

BULLETIN BOARD

Two members recently wrote to their political representatives regarding transportation issues of interest to them. J.K. Drummond requested his L.A. County Supervisor (and MTA Boardmember) Don Knabe press MTA to have emergency phones installed in the Harbor Transitway stations. Drummond at our last meeting urged members who agree this should be rectified write an MTA boardmember from their area to increase the pressure for action to be taken. Michael Higby stated his opposition to a San Fernando Valley Transit Zone in a letter to Stuart Waldman, an aide to Assemblyman Hertzberg who chairs a key committee which has a zone bill (A.B. 2189) before it. We commend Drummond and Higby for being active in their transit advocacy.

April's *Western Transit* confirms rumors that the ATTB "Stealth Bus" is being field tested on Wilshire Blvd. Passengers ride for free but are asked to fill out questionnaires about their reaction to the vehicle. Also a Los Angeles standard rail car (assembled in Carson by Siemens) is being tested on the Green Line.

Member Charles Powell reports that several additional MTA routes (#427, 429, 487,490,491) are now being operated by the lower-cost BDOF drivers.

The March issue of *Bus Ride* included a short but interesting article about Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines and its future plans. In other Big Blue Bus news, to celebrate their 70th anniversary the agency is soliciting stories on the topic of your best Big Blue Bus experience. Every other month through December one story will be selected for display on their buses. Winners will receive 70 Big Blue Bus tokens! Send anecdotes to: Big Blue Bus 70th Anniversary Celebration, attn: Marketing Dept., 1660 7th Street, Santa Monica CA 90401 or fax to (310) 451-3163 or e-mail to info@bigbluebus.com/bus. Include your name, address, phone number and the number of Big Blue Bus routes you ride.

Interested person can attend the certification review of the Southern California Association of Governments July 7 thru 9. Conducted by field personnel from the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration, this triennial review is mandated by ISTEA of all Transportation Management Areas. For more information and a copy of the final agenda contact the federal agencies' joint field office: (213) 202-3950.

Recently previously unpublished academic papers from a 1976 USC Conference on Transportation Alternatives for Southern California were placed on the internet:
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/supd/transit/>

An excellent discussion of the problems with magnetic levitation technology is also available on the net: http://home.t-online.de/home/rsdhanstein/rh_2eng.htm This bears examination due to the proposed mag lev network included in the new Regional Transportation Plan.

We are pleased to announce that in response to the articulated bus report prepared by Director Chris Ledermuller we received a letter dated April 6 from Mike Greenwood of OCTA stating "Thank you for forwarding your research results to OCTA". Included with the letter was a report on their very successful field test of a year ago and the staff recommendation to include funds for the

WASHINGTON, May 1 /PRNewswire/ -- If United Cerebral Palsy's Project Access for All poll results are indicative of the rest of the country, thanks to the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability legislation, access to public accommodations and transportation is easier for all public transit users, not just individuals with disabilities.

According to the results of UCP's Project Access for All, two out of every three commuters utilizing public transportation use and benefit from new access features that are designed with people with disabilities in mind. (Project Access for All is a program grant

awarded United Cerebral Palsy through project ACTION, a cooperative agreement with the US Department of Transportation.)

The new findings are the result of a Project Access for All survey of 1140 public transportation users at four intermodal transportation sites around Washington DC to determine the post ADA status of universal design and use of new access features in public transportation. The Project Access for All Survey was developed by the national office of United Cerebral Palsy based in Washington DC and conducted by UCP staff and volunteers in October, 1997. (cont'd on pg. 7)

purchase of artics in their Fiscal 98/99 budget. The field test found the equipment performed well for turn radius and speed (it hit 65 mph on the Interstate 5 HOV lane!) and riders were very impressed with it.

April 18 President Gabbard spoke at an Pierce College event highlighting land use issues. Our thanks to member John Ulloth for giving us a place on the agenda. The q&a session with an environmentally oriented audience reinforced our Presidents' impression that the public is often well informed regarding these issues.

May 17 President Gabbard will be among the speakers at a meeting of the Miracle Mile Residential Association on the Westside Bus Improvement Plan. Suggestions and input regarding what issues and concerns he should stress are welcome.

The most recent letters from President Gabbard to appear in the press were in the April 9 Daily News (on the role of federal bureaucrats in forcing MTA to come clean about its finances) and April 17 Los Angeles Weekly (commending their transportation roundtable).

Thanks to everyone who went on our April 25 AVTA excursion. We were especially impressed with the ridership of line 1 (over 40 boardings!) Also noteworthy was reckless behavior by auto drivers pulling in front of buses. And why were so many more people riding the Metrolink trip back from Lancaster than came out that morning?

Don't forget - our June 13 meeting will have a presentation about the proposal to extend the Harbor Transitway to link with the San Bernardino Transitway.

As always, *The Transit Advocate* needs articles, letters, Transit Tips, 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.** (or e-mailed to transit@lerami.lerctr.org).

Charles Hobbs recently cautioned on our member only page regarding the danger of getting overly caught up in the political whirl surrounding transportation. ISTEA renewal, MTA reform, various proposed projects (Orange County light rail, Irvine People Mover, West Covina monorail, LAX expansion, SCAG's mag-lev and the state's high speed rail). It's enough to make one dizzy. We should avoid being overly fixated on the minutiae of current events. That doesn't mean we will be any less aware and active, just that we don't want to lose sight of the big picture.

I may be the only person who actually read Julian Burke's restructuring plan. It essentially made clear that trying to simultaneously build rail lines is untenable. East side posturing is an attempt to get to the head of the line ahead of the Pasadena line. A little noticed lengthy consultant report commissioned by Burke outlines rail project remobilization options, which are actually few and far short of what is needed to revive the projects at the pace board members want.

Zev's initiative is now available on the internet (<http://www.co.la.ca.us/bos/zev/scripts/mtainittext.htm>) or call (213) 426-6295 for a copy. The measure so far has received little discussion in the local media save for a column by the Supervisor in the April Valley Business Journal. Yaroslavsky claims in the April 24 California Corridors newsletter that signature gathering is ahead of schedule. In the same issue I am quoted that banning subways before the Red Line reaches North Hollywood may be premature. Perhaps if it gets on the November ballot there will be some public discussion of the measure's merits and we can participate in that process.

It's interesting that Zev was beaten up by the eastside crowd for threatening their subway. Yet notice how quickly like the San Fernando Valley crowd the eastsiders are starting to pull

back from underground extension demands, even to the extent of saying a surface alternative would be acceptable. Does this mean we aren't far from an East Los Angeles busway or transit zone being proposed?

Brian Fagan, a new SO.CA.TA member and area vice president for the San Fernando Valley United Chambers of Commerce, in a letter dated April 14 to the Valley Transit Zone Citizen Advisory Committee outlines an appealing proposal for zone governance - local residents would be appointed by the various cities to an executive board that handles month to month decisions while the politicians are on a board of directors who meet occasionally to approve the budget plus handle the big issues (e.g. fare increases). This would be a step in the right direction, making a zone doing more than a trophy.

But will there be a zone? A portent of future contentiousness could be seen at the April 30 L.A. City Council meeting to approve funding of further study. Non-Valley councilmembers expressed reservations. As the process gets closer to a vote on a zone application these small fires may turn furnace hot.

Handicapping the current crop of state legislation impacting transportation in Southern California - the Schiff Pasadena Blue Line Authority bill (S.B. 1847) may well reach the governor's desk, the Cardenas bill (A.B. 2189) to force MTA to cooperate in the creation of a San Fernando Valley zone has a 50% chance of passage and the Hayden Authority bill (S.B. 1886) is dead in the water.

The June Ballot includes Proposition 224, State Engineering Contracts Initiative. Its potential impact on local agencies is disputed but something worthy of investigation when deciding how to vote

(proponents <http://compbid.org/index2.html>;
opponents <http://www.no224.org>).

Laugh of the month: the BRU flyer headlined "Want to Go to Disneyland? Too Bad. The MTA is stalling on creating new, long-distance lines". Do I need to state the obvious? MTA has a bus that runs to Disneyland - line 460. Can the BRU's leadership be that ignorant regarding elementary details of an issue they claim to be so passionate about?

Scary rumor of the month: Wheel Clicks in its May issue says one proposal MTA is mulling to help balance the budget is closing its library. (I should be fair and note John Walsh first mentioned this at an MTA Board meeting a month ago).

The Regional Transportation Plan was approved April 16 by the Regional SCAG Council. Right up to the end horse trading was going on as each area tried to get their project included. The latest coverage of the debate over urban sprawl was in the April 27 issue of U.S. News and World Report (<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/issue/980427/27spra.htm>).

Metrolink Marketing should be commended for its public outreach campaign for the proposed fare adjustment. You can even e-mail comments (metrolinkfares@yahoo.com). I just wish the arguments they use to justify the increase were more direct and linked to future improvements (they veer close to being weighed down by graphs, jargon and vagueness).

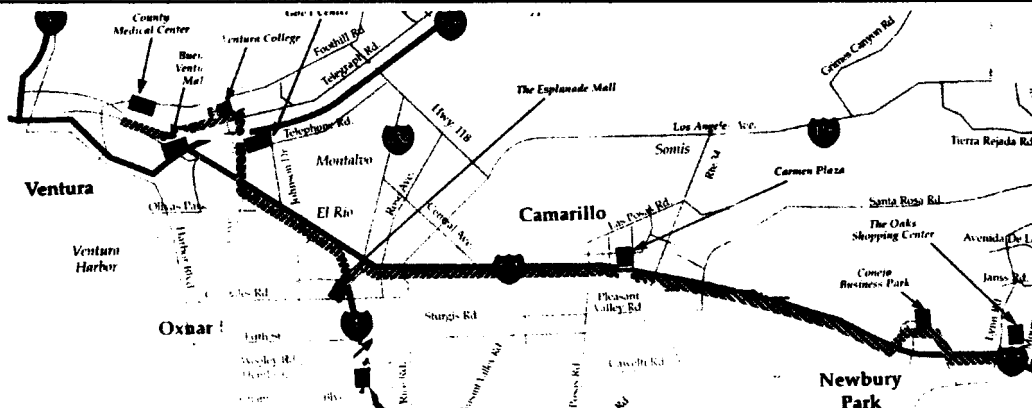
I have often encountered a phenomena I call "true believer boosterism". This is the excited belief in a particular strategy that is held with a almost religious fervor. In my years dealing with these issues I have encountered enthusiasts of every stripe. One strain that has a significant Southern California presence I have termed the

jitney cartel (centered at USC's Urban Planning Department and the Reason Foundation). There has recently been published a monograph on the topic (one of whose authors is a Reason Foundation analyst). Titled "Curb Rights: A Foundation for Free Enterprise in Urban Transit", it is by Daniel Klein, Adrian Moore and Binyam Reja and was published by the noted think tank the Brookings Institution. The paperback costs \$14.95 plus \$4 shipping and can be ordered by calling (800) 275-1447. Even if you disagree with the concept you might want to familiarize yourself with their arguments.

In response to a request LADOT has provided us with initial ridership figures for the 4 smart shuttle demonstrations underway. Passengers per hour as of March hover between 6.4 and 8.0 for three lines (Southside, East Valley and West Valley) while Koreatown has 17.1 per hour. But the concept the Southern California Association of Governments wanted to test, shifting ridership from low use lines to shuttles to produce cost savings, isn't being evaluated by these lines. Instead the shuttles are skimming passengers from MTA service. There are reports of drivers soliciting passengers at bus stops with the MTA bus just behind. This is driven by the desire of contractors to boost the ridership numbers to look good. And where does that leave the Regional Plan which depends on those cost savings? Is it DOA?

I want to end this column by giving a fond farewell to David Bloom, who until recently handled transportation issues for the Daily News (often brilliantly, especially his frequent exposes of MTA screw-ups). Bloom recently decided to change beats. His successor is Eric Moses, who has our best wishes as he learns the ropes.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH *Chris Ledermuller*



Where does it go: Buenaventura Mall, Ventura County Medical Center (1 trip), Ventura College (select trips), County Government Center (rush hours only), Esplanade Mall, Carmen Plaza, Pardee Plaza, Leisure Village, and Thousand Oaks Mall.

No service weekends or holidays.

How much is it: \$1.00, 75 cents for students, and 50 cents for seniors/disabled. The Ventura County Smart Passport is also accepted.

How often does it run: Hourly during the peak hours, every two hours mid-days.

For more information: 1-800-438-1112.

TRANSIT TRIVIA *Chris Ledermuller/Charles Hobbs*

Last month's question: How many local bus routes (MTA or other operators) in the Southern California five-county area provide Intercounty service. Bonus question: how many of these lines receive financial support from only one county?

The Answer: (note that we are not counting express routes or local segments of express routes)

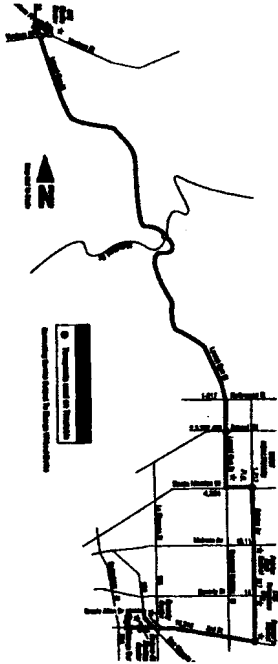
- Los Angeles/Orange: MTA #128,130; OCTA #1,29,30,38,42,46,50,60; Long Beach #131,171; Norwalk #4
- Los Angeles/San Bernardino: Foothill #187,292; Omni #60,61
- Los Angeles/Ventura: MTA #161, Thousand Oaks #4
- Riverside/San Bernardino: Omni #21,71; RTA #25,36
- Orange/San Diego: OCTA #91,397; North County Transit #305

(There is a cost sharing arrangement between Foothill and Omnitrans regarding several Foothill transit buses serving Montclair. For the most part, though, these buses are not subsidized by the "other" county they enter.)

This month's question: What Foothill Transit route went from a peak hour commuter service to an express service that runs every day? In what year did this occur?

The answer will be presented at the May meeting, and in June's newsletter.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH II *Chris Ledermuller*



Route of the Month II: MTA 218

Where does it go: Cedars Sinai, Farmer's Market, CBS Television City, West Hollywood, through Laurel Canyon, to Studio City.

Other great functions of the line: Another alternative to go from the Valley to L.A., great pedestrian oriented areas along Fairfax and Santa Monica, and many trips connect well to Lines 230 and 550.

How much does it cost: This route has a shuttle fare of 50 cents. Passes are accepted along this route.

When does it run: Monday through Friday peak rush hours, every 15-20 minutes. Mid-days and weekends, every 30 minutes. Service ends in the evening.

For more information: 1-800-COMMUTE.

(from Page 3) "The results of this poll indicate that most travelers and commuters, not just people with disabilities, are benefiting from new access options in public transportation and elsewhere in 'Mainstreet USA' because of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act," said Jeanette Harvey, new Executive Director of United Cerebral Palsy's national organization. According to Harvey, who uses a wheelchair, access to public accommodations as well as transportation access has improved and benefits many customers, with and without disabilities. "The survey findings give us an idea of the use of ramps and curb cuts, elevators, wider fare gates, color coding, flashing lights and more. Access features surveyed benefit a wide market of customers: parents pushing baby carriages, travelers with luggage on wheels, bicyclists, and delivery folks, to name a few. America's businesses are recognizing the benefits of investing in universal design and accessibility. Good access means good business." Harvey comes

to the national UCP organization from the McLaren Business School of the University of San Francisco where she served as Director of the Executive Master of Management and Disability Services programs.

The goal of Project Access for All is to identify and promote universal design and accessibility in intermodal public transportation and determine what types of access exist; who knows about and utilizes universal access; and where and how universal access and accommodations are being used; not just by citizens with disabilities, but by all transit customers.

"In the wake of backlash around the ADA, it is encouraging for all of us committed to the full participation of Americans with disabilities to see how the ADA's access changes are making life easier for just about everyone," said Harvey.