

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

**Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates**  
**October 2013** **Vol. 21, No. 10**



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*Disneyland Resort Express Van Hool 66189 in  
Anaheim on September 26, 2013.*

*—Andrew Novak Photo*

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## Bulletin Board / Members in Action

### Bulletin Board:

Our thanks to Martha Butler of Metro for an illuminating presentation at our September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting on the status of the Wilshire bus lane project. The October 12<sup>th</sup> speaker is Linda Culp of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency. Patrick Tomcheck of Los Angeles World Airports is the speaker at the November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting about what is happening with FlyAway. The holiday banquet will be held at Taix (1911 West Sunset Boulevard just east of Alvarado) on Saturday December 14<sup>th</sup> starting at 5:00 PM.

At the September meeting the by-laws change proposal was adopted after a spirited discussion. The new by-laws will take effect January 1<sup>st</sup> and should be posted shortly on our website. As of January 1<sup>st</sup> our officers consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and a Secretary with the Newsletter editor and webmaster as ex-officios of the Executive Board. There will be at least two monthly meetings per year (November for nominations and December for the election) along with community events, panels, transit service study tours (including the Day After Thanksgiving), and tours of transit facilities. The Executive Secretary welcomes suggestions as we lay out the first year of this new paradigm: 213.388.2364 or [dgabbard@hotmail.com](mailto:dgabbard@hotmail.com)

In addition at the September meeting we approved a motion by Director J.K. Drummond to support the effort by the city of Long Beach to have signal prioritization for the street running portion of the Blue Line in Long Beach. We will shortly communicate this to the city.

Hopstop Live! is an I-phone app to facilitate transit users sharing information about service plus maps, schedules etc.; another app (for I-phone or Android) that does this is Moovit.

### Members in Action:

September 11<sup>th</sup> Ken Ruben and Alek Friedman attended the Metro Westside/Central Service Council meeting. Friedman spoke in support of preserving Rapid 704 all-day, 7-days-a-week service. Presentations indicate Metro is no longer considering cutting midday and weekend service, which Friedman is quite pleased about.

Ruben also attended the Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency Board meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup>, saw the free aspect of the Station to Station train event at Union Station on September 26<sup>th</sup> and saw the train itself at Glendale station on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Ruben along with Dana Gabbard attended the September 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting. 🚆 🚆



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*We now offer the SO.CA.TA newsletter in  
PDF format to our members. The PDF  
newsletters are available a week before  
the meeting and are in full color. If you  
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stead of the printed version email us at:*

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# Transit Updates

## Amtrak

Effective October 7<sup>th</sup>, several Amtrak Pacific Surfliners train began stopping at several Coaster stations between Oceanside and San Diego. Previously these stations were only served by Coaster trains. Northbound Amtrak Trains 567, 573 and 595 and southbound trains 784, 790/1790 and 796 are now stopping at Sorrento Valley, Encinitas, Carlsbad/Poinsettia and Carlsbad/Village. Passengers holding Coaster tickets can ride those previously mentioned Amtrak Trains within the limits of their ticket without an additional fee. Amtrak fares are required on all other Amtrak Trains and there is no longer a Coaster step-up ticket.

For more information contact Amtrak at 800.872.7245 or online at: [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)



## Big Blue Bus

Starting September 30<sup>th</sup> Route 5 has been moved from Colorado Avenue to Broadway between 20<sup>th</sup> Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street due to Expo Line construction. New stops on Broadway are at 20<sup>th</sup> Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Street (eastbound only), 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Lincoln Boulevard. There will be an additional stop at 17<sup>th</sup> Street that is coming soon. All of these stops on Broadway are located east of the crosswalk and intersection.

## Foothill Transit

Effective October 7<sup>th</sup> the new City of Industry Park and Ride lot opened. The new facility is located at 500 South Brea Canyon Road is adjacent to the City of Industry Metrolink Station. The new parking structure has 622 parking spaces (422 reserved for Foothill Transit customers), lighting, emergency assistance phones, bike racks, video surveillance and security. The structure is open from 4:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Foothill Lines 493 and 497 serve the new park and ride and in November 2013 will provide all day service to the new facility.

For more information contact visit Foothill Transit online at: [www.foothilltransit.org](http://www.foothilltransit.org) or email at: [info@foothilltransit.org](mailto:info@foothilltransit.org)



## LADOT

Effective October 6<sup>th</sup> the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) will make a schedule adjustment to the DASH Wilshire Center/Koreatown route to improve the on-time performance of the line. The service still operates every 20 minutes however the arrival times have changed.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***LADOT Continued***

Effective October 7<sup>th</sup> the east and west-bound stops at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Flower have been eliminated on DASH Route D due to a lack of ridership and the frequency will be increased to every 5 minutes on this line.

For more information contact LADOT at 818, 323, 310, 213.808.2273 or online at:

[www.ladottransit.com](http://www.ladottransit.com)

### ***Metrolink***

Effective September 30<sup>th</sup> Metrolink made the following changes to their service.

Ventura County Line/Burbank Airport:

-Trains 102, 106, 108, 110 and 902 arrive at Union Station later

-Train 101 departs Union Station later

Antelope Valley Line:

-Trains 206 and 282 arrive at Union Station later

-Train 212 departs Lancaster later and arrives at Union Station later

San Bernardino Line:

-Trains 300, 305 and 383 have been adjusted in response to customer input

-Train 309 arrives at Union Station later

-Trains 311 and 315 depart San Bernardino later

-Train 357 departs San Bernardino earlier to improve connections with the Antelope Valley Line

Riverside Line:

-Trains 403, 407 and 409 now arrive at Union Station later

91 Line:

-Train 701 departs Riverside earlier

-Train 703 arrives at Union Station later

Orange County Line:

-Trains 601, 607, 634, 635, 641, 643 and 685 have had schedule adjustments.

For more information contact Metrolink at 800.371.5465 or online at:

[www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com)

### ***Norwalk Transit***

Effective November 17<sup>th</sup> Norwalk Transit will be implementing a new fare structure on their fixed-route service. Below are details on the changes.

Base Fare: \$1.25

Student (K-12): \$1



Senior/Disabled: 60¢

NTS transfer: 50¢

Interagency Transfer: 50¢

### ***Paramount College Bound***

Recently the City of Paramount began operating a service transporting students to/from Cerritos College and Long Beach City College from Paramount. Buses pick up and drop off from Progress Park, Paramount Park, Century/Orange, and Orange/Somerset Monday through Thursday from 6:30 AM to 12:00 PM and from 3:30 PM to 10:00 PM. Fares are \$1.00 per ride or \$25.00 for a semester and the service is available to the general public.

For more information contact Paramount Community Services at 562.220.2121  





## *Transit Topics By Andrew Novak*

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

**SMART onto Larkspur:** The Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) district recently received acceptance into the Federal Transportation Administration's (FTA) Small Starts Program. Acceptance in the program gives the agency \$2.5 million to complete engineering work and environmental impact reports for a 2.2 mile extension of the SMART Line from San Rafael to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal. With the agency in the program they can compete for federal funding for the extension. SMART is currently rebuilding the old Northwestern Pacific line from San Rafael to Santa Rosa with service expecting to start in 2016. SMART is also seeking funds to extend the service north from Santa Rosa to Cloverdale.



**Tri-Delta drops service:** Recently the Tri-Delta Transit (Eastern Contra Costa County) board of directors opted to cancel the popular 49<sup>er</sup> express bus service for next year's football season when the team moves to a new stadium in Santa Clara. Currently the service operates from Brentwood, Antioch and Pittsburg to 49<sup>er</sup> home games at Candlestick Park. The board of directors has raised concerns about bus parking at the new stadium and has opted not to continue the service in the 2014 football season. Passengers can still use the service in 2013.

**Proud Bird's final flight:** After 48 years in Westchester the aviation theme restaurant will close its doors in November. Located on the south side of Los Angeles International Airport the restaurant has a large collection of vintage airplanes on site and is a popular hang out for airplane buffs. Reports state changes in rental agreements with the Los Angeles World Airports has prompted the closure of the landmark. For more information visit [www.theproudbird.com](http://www.theproudbird.com)

**YCAT in Busline:** I will conclude this month with congratulations to my friend John Andoh for getting his picture on the cover of the September/October 2013 Issue of Busline Magazine. The issues cover story is on the Yuma County Area Transit (YCAT) in Yuma Arizona where John is Transit Director. It is a very interesting article on YCAT and some of the new and innovative things they are doing in Yuma. Congratulations John!

The issue can be read on line by visiting Busline Magazine at [www.buslinemag.com](http://www.buslinemag.com)



On February 27, 2013 for the first time I heard the annunciator on a Metro bus giving verbal announcements for stops: "For your safety please watch your step when exiting the bus". Intrigued as to the origins of this addition to the standard "Approaching ... Followed by ..." callout for stops, I made an inquiry to some contacts I have at the agency.

Hector A. Guerrero, Director - Operations Training & Improvement at Operations Central Instruction informed me "The new announcement was developed in response to comments received from bus operators from Division 2 ARTS team. Bus operators felt that advising customers to watch their step when exiting might help them be more aware to hold on until the bus comes to a full stop and watch their footing as they were exiting through the doors, which might prevent onboard and boarding/alighting falls".

I also asked what are the standards Metro has regarding bus operators serving stops in regard to how close to the curb they should be. Guerrero noted "[Standard Operating Procedure] 3.129 provides guidelines for spotting the bus in the zone, kneeling the bus, and avoiding stopping the bus doors in the path of hazards or obstructions. This is the same procedure that has been in place [since the 1970s]. The only change has been the distance going from 6"-12" way back when and the 12"-18" that is currently required. The distance was changed to prevent damage to the doors when they were engineered to swing out. However, we do still teach to get a little closer when boarding/alighting an elderly or disabled customer".

For those interested here is the actual wording of the procedure:

Under normal circumstances the bus should be spotted in the bus zone 12 to 18 inches from and parallel to the curb, (up to 24" if using the lift/ramp) Avoid placing either front or rear doors near obstructions or hazards. When unable to spot the bus ideally and before opening the door(s), inform customers to watch their step, especially if they are stepping off onto the street. The same caution will be given to customers boarding from the street up onto the bus. If necessary, assist by using the kneeling device.

Stupid quote of the month: Rep. Daryl Metcalfe of Pennsylvania has a rural district and thus sees any funding for public transit as wasteful. "It's a very small minority of people who actually ride the buses. It's hundreds of millions of dollars for a very small percentage of the population of our state." This guy actually claims he thinks transit should be run as private, for-profit operations. But when pressed couldn't name a single company interested in running a transit agency out of the farebox. Yesh! ("Short of funding, SEPTA unveils doomsday plan" [philly.com](http://philly.com))



SEPTA LRV 101 in May 2013 -Wayne Doran Photo

## ***Public and Legislative Affairs Continued***

I sympathize with Steven White's recent blog post "Union Station: A Half-Baked Master Plan". When I saw the presentation on the master plan by Calvin Hollis, Executive Officer for Countywide Planning and Development at Metro, at the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting September 25<sup>th</sup> I also found the PowerPoint slides not too helpful to grasp where this effort is leading, until Hollis ran an animation that made things much clearer. When I shared this news with White he inquired is the animation posted on the internet. Seemingly not yet but I hope once White contacts Mr. Hollis that this oversight will soon be rectified. The awkward Gateway Transit Plaza is to be replaced with a bus facility much easier to access (and without those high maintenance paving bricks). There is even talk of removing the hideous Mozaic apartment complex that crowds and hides the historic structure. Yippee to that idea! 🚌 🚌

### ***A trip north on the Coast Starlight (Part 2) By Dana Gabbard***

*(Continued from last month)*

As we approached the station in Santa Barbara a gentleman trackside waved to those of us on board. I also spotted a man at an easel engaged in painting. It was a contemplative time as I took stock of this impending first visit with my family in 5 years. Continuing northward we passed through the miles of rolling countryside -- -- like the Scottish moors -- that I had found so haunting and beautiful during previous Starlight trips. Tranquil rolling hills with grassland and few trees for miles and miles -- a nary a human in sight.

Then almost as if crossing a boundary suddenly we were amidst cultivated fields of some sort then passed the cemetery of Guadalupe, a farming community. We crossed lagoons and vibrant countryside with trees and fields and then passed through Grover Beach and San Luis Obispo.

My excellent meals made me wonder at the idiocy of Congressman Mica who seems to have never-ending fits about the cost of on-board food service and promotes the pipe-

dream of opening passenger service to competition. He seems to have no notion of the huge expense of crew bases, capital cost, etc. that would entail plus the freight railroads have pointedly expressed no interest in running passenger service. After all, it was they who helped foster the creation of Amtrak to relieve them of doing it. And does Mica expect we aboard long trips to subsist on vending machine food? BAH!

One less than happy moment came when I witnessed the sad phenomenon of some of my fellow passengers rushing out at a smoke stop to get their nicotine fix. The countryside was now prairie-like grassland and we wound our way through hills pierced by tunnels. Twilight came as we entered the Salinas Valley (3 hours more or less behind schedule).

Gabriella set up my bed (with pillows and bedding). I set up my CPAP machine I use due to sleep apnea only to discover that the bed didn't agree with me.

*(Continued on Page 8)*

## *A trip north on the Coast Starlight Continued*

The sharp pain in the shoulder blades signified I needed a lumbar support. But even rolling up towels and placing them under my back didn't alleviate the discomfort. I finally gave up and had Gabriella return my compartment to the seating configuration and entertained myself through the night reading and listening to music, noting the sight and sound of an occasional train crossing signal whizzing by.

Our small city on wheels (which I had realized we were) travelled through the darkness, arriving in Sacramento at 3:00 AM. I came across Gabriella at work preparing rooms for passengers who would be boarding in the wee hours. She actually was doing this outside her work hours, explaining this was a consequence of our running late. She wanted to make sure things were done right instead of hoping some other member of the train crew would be able to handle the tasks. I spontaneously took the \$20 I had planned to give as a tip at the end of the trip and gave it to her right then (she was doing all this with only 3 hours of sleep!) as a thanks for going above and beyond.

Navigating the stairs to the lower level I showered and changed clothes. On the way back to my roomette I enjoyed some of the fruit and juice for snacking available in an alcove adjacent to the stairs. It was early morning and I spotted cow pastures amid the rural countryside we were passing through. One highlight was Lake Shasta and some beautiful forests before we reached Dunsmuir (which a sign proclaimed is "An Amtrak served community"). This was small town America. With a start I realized the writer/artist of the comic book reprints I had brought, Carl Barks, grew up in this area

(Merrill, Oregon) and may well have travelled along that same route when we went to San Francisco to seek his fortune in the teens of the last century. And I wondered how much that area had changed in the intervening 100 years.



*A late running Coast Starlight passes through Dunsmuir on September 1, 2012.  
-Andrew Novak Photo*

There were miles of farmland between Dunsmuir and Klamath Falls. We skirted Lake Klamath and I saw the Klamath River that connects the upper and lower lakes. Just before my trip I was delighted to discover the latest issue of Passenger Train Journal serendipitously included a piece titled "Where Does the Sun Shine on the Coast Starlight" comparing the northbound and southbound trips as to scenery during daylight hours. It was by train travel experts Ted & Sylvia Blishak, whose travel agency Train Travel Consulting is located in Klamath Falls.

*(Continued on Page 9)*



## ***A trip north on the Coast Starlight Continued***

I called on my cell phone while stopped at the station and left a message thanking them for a wonderful article (which by the way concludes in their opinion the northbound trip is the most scenic -- lucky me!).

Now we started to cross the Cascade Range, traversing forests, steep Cliffside down-grades and tunnels to make our way into the Willamette Valley. I had hoped to try out the Parlour Car during the afternoon wine and cheese tasting (bringing an Italian lemon soda to drink since I am a teetotaler) only to find all the seats already taken. When Gabriella asked why I was returning to my seat so soon I told her what had happened and she volunteered to go up and bring me some samples of the cheese, proving again what a above and beyond type of employee she is!

While nibbling the artisan cheese slices I watched a sheep flock in an orchard set in the midst of a vast flat valley. A malfunctioning crossing gate forced us to stop and while it was being handled we fell further and further behind schedule. We then ran down the median of a divided suburban street and saw a power boat zoom by as we travelled alongside the Willamette River. Only to stop again, this time for a "track problem" that needed an inspector to determine if we could safely proceed. I spotted some young men walking along the right of way past us and someone water skiing on the river.

We finally arrived In Portland circa 6:00 PM (we were scheduled to be there at 3:32 PM) where I deboarded, met up with my Mom and via TriMet light rail reached the park and ride where Mom parked her pickup.

Overall it was a great adventure and I certainly will ride in a sleeper car again when next I venture north. 🚂 🚂



*A view of the Pacific Ocean from the author's roomette on the Starlight. -Dana Gabbard*

### ***Editor's note on Starlight Scenery.***

One of the most scenic portions of the Coast Starlight's route is the Sacramento River Canyon which the train travels through in darkness both north and south. Between 1949 and 1954 the Southern Pacific built coaches with extra large windows called "Shasta Daylight Coaches." The Shasta Daylight ran from Oakland to Portland traveling through the Sacramento River Canyon in daylight hours. The large windows gave passengers spectacular views of Mount Shasta and the canyon.



*Former SP Shasta Daylight Coach 2397 in Dunsmuir in 1991. The 2397 is now owned by Pacific Railroad Society. -Albert Novak Photo*

## Day After Thanksgiving Trip

This year for our Day After Thanksgiving Trip we will be traveling to Victor Valley on the newly expanded BV Link Service operated by the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA).

Below are the details of our trip which will be on Friday November 29<sup>th</sup>.

We hope to see you there!

Our trip begins at Los Angeles Union Station and we will meet between 5:00 AM and 5:30 AM at the fish tank under Gateway Plaza.

Metrolink Train 300

Departs (DP) LA: 5:45 AM

Arrives (AR) San Bernardino 7:50 AM

*If the train is running late we can catch the BV Link at Fontana at 8:40 AM. Train 300 is scheduled in Fontana at 7:30 AM.*

VVTA Route 15 (BV Link)

DP San Bernardino: 8:08 AM

AR Lorene & 7<sup>th</sup>: 9:30 AM

VVTA Route 52

DP Lorene & 7<sup>th</sup>: 10:00 AM

AR Mall of Victor Valley: 10:21 AM

VVTA Route 53

DP Mall of Victor Valley: 10:45 AM

AR Victor Valley College: 11:10 AM

VVTA Route 45

DP Victor Valley College: 11:30 AM

AR G & Olive: 11:55 AM

VVTA Route 48

DP G & Olive: 12:00 PM

AR Main & E: 12:05 PM

LUNCH 12:05 PM to 1:00 PM

(Sizzler and Madz Pizza and Pasta on Main)

VVTA Route 48

DP Main & E: 1:00 PM

AR G & Olive: 1:07 PM

VVTA Route 45

DP G & Olive: : 1:10 PM

AR Lorene & 7<sup>th</sup>: 1:58 PM

VVTA Route 15 (BV Link)

DP Lorene & 7<sup>th</sup>: 2:15 PM

AR 4<sup>th</sup> & G: 3:00 PM\*

AR San Bernardino: 3:08 PM

AR Fontana Metrolink: 3:40 PM

Metrolink Train 333

DP San Bernardino: 4:00 PM

AR Fontana Metrolink: 4:11 PM

AR LA: 6:05 PM

*\*Optional riding including Omnitrans or a round trip on Pass Transit Line 120 to Beaumont.*

### Projected Cost:

Metrolink: Round Trip to San Bernardino \$26.50 (\$13.25 one-way) (In years past Metrolink has offered the \$10 weekend pass on the day after Thanksgiving.)

VVTA Round Trip on BV Link and all other VVTA buses \$12.00

To download complete schedules and get information on senior/disabled fares visit:

[www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com)

[www.vvta.org](http://www.vvta.org)

As always you are welcome to join us for all or any portion of the trip. 🚗 🚗



## *Photos of the Month*

*A Glenn Ride Gillig  
pauses at a red traffic  
signal in Willows,  
California on  
September 3, 2013.*

*Glenn Ride provides fix  
-route bus service in  
Glenn County in the  
cities of Willows, Chico,  
Artois, Orland, and  
Hamilton City in  
northern California.*

*—Andrew Novak Photo*



*Amtrak California Van  
Hool 61458 at Los  
Angeles Union Station  
on September 27,  
2013. This bus has  
the new Amtrak  
California graphics on  
the side.*

*—Jeremy Dickson  
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](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com). Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

**Newsletter deadlines** are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 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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#### **SO.CA.TA officers, 2013**

President:	Nate Zaben
Vice President:	Kent Landfield
Recording Secretary:	Edmund Buckley
Executive Secretary:	Dana Gabbard
Treasurer:	Dave Snowden
Directors at Large:	Ken Ruben J.K. Drummond Craig Weingarten

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Newsletter Editor:	Andrew Novak
Newsletter Prod. Mgr:	Dana Gabbard
Webmaster:	Charles Hobbs

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Oct 12<sup>th</sup>** and **Nov 9<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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