Trains 382, 386, 385, and 387 to San Bernardino have been added to the schedule.
-Changes have also been made to Trains 300, 301, 305, 309, 312, 320, 322, 324, 326, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, and 337.

Riverside Line (Monday - Friday)

-Train 408 has undergone a schedule change.

Orange County Line (Monday - Friday)

-Train 681 now departs earlier to connect with Train 901 and Train 687 has also undergone a schedule change.

Inland Empire/Orange County Line (Weekends)

-Seasonal Train 857 and 858 will begin operation on July 2, 2011 and continue through October 9, 2011.

NCTD

On April 22nd, NCTD eliminated seven stops on Line 350 as part of the new Breeze Rapid a six-mile route from the Escondido Transit Center to Westfield North County.

The eliminated stops are:

-Escondido Boulevard at 4th Avenue, northbound and southbound stops.
-Escondido Boulevard at 11th Avenue, northbound and southbound stops.
-Escondido Boulevard northbound stop, south of Felicita Avenue.
-Bear Valley Parkway at San Pasqual Road, northbound and southbound stops.

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Culver CityBus

Starting on May 9th and continuing to November 2011, Sepulveda Boulevard will undergo a widening project from Jefferson and Playa to Green Valley Circle. During this time Culver CityBus is anticipating delays on Line 6 in this corridor. The agency is advising passengers to plan for delays, detours and possible stop closures.

The following Culver CityBus stops have already been affected by this project:

- Line 2: Jefferson/Inglewood Eastbound and Jefferson/Mesmer Eastbound
- Line 3: Green Valley Circle/Sepulveda/Blvd. (Northbound & Southbound)
- Line 6: Southbound at Sepulveda/Slauson & Northbound at Sepulveda/Playa

Now through June 2011 construction around Wilshire Boulevard after approximately 7:45 PM on weeknights with effect Line 6. Bus will detour around the construction zone and the following stops by be bypassed:

Northbound

Sepulveda/Santa Monica
Sepulveda/Ohio Avenue
Sepulveda/Westwood Rec Complex

Southbound

Wilshire Boulevard/Veteran Avenue
Sepulveda/Salvation Army
Sepulveda/Ohio Avenue

For more information and updated service alerts, please visit www.culvercitybus.com or call the Culver CityBus Service Alert Hotline at: 310-253-6589



Monrovia Trolley

Effective May 27th, Monrovia Transit will cancel their free Old Town Trolley which had been in operation since 2002. The eight stop free service had operated from Old Town to the YMCA via East Huntington Drive on weekdays from 11 AM to 6 PM. The city of Monrovia plans to re-direct the funds to a new public transit program that will complement the new Gold Line which is scheduled to open in Monrovia in 2014.



Omnitrans

On May 2nd, Omnitrans made several changes to their system. Below is a summary of those changes.

The following routes had minor schedule adjustments: 5, 8, 10 (weekdays), 15, 19, 66, 83, and OmniGo 325.

The agency has made a variety of other changes listed below:

- Route 1: On weekends, minor schedule changes were made at the Mount Vernon/College and E/Court Street timepoints.
- Route 3: Minor schedule changes were made to afternoon/evening trips at the E/Court Street timepoint.
- Route 4: Minor schedule changes were made to afternoon/evening trips at the E/Court Street, 17th/Medical Center Drive and Highland/Waterman timepoints.

(Continued on Page 5)

Transit Updates Continued

Omnitrans continued

-Routes 65 and 80: All Days: Run times have been adjusted to allow easier transfer timing between both routes.

-Route 66: The long-term detour on Foothill between Citrus and Cherry has been lifted.

Riverside Transit Agency

On May 8th, RTA made several changes to their system. Below is a summary of those changes.

The following routes had schedule adjustments to improve on-time performance: 10, 14, 21, 31, 32, 35, and 202.

The agency has made a variety of other changes listed below:

- Route 11: Route changed to travel on Frederick instead of Goldencrest and Elsworth between Alessandro and Cactus.
- Route 13: On weekends alternate service to Hulen & Massachusetts was added.
- Route 14: Improved connections at Michigan and Center.
- Route 16: Improved connections to Route 1 in the evenings.
- Route 20: The timepoint at Moreno Valley Community Hospital was changed to Kaiser Permanente Hospital. The timepoint at Alessandro Boulevard and Elsworth Street was changed to Alessandro Boulevard and Frederick Street.
- Route 21: The alternate routing to Jurupa Valley High School was discontinued due to low ridership.
- Route 22: The 2:55 p.m. weekday southbound trip was adjusted to begin at 2:44 p.m. at Trautwein & Van Buren.
- Routes 23, 24 and 79: Their schedules were adjusted to enhance connections at County Center Drive.

- Route 27: Schedule adjusted for detour at 4th St. in Perris
- Route 32: The timepoint at Acacia & Palm has been moved to San Jacinto & Mayberry.
- Route 33: Now serves the Social Security Office at Devonshire and Sanderson Avenues.
- Route 35: Improved connections at Moreno Valley Mall
- Route 41: Improved connections at Moreno Valley College.
- Route 55: No service from June 13, 2011 through August 5, 2011.
- Route 79: Route has been extended to Old Town Temecula via Jefferson and will no longer serve Diaz and Ynez.
- Route 202: Additional summer service will be added from June 20, 2011 through September 4, 2011.
- Routes 204, 208, 210 and 212: Now stop at University Avenue and Lemon Street in downtown Riverside.
- Route 216: Improve connections at the Village of Orange.
- Route 217: Improve connections with San Diego MTS commuter services. 🚌 🚌



Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

The San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) has been pursuing a rail project linking San Bernardino and Redlands since the 1990s. This would use right of way the agency purchased as part of the giant 1993 deal by which the region acquired the corridors that Metrolink and several Metro Rail lines utilize. SANBAG hoped it could draw on federal small starts funding but the cost effectiveness numbers generated by the analysis of consultants didn't remotely allow the proposal to be eligible (Item #17, April 6th Agenda for the SANBAG Board).

This should have been a red flag warning the project probably should be shelved until such time as ridership patterns develop to make it worth pursuing. Instead SANBAG is taking what it calls a "phased" approach: commuter rail service with 30 minute headways during peak periods, hourly in off-peak. Basically they are trying to do it on the cheap, which will entail sticking a giant straw into existing funding sources at their disposal and likely rob a lot of other projects of promised funding. I fear SANBAG has ribbon cutting fixation--this project is their baby and they are determined to go forward, and to hell with the likelihood it will produce only so-so ridership.

AVTA's Board has decided Interim Executive Director Julie Austin is the perfect choice to have the job permanently with a base pay of \$165,000 (agenda item NB 14, April 29th Special AVTA Board meeting). Given the turmoil that roiled the agency of late and a seemingly fractious Board I think she'll be earning her pay helping the agency recover.

In a bit of a surprise Quentin Kopp, one of the key figures in launching California bullet train effort, has left the High Speed Rail

Authority board. In comments to the San Mateo County Daily Journal he explained his action by noting being on the Board "isn't fun like it used to be." But Kopp promises to continue being a vocal advocate for the project.

In other news from up north, Governor Brown has appointed longtime Alliance for Jobs head Jim Earp and Silicon Valley Leadership Group president Carl Guardino to the California Transportation Commission. Both are heavy-hitter insiders which I guess signifies Brown doesn't see the Commission as a backwater.

Access Services has received news of the first felony conviction of a person impersonating an ADA-eligible paratransit rider and there are four more such cases pending (per the minutes of the March 8th Access Community Advisory Committee meeting). Way to go, Access!

I somehow have managed to have my e-mail address acquired by a gentleman who sends ranting messages to Metro on various complaints he has that are sent to a mind-numbing long list of Metro employees, few of whom have jurisdiction to deal with customer complaints. To his credit CEO Art Leahy responded to this latest ranting with a dignified apology: "Thanks for your email. I apologize your the inconvenience we caused you. There is no excuse to be offered for such poor service. I very much would like to know more about the problems you faced and what we can do to improve our service. We will contact you to get the details and your ideas. Again, I apologize." Classy! Not that I expect Mr. Diatribe to get a clue that his rambling messages make most of us want to hit delete the moment we see them.

PLAC Continued

I'll conclude with three examples of industry professionals in transition:

David Armijo, who formerly was the manager of Metro's San Fernando Valley Sector and then Westside/Central before moving on heading the toll agency in Orange County and most recently hired as the head of Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) in Tampa Florida, has been fired by the HART Board. As far as I can glean Armijo was the victim of a culture clash plus the tensions of when an outsider is brought in to reform an ailing agency. Armijo is for now going the consultant route. My dealings with him back when make me suspect he got a raw deal and that hopefully he eventually will get a chance to again assume a leadership position in the industry.

Stephanie Negriff, Director of Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, has announced plans to retire in October. Likewise Deborah Moraza the Transportation Services Division Manager for the city of El Monte is retiring in June. I only know Moraza by reputation, but have over the years I have had many opportunities to

interact with Ms. Negriff who is a class act and has done some great things at Santa Monica. My best wishes to both whatever their futures hold. 🚌 🚌



Stephanie Negriff Photo by Dennis Finn/filmeye.com



We Have a New Number:
323.GO.METRO

Transit information for all of LA County.

Please note the 1.800.COMMUTE phone number is being discontinued.

Amtrak at 40 - By Andrew Novak

On May 1, 1971 at 12:05 AM, Amtrak Train 235, the "Clocker" departed Penn Station in New York City bound for Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ushering in a new era in rail passenger travel in the United States. This was the first train operated by the newly formed National Railroad Passenger Corporation (NRPC) doing business as Amtrak.

Prior to the formation of the government sponsored Amtrak service, the freight railroads in the United States operated their own passenger trains across the country. During the first half of the 20th Century rail travel was the preferred form of intercity transportation in the United States. After World War II rail travel fell out of favor with the public as commercial airline traffic grew and personal automobiles became more popular especially after the development of the Interstate Highway System. In the mid-1950's railroads began canceling many passenger trains and the ones that did remain suffered due to deferred maintenance of equipment and facilities. The situation had become so bad that in 1959 Trains Magazine Editor David P. Morgan wrote an article entitled "Who shot the passenger train?"

The 1960s did not make the situation any better and two significant events in the latter part of the decade paved the way for the creation of Amtrak. In September of 1967 the United States Post Office Department cancelled most of the mail contracts they had with the railroads and switched to trucks and planes for transportation of mail. These mail contracts had kept many of the remaining passenger trains profitable for the railroad and now without them the trains were losing money. The final blow came on December 31, 1968 when the Pullman

Company ended Pullman Car (sleeping car) service in the United States. Railroads were now tasked to staff Pullman cars on their trains. It was at this time that many railroads ended sleeping car service. It seemed like the end was near for rail passenger] service in the United States.

In May of 1967 the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) was formed by attorney Anthony Haswell. NARP advocated that the Federal Government should step in and save rail passenger service in the United States. This position was not favored by either Democrats or Republicans in Washington at the time. In 1969 the American Association of Railroads (AAR) approved the concept of a government subsidized railroad passenger service utilizing a fleet of government-owned railroad equipment. Later that year senators signed a resolution aimed at saving rail passenger service. In 1970 the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) announced the creation of Railpax, a quasi-public corporation designed to save intercity rail passenger service. May 1, 1970 the Railpax bill was introduced, and after passing The House and Senate, President Nixon, reluctantly, signed the Railroad Passenger Service Act into law on October 30, 1970 creating the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (NRPC). President Nixon, along with many others, felt that the new NRPC would not last longer than two years and that this "experiment" would be the last hurrah for rail passenger service in the United States.

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Amtrak at 40 Continued

NRPC was designed to be a quasi-public agency that is not directly run by the government, but does receive public funding. Initially the hope was that the NRPC could become self supporting. With the operating name Railpax, NRPC, along with DOT, the Interstate Commerce Commission, various railroads, labor unions, politicians and advocacy groups began planning the routes for the new company.

The freight railroads were then given a choice to join the newly formed NRPC. If an eligible railroad chose not to join NRPC, they would have to continue to operate passenger service for five years. At that time they could either petition for abandonment of service or join NRPC. Railroads that did opt to join NRPC had to pay a fee to NRPC. The fee was calculated as fifty percent of the railroad's losses from operating passenger service in their last full year of service, 1970. Railroads could pay this fee in cash or passenger equipment. They could also purchase common stock in the new company. The deadline to join NRPC was May 1, 1971.

Several railroads chose not to join NRPC including the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific (Rock Island), The Southern Railroad, The Denver and Rio Grande Western (Rio Grande), and The Georgia Railroad. The Rock Island did not have the funds needed to join NRPC and continued to operate service until 1978. The Southern Railroad was not pleased with the fact that the new network was only interested in their train the "Southern Crescent" and continued to operate all their trains until 1979. Rio Grande was originally set to join NRPC, but at the last minute decided not to join and continued operation the "Rio Grande Zephyr" until

1983. The Rio Grande Zephyr became the last privately-operated passenger train in the United States. The Georgia Railroad was required by state charter to operate some 200 miles of passenger service in their namesake state. This service was in the form of mixed train service, and the Georgia Mixed operated until the railroad was absorbed by the Seaboard System in 1983.



Above: Santa Fe PA #76 leads a "San Diegan" over Miramar Hill as it approaches San Diego in the early 1960s(Andrew Novak Collection)

Below: The last eastbound "City of Los Angeles" stops at the Union Pacific Station in East Los Angeles on April 30, 1971. (Jay Roberts Photo)



Amtrak at 40 Continued

By April 1971 train-off notices began to appear across the county as the May 1st dead line approached. Many cities and towns would lose passenger service forever as the new era arrived in the United States. On April 19th, the Railpax name was dropped in favor of Amtrak, short for American Travel by Track. Along with the new name a red, white, and blue paint scheme was unveiled along with the classic pointless arrow logo. It was now only a matter of time before Amtrak would be starting a new era in the United States.



On May 1, 2011, Amtrak celebrated 40 years of being America's RailroadSM. Not a bad record for an experiment that was only supposed to last two years. While it has not been easy going for all 40 of those years, Amtrak continues to show that Americans still have an interest and a need for passenger rail travel. To celebrate the 40th Anniversary, Amtrak has painted four of their General Electric P42 locomotives in the various paint schemes used by Amtrak since day 1. They have also assembled a special museum train that will spend the next year touring the United States showing the history of Amtrak. For more information of the 40th Anniversary, visit Amtrak's 40th website at: <http://amtrak40th.com/> 🚂 🚃



On the right is a sample of Amtrak trains through the years, from top to bottom: Amtrak E-Unit 417 on the point of the "San Joaquin" in Merced in March 1976. (Jim Walker Photo) Amtrak F40PH 229 on the point of a "San Diego" in San Diego in the early 1980s. (Jim Walker Photo) Amtrak P42 117 leads the "Coast Starlight" through Black Butte, California on September 6, 2004. (Andrew Novak Photo)



Photos of the Month

Omnitrans 5876 "Old Blue" at the San Bernardino Station on April 17, 2011. The bus was on display for the San Bernardino Railroad Days.

Old Blue is the agency's historic bus and was originally from Metropolitan Coach Lines in Los Angeles.
(Andrew Novak Photo)



San Diego MTS NABI 1011 at the end of Line 7 in La Mesa on April 26, 2011.

(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 : **May 14th** and **June 11th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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