

BULLETIN BOARD

Thanks to everyone who ran from an office this year! Our officers and directors for 1999:

President: Dana Gabbard
Vice-President: Charles Powell
Recording Secretary: Pat Moser
Corresponding Secretary: Kris Sharp
Treasurer: Juanita Dellomes
Directors: Armando Avalos, Hank Fung, Anthony Loui

Kris Sharp has pointed out this gives us an even number of Executive Board members (8) and the possibility of tie votes. One solution being contemplated is creation of a Parliamentarian/Sergeant-at-Arms position, which we have discussed during the past few years.

Due to some confusion experienced in the balloting next year's election committee will prepare instructions clarifying that votes can be cast for the same person in multiple positions (if someone wins more than one position they will resign all but the one they wish to serve in).

Our Dec. 12 banquet was a great success that drew 21 members and guests. The food at the Colonial Buffet was splendid and the festive atmosphere of congeniality infectious. Trinkets (lapel pins, pencils, ballpoint pens, frisbees, notepads, etc.) were donated by a number of local transit agencies to fill gift bags handed out to attendees. Our thanks to SCAT, Torrance Transit, MTA, VCTC, Metrolink, Carson Circuit, RTA, AVTA and Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines for their generosity. The piece d'resistance of the evening came when door prizes were given away. These were donated by President Gabbard, outgoing Director Chris Ledermuller and the Foothill Transit Zone. And this year the stuff wasn't just boring government reports! A fine time was had by all. Let's do it again in '99!

And the winner of the route of the year is... MTA route 218. We will be presenting a certificate to the MTA Board at one of their upcoming meetings. Thanks for everyone's input.

Founder Pat Moser has a letter published in the Dec. 19 *Los Angeles Independent*. Joseph Dunn recently attended a meeting of the Alliance for a Regional Solution to Airport Congestion and was startled at the vehemence of its' members opposition to LAX expansion.

Saturday January 23 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. the Rail Passenger Association of California is sponsoring a program on the Future of Rail Service in Southern California. It is being held at the Old Spaghetti Factory next to the Fullerton Amtrak Station. Attendance is \$20 for RailPAC members, \$25 for others (lunch is included in the price). Speakers include Dan Levitt, Deputy Director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority and OCTA Planner Dinah Minter (who is working on the Orange County proposed light rail line). Send check made out to RailPAC to: 824 Winslow St.-214, Redwood City CA 94063. For further information: (650) 368-7112 or ricsilver@aol.com.

A response to the Torrance Transit restructuring proposal (see Transit Updates on pg. 5) is being prepared. It is our hope to publicize it and make contact with key stakeholders who may influence the final implementation. Let us know if you have ideas that should be included.

From the SO.CA.TA Comment web page: Mark Sowery writes: "I read your web pages with interest. I live near Manchester, England where the local city council advocates public transport. Whilst not anti-car for its own sake, they are implementing further electric tram systems, together with cheap bus and local train services. There is even talk of electronic tolling of private vehicles in the city centre at peak hours (as in Singapore)." (cont'd on page 5)

TRANSIT AND CONGRESS *Steven Crosmer*

Editor's Note: This article was written in early November, and certain events have changed since then.

Steve Crosmer was vice-president of SO.CA.TA until 1993.

Election Day has come and gone, and along with it, there will be some changes in the congressional make up. The United States Congress has power to appropriate funding to designated transit projects and functions, and who is in power can have an impact on how much transit receives.

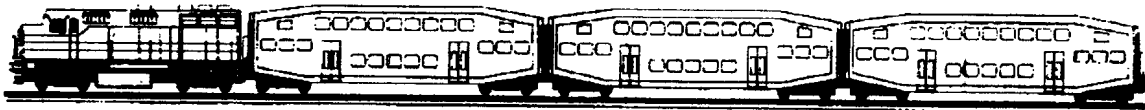
While Republicans will maintain control of both houses, power from their far right side was diminished in the recent elections on November 3, 1998. Various factions of the party had caused the Republicans to moderate themselves, and that is good news for transit. Most importantly, is probably the decision by Newt Gingrich to step down as Speaker of the House, as transit was not a topic that had interested him much at all.

That does not mean we are out of the woods with a more moderate Republican congress. A lot can be said by whoever is the next speaker, unless a few Republican moderates can pull off a coup and select Democrat Dick Gephardt, this is no time to relax. Republicans have narrowed their choice to either Stan Livingston, of Louisiana and an ally close to Gingrich, but he

has said that he wants to negotiate with Democrats and get business done in a fair way; or the other choice would be for California (Orange County) congressman, Christopher Cox who does not have a favorable record on transit and has voted against it numerous times. In all likelihood, Livingston should be the next speaker, as he is the choice for moderate Republicans. If so, we can at least breathe a little easier.

On the Senate side, there was no change in the overall numbers, but fortunately the Republicans that went down to defeat were mostly conservatives, and the winners were mostly moderates. Transit supporters will miss one conservative, that being New York Senator Alfonso D'Amato. He has been very supportive of transit, especially more bus service and high-speed rail in rapidly growing urban areas, including Los Angeles, and spoke favorably of his ride on the Metrorail Blue Line a couple years ago. Most of the other conservative senators did not have a favorable record compared to D'Amato's on transit to speak of. Moderates have said they want to negotiate, and we can take heart that Senator D'Amato's replacement, Richard Schumer, has shown support for transit and rail.

With the moderation of the Republicans, it will place staunch conservatives at bay on making important decisions, up to and possible question of the impeachment of President Clinton. It is likely that conservatives (*to pg. 5*)



PLAC REPORT *Dana Gabbard (dgabbard@hotmail.com)*

Metro Investment Report (MIR) had two interesting transit related articles in its November issue. One is an interview with BRU organizer Rita Burgos. Given her lackluster performance in the *L.A. Weekly* transportation roundtable earlier this year, I am puzzled why Eric Mann chose her for this assignment. Maybe Burgos is considered more palatable in settings outside the Labor Community Strategy Center's left-of-center niche than some of the more incendiary LCSC staffers?

Also in the *MIR* was a roundtable of MTA Boardmembers John Fasana and Mike Antonovich plus Pasadena City Manager Cynthia Kurtiz on the Pasadena Blue Line Authority. Supervisor Mike Antonovich at one point unloaded on the BRU: "The Bus Riders' Union is a hoax. It's a group of activists and so-called public interest lawyers who are receiving compensation from the MTA for this frivolous lawsuit. Instead of charging legal fees, they ought to be ensuring that all resources go into an improved transit system, not into this pseudo union. We want to have a balanced system that serves the entire county. Right now, we're using limited resources to support this transit union's litigation. Those dollars could be going into expanding the County's transit systems". I think it is startling that Antonovich spoke these thoughts aloud (albeit in a limited circulation newsletter mostly read by elite insiders). And almost as startling is the revelation that for once I am in general agreement with Mr. Antonovich, although politically we are miles apart.

Latest MTA board outrage: at its Dec. 9 meeting after spending 2 hours in closed session, the board members summarily decided to not allow those who had waited to make public comment enter the room.

Founder Pat Moser has pointed out to me an interesting aspect of the current unionization drive for MTA management employees that I totally missed: when MTA next has to negotiate with its unionized Operations employees the agency will no longer be able to field management employees to provide skeleton service if the drivers strike because unionized managers won't cross picket lines. This could have a major impact on MTA's bargaining position.

The Dec. 14 *Daily News* heralded Santa Monica Municipal Bus Line's 1st place ranking in the latest nationwide survey of transit agencies prepared by the Center for Interdisciplinary Transportation Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (based on 1996 data). This was the first year Santa Monica was included in the study. Congratulations, Big Blue Bus! (P.S. MTA had a respectable ranking in the top third).

At the 10th anniversary celebration of Foothill's start the speakers let their hair down and I received an earful of history (not always the official version). It was a true gathering of the tribes that included everyone from Pete Schabarum to the Bradley LACTC appointee whose vote ensured Foothill was formed. I even got to shake hands with William Forsythe! My thanks to Foothill for inviting me [and also for the gift bags which I used as door prizes at our

banquet].

Dec. 8 I attended a lecture by James R. Steward, Phd on Regional Transportation in Southern California at the Midnight Bookshop in Santa Monica. This was part of the Science in the Public Interest series organized by the Southern California Federation of Scientists. The talk and following q/a session was informative. Much like SO.CA.TA, SCFS has grave concerns about the future of our transportation network. Now that we have made contact we may well coordinate our future efforts on these issues.

The Dec. 11 ABC 20/20 "Give Me a Break" segment titled "Railroad to Nowhere" was perhaps the most simplistic harangue against rail ever broadcast. Reporter John Stossel's many mis-statements were reinforced by mis-leading images (an empty Red Line car that Stossel claimed is a common occurrence). This unlabeled editorial violated the most elementary strictures of fairness in journalism. But since MTA has zero credibility I guess they are fair game for this sort of unfair treatment.

(from pg. 3) will not have a whole lot of say so on budget matters, and if they do, the president is likely to threaten a veto, and transit should be no exception. We need to let President Clinton know about that.

Also, now that both houses in California, as well as the office of governor are in Democratic hands, along with the census coming up in 2000, there is an excellent chance congressional district lines will be redrawn to favor election of more Democrats to the California delegation of congress, and give transit a chance to find more support from southern California districts.

The Dec 18 California Corridors interviews incoming Senate Transportation Committee Chair Betty Karnett of Long Beach. Karnett states "I don't have any personal goals that are mine alone. I just want to see good transportation in California". Karnett indicates her emphasis is on the long term, which certainly is in line with SO.CA.TA. Among the challenges she faces is Senate President Pro Tem John Burton's plans to place \$16 billion in state transportation bonds on the ballot over the next four years (details yet to be worked out). Plus the highspeed rail proposal must have a funding mechanism by Dec. 31, 2000. Good luck, Chair Karnett. I think you are going to need it!

Metrolink's just released Triennial Performance Audit indicates the agency is beginning to address the problems that caused a shake-up in its management earlier this year. During the three year period studied costs have fallen while ridership and service have grown. One persistent problem is delays due to conflicts with freight trains. ■

That, along with a moderation movement among Republicans will be especially helpful, but only time will tell if that can be achieved in the year 2000. For now, we can ill afford to rest. If your recently elected congressional representative is new to Washington, take the time now to write to him or her, and if you voted for them, let them know, and quote them if they made any reference to transit during their campaign. ■

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

Metrolink is in desperate need of more equipment (coaches in locomotives) due to overcrowding on certain trains. (Metrolink is now carrying nearly 27,000 boardings per weekday). The California Transportation Commission has allocated about \$47 million to Metrolink for new equipment, although it will take several months for the funds to be released, and the equipment (as an add-on to Seattle's order) to be built.

The City of Torrance is considering restructuring their transit system (Torrance Transit) to focus more on Torrance residents and businesses, rather than providing long-distance regional services:

- Service to Downtown LA on #1 would operate during peak hours only, if at all.
- Service to Downtown LA on #2 would be eliminated.
- On Line #3, service to Wilmington and Long Beach would be deleted (route would probably end near Avalon/PCH). Service west of Torrance, to Redondo Beach, might also be modified or reduced.
- Line #4, a local circulator in the Torrance Civic Center/Del Amo Mall area, may be eliminated, incorporated within other lines, or replaced with a dial-a-ride system.

The resources might be reallocated into more service on the Torrance-El Camino College portion #2, later night service on routes serving El Camino

College, and/or all-day service on line #6.

According to their "1998-2003 Short Range Transit Plan", Long Beach Transit is considering the following service improvements over the next few years:

- Extending #90 and #94 to Lakewood Green Line Station
- Acquiring portions of the following MTA lines: #128, #130 and #266, as well as Torrance #3 from Long Beach to Wilmington (if Torrance Transit discontinues this route portion)
- More weekend and service on various routes
- Limited stop service, using articulated buses, on 7th St (90-series routes)
- "Cultural Loop" shuttle service, serving various tourist areas in/near Downtown Long Beach. This might substantially replace lines #30 and #31.
- On or after 2003, develop "SkyPath", an elevated roadway for use by electric shuttle trams, pedestrians, and bicycles. The SkyPath would serve most of the tourist areas that the current Passport shuttle bus system serves.

Orange County Transit Agency is proposing to eliminate transfers. In place of transfers, a Day pass will be introduced for \$2.50 (\$1.25 senior/disabled). Cash fares will remain at \$1.

(from pg. 2) Saturday March 6 the Planning and Conservation League is having its Annual Environmental Legislative Symposium at the Brea Civic and Cultural Center. For more information call (916) 444-8726 or check their website: <http://www.pcl.org>

Quote of the month: "The Managerial Grid [a course on decision making developed by Masters and Johnson]... consisted on a diverse group of people answering a long series of questions individually, then answering them collectively... almost every group came up with better answers than any individual in the group had been able to". (from Thomson Shore Printer's Ink, Fall 1998).

President Gabbard is convening a meeting of the Executive Board to discuss our plans for 1999. It will be likely held the 3rd Saturday of February (the 20th) at Eagle Rock City Hall. Details in next month's newsletter. All members are welcome to attend and participate in this planning and strategy session.

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). Material for publication should be received two weeks before the scheduled SO.CA.TA meeting date. ■

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

Gardena Municipal Bus Lines 3

Where does it go: Compton Blue Line station/transit center, Gardena & Vermont (transfer point for Gardena buses), El Camino College, Alondra Park, and South Bay Galleria.

How often does it run: Every 30 minutes, 7 days a week

How much does it cost: 50 cents (25 cents seniors and disabled)

Whom to call: 1-800-COMMUTE

