

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

DECEMBER 2007

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

On October 15, Caltrain actually began servicing and storing some trains at its new Centralized Equipment Maintenance and Operations Facility (CEMOF). Some work continued to be done at the old facility across from Diridon Station until November 5, when all operations were transferred to CEMOF. Because of maintenance schedules, some crews now wind up starting their shifts at Diridon and ending them at CEMOF, or vice-versa, and have to be shuttled between the two locations.

Mechanical problems continue to plague Caltrain operations, hurting on time performance, as well as customer relations. Then on October 30, all trains came to a halt again when a 5.6 earthquake struck northeast of San Jose. No damage was found to tracks or structures, so operations resumed after about an hour.

Progress continues on the Burlingame station reconstruction project. Over the weekend of October 19, crews reconstructed and realigned tracks between Oak Grove Avenue and North Lane. This was necessary to line tracks up with the new platform configuration. The new station is on schedule to open in June 2008, in time for the city's centennial.

Over the weekends of October 27-28 and November 3-4, construction crews rebuilt the grade crossing at Angus Avenue in San Bruno. The northbound track was rebuilt during the first weekend, with the southbound track being done the following weekend. During the construction, trains operated on a single track in both directions through the project area, resulting in minor delays.

On Halloween, October 31, staff from the San Mateo County Transit District (Samtrans) showed up at various Caltrain stations and Samtrans bus stops between 6:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., handing out treats to riders, as a way of saying "thank you" for taking transit.

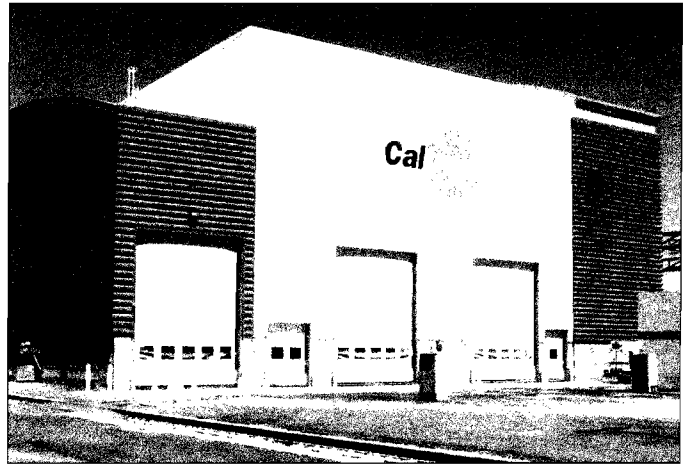
The treats were over 1000 goodie bags that contained a range of treats, from the traditional candy, to pencils, note pads, and even gift certificates to Starbucks and free passes to the Body Worlds exhibit at the San Jose Tech Museum.

ANGELS FLIGHT

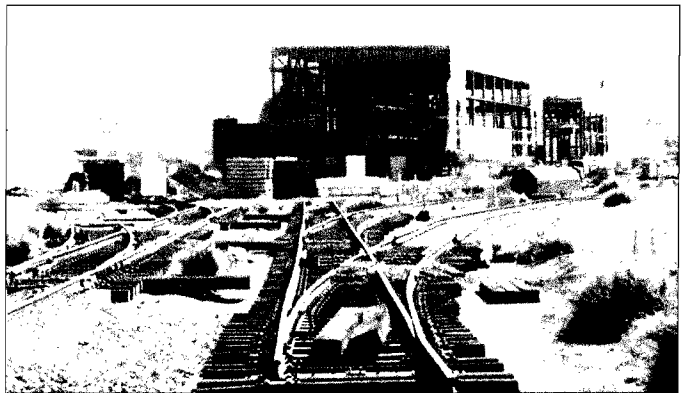
Angels Flight Railway Foundation is beginning a public campaign to raise the remaining \$397,000 to reopen the Incline Railway on Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles. They have already raised 88 percent of the \$3.3 million to replace the operating equipment and repair damages. According to available information, engineers are saying the line should be back in service by December 31, 2007.

John Welborne, president of the foundation, said he recently witnessed a demonstration of the new drive system. For information on donating, call (323) 935-1914 or email john@welborne.net.

[Info. from *L.A. Downtown News*]



Centralized Equipment Maintenance & Operations Facility (CEMOF)
Photo by Caltrain



CEMOF during recent construction.

Photo by Caltrain

BRINGING BACK BROADWAY DISTRICT

Transportation figures prominently into bringing back the vitality of the Broadway District in downtown Los Angeles. Although Pacific Electric (PE) had several local streetcar routes, it was primarily an interurban railway. Los Angeles Railway was the trolley system in Los Angeles and vicinity. While PE did not operate in the Broadway Theater district, L.A. Railway did.

As in Broadway's heyday, the yellow trolleys are an important part of the agenda. The idea has political support from U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, who three years ago secured \$100,000 for a feasibility study on bringing the fabled trolley system back to downtown L.A. Early estimates pegged the five-mile route at \$50 million, though no funding sources have been identified.

[Corrected info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]



WHEEL CLICKS

DECEMBER 2007 VOLUME 71, NO. 9

EDITOR DICK FINLEY
 TECHNICAL EDITOR CHARLES VARNES
 MAILER FRED KNOX

Opinions expressed in unsigned articles are those of the editorial board, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society, its officers or directors. Opinions in signed articles are those of the author only. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0043-4744. ©2007 BY PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.

Published monthly by **PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.**, P. O. Box 80726, San Marino, California 91118-8726. The Society is a California chartered, nonprofit organization of those who share an interest in railroad operations, travel and history. Telephone (same as Museum): (909) 394-0616.

Membership Dues: \$35.00 per year

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH

EXCURSION DIRS. BARBARA SIBERT, VINCE CAMMARANO
 For excursion informaton, phone (626) 570-8651 or (818) 445-8723.

WEBMASTER RUSSELL HOMAN
 INTERNET Home Page: <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.

VIC CARLUCCI **PRESIDENT**
 VINCE CAMMARANO **VICE-PRESIDENT**
 BILL SMITH **SECRETARY**
 OWEN DANAHER **TREASURER**
 MARTI ANN DRAPER (2007-2010) **DIRECTOR**
 DICK FINLEY (2005-2008) **DIRECTOR**
 CHRIS PARKER (2006-2009) **DIRECTOR**
 LINDSAY SMITH (2005-2008) **DIRECTOR**
 WILL WALTERS (2007-2010) **DIRECTOR**

PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

- Dec. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Pacific Railroad Museum**, Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Dec. 9 PRS Christmas Banquet at Knott's Berry Farm Chicken Restaurant. For further information call Vince: 818-445-8723 or Barbara: 626-570-8651.
- Dec. 21 Slide night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes & Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.
- Jan. 4 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Jan. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 19, 26 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: 26
- Jan. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular Sats. day: 5, 19; Extra day: 12, 26. Com. Meeting: 19
- Jan. 11 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by **RUSS DAVIES**

December 9: The entertainment at the annual Christmas Banquet at **Knott's Berry Farm Chicken Restaurant** will cover **Steam Railroading in Colorado**, provided by the **PRM staff**, represented by **Russ Davies**.

January 11: **Railroad stations, depots and terminals, at home and abroad!** A slide presentation by **Paul Frantz** and **John Lee**. Paul and John are members of the **San Fernando Valley Historical Railroad Group**, and jointly put this presentation together. **Be there, and bring slide or digital image briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

At the Board Meeting on Nov. 2, John Hackey was voted into PRS with seniority number 510. No. 511 was assigned to a late renewal.

ROY GABRIEL

Long-time PRS member #86, J. Roy Gabriel, and a personal long-time friend of mine, passed away on October 2, 2007, while in Washington, D.C. on a business trip. A "Celebration of Life" was held in the roundhouse of the California State Railroad Museum (CSRM) in Sacramento, California, on November 15. The celebration was sponsored by Roy's employer, the California Farm Bureau Federation and by his rail friends, headed by Brad Lomazzi, Roy's long-time railroading show partner.

There were several Farm Bureau and non-Farm Bureau speakers, including Roy's son, Christopher, who said that the Pacific Electric was Roy's favorite railroad; Mike Snyder, who spoke of his many trips with Roy; and Paul Hammond, formerly active with the Orange Empire Railway Museum and now an official with the CSRM, who spoke about his memories of Roy. I spoke about several trips with Roy, including the time we had a special fantrip on the Yakima Valley Transportation Trolley under Roy's supervision. Some years ago Roy participated in train discontinuance hearings for the SP Sacramento Daylight and was a member of many rail organizations.

Ken Ruben

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of September 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 311,972. This was a increase of nearly 4 percent from the previous month.

RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO

by **TOM NELSON**

NORTH (SAN DIEGO) COUNTY

Track laying on North County Transit District's (NCTD) diesel railcar passenger line between Oceanside and Escondido was completed in August 2007. It was expected to be turned over to NCTD by Oct. 1. The opening of service was still scheduled for Dec. 31.

SACRAMENTO

Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) celebrated its 20th Anniversary of Light Rail on Sept. 14, 2007. A 9:30 a.m. press conference was held at Cathedral Square Light Rail Station, 11th and K Streets. There followed a Community Festival at State

Capitol Station, 11th and L Streets, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Live entertainment featured Mumbo Gumbo, and prize drawings, information booths, and refreshments were available.

VANCOUVER, WASH.

A group of Vancouver architects recommended a streetcar line to serve a 29-acre land parcel along the Columbia River in Vancouver. They had received a \$15,000 grant from the American Institute of Architects to study streetcars to improve livability. The 29 acres are possibly to become a mixed-use residential area. The group's findings were announced at Clark College on Oct. 10. The City of Vancouver is paying a streetcar consultant \$40,000 to assist in the study.

The streetcars would travel on a loop from downtown Vancouver to serve the riverfront property. Boise Cascade Corp. is selling the 29 acres to Gramor Development, Inc., of Tualatin, whose management favors streetcars on the property.

SEATTLE

Streetcar service in Seattle began in the late 1800s, when horse drawn cars were introduced, but ended in 1941. It returned in 1982 with second-hand trams from Australia running on the Waterfront line. In 2003 the mayor proposed a line between downtown (Westlake) and South Lake Union. By Feb. 2004, the Seattle Dept. of Transportation began a study of a South Lake Union Streetcar (SLUS) and possible Waterfront Streetcar extensions. The Seattle Streetcar Network and Feasibility Analysis came next, published in June 2004.

Stakeholders along the SLUS route formed a Build the Streetcar committee and proposed partial private funding. This resulted in the city council authorizing a funding plan on June 27, 2005, which included \$50.5 million for design and construction of the SLUS. Funding will also come from federal, state, and local sources. Design began in the fall of 2005, a contract was awarded in the summer of 2006, and revenue service on the 1.3-mile route is scheduled to begin by winter 2007/2008.

NEW MEXICO

Eighteen miles of new track are to be built from near La Bajada, New Mexico, to just outside Santa Fe. A \$115-million contract for the work was awarded to Twin Mountains Construction Co. and Herzog. This is part of the plan to extend the commuter service of Rail Runner Express from Albuquerque to the state capitol. The Rail Runner Express is operated and maintained by Herzog.

FORT WORTH

The Fort Worth Transportation Authority (The T) is proceeding toward building a commuter rail line southwest to northeast along 40 miles of existing track in Tarrant County. The route will serve Ft. Worth, Grapevine, and other localities en route to DFW Airport, where it will connect with a future Dallas DART line. The Alternatives Analysis was completed in 2006. The T selected URS Corp. to perform the environmental impact study, which began in June 2007, and initial engineering design.

DALLAS

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) awarded Siemens Transportation Systems a \$30-million base contract to supply 24 thyristor-controlled, rectifier substations for its latest corridor expansions. An option is included to supply another 14 of these Sitras Rectifier units to deliver direct current to the railway. The first unit is scheduled to be received by Oct. 2008 and all 24 by

2010. Valley Metro in Phoenix ordered similar units.

NEW ORLEANS

It was an auspicious occasion on Saturday, Nov. 10, 2007, when the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) re-opened its St. Charles Streetcar Line into the Garden District. A band led the streetcars to Lee Circle, 1.2 miles that was first to reopen in Dec. 2006 after the Katrina Hurricane of Aug. 2005. Parade watchers waved signs, "No More Bus," as the trolleys rolled by on about half of the 13-mile line. The St. Charles line originally opened in Sept. 1835.

Passengers rode free on Sat. the 10th, with revenue service starting on Sun. the 11th at a fare of \$1.25. The entire line may be running by spring 2008. About five cars are expected to be in service, in addition to four or five on the Canal St. line and two on the Waterfront line.

MINNEAPOLIS

Metro Transit's designated route for the LRT Central Corridor to St. Paul will pass over the Mississippi River on the Washington Ave. Bridge built in 1965. A July 31, 2007, draft report (dated one day before the collapse of the I-35W bridge upstream) states that the Wash. Bridge could not support several light rail vehicles plus other traffic simultaneously. Bridge girders need strengthening or replacement. The final report was due this fall.

Recently, there has been talk of the Central Corridor being routed to a new I-35W bridge. This would raise several problems: delays in a rebuilt I-35W bridge, and reengineering of the LRT line to a circuitous new route. It was said that no federal funding could go toward the new I-35W bridge, because it would not be a replacement in-kind due to the addition of tracks to carry the rail transit cars.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson, Sacramento Regional Transit, *Ry. Age*, *Mass Transit*, *Metro Magazine*, and *Pasadena Star-News*]

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP

by DICK FINLEY

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during September were 42,373. This was an increase from the previous month of about 2 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within five minutes of scheduled time) was 94 percent.

SCHEDULES

Metrolink 2007/2008 Holiday Season schedules shall operate as follows:

On November 22 – Thanksgiving Day - Service occurred on three lines:

On the Antelope Valley Line and the San Bernardino Line was a regular Sunday schedule. The Inland Empire Orange County Line had a special 4 round trip schedule between Riverside and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo.

On November 23 – "Thanksgiving Friday" - A full regular weekday schedule operated on all lines.

On December 24 – Christmas Eve - A full regular weekday schedule will operate on all lines.

On December 25 – Christmas Day - No Metrolink service will operate on any line.

On December 31 – New Years Eve - A full regular weekday schedule will operate on all lines.

On January 1, 2008 – New Years Day - Service will occur on two lines:

San Bernardino Line – A modified Sunday schedule will operate. Train 349 replaces train 351 and operates 1 hour 15 minutes earlier to accommodate Rose Parade passengers.

Antelope Valley Line – A modified Sunday schedule will operate. Train 258 replaces train 260 and operates 35 minutes earlier to accommodate Rose Parade passengers. In the afternoon train 273 replaces train 265.

IEOC WEEKEND SCHEDULES

On Saturday and Sunday trains go from San Bernardino to Oceanside at 7:30a and 8:55a, and on Sat. only from Riverside-Downtown to Oceanside at 6:05p. Trains go from Orange to San Juan Capistrano at 9:30a and 5:15p, and from Orange to Oceanside at 1:30p and 9:30p.

On Saturday and Sunday trains go from Oceanside to San Bernardino at 2:50p and 4:30p and on Sat. only from Oceanside to Riverside-Downtown at 7:45a. Trains go from San Juan Capistrano to Orange at 10:23a and 6:08p, and from Oceanside to Orange at 6:27a and 2:10p.

GRADE SEPARATIONS

There are a number of grade-separation projects in progress on Metrolink rights-of-way to turn at-grade crossings into grade-separated crossings. As of November 2007, grade-separation projects are currently in design or construction at the Ramona Blvd. underpass in El Monte; the Sierra Highway overhead bridge in Santa Clarita; Interstate 5 HOV lanes in Sylmar; Sun Valley, and Burbank; the Buena Vista and Empire Ave. underpasses in Burbank; various overhead bridges in Los Angeles; the Jeffrey Rd., Sand Canyon Dr., and Marine Way underpasses in Irvine; the Haven Ave. underpass in Rancho Cucamonga; Oso Parkway in Mission Viejo; Tustin Ranch Rd. in Tustin; the Columbia St. and Third St. underpasses in Riverside; and a Fairmont Ave. overhead in Glendale.

SANTA CLARITA

Flashing red-and-blue light-emitting diode (LED) signs are being installed at nine intersections near railroad tracks. Two of the signs flash when right turns are prohibited from eastbound Soledad Canyon Rd. to Oak St., where a turn at the wrong time could mean a collision with a train, said Andrew Yi, Santa Clarita's traffic engineer.

ANTELOPE VALLEY

Metrolink added two trains to the four Saturday trains in each direction from Lancaster to Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) in early September. Saturday trains leave Lancaster at 6:45, 9:45 and 11:15 a.m. and 1:10, 3:30, and 6:25 p.m. Saturday trains now leave Los Angeles at 9:00 and 12:00 a.m., 2:45, 4:10, 6:05, and 9:00 p.m.

Sunday service has three trains in each direction, leaving Lancaster at 6:45 and 9:45 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and leaving Union Station at noon and 2:45 and 6:05 p.m. Trains arrive in Lancaster or at Union Station about one hour and 55 minutes after departing. If these trains are successful, Denise Tyrrell, a Metrolink spokeswoman, and Michael Cano, an aide to Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, said it could lead to more trains in the future.

ORANGE COUNTY

Orange County Transit Authority (OCTA) decided the first week of September to start a \$60 million, county-wide quiet

zone program. While 40 of the 53 railroad crossings included in OCTA's plans are located in Orange, Anaheim, and Santa Ana, San Juan Capistrano officials said they will also participate in the program. The plan calls for cities to foot 12 percent of the bill for safety improvements, with OCTA picking up the other 88 percent.

VENTURA COUNTY

Ventura County Transportation Commission is collecting comments on a study into activating train service through a 52-mile corridor from Port Hueneme to Santa Clarita at a cost of \$375 million or more. The commission will seek input and support from communities along the rail corridor, including Oxnard, Ventura and Santa Clarita. The 18-member commission was set to consider the study on Oct. 5, said commission Deputy Director Kerry Forsythe. Fillmore and Santa Paula city officials have expressed concerns about freight trains on the line.

There is no estimated year of completion, Forsythe said, although the commission would be "pretty excited" if it was finished in the next 10 years.

BUENA PARK

More than 170 Metrolink passengers boarded the first 10 trains to pull into Orange County's 11th and newest station, which opened Sept. 4 in Buena Park. A contingent of City Council members, city staffers and county Supervisor Chris Norby arose early to take the first train that rolled into the Lakeknoll Drive station at 4:45 a.m.

It is believed to be the first passenger train to stop in Buena Park in at least 40 years, though no one was quite sure when the last train actually came to the city. The \$14-million station was designed to replicate the tower at Knott's Berry Farm, which itself is a replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

By 2009, the goal is to have commuter trains running every 30 minutes from 5 a.m. to midnight on weekdays, between Fullerton and Laguna Niguel. Parking lot improvements are scheduled for Fullerton, Orange, Tustin, Irvine and Laguna Niguel.

RIVERSIDE

A motor-home storage yard near downtown Riverside sits on some 100,000 tons of soil contaminated at the turn of the century by one of several gas-production facilities that left toxic footprints across the Inland region. City and transportation leaders envision the property by Riverside's Metrolink station as the city's first transit village where commuters one day would live and shop.

The contaminated land cleanup might have begun by last August and last for nine months. The transit village cleanup was to be funded by Southern California Gas Co. and Southern California Edison, whose predecessors once occupied the site, said Peter Hidalgo, a gas-company spokesman. He said the cleanup is expected to cost several million dollars. Trucks will cart away 3,000 loads of tainted soil.

BURBANK

The City Council unanimously approved a resolution August 28, that would allow the city to create a quiet zone along a local railroad. Trains passing through the Buena Vista St. at-grade crossing near San Fernando Blvd. would be required to refrain from honking through a stretch of track at least half a mile long, and the crossings would be outfitted with safety improvements.

The quiet zone would coincide with other improvements to the area. Officials are planning to develop a grade crossing – or

overpass – at the intersection in the next couple of years, said Ken Johnson, city traffic engineer. A grade crossing would render the need for a quiet zone moot, Johnson said.

VENTURA COUNTY & ANTELOPE VALLEY LINES

Metrolink officials have unveiled a plan to improve safety at 63 busy railroad crossings along the Ventura County and Antelope Valley rail lines. The \$100 million price tag for the “sealed corridor” program is steep, but if it makes railroad crossings safer for train riders, impatient motorists and pedestrians, it will be money well-spent.

This latest effort is a continuation of one Metrolink has undertaken since 1992. To date, the agency has invested more than \$70 million in grade-crossing improvements.

NEWHALL PASS

The developers of a 5,800-home transit utopia proposed for the Newhall Pass want to include a futuristic people-mover that would transport commuters 30 stories down to a subterranean Metrolink platform. The plan by Palmer Investment envisions commuters living in the Las Lomas project, perched atop the San Gabriel range between Sylmar and Santa Clarita. They would reach the Metrolink platform on elevators cored through a mountain to an already-built rail tunnel 100 yards below.

Las Lomas would be served by the Antelope Valley line. Trains thread through, but do not stop in, a tunnel dug through the base of the San Gabriel Mountains. Among the engineering concerns about an underground station are the diesel emissions and pollution from the trains, which would need to be vented to protect waiting passengers.

“We do not load and unload passengers in those tunnels, and we’re not asking people to stand 20 minutes and wait for a train,” said Denise Tyrrell, a spokeswoman for Metrolink. “Any decision to proceed should be premised on thorough study beforehand,” said James Moore, a transportation engineer and professor of civil engineering and public policy and management at USC.

Palmer Investments would shoulder the entire cost of the station, said Matt Klink, a spokesman for the Las Lomas project. Las Lomas is one of several large-scale developments planned for north Los Angeles County. Ultimately, 21,000 homes are planned at Newhall ranch north of Valencia, while 25,000 homes are expected at Tejon Ranch, near the L.A.-Kern counties line. Today, nearly 60 percent of Santa Clarita residents commute to jobs outside their valley.

“The cost and physical feasibility of this Metrolink station being built has not been determined and must be further investigated before this alternative can be considered feasible,” wrote Los Angeles transportation engineer Sergio Valdez in a Dec. 26 memo. Jan Heidt, a former member of the Metrolink board who rides the Antelope Valley line at least twice a month, opposed the underground station.

It’s ridiculous,” said Heidt, also a former Santa Clarita City Council member. “It’s a single track. It was hewn out of the mountain over 100 years ago. I think it works fine. I’d leave it alone. “Anyone who rides Metrolink knows the train slows down when it goes through the tunnel because the base is soft,” she said.

POMONA

City administrators of Pomona received a letter in Aug. from

the state Public Utilities Commission outlining steps Pomona must take before a Quiet Zone can be established so that trains will no longer sound horns.

Pomona has five crossings along the Union Pacific railroad tracks paralleling First St. The crossings are at Hamilton Blvd., Park and San Antonio Aves., and Main and Palomares Sts. Metrolink asked that once the city has met all the requirements for a Quiet Zone, the various agencies conduct an inspection and verify the work has been done, said Steve Wylie, Metrolink assistant executive officer.

It seems like this has taken forever,” said Councilman George Hunter, who has been working on the project as a member of the Alameda Corridor East (ACE) Construction Authority. One of the major elements in the process involved the ACE Construction Authority, which paid for the four-quadrant gates installed at the city’s five railroad crossings. Pomona is the only city in the authority’s service area that has this type of gate, said Rick Richmond, chief executive officer of the ACE Construction Authority. Medians and other measures were used to create safer crossings in other places but the close proximity of First Street to the tracks made that unworkable.

HOLIDAY TOY EXPRESS

On Nov. 17, the Holiday Express began stopping at Metrolink stations in the evening to perform a free show and collect toys for local firefighters’ “Spark of Love” toy drive. The following schedule lists the December stops. For more information, call (800) 371-LINK or visit www.metrolinktrains.com.

Saturday, Dec. 1: Anaheim 5:15, Orange 6:00, Santa Ana 7:00, Fullerton 8:30.

Sunday, Dec. 2: San Clemente North 5:45, Camp Pendleton USMC 7:15, San Clemente Pier 8:45.

Friday, Dec. 7: Downtown Burbank 6:15, Glendale 8:00.

Saturday, Dec. 8: Simi Valley 5:00, Chatsworth 6:00, Northridge 7:00, Van Nuys 8:15.

Sunday, Dec. 9: Montalvo 5:00, Oxnard 5:45, Camarillo 6:30, Moorpark 7:30.

Friday, Dec. 14: El Monte 7:30, Baldwin Park 8:45.

Saturday, Dec. 15: Lancaster 5:00, Palmdale 6:50, Vincent Grade/Acton 7:45, Via Princessa 9:00.

Sunday, Dec. 16: Tustin 5:45, Irvine 6:30, Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo 7:30, San Juan Capistrano 8:30.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

S. 294, which authorizes Amtrak for five years, Fiscal 2008-2012, was passed by the Senate on Oct. 30. It was received in the House of Representatives the next day and referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The Committee is expected to consider the bill early next year. It only reauthorizes Amtrak, and sets the amount of funds that may be appropriated. An appropriation bill, originating in the House, is required to actually provide funds for Amtrak. The last Amtrak reauthorization bill was passed by Congress in 1997, and expired in 2002.

On Oct. 31, *The Wall Street Journal* printed a favorable article, which pointed out “The Senate bill changes the Amtrak debate by setting a goal for the passenger railroad to improve train service rather than to achieve financial self-sufficiency.” The article was followed by a *New York Times* editorial calling

for support for Amtrak the next day. The editorial pointed out that if the bill becomes law it would give Amtrak a steady level of support which would permit it to start planning for a few years at a time, and not have to seek funding annually. The article concludes, "In the costly world of mass transportation, adequately funding Amtrak is an easy bargain." Several other newspapers printed editorials or articles regarding the Amtrak reauthorization bill, also.

AMTRAK NEWS

Donna McLean was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) at the November 8, 2007, board meeting. McLean, who was appointed to the Board by President Bush and approved by the Senate in July 2006, had served as Vice Chairman of the Board. She replaces former Chairman David M. Laney, who remains a board member until his term expires in late November 2007.

Californians Honored

At its President's Safety and Service Ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Oct. 29, two Californians were honored. William Bronte, Chief, Division of Rail for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and Eugene Skoropowski, Managing Director, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, received special recognition among state and local leaders across the nation for their support of Amtrak and commitment to passenger rail service. Both men received Amtrak's most prestigious award, the President's Service and Safety Award for State Partner.

Ridership and Revenue

Amtrak ridership in Fiscal Year 2007 increased to 25,847,531, marking the fifth straight year of gains and setting a record for the most passengers using Amtrak trains since the National Railroad Passenger Corporation started operations in 1971.

This total, for the period October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007, topped the 24,306,965 for the previous 12 months and is greater than the passenger count of 25.03 million reached in 2004, before Amtrak transitioned some services to a commuter rail operator.

Total ticket revenue for the fiscal year, \$1.5 billion was an 11 percent increase over the \$1.37 billion in FY06. If other income from contract services is included, the railroad's total revenue was \$2.2 billion for the fiscal year.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Pacific Surfliner

Southbound *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. Nos. 566 and 57, and northbound *Surfliner* Tr. Nos. 565 and 567 began stopping at the Metrolink Orange and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo stations on Oct. 29. Tr. No. 566 departs Orange at 9:15 a.m. and Laguna Niguel at 9:41 a.m. Tr. No. 578 departs Orange at 2:45 p.m. and Laguna Niguel at 3:11 p.m. Tr. No. 585 departs Laguna Niguel at 8:35 a.m. and Orange at 9:01 a.m.

Surfliner service was canceled between San Diego and San Juan Capistrano on Oct. 24 as a result of wildfires in the area. No alternate transportation was offered.

Cascades

Amtrak operated additional trains between Seattle (SEA) and Portland (PDX) during the Thanksgiving holiday period. The trains operated with 60-seat *Horizon* coaches and a café car. Amenities found on the Talgo-equipped trains: business class seating, accessible seating, movies, checked baggage service,

and bicycle space was not available on the trains. The extra trains operated on the following dates and schedules.

- Nov. 21 - Tr. No. 511: Dp. SEA 1:45 p.m., Ar. PDX 6:00 p.m.; Tr. No. 514: Dp. PDX 7:00 p.m., Ar. SEA 11:15 p.m.
- Nov. 22 - Tr. No. 505: Dp. SEA 8:30 a.m., Ar. PDX 12:45 p.m.; Tr. No. 502: Dp. PDX 8:00 a.m., Ar. SEA 12:15 p.m.
- Nov. 24 - Tr. No. 502: Dp. PDX 8:00 a.m., Ar. SEA 12:15 p.m.; Tr. No. 511: Dp. SEA 1:45 p.m., Ar. PDX 6:00 p.m.
- Nov. 25 - Tr. No. 511: Dp. SEA 1:45 p.m., Ar. PDX 6:00 p.m.; Tr. No. 515: Dp. SEA 7:00 p.m., Ar. PDX 11:15 p.m.; Tr. No. 512: Dp. PDX 1:45 p.m., Ar. SEA 6:00 p.m.; Tr. No. 514: Dp. PDX 7:00 p.m., Ar. SEA 11:15 p.m.

Amtrak offered direct Thruway Motorcoach service from the University of Oregon to Portland Union Station on Wednesday, November 21, and Sunday, November 25, 2007, during the Thanksgiving week.

In cooperation with the Oregon Department of Transportation, a regular daily roundtrip, as well as Friday and Sunday express service between the University and Portland began on November 26, 2007, through the end of the Winter Quarter.

The last of the *Talgo* trainsets used in the operation of Amtrak Cascades service between Eugene, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, returned to service on Sunday, October 21, 2007, after undergoing repairs at the maintenance facility in Seattle. Seattle-Vancouver, B.C. Tr. Nos. 510/517 continue operating using Superliner equipment.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Amtrak offers additional service in the Northeast Corridor during the Thanksgiving holiday period, and issues a special Thanksgiving holiday timetable. The timetable includes Northeast Corridor, Keystone/Pennsylvanian, and Empire Service schedules. This year, for the first time, the 36-page timetable was available from the Amtrak web site, as well as at Northeast Corridor stations.

Extra sections of *Regional* trains operated with 1000-series train numbers, using regular Amtrak equipment offering the same amenities as regularly scheduled *Regionals*.

Holiday Extra service operated with 3000-series train numbers, using leased commuter equipment. Most of these trains did not have food service.

DEPOT DOINGS

Amtrak and T-Mobile are now offering commercial-grade Wi-Fi hotspots at Washington Union Station, Baltimore Penn Station, Wilmington Station, Philadelphia 30th Street Station and New York Penn Station. A variety of service plans are offered from one-day passes to unlimited annual access. Wi-Fi service is not available aboard trains, but may be offered at some time in the future.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

September 2007	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	136,355	77,834	40,576	19,579
Saturday Ave.	95,122	56,004	24,351	12,219
Sunday Ave.	78,697	46,977	18,908	11,072
Monthly Total	3,538,543	2,040,734	1,006,147	499,528

UNPAID FARES

About 5 percent of weekday passengers on Los Angeles' Red, Blue, Green, and Gold Lines are getting a free ride by failing to pay fares. A study for Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)(MTA) found that the percentage of fare evaders increased at night and on weekends. MTA Chief Executive Officer said there were more fare evaders during off peak periods when fewer fare inspectors were on duty.

Unlike in other major cities, MTA's entire rail network and Orange Line busway operate on an honor system, where there are no turnstiles or entry gates. Riders must produce proof of payment when asked for it by a sheriff's deputy or inspector. It is no secret that the open architecture of the stations and the absence of station agents has allowed some riders to avoid paying fares.

Concerned that fare evasion is costing millions of dollars in lost revenue, MTA officials are looking into possible solutions, including what it might cost to install entry gates. Consultant Joe Forgiarini of Transportation Management and Design Inc. said three-member teams, consisting of a sheriff's deputy, MTA security officer, and representative of the consulting firm, randomly boarded rail cars and Orange Line buses during a two-week period in October.

Passengers were asked for their tickets or transit passes as the train or bus traveled between stations. Violators were not issued citations during the study.

The study found that 4.4% of weekday passengers on the Red Line subway had not paid or paid an incorrect amount. The percentage on weekends was between 6% and 7%.

The Green Line from Norwalk to Redondo Beach had the highest percentage of passengers without tickets. For the Green Line weekday passengers, 6% had no proof of payment or paid incorrect fares. The percentage rose to nearly 8% on Saturday. One of every 10 passengers on Sunday was a fare evader.

On the Blue Line from Los Angeles to Long Beach, the percentage ranged from slightly more than 5% on weekdays and Saturdays to 8.2% on Sundays.

The Gold Line between Los Angeles and Pasadena had the lowest level of fare evasion – 3% during the week and a little more than 4% on weekends.

Orange Line buses had a fare evasion rate of 5% weekdays and Sundays and 6% on Saturdays.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Rail and its supporting structures are being installed between Vignes and Alameda Streets. Hundreds of feet of concrete have been poured near Vignes St., accompanied by the forming of new concrete areas, the installation of drains and the demolition of some intersection paving.

EXPO LINE

Dorsey High School is the focal point of an increasingly heated fight between transit officials determined to build a light rail line from downtown Los Angeles to the Westside and Crenshaw District residents who fear that fast-moving trains will threaten the safety of students crossing the tracks. The first phase of the rail line, scheduled to open in 2010, will run near the 2,000 student high school where at 3:08 p.m. most weekdays, chaos reigns.

After school, hundreds of students flood across the intersection of Exposition Blvd. and Farmdale Ave., walking home or awaiting pickup. Ice cream trucks beckon. Cars wait six deep in all directions, sometimes blocking traffic when they pull up to and away from the curb. Students walk or run past the scene or loiter under the mature pepper trees in the boulevard's grassy median – an old railroad right-of-way that soon will become the path for trains carrying commuters between downtown L.A. and Culver City.

Critics insist that running trains at 35 mph across the intersection is unsafe. To avoid potential collisions between trains, students and motorists, they want the tracks built above or below ground, but not at street level.

Opponents of the design note that the MTA Board in Sept. approved spending an extra \$23.3 million to add a station at USC/Exposition Park and to pay for safety improvements at several points along the Expo Line route. But transit officials say they only have the money to pay for a street-level crossing at Dorsey. To elevate the rail line across the intersection would cost at least an extra \$25 million, further straining the Expo Line project's \$663.3-million budget.

Richard Thorpe, chief executive of the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority, said the intersection will be much safer than it is now with the installation of traffic and warning lights, wider sidewalks, bells and barriers to prevent people and cars from crossing the tracks when a train is approaching. Thorpe points to an excellent safety record on MTA's Gold Line, which runs near schools between downtown L.A. and Pasadena.

Thorpe said the added USC/Exposition Park station addressed concerns about how to handle crowds from a major event, such as a football game at the nearby Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. Thorpe said the MTA had agreed to slow the trains from 55 mph to 35 mph at Dorsey before and after school. Barriers would lower to block off the tracks for passing trains, which won't stop at the intersection.

"Kids are kids," said Beverly Manuel, Dorsey's dean of students. "You will have students who will try to beat the train. Someone is going to end up being killed right here on this spot." [Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION ADDITION

The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension is yet to be completed, but officials are already planning for a second leg to the line that could go as far as Whittier. The \$898 million Eastside extension, which will run from Los Angeles Union Station through East Los Angeles to end near the intersection of Atlantic Ave. and Pomona Blvd. near Monterey Park, is on schedule and scheduled to open in 2009.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials have scheduled a series of public meetings to discuss options for the second phase of the line, said Metro spokesman Jose Ubaldo. The meetings will take place in some of the cities that could be traversed by the new line, including Whittier, Montebello, Rosemead, and Pico Rivera. "We are looking at proposing either light rail, a rapid busway like the Orange Line, or rapid bus service like Metro Rapid," said Ubaldo.

The Whittier and Beverly boulevard routes, as well as a third option along Washington Blvd. via Atlantic Ave., would end in Whittier. Rosemead City Councilman John Nuñez said he was

excited about the probability of the Eastside extension. But he added that the proposed 60 Freeway route, which would take the line past his city, is the most logical option. "Going down the 60 makes sense because you could feasibly use it to get to the (Ontario) airport," said Nuñez. "Montebello would also be very interested in having the route go there because they have a mall."

Plans are also being considered to lengthen the proposed Gold Line Foothill extension to Montclair down to the Ontario Airport.

"This is a study only; we don't really have the funds to do anything more," said Ubaldo. "It would take at least 10 years to finish a project like this, and that is why we want to start planning now."

The meetings will take public input on the proposed lines and analyze those suggestions to determine which is most feasible from the perspective of environmental impact, economic feasibility and ridership. Revised options will be brought back to the public in March 2008, and the final locally preferred alternatives will be presented to the Metro Board by Sept. 2008. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News* via Dick Finley]

EXPOSITION CONNECTOR RIGHT-OF-WAY

At the Metro Board Meeting on Oct. 25, a program was approved not to exceed \$300,000 over two years for fencing, landscaping, and basic improvements at strategic locations along the Exposition Connector Right-of-Way (ROW) between Flower St. and Long Beach Blvd. Enclosing portions of the ROW with iron fencing, clearing debris, and installing some shrubs and low-maintenance landscaping would improve the physical appearance and minimize the recurrence of unsightly conditions.

The ROW is a former Southern Pacific freight railway segment approximately 2.2 miles in length. The ROW runs east to west between Metro's Blue Line and the Exposition Light Rail Line, which is now under construction near USC and Exposition Park in South Los Angeles. Planning does not propose fencing and landscaping along the entire ROW; the improvements would be strategically located in residential and business districts, primarily in the one-half mile segment between Main and San Pedro Streets.

Stakeholders have expressed interest in using the ROW for a variety of non-transportation uses, including the development of workforce housing. A recent Metro consultant study concluded that the ROW holds potential as a future transit corridor and should be preserved. The ROW is not currently used for transportation purposes.

REGIONAL CONNECTOR STUDY

Metro has begun a study to select a route between the 7th St./Metro Center Station and Union Station (LAUS) to connect its Blue and Gold light rail transit (LRT) Lines in downtown Los Angeles. Several possible routes were shown on a Study Background map as part of the Alternatives Analysis for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor. The first public meeting was held at the L.A. Central Library on Nov. 6, 2007. Oral comments were sought, but written comments were to be accepted no later than Nov. 21

The following differing views from seven attendees, out of a dozen or so, reflect most of the comments offered in the packed

room.

"To provide through service between distant terminals, LRT track should be laid on Alameda St. and Washington Blvd."

"Have as much tunneling as possible, and convert the former Subway Terminal Station to a rail transit museum."

"The track needs to be grade separated. A route along Alameda and Washington could be part of a loop."

"The study boundary should include LAUS. Run trains through so no transfer is needed south of LAUS."

"A direct route underground. LAUS-Grand Ave. on Bunker Hill – 7th/Metro Center, would be preferable."

"No need to go down Alameda."

"Run the line along 1st St. using single track in Little Tokyo where the street is narrow between Main St. and Alameda. An alternate through Little Tokyo could be a 1st St./2nd St. couplet."

The estimated time to attain operational status is 7 to 10 years. [Info. and recalled quotes heard by Tom Nelson]

WESTSIDE TRANSIT PLAN

A large crowd of West Hollywood residents, business owners and city officials turned out for the community meeting on Nov. 5 at Plummer Park to discuss the Metro Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study, which proposes to extend transit service from the Los Angeles/Hollywood area through to Santa Monica. Led by the Westside Extension Transit Corridor study's executive officer and project manager David Mieger, the meeting commenced with an overview of the many different aspects being considered, including the various types of transit modes available, the transportation routes, the station locations, and the rail's distance. Mieger showed the two most preferred routes currently being considered.

The first possibility is to extend the Metro Purple Line at the Wilshire and Western station west on Wilshire Blvd. through Hollywood, where the line would run parallel to Santa Monica Blvd. for a brief stretch in Century City until reconnecting to Wilshire in Westwood.

The second highly desired route would extend the Metro Red Line at Hollywood and Highland, connecting it from Sunset Blvd. to Santa Monica Blvd., running directly through West Hollywood to Beverly Hills and Century City.

One line isn't certainly going to serve everyone through the area, Mieger said, adding that there is a possibility various lines could be included. Over 28 community members, including various West Hollywood commissioners, advisory board leaders and Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge shared their thoughts about the Metro transit extension.

While the majority of the speakers were in favor and excited about a transit line through West Hollywood, many expressed concerns over the project's extensive construction along the already traffic congested Santa Monica route, the potential for increased crime as a result of an influx of people and how accessible both the Santa Monica and Wilshire routes would be to all West Hollywood residents, particularly seniors and disabled populations.

"No one here is against the subway," LaBonge said. "Only we know we want it. We have to push for it."

[Info. from *The Los Angeles Independent* via Tom Nelson]

SAN DIEGO

FY 07 Year-End Rail Operations Report

The annual ridership for FY 07 (commencing July 1, 2006) was fixed at 35,114,385, representing an increase of 3.6 percent over the previous year. This number is attributed to the ever-increasing public use of trolley service for work, travel, and special events and escalating gasoline prices. Daily ridership of 9,531 to the San Diego State University campus is up 21.7 percent over FY 06.

San Diego Trolley Inc. (SDTI) again has achieved one of the lowest accident rates among light rail agencies in Calif. A comparison of accidents per 100,000 miles in FY 07 and FY 06 (0.5 vs. 0.7) demonstrates an increase in safe train miles operated. The total number of accidents during the fiscal year was 16 representing 0.5 accidents per 100,000 miles operated.

SDTI scheduled 171,853 regular train trips in FY 07. Of the number scheduled, 171,787 were operated for a schedule adherence of 99.96 percent. Of those trips operated, 96.6 percent were on time (within five minutes of schedule).

Total wheelchair ridership during FY 07 reached 84,032, representing a 6.5 percent increase over FY 06. The new low-floor S70 light rail vehicle (LRV) allows four disabled riders per LRV as opposed to the two-rider maximum per train on the U2 LRVs and three-rider maximum per train on the SD-100 LRVs.

The fleet incorporates three series of Siemens vehicles beginning with 71 U2 LRVs (22 to 27 years old), 52 SD-100 LRVs (12 years old), and 11 S70 LRVs (introduced in 2005) to support Green Line service. The LRV Maintenance Department remains focused on preventative maintenance programs to address the most common component defects, enhance maintenance procedures, and reduce equipment failures and service delays. Based on the National Transit Database criteria for vehicle miles between service failures, the LRV Maintenance Department recorded 94,214 train miles between service failures.

An aggressive body restoration and painting program continued to address the exterior appearance of the U2 LRV fleet. In FY 07, a total of eight U2 LRVs received extensive body restoration and finish paint, which brings the total number restored to 66. In the U2 fleet, the five remaining vehicles will not be restored and, as an alternative, will receive a Board-approved advertisement wrap. The current contract was renewed in FY 08, and a similar restoration program has been initiated on the SD-100 LRV fleet.

The low-floor configuration of the S70 LRV requires that a considerable amount of its mechanical equipment be stored on the rooftop, as opposed to the undercarriage, as on the high-floor U2 and SD-100 LRVs. A \$2.4 million project was initiated as part of the Mission Valley East Project to provide an overhead platform on shop tracks C-1 and C-2 with corresponding monorail cranes for the purpose of moving heavy equipment to and from the vehicle rooftop. The project scope also included a provision to provide an under rail service pit on each of these shop tracks. The project was completed in August 2007.

Maintenance programs and inspection activities specific to the track structure, safety, ride quality, signaling, grade-crossing safety and general system maintenance continued through-

out the year. The FY 07 goal to replace cross ties and track tamping was exceeded with a total of 1,274 crossties changed and eight miles of track resurfaced and aligned on the Blue Line.

NEW BRIDGE IN PORTLAND, OREGON

Portland's first new bridge in 34 years could be a 30-story, white monument rising from the Willamette River and standing in contrast to the many other steel truss bridges. The span would carry light rail and streetcar service, bicycles, pedestrians and possibly buses, but no cars. The cable-stayed bridge with a single pair of columns would limit impediments to river navigation and, during construction, limit interference with endangered salmon runs.

The bridge would link downtown Portland and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), the city's largest employer, with Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), one of the biggest tourist and educational attractions, and with Milwaukie to the south.

The exact route the bridge takes across the river is crucial to many riverfront interests – there are at least five alignments now in consideration. The route could be set within the next two months. City Council and Metro hearings would follow until a final selection is made by July. Construction could start in 2011, with an opening in 2015.

The bridge is part of an \$880 million planned light rail line from Portland to Milwaukie that got a big jolt when the Legislature committed \$250 million earlier this year. Aside from the overall goal of connecting the region's growing Southeast suburbs with downtown, Portland Planning Director Gil Kelley says the bridge has a crucial role to play in Portland's core. It can link OHSU, OMSI, Portland State and Portland Community College in what he calls a "science and technology quarter."

TriMet and Metro planners are contemplating a cable-stayed design rather than a normally less costly concrete segmented design. But a segmented bridge could result in multiple columns dipping into the Willamette, disturbing salmon habitat more during construction and leaving more impediments to river navigation. Also, can the bridge deck leap from ground-level near OMSI to a height of 72 feet above the river to allow barge traffic? Then, can it descend on the west side in such a way as to remain high enough to clear a waterfront bicycle trail but dip low enough for a street-level station in South Waterfront? And how well can a train ride up and down steep grades? What will be the effect on the wheelchair bound? That's just the height issue.

Metro and TriMet say they'll have answers to all the questions by springtime. Their answers may determine whether the bridge itself is all about utility or also about creating another Portland icon.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

