

THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates
July 2012 Vol. 20, No. 07



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A three car train arrives at the new Culver City Station on June 21, 2012

—Andrew Novak Photo

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Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Bulletin Board:

June 30th we had a booth in Chatsworth at the celebration of the Orange Line extension. Members who assisted or dropped by to say hi included Ken Ruben, Mike Baron, Dominick Falzone and Dave Snowden plus Dana Gabbard. Jerry Martin-Kosis on behalf of the Rail Passenger Association of California provided copies of RailPAC's Steel Wheels newsletter and helped put up our banner. We gave out a lot of material (including Surfliner schedules), interacted with the public and (courtesy of ally Warren Quon) Gabbard and Martin-Kosis had a chance to try Chili Cheeseburgers from legendary local eatery The Lunch Box. Save the Date: The City of Banning turns One Hundred next year and will be celebrating by holding a Train Festival the weekend of October 19-20, 2013.

On Sunday August 26th, The Pacific Bus Museum will be hosting their Annual Open House and Flea Market at the Shinn Street yard in Fremont, California. For more information visit: www.pacbus.org. In conjunction with the open house the Norcal Bus Fans will be operating an excursion on Saturday August 25th. For more information on this excursion visit www.norcalbusfans.com

Members in Action:

Ken Reuben, Dominick Falzone and Joseph Dunn were at the Culver City Expo line station opening June 20th. Ruben and Dunn attended the Metro Westside/Central Service Council meeting on June 13th. Ruben in early May met Amtrak President Joseph Boardman at L.A. Union Station; Boardman was travelling in Amtrak's business car the Beech Grove (#10001). Ruben attended the May 9th Westside/

Central Service Council meeting. On May 31st Ruben met up with co-founder Steve Crosmer (visiting the area) and shared a ride with him on the Expo line. Dunn attended the Southbay Metro Service Council meeting on June 8th.

Dana Gabbard's letter "Lack of Hoopla About Expo Aside, Remember Priorities" appeared June 18th in the Culver City news website The Front Page Online: thefrontpageonline.com

Ruben and Gabbard attended the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting on June 27th.

Alek Friedman had two articles published by L.A. Streetsblog (<http://la.streetsblog.org/>): "The Good, Bad and Ugly of the New Trader Joes at Third and Fairfax" (June 7th) and "Five Mega-Projects that Will Transform La Brea" (June 19th). Way to go, Alek!



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

AVTA

On June 18th, the Antelope Valley Transit Authority (AVTA) Route 787 began stopping at the newly completed Cal State Northridge (CSUN) Transit Center. The new CSUN Transit Center is also served by Metro Routes 167 and 741.



Beach Buses

The cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, and Moorpark are offering bus service from their respective cities to Zuma Beach. Below is more information on each of these services.

Agoura Hills operates Monday through Friday from June 18th to August 17th and is \$4.00 round-trip. For more information and a schedule visit <http://ci.agoura-hills.ca.us/Index.aspx?page=384>

Calabasas operates Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from June 18th to August 17th and is \$2.00 round-trip. For more information and a schedule visit <http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/beachbus.html>

Moorpark operates Tuesday through Thursday from June 12th to August 16th and is \$5.00 round-trip. For more information and a schedule visit <http://ci.moorpark.ca.us/moorparkcity/xtra/img/2012MBB.pdf>

Breeze Bus

In July 2012 the Breeze Bus, which currently offers weekday service from Santa Maria to Lompoc via Vandenberg Air Force Base, will begin a new bus service from Santa Maria to Buellton/Solvang via Los Alamos. The two-year pilot program will also operate week-

days only and provide three round trips, one in the morning, one midday, and one in the evening. More details as they become available. <http://www.breezebus.com/>

Culver City Bus

With the opening of the new Culver City Expo Line Station on June 20th, Culver City Bus expanded bus service on Line 7 on a trail basis. The service operates every 30 minutes and operates until 9:00 PM.

Glendale Beeline

Effective July 1st Glendale Beeline increased bus fares. One-way fare is now \$1.00 (50¢ senior/disabled). The express fares remain the same for Routes 11-12. The 31-Day passes and 10-ride cards prices also increased. Transfer prices, both local and interagency remain the same. Along with the fare increase Beeline issued new timetables for Routes 1, 2, 3, (31-32), 33/34, 6, 7, 11, and 12 making minor improvements to running time for each of the routes. These changes are also expected to improve on-time performance.

For more information visit:
www.GlendaleBeeline.com
or call 818-548-3960.



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Transit Updates Continued

Long Beach Transit

Effective June 3rd Long Beach Transit made several changes to their bus service. Below is a list of those changes:

Passport Service: Route C had a slight service increase while Routes A&D had a slight service decrease.

Route 96 ZAP is on hiatus until fall.

Routes 61, 91, 92, 93, 94, 111, 112, and 171 had a slight service reductions due to lower ridership in the summer months.

The AquaBus and AquaLink/AquaLink Express services are operating until September 30th.

For more information visit <http://www.lbtransit.com/> or call 562-591-2301.



Metrolink

Along with the fare increase that took effect on July 2nd, Metrolink also made several service changes. Below is a summary of those changes. Schedule changes were made to the following weekday trains: 112, 201, 282, and 318.

On the San Bernardino Line the following weekend trains will depart intermediate stations at different times: 352, 354, 356, 358, 362, 364, 368, 372, and 378.

Metrolink also added service to the Orange County Line. New Trains 633 and 635 were added from Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo to Fullerton departing at 8:50 AM and 11:30 AM respectively. New Trains 632 and 634 depart Fullerton to return to Laguna Niguel at 10:00 AM and 1:35 PM respectively. On

weekends two additional round-trips have been added from Los Angeles to Oceanside. These trains are designed to connect with the Coaster Service in Oceanside. Passengers can purchase Coaster tickets and continue to San Diego.

Changes to the Inland Empire/Orange County line include the addition of one round-trip from Riverside-Downtown to Laguna Niguel during the week. Also during the week Train 808 had minor schedule adjustments. On weekends an addition round-trip was added from San Bernardino to Oceanside, Trains 857 and 858, and these two new trains along with existing beach trains 859 and 860 will now operate year round. Train 860 had a minor schedule adjustment.

METROLINK

NCTD (Oceanside)

On June 24th the North County Transit District (NCTD) made several changes to their bus service. Below is a list of those changes:

- Route 101: trips terminating at V.A. Medical Center were extended to a new terminal on University Center Drive north of Nobel Drive.

- Route 308: The last eastbound bus from Solana Beach was adjusted ensure connection from northbound Route 101 bus.

- Route 311: One trip was added at 5:04 AM northbound from North River/Douglas to Town Center North. It is interlined with the southbound Route 315 trip to College Station. Selected trips which operate during school year will not operate during summer months.

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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.

CCW Battery Bus: Complete Coach Works (CCW) of Riverside recently unveiled a new Zero-Emission Propulsion System (ZEPS) on a refurbished transit bus. CCW expects the electric bus to have a range of 120-150 miles. For the first demo, CCW converted former Long Beach Transit New Flyer 9402 which was previously powered by diesel fuel. CCW plans to offer the ZEPS system in refurbished transit buses at half the cost of a new electric bus.





Proterra Bus: Proterra and the San Joaquin Regional Transit District (SJRTD) in Stockton have recently partnered to bring battery powered buses to Stockton. Using grant money Proterra will be providing two new EcoRide BE35 battery-electric buses and an automated fastcharging station at the downtown transit center as part of a project. Foothill Transit currently operates similar buses on Line 291 in Pomona and has had success with the Proterra buses.

Phoenix People Mover: A new automated People Mover (PHX Sky Train) connecting Terminal 4 at Phoenix's Sky Harbor Airport with the Valley Metro Light Rail has made its first test runs. Stage One of the project is scheduled to open in early 2013 and will

connect with the light rail at the 44th and Washington Station. Stage One will also include service to the East Economy Parking lot. Future stages will include service to Terminal 3 and the Car Rental Terminal by 2015. Once open the PHX Sky Train will be free of charge and operate seven days and week, 365 days a year.



Megabus: On June 19th low cost bus carrier Megabus began operations in Texas. The service operates from Dallas/Fort Worth and San Antonio to Houston, Austin, New Orleans, Little Rock, Memphis, Norman and Oklahoma City. Passengers can book Megabus seats for as low as \$1.00 (plus 50¢ transaction fee). The low cost carrier has had success in the Midwest and northeast portions of the country. Stagecoach, owners of Megabus, have recently acquired several properties from bankrupt Coach America with plans of bringing Megabus hubs to various cities in the west including Anaheim and Portland. For more: megabus.com  



Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

As Ken Ruben & I were waiting after the Orange Line celebration in Chatsworth to catch a bus to North Hollywood June 30th we encountered Channel 11 reporter Hal Eisner who was seeking interviews with bus riders about whether stops are too widely separated. What was motivating Eisner's line of questioning? Turns out Los Angeles Councilman Mitchell Englander has voiced concern about his constituents having to walk too far to get to bus stops. I have an inquiry in to the Councilman's office seeking details about what actions (if any) he is contemplating and/or council motions he is hoping to advocate for.

They have peculiar politics in the San Gabriel Valley. This is no revelation, just a simple observation based on my years following the local transportation scene. The latest example of this is the hue and cry being set up that the Measure R extension proposal would not fund the Foothill Gold Line extension past Azusa to reach Claremont. The whole purpose of the extension is to facilitate bonding to accelerate the existing R project list. Re-opening the project list would create a huge battle. Plus these folks are bellyaching about a project with horrible numbers. Otherwise why are they unable to obtain funding themselves despite all their talk of earmarks etc. over the years? All the political mojo they mustered was unable to overcome what a sorry excuse of a project it is. And they are overlooking once all the projects on the list are done Measure R will be able to fund new projects via the Long Range Plan process. Of course how well (or not) their project would compete in a fair evaluation of performance might be why they are taking the yell loud to get their way approach...

Speaking of hue and cry, some advocates for the disabled are crying fowl as Access Services informs agencies that are part of the free fare program that it will not reimburse the rides of Personal Care Attendants (PCAs), leading a number of agencies to announce they will no longer give PCAs free rides. From my understanding Access has never reimbursed agencies for carrying attendants. More accurate ridership counts facilitated by improved firebox coding had encouraged agencies to start seeking per person reimbursement from Access for the free fare program versus the flat rate approach many took in the past. This plus the fraud that has been documented where agencies that allowed PCAs to ride free were discovering in many cases the "Attendant" was actually someone who had paid (somewhat less than the fare) to the disabled person who had solicited money to provide a ride via this deception led to the change in policy. Complaining this is punishing everyone for "a few bad apples" avoids the unhappy fact this was a loophole that had to be closed.

The Access Service Board at its April 23rd meeting (item #7-d) had a very interesting report on CorVel, which investigates legal claims made against the agency: "To date, CorVel has done an excellent job investigating and resolving claims in an expeditious and fair manner and also protecting the agency against numerous false or exaggerated claims. In many instances, CorVel has settled cases well below the demands of plaintiffs' attorneys. Overall, in the first year of the SIR (June 2009-June 2010), CorVel investigated 361 claims against the Agency

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Public and Legislative Affairs Continued

and has closed 341 of them. In the second year of the SIR (June 2010-June 2011), CorVel investigated 286 claims against the Agency and has closed 244 of them. In the current year, CorVel has investigated 161 claims against the Agency through March 1st and, we estimate, will investigate around 220 claims through the end of the SIR year". WOW!

The Metro Inspector General Activities Report to the Metro Executive Management Committee January 19th meeting has an item (#42) that left me dumbfounded:

The OIG received information that a Metro Machinist Leader was selling motorcycle parts, which he fabricated during Metro duty hours using Metro equipment and materials. We searched the Machinist Leader's work area, and found evidence that the Machinist Leader was using Metro time, equipment, and materials to fabricate precision motorcycle suspension parts for sale, and refurbish motorcycle parts.

The Machinist Leader had his own website to promote the sale of motorcycle suspension parts. Postings on this site confirmed that he was fabricating parts at Metro and selling them. The Machinist Leader's actions violated Metro policy and the Metro Employee Code of Conduct, which prohibit the use of any Metro time and assets for personal gain. When the Machinist Leader, a 29 year veteran of Metro, was confronted with the investigative evidence, he retired with disciplinary charges pending. The Metro Human Resources records have been annotated to show that this employee is ineligible for re-hire.

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune in its July 2nd article "Construction authority attempts to

separate from troubled regional agency" reports the Alameda Corridor East Authority (dedicated to funding and constructing grade separations for streets crossings along busy freight rail lines in the inland empire) is in the midst of separating from the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments to become a stand alone entity. This is while SGVCOG Executive Director Nicholas Conway is on administrative leave, with four felony counts of conflict of interest pending based on his consulting firm Arroyo Associates Inc. obtaining grants which are alleged to have been to his own financial benefit. My sole observation is Mr. Conway seems to have no friends to speak up for him and is seemingly being given the bum's rush. The one time I had dealings with Mr. Conway he said things at variance with reality to suit the agenda of his region. Maybe he walked a tightrope and has finally stumbled? As I said above, they have peculiar politics in the San Gabriel Valley.

Member Charles Powell brought to my attention refundtransit.org, which advocates an end to banks making use of variable/fixed rate swap deals to plunder transit agencies of millions. The feds helped create this mess and so far have ducked responsibility. Maybe this campaign will finally force the issue.

I'll conclude by noting George Huckaby Jr., a model railroad supplier and retired aerospace and aircraft engineer from Los Angeles, has been elected President/CEO of the Orange Empire Railway Museum. This is an exciting time for OERM as the Library Building project is drawing near to starting construction. Good luck to Mr. Huckaby in moving forward the project. 🚂 🚂

Transit Updates Continued

NCTD Continued

-Route 315: The existing 5:13 AM southbound trip from Vandegrift-Douglas will be adjusted to 5:24 AM leaving Town Center North. The existing portion of this trip from Vandegrift-Douglas to Town Center North will be operated on Route 311.

-Route 323: The 4:34 AM northbound trip from Quarry Creek Plaza and 5:01 AM southbound trip from College Boulevard SPRINTER station were eliminated due to low ridership.

-Route 351-352: From the Escondido Transit center Route 352 now travels north on Quince Street, then east on Washington Avenue to Escondido Boulevard.

-Route 353: New half hourly service on Sundays and holidays between Escondido Transit Center and Nordahl Marketplace (Wal-Mart/Costco). The route will serve the Palomar Medical Center when it opens. The east and west buses will now use stalls 10 & 11 (respectively) at Escondido Transit Center.

-Route 354: The route was modified in Escondido. The bus will also pick up at stall 9 at Escondido Transit Center.

-Route 358-359: From the Escondido Transit center the route now travels north on Quince Street, then east on Washington Avenue to Broadway

-FLEX 370 Ramona Local: The Tuesday-only service was discontinued due to low-ridership.

-FLEX 373 Southwest Carlsbad: May operate with contracted vehicle (taxis) instead of with branded NCTD FLEX vehicles.

-FLEX Encinitas-Solana Beach 374: This is a new general-public demand response service serving southeast Encinitas and western Solana Beach. It is a weekday only service operating between 4:50 AM and 8:30 PM.

Like the 373 it may operate with contracted vehicle (taxis).

Minor Schedule adjustments were made to the follow routes: 302, 303, 316, 318, and 334-335.

Minor schedule adjustments were made to the follow routes to improve connections with Coaster Trains: 313.

Pasadena ARTs

From June 20th until August 22nd, Pasadena ARTS Route 20 (Clockwise) will have extended service on Wednesdays to accommodate the Levitt Pavilion. The 8:18 PM bus will make a midblock stop between Raymond and Marengo next to the stairs leading from the grassy area in Levitt Pavilion. The 8:20 PM departure on Route 20 will travel the Route 20 (Clockwise) and passengers can exit the bus at any stop on the route. The 8:42 PM departure will end southbound at Lake and Washington.

Santa Barbara MTD

Effective July, 2nd, the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District made the following service changes to various shuttle services. These changes come as a result of the State's elimination of Redevelopment Agencies which reduced the amount of funding for these services.

-Fare for the Downtown-Waterfront shuttle and the Seaside Shuttle in Carpinteria is now 50¢.

-The Carrillo Lot Commuter Shuttle has been discontinued.

-Midday service was reduced on the Cross-town Shuttle.

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Transit Updates Continued

San Diego MTS

On June 10th, San Diego MTS made the following service changes:

- Route 7: Buses operate every 12 minutes on weekends. The tripper service on weekday afternoons has been suspended for the summer.
- Routes 8-9: Service operates every 15 minutes during the summer, all week.
- Route 20: Service was added on weekday afternoons from Mira Mesa to downtown San Diego.
- Route 27: The frequency has been increased to hourly on Saturday and hourly service has been added Sundays and holidays through Labor Day.
- Route 30: Weekend service between Old Town and Pacific Beach has been increased to every 15 minutes and other schedule adjustments were made.
- Route 44: The extra weekday morning trips to Mesa College will not during the summer.

-Route 204: This is a new service operating an eastern segment of the SuperLoop in University City. Route 204 trips will be combined with Routes 201 and 202 to provide through-service between UCSD and eastern University City.

-Route 810: One round-trip was added due to ridership increases along with other schedule changes.

-Route 854: Route 854X trips have reduced during the summer and now operate during peak hours only.

-Route 880: Minor schedule adjustments were made to the morning service. 🚏 🚏



LA Metro Service Changes

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) made a number of changes to their service on June 17, 2012. Due to space constraints we were unable to cover those changes in this issue, however we will have them in the August 2012 issue.

At left is Metro NABI 8266 at Sherman Way and Woodley on June 17, 2012. This is the first bus to operate on new Line 162.

Photo courtesy of San Fernando Valley Transit Insider
<http://www.transit-insider.org>

Three weekends, Four Events By Dana Gabbard

Continued from last month...

It was edifying to note the event hasn't suffered from its being held irregularly (and even once in Brea) these past few years. Lots of families attending and folks obviously having fun. The model railroad displays were thronged and the row of food booths on the north end was very popular. The line to see the BNSF locomotive and the Disney railcars were never short. And thankfully the Boy Scouts, who had a food booth, came around with a wagon selling hot dogs and cold water to vendors. Thank you! Thank you!

I gave out a lot of material and had some very interesting conversations with our members and attendees. I spent Saturday night at the hotel then checked out and spent Sunday working the booth. The train back to L.A. Sunday evening was packed just like the one down on Friday. Via the Purple Line and a short bus ride I got home and got some rest.

During the subsequent week I started getting a bad case of the blahs -- flu-like body aches, exhaustion, slight fever. But like a trooper on the 12th I piled the chair and giveaway materials into a minivan taxi for the short trip to Union Station (I didn't bring the banner since I have found the venue for National Train Day doesn't really have any good place to mount it). I filled the table with all sorts of rail literature and in the ensuing hours gave away about 80% of it. It was another well attended event where people were obviously having a good time.

A number of members helped me with the booth, which was especially appreciated as for the last hour or so I was struck with aching eyes that I could hardly open due to the

blahs. Tired but happy with help from Kent Landfield and Joe Dunn I made my way to the subway and after a final short bus ride was home and could take a load off.

A big thanks to the 4 entities who put on the events we participated in: Metro, Motor Bus Society, Southern California Railway Plaza Association and Amtrak. And also all the groups that donated materials we gave out: Coast Rail Coordinating Council, National Association of Railroad Passengers, Pacific Bus Museum, Fillmore & Western Railroad, Rail Users Network, Rail Passenger Association of California, Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency and Kalmbach.

Our remaining outreach efforts this year entail booths at the Orange Line Extension opening Saturday June 30th (Chatsworth Train Station) and South Pasadena Clean-Air Car Show & Green-Living Expo Sunday Sept. 16th. Drop by and say hi. And marvel at my sturdy stupor chair! 🚗 🚗



Dana and Ken at the SOCATA table during the Orange Line extension opening on June 30, 2012. Photo by Jerry Martin-Kosis

Photos of the Month

*OCTA New Flyer 5397
at the Santa Ana
Transit Terminal on
May 19, 2008.*

*Happy 40th Anniver-
sary OCTA!*

-Andrew Novak Photo



*AVTA Gillig 304 at the
Palmdale Transit Center on
June 13, 2006.*

*Happy 20th Anniver-
sary AVTA!*

-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 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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NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **July 14th** and **Aug 11th** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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