

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

NOVEMBER 2008

## 3751 TO SAN DIEGO WITH PRIVATE VARNISH

by BOB AND LAURA DRENK

Sunday, September 21, came early and dark. Laura and I had a snack, then arrived Los Angeles Union Station at 5:30 a.m. The first bus to take us to 8th Street coach yard for boarding was already there. Identification Tags were passed out and we departed at 6:30 a.m.

The train was sponsored by the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners (AAPRCO) and was run as an Amtrak train. We were assigned to the *Overland Trail*, a full lounge with barber shop. We boarded the *City of Angels* to access our car. As I had a printed consist of the train, I was in the vestibule greeting the boarding participants and directing them right or left and how many cars to go.

Bill Hatrick was dressed in uniform as a 1940's Santa Fe Conductor. As I was co-hosting with Bill, I was dressed as a Santa Fe 1950's Station Agent, with my 61-year-old Standard Hamilton Railway Special pocket watch.

The train departed at 7:29 a.m., making a reverse move to clear the switch, so we can escape to the main line and onto the fly-over. *Overland Trail* was the eighth car leaving LA, with 3751 leading Amtrak P-42 63, 87 and 99. We make good time, although track speed was limited to 60 mph with the 24 cars, per the Chief Mechanical Officer. Blowing through Fullerton, we waved to several friends, which was really mostly a blur! Breakfast was nice with fresh-baked Belgian waffles, sausages, fruit, pastries and beverages.

Beach front running south of Serra brought out many to view our classic 24-car time machine. Service and water was near old Fallbrook Junction. Climbing out of the Sorrento Valley, we attacked Miramar Hill, topping and descending through Rose Canyon to our destination of Old Town with arrival at 11:37 a.m. Amtrak Conductor Marisol said she liked seeing the luxury of yesteryear.

Many passengers took trolley rides to the east and south. As old folks, we stayed around and toured Old Town, enjoying a cozy outdoor lunch.

After unloading, the train was backed to Morena, four miles north and put away. The power was cut off and the three units and 3751 continued north to the wye at Miramar turning. During their absence, the Private Varnish cars were on generator power. Upon returning from the wye, with the power attached, there was some trouble with the brakes on these classic cars, requiring several set and release procedures – all time consuming. Each time the train is walked to check each car for proper set and for proper release – walking 24 cars each time.

The train backed to the platform, loaded and then backed up for more servicing, with departure about 6:30 p.m., two and a half hours late. Service and water was completed at Stuart Mesa. We enjoyed views and the sunset along the coast return



*San Pedro Convention of the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners with 24 cars. Photo by Leon Callaway*



*Bob Drenk (left) and Bill Hatrick, owner, aboard the Overland Trail on the 3751 trip from Los Angeles to San Diego with AAPRCO on September 21, 2008. Photo by Laura Drenk*

ing with the interior lights dimmed. Dinner was nice with entre salads and desserts of Bailey's over ice cream and a decadent chocolate conglomeration!

We arrived Hobart, cut off 3751 and unit 63 for Redondo Jct., and awaited our BNSF-PHL pilot for an hour, arriving San Pedro at 1:20 a.m. We boarded our buses and arrived back at LAUS where Laura and I boarded the RR crew wagon for the Metro Plaza, and in bed at 3:00 a.m.

We were up at 7:30 a.m. to catch Metrolink at 9:03 for San Bernardino and home in Highland by 11:00 a.m. Our cats, Wally and Sam, were happy to see us.



**WHEEL CLICKS**  
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**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.

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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

- Nov. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: November 22.
- Nov. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 1, 15; Extra day: 8, 22, 29. Committee Meeting: 15. More info.: Will Walters: 714-637-4676.
- Nov. 7 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Nov. 14 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Dec. 5 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **PACIFIC RAILROAD Fri. MUSEUM**, 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas
- Dec. 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: December 27.
- Dec. 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 6, 20; Extra day: 13, 27. Committee Mtg.: 20.

Dec. 12 **PRS HOLIDAY PARTY**, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Fri. Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra. SEE FLYER FOR DETAILS.

**MEETING PROGRAMS** by **RUSS DAVIES**

November 14: **The Santa Fe Ice Plants!** **Charlie Schultz** will share a **Power Point** presentation similar to one he did for the Santa Fe Historical & Modeling Society's annual meeting in July in Riverside. We'll see how the ice was produced and stored, and how the reefers were iced by hand. Charlie's father spent his career as a manager in Santa Fe's Ice Department, and Chsrli was exposed to the operation as a youngster. **Be there, and bring news briefs on a CD!**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT** by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

One late renewal was assigned No. 471. At the Board Meeting on October 3, 2008, Judy Talnadge and George Beidler were voted into PRS with Nos. 472 and 473, respectively.

**OWEN DANAHER**

Owen Danaher, Pacific Railroad Society Treasurer and 62 years of age, passed away October 4, 2008. On the previous Friday, Owen presented the Treasurer's report at the PRS Board meeting. On Saturday, Owen planned to work at the San Dimas Western Arts Festival, but was not feeling well enough and stayed at the Unity Church of Truth in Pomona, where he was the night watchman. The Pastor of the church found him comatose Sunday morning, and the emergency response squad could not revive him.

Owen assisted in PRS, church, and San Dimas civic events. In addition to serving PRS at the Museum and greeted visitors, he was a Director of the Railroad and Locomotive Society at the Pomona Fairplex. Owen was an Ambassador for the Chamber of Commerce, served on the Bonita Avenue Development Committee for the city, worked the Music in the Park program on Wednesday evenings after the Museum was closed, was active with the Citrus Empire Model Railroad Club (formerly under the Fairplex grandstand), and sang in both the Unity and Catholic Church choirs. His ample white beard and gregarious nature caused him to be described as "Santa Claus." His life was celebrated at the Unity Church because of many friends there.

Owen, a Californian, grew up in Pasadena and Glendora. He attended Los Angeles City College and Citrus College. A school teacher by profession, Owen developed health problems that forced early retirement. During later years, he frequently worked as a substitute teacher.

His daughter and grand daughter live in Cucamonga, and his brother lives in Ontario. His mother passed away in April, while his sons visited him from Minnesota this last summer.

Owen left PRS records up to date, and Marti Ann Draper assumed the responsibilities of Treasurer. Lindsay Smith

**LOS ANGELES DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION**

**NIKKEI CENTER** – The Nikkei Center is slated to rise on a 4.5-acre parcel on the northeast corner of First and Alameda streets, on the border of Little Tokyo and the Arts District. It will be adjacent on the west to a station of the Gold Line

Eastside Extension, which is scheduled to open in July 2009.

The project would include 390 apartments, with 110 designated for seniors and low-income households, 80,000 square feet of largely Japanese-themed retail, an office tower, 1,286 parking spaces, and several public spaces. The site, known to many as Mangrove, is part of a 10-acre parcel that the city purchased in 2002. The development team has until March 1, 2009, to negotiate various details, with two optional 90-day extensions.

**ONE SANTA FE** – After obtaining city approvals in February, the developer, McGregor Company, plans to break ground on a \$140 million Arts District apartment complex soon. Plans for the 500,000-square-foot project include 439 rental units above 70,000 square feet of ground-floor retail, commercial and live-work space. The building would feature vertical gardens along its main facade and a 5,000-square-foot ground-floor community center to be utilized by several neighborhood groups.

The five-story development would stand approximately 65 feet tall, rising on a four-acre site the currently houses an MTA lot. The property is bounded by Santa Fe Avenue, the First and Fourth street bridges and Metrolink service tracks adjacent to the Los Angeles River.

**BLOSSOM PLAZA** – A representative of developer Bond Companies said construction on the 262-unit mixed-use project is scheduled to start in the second half of 2009. The \$170 million effort would include two residential towers designed by Nakada & Associates, 43,000 square feet of retail space and a 372-car garage, about half of which would be available to the public.

The project planned at the site of the former Little Joe's restaurant at 900 N. Broadway in Chinatown, would connect the Chinatown Metro Gold Line station to Broadway. The development would offer 20 percent affordable housing and include a 17,500-square-foot plaza for cultural events.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

**THE TRAIN STOPS HERE** – Addition to the October issue.

In November the second group of 138 apartments were planned to become available for occupancy at the Belmont Station Apartments. The Los Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation has created a mini-museum at the Station's Rental and Welcoming Center. This includes an exhibit of 41 archival photographs and a memorabilia display detailing the construction of the Pacific Electric subway as well as the Terminal Building and the area along the passage of the PE cars that operated out of the Terminal.

LARHF had access to the Huntington Library's collection of Pacific Electric and Los Angeles Railway photographs, and their staff selected a number of photographs for reproduction and display at the Belmont Station Apartments. Pacific Electric artifacts accompany the photographs.

Belmont Station has a written agreement with LARHF for the Mini-Museum to be open to the public and special interest groups for viewing. Please call the leasing office to obtain a mutually convenient time for visiting.

[Info. from Josef K. Lesser, President of LARHF]

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of August 2008, the average number of

weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 344,366. This was an average decrease per day from July of 18,323 riders or about 5 percent.

## PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

On Oct. 1, the Senate passed H.R. 2095, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 including the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. The following day White House spokespersons told the Associated Press and Gannett News Service yesterday that President Bush would sign H.R. 2095 into law.

The bill includes Amtrak reauthorization language and authorizes significant federal funding for intercity passenger rail service and corridor development. The measure authorizes \$12.9 billion over five years including: \$5.3 billion in capital grants, \$2.9 billion in operating grants and \$1.9 billion for grants to states for intercity passenger rail development. Congress will need to pass annual appropriations bills to provide the funding levels authorized in the bill.

### AMTRAK

Amtrak ridership in Fiscal Year 2008 increased to 28,716,407, marking the sixth 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. The fiscal year ended September 30, 2008.

All Amtrak trains across the system saw increases in ridership. The 28.7 million total for the period October 1, 2007 - September 30, 2008, topped the 25,847,531 for the previous 12 months by 11.1 percent. Total ticket revenue for the fiscal year reached \$1.7 billion, a 14.2 percent increase over the \$1.5 billion in FY07.

### National Train Activity Monitoring System

Amtrak recently launched its National Train Activity Monitoring System (NTAMS) on routes operated with diesel locomotives. The system determines a train's estimated time of arrival at stations based on GPS positioning and supplies the information to operations centers, ticket offices, and customers. The NTAMS supplies train arrival times to the Train Status features on [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com) and "Julie" (1-800-USA-RAIL), Amtrak's automated voice-response information system.

The system was launched on July 14, 2008, on the *Downeaster* route. Followed by the *Pere Marquette* route on July 24. On Sept. 15, the system became active on the *Carolinian*, *Hiawatha*, Illinois, other Michigan trains, and Missouri service trains.

During fall 2008 Amtrak plans to apply the NTAMS to the *California Zephyr*, *Capitol Limited*, *City of New Orleans*, *Coast Starlight*, *Heartland Flyer*, *Piedmont*, and *Texas Eagle* routes.

Later on the system will be expanded to the *Auto Train*, *Cardinal*, *Cascades*, *Crescent*, *Empire Builder*, *Empire Service*, *Hoosier*, *Lake Shore Limited*, *Palmetto*, *Pennsylvanian*, *Silver Meteor*, *Silver Star*, *Southwest Chief*, *Sunset Limited*, and *Vermont* routes.

The *Capitol Corridor*, *Pacific Surfliner*, and *San Joaquin* routes are already operating using another system.

There are currently no plans to apply the NTAMS to the electrically-powered *Acela Express*, *Keystone*, and *Northeast Regional* routes.

In the event that equipment that provides the train's location is not functioning NTAMS will not be able to provide estimated arrival times. In that case the basic estimated arrival time functions already operating in the Arrow system will be used.

For small delays, NTAMS will make conservative delay reports as follows so that travelers will not miss their trains.

If the train is...	NTAMS will report...
Early	ON TIME
0-9 minutes late*	ON TIME
10-15 minutes late*	10 MIN LATE
More than 15 minutes late	XX MIN LATE
	where XX is the NTAMS estimated minutes late

\*In cases where NTAMS is revising a previous estimate, times between 0 and 15 minutes may appear in the ETA.

**Historical On-Time Performance**

Amtrak has placed a Historical On-Time Performance (HOTP) link on its home page. The HOTP for each route is available plus the performance of individual trains and the primary cause of delays.

The September HOTP percentages for selected routes was:

Route	September 2008	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	52.0%	33.2%
Texas Eagle	22.4%	13.7%
Southwest Chief	70.0%	60.3%
California Zephyr	5.0%	22.3%
Empire Builder	85.0%	66.9%
Coast Starlight	35.0%	62.9%
City of New Orleans	41.2%	54.2%
Pacific Surfliner	78.8%	74.5%
San Joaquin	85.0%	82.0%
Amtrak Cascades	62.3%	64.0%
Illinois Service	59.5%	50.0%
Missouri Routes	11.2%	20.3%
Acela Express	92.8%	84.0%
Northeast Regional	78.5%	75.4%

Note that the last 12 months HOTP percentages coincide with Amtrak's Fiscal Year (Oct. 1, 2007-Sept. 20, 2008).

**BNSF On-Time Performance Percentages**

For the past several months the BNSF Ry. has posted its Amtrak on-time performance percentages periodically on its BNSF News web page. The last data reported before column deadline was:

Amtrak On-Time Performance	2008-10-06	
TRAINS	MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	89%	71%
Short-Distance Trains	94%	87%
Pacific Surfliners	96%	83%

**Amtrak Security**

On Sept. 23, the Amtrak Office of Security Strategy and Special Operations, Amtrak Police, Transportation Security Administration personnel and officers from approximately 100 commuter rail, state, and local police agencies conducted a large, joint, simultaneous security operation along the Northeast Corridor.

The operation encompassed rail stations in 13 states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode

Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Amtrak and TSA plan unannounced exercises in the future along the Northeast Corridor as well as in other parts of the country as part of an enhanced security strategy.

Amtrak will be installing a video security system to protect its Los Angeles and Oakland maintenance yards. The system will allow surveillance video to be monitored in real-time from any Amtrak location over an Internet Protocol network connection.

It will be composed of Cisco's Video Surveillance Manager (VSM), Proximex Surveillint and Agent Vi software. The systems will be integrated by Consiliant Technologies.

The Los Angeles and Oakland facilities will offer back up coverage to each other to help ensure continuous coverage in the event of a power failure or other emergency.

**LONG-DISTANCE TRAINS**

**New Menus**

On Oct. 1, Amtrak introduced new menus on its Long Distance trains. There are three menu cycles which allow travelers to experience a variety of meals in the dining car when their travel extends over several days, or they travel on more than one train during their journey.

With the advent of the new menus dining car servers will announce the Chief's Specials. Some entrees will be increased in size and some will be served in a new deep-dish bowl. Dessert sizes will be decreased. The Children's menu is included on the new three-panel national menu.

The menu selections follow. The number preceding a menu item is the number of the cycle in which it is offered.

**Breakfasts**

- Continental (with orange instead of banana)
- Scrambled Eggs
- Three-Egg Omelet, plain or with filling
- Railroad French Toast
- Chef's Special

1. Breakfast burrito (egg, cheese and chorizo)
2. Egg, broccoli, and bread Strata
3. Sourdough sandwich (egg, cheddar, Canadian breakfast)

**Today's Omelet Selection:**

1. Garden vegetable
- 2.. Primavera
3. Mexicali vegetable

"Extra" Special: Eggs cooked to order, up or over (available only on select trains with sufficient staffing)

**Sides**

- Hash browns or grits
- Croissant or biscuit
- Pork sausage patties, bacon, or chicken maple sausage links

**Lunches**

All Luncheon entrees include coffee, tea or milk.  
Buffalo Wings appetizer (Re-introduced, with cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, and bleu cheese)

**Amy's Veggie Burger**

Angus Burger with or without cheese, served on a new sesame bun (The turkey burger has been discontinued)

Hot sandwich, served with gourmet side salad

1. Garlic chicken with provolone on wheatberry bread
2. Smoked turkey and muenster on pretzel roll

3. Beef pastrami with swiss on wheat bread
- Entree salad with rosemary olive oil ciabatta roll
1. Tropical chicken mix
  2. Albacore white tuna mix
  3. Smoked turkey mix
- Chef's special, served with gourmet side salad and roll
1. Chicken, leek, and mushroom ragout with rice medley
  2. Red curry coconut chicken with rice medley
  3. Pork chile verde with roasted peppers and corn with rice medley

## Dinners

All dinner entrees include a small salad with dressing, warm roll and coffee, tea or milk.

Buffalo Wings appetizer

Flat iron steak (now pre-marinated with garlic butter)

Roasted Half-Chicken, thyme & parsley seasoned

Seafood, all with special sauces

1. Wild Alaskan Salmon
2. Wild Mahi-Mahi
3. Whole Baked Idaho Trout

Vegetarian Pasta

1. Spinach and ricotta rollatini in vodka sauce
2. Jumbo ravioli stuffed with ricotta in pesto alfredo sauce
3. Three-cheese jumbo ravioli in marinara sauce

Route-specific Chief's specials

*Capitol Limited* and *Coast Starlight*: Phillips Seafood Coastal Crab cakes in Maine lobster sauce

*Crescent*: Chicken and sausage jambalaya (no side vegetables, rice, or potatoes)

*Empire Builder* (westbound): Roast Chicken Breast in wild Morel mushroom dynamite sauce

*Empire Builder* (eastbound): Red Rosemary-braised Roasted Lamb shank

*California Zephyr*: Pan-roasted Pork Tenderloin in roast garlic balsamic fig sauce

*Silver Service*: Phillips Seafood Coastal Crab cakes in Floridian green chile tomatillo sauce

*Southwest Chief*: Chicken and Cheese Trio of Enchiladas brushed with Santa Fe sauce in salsa verde

*Sunset Limited*: Texas BBQ Pit-Smoked Beef Brisket (same as on *Texas Eagle* Cross Country Café, with larger portion)

Side vegetable medley (Two types are loaded on each train, with one served each night (1 pair per menu cycle))

Wild and white rice pilaf

Garlic mashed potatoes

Baked potato

## Desserts

Chocolate Dessert

1. Raspberry Chocolate Tango drizzled with white and dark chocolate
2. Three-layer Oreo Chocolate Dream Bar
3. Chocolate Caramel Peanut Torte

Nut/Fruit Dessert

1. Lemon Crumb Cake
2. Lemon and Barry Creme Torte
3. Green Apple and Almond Frangiapan Bar

Cheesecake Dessert

1. Cheesecake topped with fired brulee on graham cracker

crust

2. Classic New York Cheesecake on graham cracker crust

3. Raspberry White Chocolate Swirl Cheesecake

Haagen-Dazs Ice Cream (Vanilla or Chocolate)

Beverages

Cold Beer\*

Domestic Beer

Premium Beer

Wines\*

By the Glass

Half Bottles

White – Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay

Red – Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon

Cocktails\*

Premium Spirits

Mixers: club soda, tonic water, ginger ale, bloody mary mix and orange juice

Bottled Water

Soft Drinks

Regular or diet

\* Alcohol and appetizer selections are available as an extra purchase and are not included in first class meal packages.

The current menu cycles and the trains on which they are served are:

Cycle 1: *Sunset Limited* (westbound), *Southwest Chief* (eastbound), *Crescent* (westbound), *Silver Star* (southbound), *Silver Meteor* (northbound).

Cycle 2: *Sunset Limited* (eastbound), *California Zephyr* (eastbound), *Empire Builder* (westbound), *Coast Starlight* (southbound), *Crescent* (eastbound), *Capitol Limited* (westbound and eastbound), *Silver Star* (northbound), *Silver Meteor* (northbound).

Cycle 3: *Southwest Chief* (westbound), *California Zephyr* (westbound), *Empire Builder* (eastbound), *Coast Starlight* (northbound).

## Coast Starlight

The Union Pacific Railroad needed additional time to perform the trackwork in the Cascade Summit, Ore., landslide area, which was mentioned in last month's column. The additional work was scheduled for Oct. 8-15 and Oct. 29 and 30. On those days the northbound *Coast Starlight* was delayed at Klamath Falls until 10:25 a.m., departing two hours later than its scheduled departure. The affected train's Los Angeles departure dates were one day earlier.

## Lake Shore Limited

On Oct. 27, through coach service on Tr. Nos. 448/449 between Boston and Chicago was restored. Sleeping car service will be restored at a later date. Previously, passengers traveling between those cities had to change trains at Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y.

The train's lounge car operates now between Boston and Chicago. Its *Amfleet II Diner Lite* car operates now on Tr. Nos. 48/49 between New York City and Chicago. Only snack service is offered between Albany and New York City.

Also, in August the baggage car was returned to the Boston section of the *Lake Shore Limited*. Checked baggage and Amtrak Express service is available at the Boston, Worcester (Monday-Friday arrivals and departures only), Springfield, and Albany stations.

## WESTERN CORRIDORS

## Pacific Surfliner

Effective Oct. 27, Tr. No. 798, the San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles *Pacific Surfliner*, began operating only on Monday through Friday, except on holidays. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays the *Surfliner* began operating as Tr. No. 792 on a faster schedule south of Oxnard. It arrives in Los Angeles at 7:15 p.m., 25 min. earlier. The faster schedule was achieved by removing the time needed for meets with Metrolink commuter trains, which do not operate on the weekends or holidays.

*Surfliner* trains numbered in the 500s operate between Los Angeles and San Diego. *Surfliners* numbered in the 700s operate between Los Angeles and Goleta except for Tr. Nos. 774 and 775 which operate between San Luis Obispo and San Diego.

## Amtrak Cascades

The Seattle-Vancouver, B.C., *Amtrak Cascade*, Tr. Nos. 510/517, operated with a sleeping car in place of a coach on Sept. 26-28. The Sept. 26 consist was: AMTK113 P42/32106 *Superliner II Sleeper*/34032 *Superliner I Coach*/37015 *Superliner I Diner Lounge*/31011 *Superliner I Coach* Baggage. The sleeper was used because there were no spare coaches in Seattle.

## DEPOT DOINGS

CHICAGO UNION STATION. Effective Oct. 1, the ticket office stopped selling tickets for a train ten minutes before its departure time. The gate to the tracks for a Train closes five minutes before its scheduled departure time. The Quik-Trak will remain available within ten minutes of a Train's departure time but the gates will still close five minutes before Train departure. The change was made to allow boarding to take place safely, and to permit trains to depart on time.

SEATTLE, Wash. King Street Station. On Sept. 22, the Seattle Dept. of Transportation (SDOT) began removing the station's leaking roof. A new roof, made of terra cotta tiles replicating the originals, will be installed starting in mid-October. The roof replacement will be completed by March 2009.

SDOT has already mended and illuminated the neon "King Street Station" sign above Jackson Street Plaza, replaced broken windows, and repaired the four clocks on the building's signature tower.

In October of this year SDOT will remove the station tower's microwave dish. Also, SDOT will refurbish or replace the clock tower's windows and restore the lighting around the four station clocks. By late 2011, interior finishes and the lobby's original ornate ceiling will be restored, the grand staircase will be recreated and reopened, and seismic upgrades will be made.

King Street Station first opened to the public in May 1906. It was designed by Reed and Stern, the architectural firm responsible for New York City's Grand Central Terminal. The structure was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

[Info. from Caroline Hobson, Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

## PORTS OF LOS ANGELES AND LONG BEACH

Freight Rail Service at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles has replaced its fleet of 22 locomotives with more environmentally friendly engines, said Andrew Fox, president of Pacific Harbor Lines, on Sept. 11, 2008. In addition to consum-

ing less fuel, the new locomotives have cut particulate emissions by 70 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by 46 percent. They also meet or exceed federal guidelines to reduce air pollutants, according to PHL.

The \$30 million cost to replace the locomotives was shared by PHL, the ports, and California's Carl Moyer Program, which is administered by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, Fox said.

[Info. from *The Daily Breeze* via Michael Jordan]

## S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

by DICK FINLEY

## RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during August 2008 were 47,111, which was a decrease from the previous month of 1,178 or 2 percent. Average weekday Metrolink monthly passholders on Amtrak during August were 1,831, which was a decrease from the previous month of about 1 percent.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, total schedule adherence (within 5 minutes of scheduled time) during August was 95 percent.

## COLLISION REACTION

After two California train accidents this summer in which cellphone use may have been a factor, state regulators were preparing a ban on the wireless devices for rail crews in the weeks prior to the Metrolink crash in Chatsworth that killed 25 people, which fact was disclosed Sept. 16 by state Public Utilities Commission officials. It came a day after federal investigators confirmed that a Metrolink engineer had been sending and receiving text messages while on duty Sept. 10, the day of the head-on collision with a Union Pacific freight train, the worst California train disaster in 50 years. Investigators are trying to determine why the engineer did not heed signal lights warning that another train was heading his way.

The commission voted unanimously to bypass normal procedure and impose an immediate ban on the use of wireless devices by train engineers, conductors and brakemen while on duty. The only exception would be in emergencies, after a train has stopped and permission has been received from superiors. "Its extremely unfortunate that it took this terrible Metrolink tragedy to focus our attention on this very serious issue," said Commissioner Rachelle B. Chong.

Members of the commission, which share some railroad oversight and accident investigation responsibilities with the federal government, said they want their agency to step up rail safety efforts.

Commission, freight rail systems, and Metrolink, have had various policies restricting cellphone use, according to the Public Utilities Commission. But "these rules seem to lack appropriate enforcement," said Commission President Michael R. Peevey.

Under the order approved on Sept. 16, rail systems operating in California could be fined up to \$20,000 per violation if employees are caught using cellphones. In some instances, rail service could be halted, said Richard Clark, director of the commission's division that oversees rail safety.

Enforcing the ban will primarily be the responsibility of the railroads. But spot inspections by state workers will be conducted, and the PUC will enlist the help of the public, possibly

through a toll-free phone line dedicated to the reporting of rail safety problems, Clark said.

Federal investigators are probing the split-shift work schedule of the Metrolink engineer who sped through a red light shortly before the Chatsworth crash. Robert M. Sanchez, who died in the wreck, typically worked five days a week with back-to-back, split-shift schedules, which began at 5:54 a.m., continued to 9:26 a.m., then returned for a second tour at 2 p.m. and ran to 9 p.m. Federal investigators have long maintained that engineer fatigue in a major safety problem.

#### ENHANCED COMMUTER RAIL SAFETY

1. The following was adopted at the Metrolink Board of Directors Meeting on Sept. 26, 2008, as the number one priority to increase the safety of the commuter rail network in Southern California.

2. Direct the CEO to immediately establish an independent "Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel" consisting of experts in applicable fields to review and recommend both immediate and longer term improvements that will increase safety, reduce the risk of a catastrophic event, and focus on creating redundancy in Metrolink's operating procedures, vehicles and facilities (wayside), and systems. Review the safety plans and protocols of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and Union Pacific railroad as well as Amtrak operating in the Metrolink service area. Request the "Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel" to present its findings and recommendations within two weeks to the Metrolink board at a special board meeting. Report to the Metrolink Board in October 2008 with recommendations to improve safety and reduce the risk on our commuter rail system.

3. Direct Connex Railroad LLC/Veolia Transportation to immediately staff Metrolink locomotive cabs with two qualified engineers and authorize the Metrolink CEO to negotiate any associated contract amendments. Implement "automatic train stop" (ATS) wayside infrastructure immediately to compliment Metrolink trains that are already equipped with ATS equipment and capability. Seek a waiver from the Federal Railroad Administration to implement ATS infrastructure in the wayside in the Metrolink's service area. Install in all Metrolink locomotive cabs as soon as possible video cameras and digital video recorders (or equivalent technology) that will record all engineer and other staff activity in the cab for forensic and investigative purposes, including appropriate discipline for engineers who violate operating procedures required by law or contract. Initiate conversations with UP and BNSF as well as Amtrak on cooperatively implementing enhanced safety measures, including ATS on their locomotives operating in the Metrolink service area. Report back for Metrolink Board ratification approval of final funding for short-term safety improvements.

4. Review the existing Connex/Veolia Transportation operating contract, hiring criteria, monitoring/evaluation procedures for employees assigned to operate Metrolink service, work rules (including but not limited to work hours, rest periods, split-shifts, etc.), disciplinary system, etc. Report to the Metrolink Board in October 2008 with recommended contract amendments to enhance the safety of Metrolink's commuter rail system.

5. Direct the CEO to report back to the Metrolink Board in October 2008 with a revenue estimate if Measure R is approved

by voters in Los Angeles County and tentative recommendations for how this new funding should be prioritized to improve safety on our commuter rail system.

6. Direct the CEO to seek funding for positive train control from the "North American Joint Positive Train Control Program" funded by the Federal Railroad Administration and any other source of federal and/or state funding eligible for developing, implementing, and/or operating a positive train control system for Metrolink. Work with Metrolink's other funding partners to secure, identify and program funding for implementation of automatic train stop, positive train control systems, or other safety measures recommended by the "Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel" and directed by the Metrolink Board.

7. Direct the CEO to report back in October 2008 with a description of the safety features of new passenger cars and locomotives currently on order; and with an assessment of the best current and emerging rail car designs, coupling systems, seat belt systems, etc. applicable to commuter rail operations.

8. Direct the CEO to report back in November 2008 with the cost and best case schedule (if funding was readily available) to double track all single track sections in Metrolink's service area, to complete Metrolink's sealed corridor program, and to grade separate all grade crossing, or those at major or secondary highways only, or those at major highways only.

#### OCTOBER 27, 2008 SCHEDULE CHANGE

On October 27, 2008 Metrolink schedules were to change on the following lines. A summary of the changes occurs below:

- San Bernardino Line – Weekday Schedules

(Please refer to October 27, 2008 San Bernardino Weekday Schedule)

1. Four new trains have been added between San Bernardino and Los Angeles.

- Train 319 Dp. San Bernardino 09:50 a.m.
- Train 323 Dp. San Bernardino 12:00 noon.
- Train 302 Dp. Los Angeles 07:45 a.m.
- Train 306 Dp. Los Angeles 10:10 a.m.

2. As a result of the above additions a renumbering of current train numbers has occurred.

3. Train 300 arrival time San Bernardino adjusted for construction.

4. Effective Oct. 27 "directional running" will begin at Pomona (North), Claremont, and Montclair. All Westbound trains will operate on Track 1. All Eastbound trains will operate on Track 2. (Note: this directional running pattern will be in effect seven days a week.)

- Antelope Valley Line – Weekday Schedule

(Please refer to October 27, 2008 Antelope Valley Weekday Schedule)

1. Trains 207 and 214 have been moved about 10" to resolve conflicts with the UP Intermodal Train ZLCSE.

2. Schedules for train 201, 203, and 208 have been adjusted to improve 208 internal schedule performance.

3. Minor adjustments to 205, 215, 218, 221, and 223.

- Antelope Valley Line – Saturday/Sunday Schedule

1. Train 260 operates 5" earlier for improved Los Angeles connections.

2. Internal runtime adjustments to most remaining schedules.

**2008 / 2009 HOLIDAY SCHEDULES**

Metrolink 2008 / 2009 Holiday Season schedules will operate as follows. This schedule pattern is the same that was operated last year in 2007/2008.

**THANKSGIVING**

1. Thursday November 27 – Service on three lines.
  - Antelope Valley Line – A regular Sunday schedule will operate.
  - San Bernardino Line – A regular Sunday schedule will operate.
  - IEOC Line – A special 4 round trip schedule will operate between Riverside and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo. Please refer to the Public Timetable November 27, 2008 IEOC Line Schedules.
2. Friday November 28 – “Thanksgiving Friday” – A full regular weekday schedule will operate on ALL lines.

**CHRISTMAS**

1. Wednesday December 24 – Christmas Eve – A full regular weekday schedule will operate on ALL lines.
2. Thursday December 25 – Christmas Day – No Metrolink service will operate on any line.
3. Friday December 26 – A full regular weekday schedule will operate on ALL lines.

**NEW YEARS**

1. Wednesday December 31 – New Years Eve – A full regular weekday schedule will operate on ALL lines.
2. Thursday January 1, 2009 – New Years Day – Service 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. Please refer to the Public Timetable January 1, 2009 New Years Day San Bernardino Line Schedules.
  - Antelope Valley Line – A modified Sunday schedule will operate. Train 258 replaces Train 260 and operates 30" earlier to accommodate Rose Parade passengers. In the afternoon Train 273 replaces Train 265. Please refer to the Public Timetable January 1, 2009 New Years Day Antelope Valley Line Schedules.
3. Friday January 2 – A full regular weekday schedule will operate on ALL lines.

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT**

by **DICK FINLEY**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL  
RIDERSHIP**

August 2008	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	149,992	83,674	44,472	24,310
Saturday Ave.	97,262	59,277	23,613	14,811
Sunday Ave.	87,213	54,308	18,900	12,990
Monthly Total	4,072,201	2,325,076	1,146,478	649,520

Metro Rail ridership is up 20 percent this summer to nearly 325,000 daily and riders on Metro buses increased 6.5 percent to more than 1.2 million a day.

**DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES STREETCAR**

Downtown Los Angeles could see a working streetcar system sooner than anticipated, as city officials have fast-tracked a proposal to bring back a trolley that would connect Broadway to the L.A. Line entertainment district and the Grand Avenue

project.

Originally pegged as a 10-year endeavor, those involved with the streetcar effort now hope it could open in half that time. “We think it’s realistic to have it under construction within two years, and have it up and running within four and a half years,” said Russell Brown, head of the 23-member Bringing Back Broadway Streetcar, Parking & Transportation Committee, a group of stakeholders and transit experts studying transportation issues along the historic corridor.

All of this is in the early stage, and at this moment Downtown is not close to having a streetcar. Numerous important questions need to be answered, including how to fund a project that is estimated at \$60 million to \$90 million that the three-mile line is expected to cost, according to Community Redevelopment Agency estimates.

On Aug. 14, a community meeting on the streetcar effort brought approximately 120 people to the New LATC on Spring Street. The next day, the Bringing Back Broadway Trustees, a group of 30 government leaders, property owners and other stakeholders, approved the formation of a nonprofit organization to handle the design, construction and eventual operation of the Downtown streetcar. The proposed nonprofit, tentatively named L.A. Streetcar Inc., is based on Portland Streetcar Inc., which formed in the early 1990s to design, build and operate that city’s streetcar system.

As enthusiasm swells, the focus must be kept not just on the streetcar, but on Broadway as a whole. As has been stated many times, the street requires significant improvement, as well as millions in investment, to reclaim its luster. Progress on the streetcar must happen in conjunction with upgrades to the aging theaters and other improvements, and many of those need to be paid for by Broadway building owners. A new transportation system on an otherwise dingy street would be shortsighted.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News* via Tom Nelson]

**EXPOSITION LIGHT RAIL LINE**

Utility and street improvements are taking place along Flower Street from Washington to Exposition blvds., said an official with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which is behind the \$808 million Expo Line. The installation of 95 concrete girders on a trench near USC/Exposition Park is complete and right-of-way excavation has begun from Vermont to La Brea avenues. The light rail line will connect Downtown L.A. to Culver City, with completion slated for 2010. The eight-mile route will share two stops with the Blue Line and will add nine new stations.

**GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION**

Work is 85 percent complete on the extension from downtown Los Angeles. The installation of the overhead power lines is almost done, as are the platforms and canopies from some of the stations. Track construction continues from Alameda and First streets into Boyle Heights. The 4899 million light rail line will extend the Gold Line from Los Angeles Union Station across the 101 and 710 Freeways, creating eight new stations and culminating at Atlantic Blvd. Officials say the extension could carry 23,000 riders a day by 2020.

**PORTLAND, OREGON**

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) has approved spending \$5 million the last of August for final design and



engineering of a Portland Streetcar extension. The commission voted 3-0 to go ahead with the extension, although the Federal Transit Administration has balked at providing a grant for construction of the \$147 million line. The project would extend the streetcar across the Broadway Bridge and south to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry.

The Bush administration has refused to sign off on the streetcar project, leaving it in financial limbo. By approving final engineering, the PDC runs the risk that it could pay for plans for a project that might not be built. PDC commissioner Scott Andrews said it was worth the risk. The project has broad neighborhood and community support and would help boost urban redevelopment, he said.

Chairman Charles Wilhoite said the engineering work would be necessary regardless of the timing of construction. "It's a great opportunity to promote development on the eastside," said Commissioner Bertha Ferran, the third vote for the project. One commissioner was absent and the board has one vacancy.

#### MOUNT HOOD

The Mount Hood Railroad has added a dome car to give passengers better views of Mount Hood and the Hood River Valley during the scenic train's excursion between Hood River and Dee. The line's first five miles, from Dee to Parkdale, will reopen Friday after being severely damaged in the November 2006 flood.

The dome car was obtained from the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, which is owned by the same Colorado company that now owns the Mount Hood Railroad. Seating in the dome car is available for a surcharge on most excursion runs during the line's April to December season. For information, call 800-872-4661, or visit [mthoodrr.com](http://mthoodrr.com).

#### WILSONVILLE-TO-BEAVERTON

The opening of the Wilsonville-to-Beaverton commuter rail line is now expected to open to the public Feb. 2, 2009, TriMet said Oct. 1. TriMet had expected the line known as Westside Express Service (WES) to begin service as early as this month, but diesel railcars made by Colorado Railcar Manufacturing of Fort Lupton, Colo., were delivered at least six months late.

The delay is caused in part by electronics-related problems with one of the railcars, said George Passadore, president of TriMet's board.

In addition, the Portland & Western Railroad (P&W), a freight operator that shares the tracks WES will use, is concerned about rail safety after the Sept. 12 accident in Los Angeles. In response, TriMet is installing devices on WES and P&W line vehicles to prevent such collisions.

TriMet has been closely monitoring financial upheaval at Colorado Railcar for at least a year and a half, Passadore said. Colorado Railcar ousted its president this year amid manufacturing problems that made it more than a year late in completing an order for a South Florida commuter rail system.

#### WILLAMETTE RIVER BRIDGE TO MILWAUKIE

The TriMet board nearly tripled its spending on an engineering study for a Willamette River bridge for a light rail extension to Milwaukie. The board approved spending \$509,000 to bore on the floor of the river.

The National Marine Fisheries Service recently ended its practice of allowing construction projects to disturb salmon

habitat in the river during some winter months. TriMet officials said that decision forced them to either do the geotechnical testing next summer to change its contract to do it next month.

Neil McFarlane, executive director of capital projects for TriMet, said nearly all the new money will be passed through to contractors who will test the soils. HNTB Corp., which is performing preliminary bridge studies, will receive a small amount for analysis of the data. Delaying the testing until next summer could have produced a six to 12-month construction delay.

#### SOUTHERN OREGON RAILROAD

Major southern Oregon shippers say they will file a petition to allow a new railroad to move their freight over the Siskiyou Mountains to Northern California after the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad raised rates. The Coos-Siskiyou Shippers' Coalition says it filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board on Aug. 28 to allow the change.

The petition says that shippers want the West Texas & Lubbock Railway to move their product over existing track. The railway is a subsidiary of Permian Basin Railway, which operates several small lines in the Midwest. The petition says Central Oregon and Pacific rates are unaffordable.

[Oregon info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

#### TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT by DICK DONAT

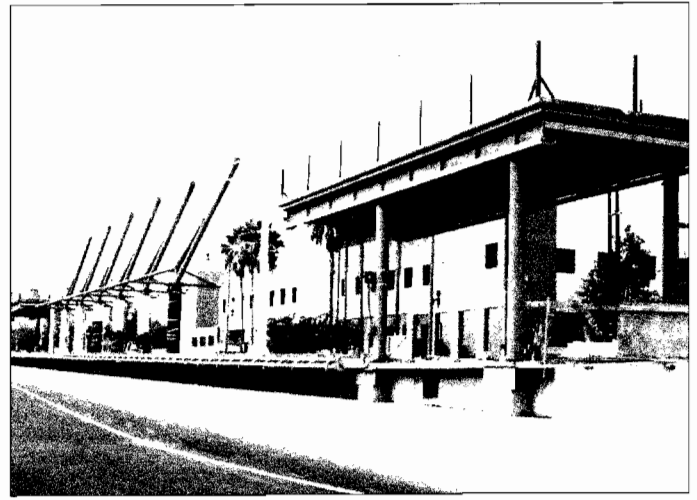
The staff at the Pacific Railroad Museum has been a great help in researching some of my memories of the 1950's but along the way I must have created some misunderstandings and I don't want them added to the *Descanso* legend. To set the record straight, my dad L.W. (Doc) Donat had nothing to do with the movement of the *Descanso* to Summit. (An event that took place in July 1940.) His involvement with the car at Summit started in the late 1940's and continued until its move to Perris in 1967. While talking about the *Descanso* at the museum last summer, Virginia Grupp mentioned that she thought her father, Jim Grupp, had been involved with the move. It has always amazed me that negotiations, transportation and physical movement of the car to its Santa Fe lease was pulled off by a group of young men in their early 20's. By the way, the point of the car's Los Angeles area departure in 1940 was L. A. Railway's South Park Shops not P.E.'s Torrance Shops. (The latter would have required a gauge change!)

A lot of people (PRS members and others) contributed their time, energy and sometimes money to maintain and improve the *Descanso* during its 27-year stay at Summit. If you asked them why they would spend a blistering summer weekend hoeing weeds or moving rocks, you'd probably get a shrug in reply. But I think the real answer was that they loved the *Descanso*; my dad was one of those people. However, when you're looking for the people most responsible for the welfare of the car at Summit, in my book major credit should go to three people: Mart Sabransky, Chard Walker and L.T. Gotchy.

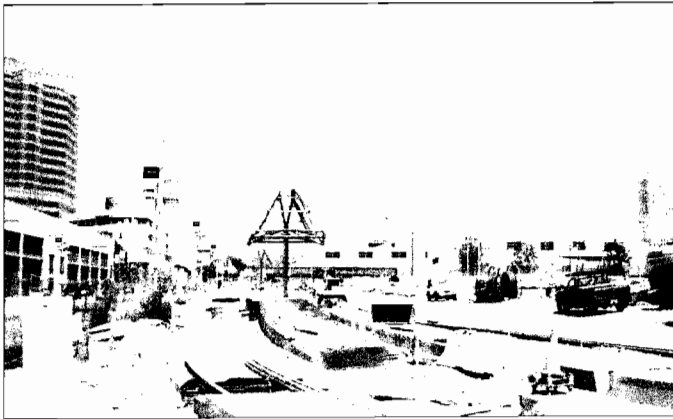
As a member of the PRS Board of Directors in 1967, my dad was a minority of one supporting movement of the car to Travel Town in Los Angeles rather than to OERM. I never discussed his reasoning for his position, but I think it may have been influenced by the less than stellar stewardship PRS had displayed with L.A. Railway car 1559 at Perris. History seems to have shown that not only was he in the minority, he was wrong!



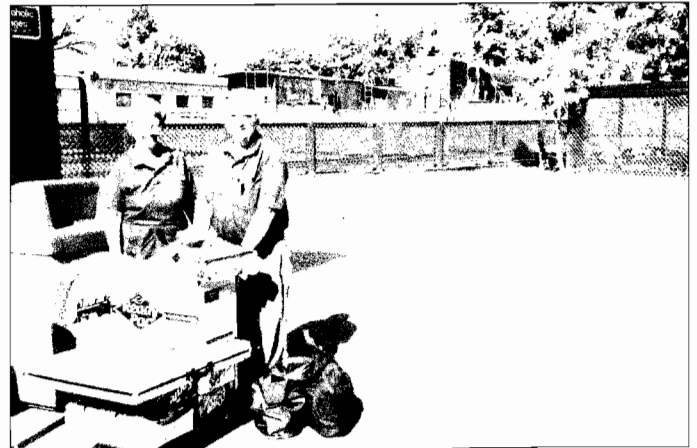
*The tie-in of the Gold Line Eastside Extension to the Pasadena Gold Line is nearing completion.* Photo by Metro



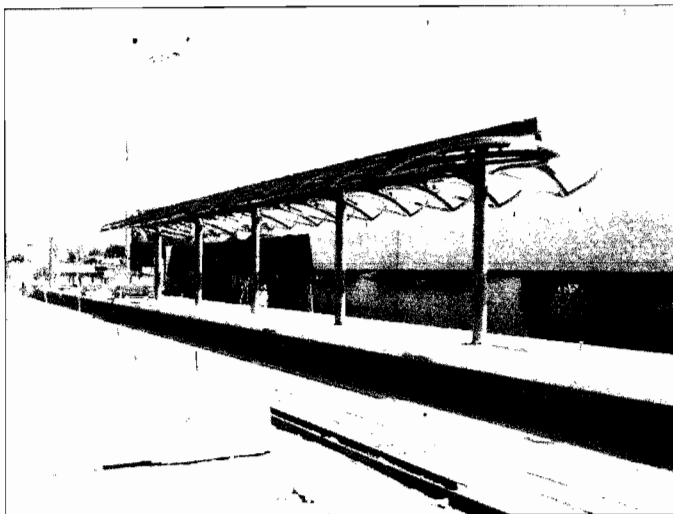
*Canopy erection and the installation of architectural finishes has begun at the Pomona/Atlantic Station.* Photo by Metro



*Little Tokyo/Arts District Station at the northeast corner of 1st/Alameda with trackwork installation nearing completion and station canopies being erected.* Photo by Metro



*Barbara Sibert and David Abbott at the PRS Picnic in Travel Town on September 23, 2001.* Photo by Dennis Gilkey



*Construction of the Indiana Station along 3rd St. in East Los Angeles is well underway.* Photo by Metro



*Major construction related to the installation of the track guideway, stringing of the catenary wires for the Overhead Contact System and the "Grind & Overlay" street resurfacing is nearing completion in limited areas along 3rd Street.* Photo by Metro