

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
April 2012 Vol. 20, No. 04



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Gardena Municipal Bus Lines New Flyer 719 at the corner of Gardena Boulevard and Vermont on April 7, 2012. —Andrew Novak Photo

ISSN 1525-2892

Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to presenters from the Consensus Group Denise Guerra and Samantha Foley from the Los Angeles to Palmdale section outreach team and Veronica Yniguez from the Los Angeles to Anaheim section outreach team for an informative presentation on the statewide high speed rail project at our March 10th meeting.

We are slated to have a booth during the opening celebration of the Exposition Light Rail line phase one on April 28th. That same day we'll participate in the flea market at the Motor Bus Society Spring Convention in downtown Los Angeles. Thanks to an anonymous donor we will have a booth at Fullerton Railroad Days (May 5-6). And we also will be an exhibitor at National Train Day May 12th at Union Station. Due to a conflict with the latter event we likely will reschedule our May meeting for the 3rd Saturday, May 19th. Volunteers to assist with the various booths are welcome - contact the Executive Secretary at dgabbard@hotmail.com or (213) 388-2364.

Our preview tour of Exposition light rail Phase I will be on Tuesday April 17th, departing at 10:00 AM from Platform 1 (Hope Street side) of 7th/Metro station. Please arrive at least a few minutes early. Hold Harmless Agreement forms (copies of which the Executive Secretary will bring) will need to be signed by all participants. Our group is limited to 20 so regretfully members cannot bring guests.

Members in Action:

Alek Friedman attended the March 29th Westside Subway Extension study community open house/workshop at Beverly Hills and the March 7th Green Line to LAX

connection open house at Union Station. Friedman recently advocated for trash cans to be placed at the corner of Sunset and Orange Drive, next to Hollywood High School, which has a bad litter problem (partly due to the nearby In-N-Out). The city has now responded with trash cans and Alek reports "The intersection looks cleaner now". Lastly Friedman's letter "Reasons to Love the Bergamot Transit Center Project" appeared in the LookOut online Santa Monica news site (surfsantamonica.com). Way to go, Alek!

Pat O'Connor and Nate Zablen attended the April 4th meeting of the Metro San Fernando Valley Service Council in Van Nuys and made public comments.

Ken Ruben attended the March 14th meeting of the Metro Westside/Central Service Council. Ruben and Dana Gabbard attended the March 21st Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting.

Andrew Novak's article "35 years of Omnitrans" appeared in the Fall-Winter 2011 issue of the Norcal Express newsletter. The Norcal Express is available for free at www.norcalbusfans.com



Transit Updates

Anaheim Resort Transit

On April 4th, the Anaheim Resort Transit (ART) began two new routes that travel outside of Anaheim.

Route 18 runs from Disneyland to Buena Park serving downtown Anaheim, Walmart at Euclid, Knott's Berry Farm, Medieval Times, Pirates Dinner Adventure, and the California Welcome Center in Buena Park. The service operates hourly and the first bus leaves Disneyland at 7:00 AM and the last bus leaves Buena Park at 9:00 PM.

Route 19 runs from Disneyland to the Discovery Science Center in Santa Ana with a stop at the Main Place Mall in Santa Ana. The service operates hourly and the first bus leaves Disneyland at 8:00 AM and the last bus leaves Science Center at 10:15 PM.

For more information visit ART at www.rideart.org



Angels Flight

Effective March 12th the one-way fare was increased on Angels Flight to 50¢. Metro pass holders can ride for 25¢.



AVTA

Effective April 1st the Route 1 Express was cancelled and replaced with new Route 10. The new Route 10 starts at Avenue S and 47th Street East in Palmdale and ends at the University of Antelope Valley in Lancaster. There are only seven stops on the line which include the Palmdale Transit Center, the Antelope Valley Courthouse, and Lancaster City Park.



Coaster

For the 2012 San Diego Padres baseball season, Coaster has added some trains that operate during select home games. For Wednesday home games that begin at 3:35 PM, Coaster Train 652 will depart Oceanside at 1:51 PM. For other weekday games that begin at 3:35 PM regular Train 665 may be held at San Diego and depart at 7:30 PM instead of 7:08 PM. For Friday home games Train 675 and for all other days Train 699 will depart 50 minutes after the game/fireworks show. Fridays/Saturdays with games at 7:05 PM, the last train departs San Diego at 10:45 PM or 50 minutes after the last out fireworks show, with an absolute departure of midnight. Trains run only for games will depart 50 minutes after game / fireworks show with an absolute departure time of midnight Monday-Saturday and 5:10 PM Sunday.

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Transit Updates Continued

Foothill Transit

Effective April 1st the Line 272 bus stop on the corner of Baldwin Park Boulevard and Live Oak Avenue, in Baldwin Park, will be removed due to safety concerns. Passengers will find an alternate bus stop on the corner of Live Oak and Stewart Avenues.

From April 9th to April 30th, the northbound Line 280 northbound bus stop on the northeast corner of Azusa Avenue and Arrow Highway is temporarily closed due to construction. There will be a temporary bus stop located just south of Arrow Highway near the Shakey's restaurant.

Metrolink

Once again Metrolink is operating Angles Express Trains to all weekday home games that start at 7:05 PM. Special Train 6502 departs Los Angeles Union Station at 5:50 PM and Train 643 departs Laguna Niguel at 5:50 PM. New for this year Train 899 will depart Riverside downtown at 5:01 PM and passengers can transfer to Train 643 at Orange Station. Train 6503 to Los Angeles and Train 644 to Laguna Niguel will depart 30 minutes after the game ends. Passengers returning to Riverside will need to take Train 644 and transfer to Train 898 in Orange. On Friday nights trains will hold at Angel's Stadium for 45 minutes after game time for the fireworks show.

Fares are all roundtrip and \$7 for adults, \$6 Senior disabled, \$4 for youth ages 6-18, and free for kids 5 and under with a fare paying adult.

For more information and for train schedules visit: www.octa.net/angelsexpress.aspx

Metro

The Dodger Stadium Express has returned for another season for every home game. Buses will board passengers at Bay 3 of the Gateway Transit Plaza on the eastside of Union Station. Buses leave Union Station every 10 minutes, starting 90 minutes before game time through the 3rd inning. Same day Dodger ticket's will once again be honored as fare on the buses. Standard Metro fares also apply to this service. Buses will drop passengers off inside Dodger Stadium behind Center Field. Service will run the same route in reverse after the game. Return service runs until 45 minutes after the final out.



RTA

On March 16, 1977 the Riverside Transit Agency began operating with 26 used buses on six Routes that duplicated routes formerly operated by RTD. The agency has grown over the last 35 years and as part of the celebration RTA will be offering a variety of special promotions. Visit www.riversidetransit.com



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Transit Topics By Andrew Novak

This month in Transit Topics we have a few things you might have missed from the world of transit.

Private Passenger Service: At the end of March the Florida East Coast Railway announced they are considering starting passenger between Jacksonville, Miami, Tampa and Orlando Florida. The railroad has considered starting the service without government subsidy which would make it the first privately operated passenger train in the United States since the Rio Grande Zephyr was cancelled in 1983. This proposed service will defiantly be worth following.



ACES Express ends: After three years the luxury passenger train service operated between New York City and Atlantic City known as the ACES express was cancelled earlier this year. The service which was funded by several casino's never drew the ridership that was anticipated and from all estimates never turned a profit. *(One wonders if this is what will eventually happen to any of the proposed Los Angeles to Las Vegas luxury trains if they ever get started.*
-Editors Note)

CTA naming rights: The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) has recently issues Request for Proposals (RFP) for naming rights for several of the agencies icon special services. The CTA Holiday Train, New Year's Eve Penny Rides, Free Rides for Chicago Public Schools students on the first day of school,

and CTA Bus Tracker and Train Tracker are including in the naming rights RFP. By selling naming rights CTA hopes to bring in enough revenue to continue these services.

Detroit Private Bus Service: 25-year old Detroit, Michigan native and entrepreneur Andy Didorosi has purchased three buses and has begun organizing the Detroit Bus Company. Didoroshi hopes his private bus service can help restore some of the service lost after the DDOT made cuts to there service, mainly night and weekend service. The Detroit Bus Company hopes to start in late April.

Greyhound Moves Station: Recently Greyhound moved their Santa Barbara bus station from downtown, next to the MTD Terminal, into the former Railway Express building adjacent to the Amtrak station. This move came after Greyhound lost their lease in the classic bus terminal in downtown. When moving Greyhound opted not to take the historic "BUS" sign off the roof of the building instead they plan to scrap the classic sign to protect their trademark. Offers were made to several local groups, but Greyhound determined none we deemed acceptable. *(My thanks to Ken Ruben for bringing this story to my attention.)* 🚌 🚌



Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

Usually legislators don't want to overly meddle with local governance issues. But Assemblyman Das Williams has authored a bill (AB 1778) that has the electeds of Ventura County up in arms. What is Williams great sin? Pressuring local jurisdictions to spend Transportation Development Act funds on transit instead of road repair ("Local officials balk at bill to require them to spend more on transit" Ventura County Star March 27th). Williams says he'll compromise IF a countywide transit plan with teeth is offered by the locals. This disagreement could get a bit ugly.

In other legislation of note, SB 1225 and AB 1779 are dedicated to having the administration of (respectively) the Surfliner and San Joaquin intercity rail lines turned over to a collection of local agencies in the corridors much like the Capitol Joint Power Authority which has existed for over 10 years. Both bills have hearings in mid-April and appear to be gaining consensus among stakeholders. The intent is better service and coordination among overlapping services.

Here are some tidbits from the latest RTA Reader e-newsletter:

RTA Board members formally recognized Coach Operator Paul Charles for his service on March 6th when he helped reunite a worried customer with her lost purse. The Riverside resident boarded Route 20 in downtown Riverside headed to Food 4 Less. Inside her purse, she carried \$767 in cash that she intended to spend at the store and deposit the rest in her bank. When she got off the bus, and realized that she left it on board, the woman called RTA's Customer Information Center and reported the missing item. RTA dispatchers contacted Charles

who pulled over his crowded bus at the next stop and found the missing purse. Later that day, the purse was returned to its owner with its contents intact. To show her gratitude, the customer sent her hero coach operator a hand-written thank you note. As a bonus, she also enclosed a \$50 reward.

A new report shows RTA buses handled more than 758,000 boarding's in February, a 15 percent increase from February of last year. Ridership on CommuterLink express routes was up 23 percent and Dial-A-Ride boarding's climbed 25 percent.

RTA CEO Larry Rubio has been named Manager of the Year for 2011 by the California Transportation Foundation.

For some time I have been keeping track of the fate of the original Nippon Sharyo Metro Blue Line cars and whether they would be getting the mid-life rebuild that is industry standard after running urban rail cars for 20 years. It now appears Metro intends to replace them with the new cars they are currently procuring. Wonder if any peer agencies buy them and do the rebuilds. They are quite sturdy and probably could operate at least another 15 years if given a thorough rehabilitation.

Exaggeration of the month: First Transit in its publication "Contracting Transit: An Innovative Solution" claims North County Transit District Saves \$10 Million Annually After Contracting with First Transit. The Watchdog columnist of the UT in San Diego concluded the actual figure is one million a year-ops! ("Bus privatizing savings not as touted" UT April 3, 2012).

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Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

I'll conclude by noting three folks taking new positions in the world of transportation policy:

Moorpark City Council member Keith Millhouse, has been elected chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Southern California Association of Governments. Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (who already sits on the California Transportation Commission) has been nominated by the President to be on the Amtrak Board.

Dr. Raymond W. Wolfe has been appointed the new Executive Director of the San Bernardino Associated Governments.

Good luck to all three in their new roles! 🚗 🚗

Using Metro's Nextrip text message service

Recently I had a chance to try Metro's Nextrip text message service while on a bus excursion. The stop was at the corner of Eastern and Ramona near Cal State LA and several of us were waiting for the eastbound Line 70.

Using my cell phone I texted the Metro stop number to 41411 and in a matter of seconds I got a second text asking which of the four lines that stopped there I wanted to know the schedule of. I replied with my choice and the next approximate arrival time of Line 70 was sent to me. The bus showed up in less than the time advertised, but it was a nice that the service did work.

I have also used the similar service that OCTA has which will provide the next three scheduled departure times. At right is the sign at Eastern and Ramona.

(Andrew Novak Photo)



2011 Day After Thanksgiving Trip Part 2 By Dana Gabbard

Continued from the March 2012 issue...

The bus carried minimal passengers at first before starting to fill up by the time we passed the 94/125 interchange and entered Lemon Grove, soon passing the old depot that is now a stop on the Trolley's Orange Line. We were surprised to serve the College Grove Shopping Center directly by diverting off College Avenue and looping through the mall's parking lot (although the stop itself was streetside amid an elongated series of bus stops as a de facto transit interchange hub). 10 riders got on at the mall stop including two wheelchair users. Only to have the bulk of the ridership get off when we reached the intersection of College and University Avenues. Four more got off at El Cajon Blvd. At 12:47 PM we reached the SDSU transit center.

For lunch we availed ourselves of a Chipotle outlet adjacent to the transit center. Around this time an auto was spotted driving through the bus center sporting a Veolia logo (maybe a supervisor checking up?). Also Dave Snowden rejoined us. It was decided since we were at a Trolley stop instead of riding the final bus in the itinerary (MTS Line 955) we'd finish the day riding on the rails. We took an elevator down to the underground SDSU trolley station and after a short wait caught a Green Line low floor train.

At Old Town we transferred to a Blue Line high floor vehicle and after passing through downtown continued south to 24th Street station where some of our party deboarded and took a short walk to the rail museum at the historic National City Depot. Others continued to San Ysidro before coming north and linking up with the rest of the group af-

ter which we all made our way back to the Santa Fe Depot. Around 5:40 PM boarding began; we were guided by Dave Snowden to one of the forward cars after cautioning us that this would allow us to ride in comfort away from the families with noisy toddlers and kids crowding the rear cars. Robert Meinert had taken the trolley to check out a local shop and almost missed the train back. He had to run and jump across the tracks to get on the Surfliner with about 10 seconds to spare. We departed on time at 5:55 PM (with a very full train) and after an uneventful trip arrived at Union Station at 9:00 PM.

My thanks to Dave Snowden for some helpful suggestion that helped augment the final portion of the report. One thing I'll comment on is the marked prevalence of 7-11s adjacent to San Diego Trolley stops (especially in downtown). All in all it was a fun day. So, what should we do for DAT 2012? 🚊 🚊



Upcoming Events

April 20, 2012

The Victor Valley Transit Authority will be dedicating their new facility at 11:00 AM. The new facility is located at located at 17150 Smoketree Street in Hesperia.

April 21-22, 2012

The San Bernardino History & Railroad Museum will be hosting the fourth annual railroad days and steam excursion with former Santa Fe steam locomotive 3751. The event at the historic San Bernardino Station will be open 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturday and 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Sunday. The steam excursion runs from Los Angeles on Saturday and returns on Sunday. For more information on railroad days visit:

<http://sbrailroaddays.com/>

or by calling 909-888-3634. For more information on the steam excursion visit:

<http://sbdepotmuseum.squarespace.com/steam-excursion/>



April 27-30, 2012

The Motor Bus Society will be holding its annual Spring Convention in Los Angeles. Tours of various bus yards have been arranged. For more information visit the Motor Bus Society: www.motorbussociety.org or by emailing Los Angeles Convention Chairman Andrew Novak at rtd1121@yahoo.com

May 5-6, 2012

Fullerton Railroad Days returns to Fullerton after a several year hiatus. The event will be at the Fullerton Amtrak Station and will be open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM both days. There will be many displays, vendors, and food options. For more information visit the Southern California Railway Plaza Association at: www.scrpa.net

May 12, 2012

National Train Day returns to Los Angeles Union Station from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. There will be various displays of railroad equipment, model trains, and various organizations. For more information on the event and to locate other local National Train Day events visit the website at:

<http://www.nationaltrainday.com>

June 9, 2012

The City of Torrance is holding their annual open house at the city yard. Along with various city vehicles the Torrance Transit buses will also be on display. The city yard will be open from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM and is located at 20500 Madrona Avenue in Torrance. 🚌 🚌



Transit Updates Continued

OCTA

Recently the Orange County Transportation Authority opened a new access para-transit training center in Anaheim. The new center is one of only four in the national and allows passengers with disabilities to learn how to navigate transit in the county in a controlled environment. As part of the new center OCTA New Flyer 5404 has been placed inside as a bus simulator.



Santa Monica Big Blue Bus

On March 12th Big Blue Bus made changes to Route 12. The route will no longer operate on La Cienega Boulevard, Olympic Boulevard or Robertson Boulevard north of Pico Boulevard as per a request from the LADOT. Route 12 will now start and end from Pico Boulevard at South Alfred Street (one block east of La Cienega) and operate on Pico to Robertson where buses will continue on their regular route. The following bus stops will be abandoned: La Cienega at Whitworth, Olympic at La Cienega, Robertson at Olympic, and Robertson at Whitworth

For more information contact Big Blue Bus at 310-451-5444

Sun Line (Palm Springs)

Sun Line will be offering additional service for the Coachella and Stagecoach Festivals during the month of April. On April 14-15, 21-22, and 28-29, Line 111 will be operating every 20 minutes from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Before and after these times, regular weekend service will be operated. Direct service is not offered to the festivals, taxi cabs will be available for hire in the BevMo parking lot at Highway 111 and Depot Drive in La Quinta. For more information on this added service visit:

<http://www.sunline.org/line-111-added-service->  



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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

Photos of the Month

NICE BUS!

At right are Orion's belonging to the newly formed Nassau Inter-County Express (NICE) former known as Long Island Bus in New York. This photo was also taken on March 24, 2012.
www.nicebus.com

-Wayne Doran
Photo



San Francisco MUNI Gillig 2805 on the special N Judah Express Route in February 2012. This route is an express version of the N Judah street car route that operates during peak hours.

-Mark Strickert 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 PM 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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Newsletter Prod. Mgr:	Dana Gabbard
Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **April 14th** and **May 19th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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