

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

MTA is now operating later service (till 11 p.m.) on the Metro Red Line

As of June 30th, MTA #484,490 in will be rerouted to serve the new Cal Poly Pomona Transcenter. #484 will also serve the Pomona Transcenter. (Both locations are already served by Foothill Transit)

MTA bus routes #96, 104, 128, 167, 177,254 and 256 will be operated by another private operator (Charterways Transportation Management) in the next few months. Fares, etc. will be the same as regular MTA buses.

LADOT has opened its first transit information center, selling LADOT and MTA passes and MTA tokens. They also have schedules available. It is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at 2401 N. Broadway. Further information: (213) 808-2273

Montebello #30 and #70 no longer operate on weekends; in the near future, #30 may be discontinued (it duplicates MTA and Monterey

Park routes) and #70 rerouted into a loop serving Downtown Montebello, the Town Center, and other points within the city. (The new #70 would also replace current #50).

The **Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System (ARTS)** now operates on Sunday.

The **LCF Shuttle** is a new service operating in La Canada Flintridge. It operates along Foothill Blvd. between Ocan View Bl. and J.P.L., every 15-minutes, on weekdays only.

There have been minor adjustments to several **OCTA** bus lines, and one minor line has been cancelled.

The Santa Ana Transit Terminal information center will close after June 21st. The terminal has free bus information phone lines plus schedule racks and a machine that sells passes/coupons.

Ventura County's Smart Passport, an electronic fare card, is now available.

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EDITED BY
KIRK D. SCHNEIDER

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BULLETIN BOARD

Bylaws: All members should receive a draft copy of the proposed bylaws amendments in this issue of the newsletter. A final membership vote on the bylaws will be held at a future meeting (probably August or September of this year).

We will likely have a booth at the opening of the extension of the Red Line to Western Avenue on July 13th. Details are still being worked out as to which station we'll be at (Western or Vermont). Members who want to volunteer to help staff the booth should call our voice mail: (213) 388-2364 ext.2.

There is a good chance we'll get to tour the Red Line extension prior to its opening. We won't know the day and time until later this month. Members wishing to participate can sign up at the monthly meeting or leave a message on the voice mail. Let us know best day/ times for your schedule, and we'll do our best to accomodate.

Member John Ulloth sends us his ideas on the proposed San Fernando Valley rail line (which will be presented in a future issue), as well as some interesting items on hydrogen fuel and the Playa Vista /Dreamworks project. He is part of a coalition of environmental groups suing to stop this project, and he is requesting SO.CA.TA's help. [Editor's note: Whether one agrees or disagrees with this project, should general environmental issues be the focus of this group?]

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 (or emailed to ab415@lafn.org).

PLAC REPORT #5 Dana Gabbard, chair

May 17th I met with Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan's chief aide for transportation Jaime De Le Vega. It was a get acquainted session to hopefully begin the sort of dialogue between the various parties interested in the future of transit that previously had not occurred.

Some of the concerns I raised were immediate (foot dragging by LADOT in implementing the San Fernando Valley restructuring), others more long term (the need to have more public input).

Our expertise can play a role in expanding the public discourse involving transit. Channels among the various parties is necessary to break up the intellectual grid-lock that has prevailed.

An example of the status quo is the hotline MTA has for a study of running light rail down Crenshaw Boulevard: (213) 922-3500. Nearly \$200,000 is being spent of is despite the project having no assured funding. Parochial politics again rears its head.

I've been told the concluding round of meetings for the central/ east/northeast restructuring study should occur this month. Arroyo Verdugo (Glendale/Pasadena/Burbank/S. Pasadena/La Canada-Flintridge) also is almost ready to present its study. The next area to have a restructuring is west of downtown Los Angeles to the ocean; the first round of meetings is targeted to occur in October.

BIG BEAR EXCURSION *Michael Ludwig*

Several So.Ca.TA members met early in the morning on Saturday, April 20, 1996 because we wanted to take another long trip on public transit. This one took us up in the mountains to Big Bear. As with our two previous trips, it was a full-day experience.

On that day, Metrolink trains were on a special expanded schedule due to the Orange Blossom Festival in Downtown Riverside. This made it much easier to do the whole trip. Dana Gabbard, Woody Rosner, Michael Ludwig, and Alan Michelson got to Union Station early in the 7:00 hour so that we could catch the first train heading east. Charles Powell joined us at the Covina station, and Charles Hobbs boarded in Claremont. Since the festival was funding the expansion in train service, the conductor tried to convince us to stay on the train all the way to Riverside. Despite his good-natured cajoling, we stuck to our original plans by getting off the train at San Bernardino. An Omnitrans route 9 bus took us from the station to the Transit Mall in downtown. Chris Fletcher took an Inland Empire Connection bus to the San Bernardino Transit Mall (it was more convenient from where he was living), and he met us as we deboarded the route 9 bus.

Since we had more than an hour until the MARTA (Mountain Area Regional Transit Authority) vehicle came, most of us looked around for a place to eat breakfast. We finally settled on a Jack-in-the-Box one block north of the Transit Mall. After eating and splitting up to do a few quick things, we all got back together just in time to catch MARTA route 218 at 10:40. The van-bus traveled up Waterman Avenue, then east on the Cal. 30 freeway to Boulder Plaza on Highland Avenue. Then it went directly up Cal. 330 into the mountains.

I noticed that we did pretty good for a large van-bus: we only pulled into a turnout three

times between Boulder Plaza and Big Bear Lake, letting four cars pass us; plus, one pickup truck pulled over to let us pass (although he was pulling a boat trailer). Yet the seven of us never felt that we were going too fast on the winding, two-lane roads. After passing through the town of Running Springs and going by the Snow Valley Ski Resort (which had virtually no snow on the ground), we got up to Big Bear Dam. Instead of going across the dam directly into the city of Big Bear Lake, the route goes all the way around the north side of the lake to serve the town of Fawnskin. After the long yet beautiful trip, the vehicle dropped us off at its last stop, which is in front of the Thrifty towards the eastern end of the city of Big Bear Lake. Despite the many places served by the route, we were the only passengers for the whole trip.

From there, we decided to take MARTA's Bear Valley Transit headed west (this was around 12:30). After seeing the route all the way out to Boulder Bay (near the western end of the city), we came back on the same short bus to get off on Pine Knot Ave., which is in Downtown Big Bear. We split up so we could each explore what we wanted to in that popular historic shopping district (someone in our group called it a tourist trap, which isn't totally far-fetched).

One hour later, we boarded the next Bear Valley Transit vehicle heading east. We took it past the Thrifty shopping center, through Big Bear City (a different area than the city of Big Bear Lake) and Sugarloaf, to Erwin Lake, the east end of the route. On the way, we briefly stopped for a mule that was crossing the street in Big Bear City; also, a couple of equestrians could be seen traveling down the middle of a street a half-block from the bus route in Sugarloaf. Since the part of the route east of the Thrifty was almost completely residential, we

decided to return to the Thrifty shopping center and wait for the next route 218 trip came to take us back out of the mountains. But before we got back to the Thrifty, the short bus took an unexpected detour. It stopped on Valley Blvd. right across the street from the Big Bear Airport. Because we saw a couple other transit vehicles parked across the street and noticed that there was a driver switch for our short bus, we realized this was the operational headquarters for MARTA.

The hour at the Thrifty shopping center was another time period where we could each do what we wanted. Then at 4:40, we had to start heading out. At that time, the van-bus on route 218 left Thrifty and started its last trip down the mountain. Unlike our trip up, we had a couple passengers outside our group. Another difference was that the driver was traveling at a rather nerve-racking speed on the narrow roads. But the driver was talkative and friendly, like the one that took us from San Bernardino to Big Bear Lake. From one of those two drivers, we found out that this route normally has a few, but not a lot of, passengers (and that it can vary a lot). In terms of routing, the trip down is the same as the reverse of the trip up until leaving Boulder Plaza. From there, it takes the freeway all the way to downtown (just west of the Carousel Mall).

We got off the MARTA van-bus on E St. on the east side of the Carousel Mall. Chris left us to catch his IEC bus. The rest of us went into the mall. Since we couldn't come to a quick agreement on where to eat dinner, we decided to split up to get our nourishment. A few minutes after 7:00, as the mall was closing, we got back together. Since the last Omnitrans bus that goes within a couple blocks of the Metrolink station had left the Transit Mall more than an hour and a half earlier, we walked that half-mile (although it was getting dark during that time). Despite

arriving at the train station about an hour after getting off the MARTA vehicle, we still had to wait almost an hour for the Metrolink. Finally, we caught that last train to Los Angeles. After the two Charleses deboarded at Claremont, the rest of us arrived at Union Station around 10:00. From there, we all split up to take busses back to our respective residences.

There were a few inconveniences about the trip (it was a long day that had to be planned around a train route with a frequency that varied between two & four hours and a bus route with a four-hour frequency). However, there were many things that, when taken together, more than made up for those negatives. We saw a wide variety of land: from big cities to small towns, from transit malls with lots of busses to forests with lots of trees. We saw almost as much undeveloped land as development, including some empty space even before we boarded our first MARTA vehicle (portions of the Metrolink route east of Ontario). We went from near sea level to over 7000 feet high (the summit between Snow Valley and Big Bear Dam). We saw that people who live in an almost rural area up in the mountains have a rather decent transit system, and they do a good job of using it (on the Bear Valley Transit route, there were always other passengers with us, sometimes quite a few). We also saw several unique things that are virtually impossible to see from most bus routes in the Los Angeles region. There aren't many places where you can take a transit route with a forest on one side of the route (with trees from the top of the mountain down to within a few feet of the road) and a large lake just a few feet away from the other side of the road. There aren't many transit routes that pass a "Mule Crossing" sign. Thus, upon considering everything, we had an enjoyable day.

TRANSIT CENTER OF THE MONTH

UCLA BUS TERMINAL

LOCATION: Gayley Bl. north of Westholme

MTA Metro Bus:

MTA #2 - Pacific Palisades-Sunset-LA

MTA #21 - Downtown LA via Wilshire

MTA #561 - LAX - Van Nuys - Sylmar

MTA #576 - Pac Palisades - South Central LA

Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines:

SMMBL #1 - Santa Monica Blvd.

SMMBL #2 - Wilshire Blvd

SMMBL #3 - Montana Bl, Lincoln Bl, LAX

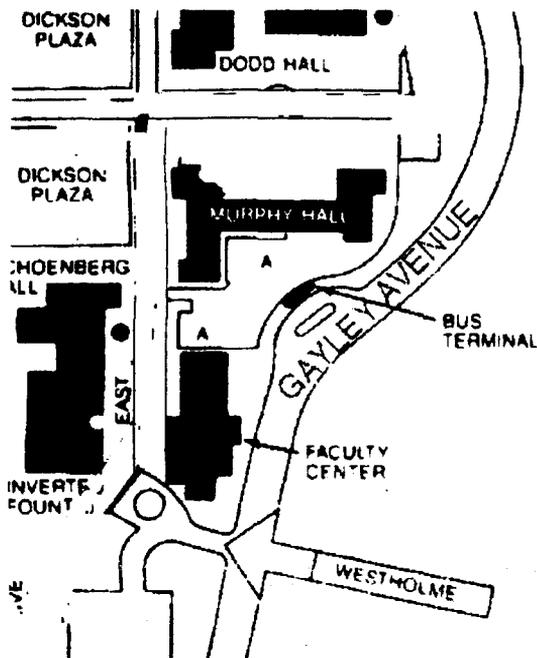
SMMBL #8 - Westwood Bl, Ocean Park Bl

SMMBL #12 - Westwood, Palms, Pico/Rimpau

Culver City Municipal Bus Lines:

CCMBL #6 - Sepulveda Bl, Culver City, LAX

UCLA shuttle service (Campus Express) is also available, on Circle Drive (upstairs from the bus terminal)



TRANSIT TRIVIA *Michael Ludwig*

Last month's Transit Trivia question was:

Name all transit agencies that serve Downtown Los Angeles (bounded by: Santa Monica Freeway, Harbor Freeway, Cesar Chavez Ave and the Los Angeles River)

The answer:

MTA, Metrolink, Foothill, Santa Monica, Torrance, Gardena, Montebello, Santa Clarita, Antelope Valley, LADOT and OCTA.

This month's Transit Trivia question:

Which bus routes in the Los Angeles metropolitan area take a freeway 24 hours per day?

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