

NOTICE OF EMERGENCY ELECTION

New Vice President, Director-At-Large Needed: Due to the fact that our current Vice President (Michael Ludwig) and one Director at Large (Steve Scheel) are leaving the local area, the April 13th meeting will almost certainly have an emergency election in order to fill these positions.

This also affects our current fundraising effort (The Human Race) as well as our current HOV position paper committee.

All members in the Southern California area are asked to please attend the April 13th meeting if at all possible, and to consider running for one of these positions. Thank you for your consideration!

TRANSIT UPDATES *Have anything to report? Call 213 388 2364*

Metrolink has recently extended its Inland-Empire-Orange County service to San Bernardino. Three round trips (two peak hour and one off peak) are provided.

Also, Metrolink will operate special trains to the 1996 Sunkist Orange Blossom Festival in Riverside on April 20 and 21. Extra trains will be provided on the San Bernardino Line, and weekend service will operate on the Inland Empire-Orange County line. Regular off-peak fares will apply. For more information, call RCTC at 909-787-7983. (Schedules will also be available at the Apr 13 SO.CA.TA meeting)

The **Bellflower Bus** operates on new routes and schedules. One new route (Blue) has been extended to Palo Verde Ave, connecting with the Cerritos local bus system (COW).

According to radio news reports, **OCTA** drivers have rejected a contract offer, and may strike. Stay tuned . . .

Bicycle racks are now available on all **Omnitrans** bus routes; these do not require a permit for use. Call Omnitrans at 800-966-6428

for more information on how to use these racks. Bicycle racks are now also being installed on all **Foothill**

Transit routes; this project should be complete by June 96.

RTA-#149 now features Superbuses (tractor-trailer buses leased from OCTA) and additional weekday evening service.

The **City of Ventura** has reinstated its "trolley" shuttle bus service. The trolley serves primarily Downtown Ventura and the Ventura Harbor area. Fare is \$.25. Service is provided Wednesday-Sunday (Tuesday-Sunday during June, July and August) and runs between 10 a.m and 5 p.m (except on Friday and Saturday, when service operates until 10 p.m. on a modified route). Confused yet? Call them at 805-382-8300.



BULLETIN BOARD

From Chris Flescher, on rail transit and the poor: "In my opinion: although light rail cars sometimes have to wait for red lights, they otherwise are unaffected by traffic if they have their own right-of-way, as the Blue Line does. Subway cars are completely unaffected by traffic. Because of this, rail lines travel much faster than buses. When the red line opens at Wilshire/Western the travel time to Union Station will be half of that of the present buses. Rail cars can be easily linked together and when that is done, a 3-car train can carry many more people than a regular bus. When bus routes are changed to feed the rail lines, than ridership on each generally increases. Like I said before, I think that SO.CA.TA should suggest to its members that they write the *LA Weekly* asking them to rethink their anti-rail policy, and the above points are things that they can mention. I wrote to them a while ago and they told me that they got my letter but I don't know if they will print it."

The following items are from Dana Gabbard:

You can buy OCTA's Transit Guide over the phone with a credit card. It includes schedules for all their routes in one handy trade paperback volume. The cost is \$4.50 (which includes \$3 postage and handling). Call (714) 560-5932 (you can also purchase passes and tickets for OCTA at this number).

Santa Monica has begun a study of its bus system with the purpose of restructuring to improve service. Charles Hobbs and I attended one of the input meetings for the public held March 23rd. Attendance was light but participants were impassioned. SO.CA.TA has signed up for the next series of input meetings this summer and will keep our membership apprised.

We are planning to have an excursion out to San Bernardino County on April 20th or 27th to experience the MARTA bus between San Bernardino and Big Bear. This is going to be a grueling trip as we'll leave Los Angeles early in the morning and not return until evening. If you are interested in participating attend our April 13th meeting or call the SO.CA.TA voicemail and leave a message - (213) 388-2364 ext. 2.

In the next newsletter we'll be running a list of SO.CA.TA members who have written MTA about their interest in being members of the Transit Improvement Councils. This could be a golden opportunity to offer input directly to the people who run the regional transit system and fund a large number of transit providers.

Jon Hillmer, General Manager of MTA's Northern Region (which includes the San Fernando Valley, Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena) is holding a series of monthly meetings to solicit feedback. For more details call Hillmer's office at (213) 922-6972.

The Orange Empire Railway Museum is having its Spring festival April 27th and 28th, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. This is a chance to ride many of the trains in their collection along with some of the trollies (including Red Cars from Los Angeles). For more information call (909) 657-2605 (we may include a flyer with this newsletter).

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, photographs and research (newspaper clippings, etc.) from all members and interested non-members. All materials should be sent to **3010 Wilshire #362, Los Angeles, CA 90010**. Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date.

SURVEY SAYS! *Charles Hobbs*

These statistics came from the SO.CA.TA member survey sent out in December 1995. The analysis and commentary is my own, and does not necessarily represent the official position of SO.CA.TA.

First of all, there were 15 responses out of a total of 40 surveys sent out, or a 37.5 % response rate. The largest group of survey respondents reside in the San Gabriel Valley (33%) then South Bay and Central Los Angeles (20% each) and Southeast, with 13%. Respondents from other areas (including non-local areas) totalled 15%.

36% of all respondents were SO.CA.TA members before 1990. 14% joined between 1990 and 1992, another 21% joined between 1993 and 1994, and 29% joined in 1995. The group started in 1987 with a few core members. Before 1993, people both joined and left the group, but membership levels stayed about the same. Real growth started in 1993 and is steadily climbing upward.

80% of all respondents have computers (or access to one), 60% of all respondents have modems, 53% have access to the Internet, but only 33% have access to a fax machine. There will probably be continued growth in the number of members with access to computers, modems and the Internet.

Most respondents read between two and three newspapers regularly.

40% of all respondents attended at least six meetings in 1995. 80% of all respondents found the current time convenient. 73% were interested in local "satellite" community meetings and voice mail announcements, 66% wanted printed summaries of SO.CA.TA meetings, 13% were interested in audiotapes of meetings, and nobody was interested in videotapes. Although attendance figures are somewhat lower than expected, there seems to be little complaint about the day, time and location of the meetings. In addition, certain respondents

suggested phone trees, agendas in newsletters, reminder calls, absentee voting on major issues, and use of e-mail, in order to encourage non-participants to attend meetings. There were concerns about meeting organization and decorum as well.

Respondents were asked to rate the various newsletter features on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being most useful. The average rating of the newsletter features was 3.01. Note that features rated below average (Route of the Month, Calendar, and Maps/Graphics) have been modified, changed or improved in 1996. See, your survey responses do count! The highest rated feature was News (3.29). Second highest was Transit Updates(3.2) What does this tell us? People want to know what's going on in the world of transit!

80% of respondents reported that the newsletter was delivered "on time" (e.g. before the meeting). 66% of all respondents are interested in writing at least occasionally; about 27% of these (or 20% of all respondents) are interested in writing at least every other month. 87% of all respondents support some form of advertising in the newsletter; of those, 80% are strongly in favor of it. In future meetings we may decide what types of ads to accept, rates, how much of the newsletter should be given over to ads, etc.

About 80% of all respondents either use transit regularly, or know about the local routes near them. But, 80% also own or have access to an automobile. (Only about 33% of all respondents attend SO.CA.TA meetings via transit). This might mean that SO.CA.TA members are not largely transit dependent, but are people with transportation choices who still realize the value of public transit. This might make us more attractive to a wider cross-section of the general public. However, there is always the lurking possibility that SO.CA.TA might be perceived as less concerned with the transit-dependent than certain other transit activist groups.

S.F. VALLEY RAIL LINE *Michael Higby*

NOTE: This article represents the opinion of its author and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

The more I think about it, it makes no sense to put an east-west San Fernando Valley line anywhere but on the Chandler right of way. And this should be a light rail line, whether elevated or placed in a trench, as opposed to a subway. A Ventura Fwy. monorail does not seem to serve the Valley in the same way as a Chandler line.

I know this has been discussed many ways and times. But if you think about it, starting the line in Burbank (where the right of way starts) at Metrolink, running out through North Hollywood (connecting to the Red Line), out to the West Valley and across the Owensmouth portion of this line to hook up with Metrolink in Chatsworth, this makes the most sense. It picks up the most amount of ridership and flows beautifully into other transit options.

Given the configuration of the streets in the West Valley and the right of way, a Warner Center station on a Burbank Branch line would be almost walking distance from the Ventura Freeway, hence, serving those who would shuttle from Woodland Hills to Universal City and beyond. Running along Owensmouth to Chatsworth, it nicely serves lower income portions of the West Valley, and effectively links the Southeast Valley transportation hub to both the South and North West San Fernando Valley with high speed transit. Feeder buses would easily connect this line between Metrolink and the Ventura Freeway in the areas in between North Hollywood and Warner Center.

I know all the objections to this project, but I believe we need to transcend them. This discussion and project, needs to be elevated to a major issue and people need to be brought on board.

This line is desperately needed.



EDITED BY
KIRK D. SCHNEIDER

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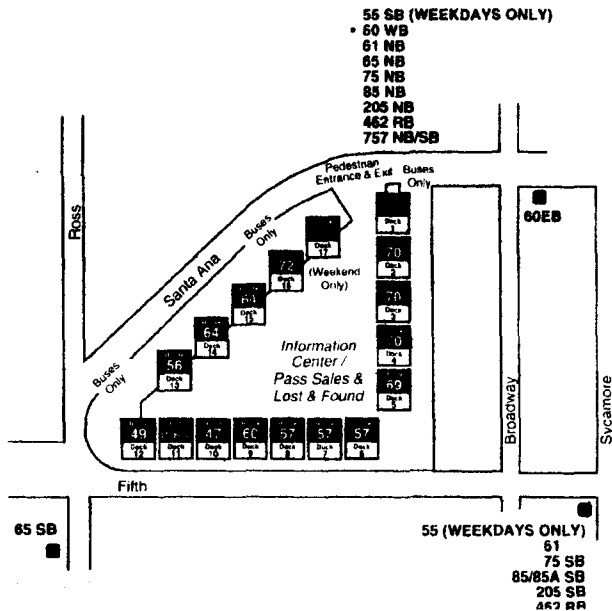
TRANSIT CENTER OF THE MONTH

LOCATION: 400 W. Santa Ana Blvd, Santa Ana

SANTA ANA TRANSIT TERMINAL

TRANSIT ROUTES: (All OCTA)

- #47 Fullerton-Santa Ana via Anaheim Bl
- #49 Brea-Santa Ana via State College Bl
- #55 Orange-Costa Mesa via Main/Grnvl
- #56 Santa Ana-Cypress via Gardn Grove
- #57 Santa Ana-Newport Bch via Bristol
- #60 Tustin-Long Bch via 17th/Wstmnstr
- #61 Santa Ana-Newport Bch via Grand
- #64 Santa Ana-Hunt Bch via 1st/Bolsa
- #65 Santa Ana-Balboa via Culver/PCH
- #69 Fullertn-Santa Ana via Tustin/Grand
- #70 Santa Ana-Sunset Bch via Edinger
- #72 Santa Ana-Sunset Bch via Warner
- #75 Santa Ana-Laguna Hls via Walnut
- #85 Santa Ana-San Clemente via I-5
- #205 Laguna Hls-Santa Ana-Disneyland
- #462 Santa Ana Civ Cntr-Metrolink
- #757 Diamond Bar-Brea-Santa Ana Exp



OTHER FEATURES:

- Information Center (incl. pass sales)
- Restrooms

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call OCTA at 714-636-RIDE

TRANSIT TRIVIA *Michael Ludwig*

Last month's Transit Trivia question was:

Which transit agencies in the Los Angeles Metropolitan area offer their own monthly passes and accept the monthly pass of another transit agency?

The answer:

Monterey Park, LADOT and West Hollywood all accept MTA passes

This month's Transit Trivia question:

Of all transit agencies operating mostly or completely within Los Angeles County, which is the only one to not connect with MTA?

(The answer will be in next month's Transit Advocate, and announced at the April SO.CA.TA meeting!)