

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

AUGUST 2010



Train 366, bearing the PRS Metrolink Ramble Excursion, approaches the station at Baldwin Park on the afternoon of June 26, 2010. The apparent ripples in the photograph are heat waves on this hot early summer day. Photo by Andrew Novak

METROLINK RAMBLE EXCURSION

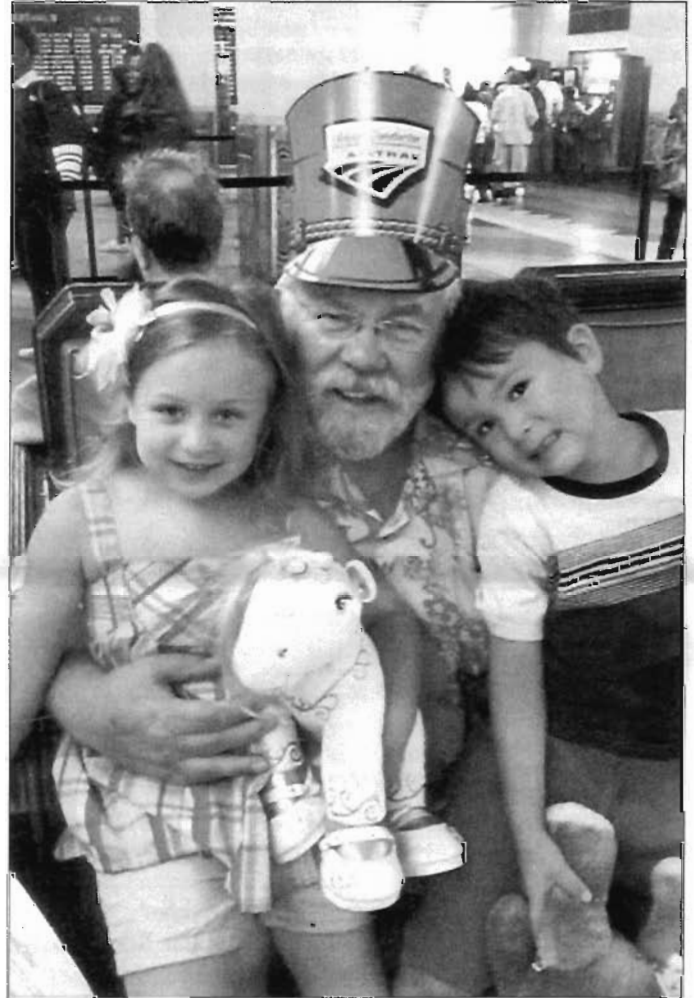
by MARTI ANN DRAPER

On Saturday, June 26, 2010, 67 PRS members and friends completed a 266.2 mile marathon from Los Angeles to Lancaster, back to Los Angeles, and then went round trip to San Bernardino on an all-day "Metrolink Ramble."

Our day began at Union Station, where participants were greeted by one of our excursion hosts: Dave Abbott, Bob Alexander, Andrew Novak, or Marti Ann Draper. Each traveler was checked in and provided with an information packet and a badge designating them as part of our group. Inside of the badge cover was an all-day "Family fun fare" ticket, good to ride anywhere on the system as long as the participant stayed with the group.

Our first train was Metrolink 261, which left Los Angeles at 9:00 a.m. behind engine 877 with three Bombardier bi-level commuter cars. Our group was spread out, mostly in the first and last coaches. The weather was clear and afforded a beautiful view of the San Gabriel Mountains and high desert. After a brief stop and some photo taking at Lancaster, we re-boarded the same equipment, now designated Train 264, with the cab car first for a quick run back to Union Station.

We were disappointed that our planned tour of the non-public areas of the station could not occur, since the entire original ticket concourse had been rented for the BET Awards ceremony to be held that night. Also, the much-touted "food court" inside the station was not completed. However, there was plenty of time for lunch; some members ate at Phillipe, taking in the current display about Trains in the Movies put on by the Los



Who's having more fun? At Los Angeles Union Station grandpa Arie Korporaal shares the waiting time with grandkids Calista Kinnaman and Kai Korporaal. Photo by Pam Korporaal

Angeles Railroad Heritage Foundation.

At 3:25, we boarded Train 366 to San Bernardino. The train was pulled by engine 881 and included a Bombardier single-level "Comet" car which had been used on New Jersey Transit and the Utah Regional commuter services before acquisition by Metrolink. Although there was full access through the train at all times, regular passengers seemed to prefer stranding in the regular bi-level cars to riding in the Comet. As several PRS group members could attest, the ride, at least on this line, was fine in that car.

At San Bernardino, the San Bernardino Railroad and Historical Museum specially opened their doors for our group [continued at METROLINK RAMBLE on Page 3]



WHEEL CLICKS

AUGUST 2010 VOLUME 74, NO. 5

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MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Aug. 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Aug. 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 21, 28 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 28.
 Aug. 4, 11, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Aug. 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 7, 21; Extra days: 14, 28. Com. Mtg.: 21.
 Aug. 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 18, 25 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 25.
 Sep. 1, 8, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 15, 22, 29 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sep. 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders

18, 25 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 4, 18; Extra days: 11, 25. Com. Mtg.: 18.
 Sep. 10 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 17 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes
 Fri. & Herbert, Commerce. All welcome, bring slides.

MEETING PROGRAM by RUSS DAVIES

August 13: **On the road with YOUR National Forum!** As announced in last month's *Wheel Clicks*, this will be the theme of the presentation, **but with a surprise twist!** We'll see the *Forum* on a wonderful never before seen "Rare Mileage" tour! **Be there, and bring digital OR slide briefs!**

September 10: **Glen Icanberry** will share his acclaimed presentation, "**The Kite Shaped Track, A Contemporary View**" with us. The **digital presentation** was featured at **Winterrail 2006**, and earned rave reviews. **Santa Fe's Second and Third Districts** are featured. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by VIRGINIA GRUPP

As reported at the Board Meeting on July 2, 2010, late renewals were assigned numbers 384 - 408. A new member voted in was Robert Winn with number 409.

MILEPOSTS FROM MARTI ANN

by MARTI ANN DRAPER

Is this any way to run a railroad?

If you attended the regular June membership meeting, you probably noted with interest the discussion over whether PRS is, or is not, a business. The discussion came up because of a proposal by member Tom Grose that PRS adopt a by-laws amendment requiring the Board of Directors not only to adopt a balanced budget, but providing that there be a small surplus each year, to be retained.

In the responses to the recent opinion poll, we also heard some phrases regarding how the club is run, such as "If this were a well-run organization" (In other words, it is a poorly-run organization), and "the in-group at PRS" (inferring that there is a small cadre of insiders who run the club and shut everyone else out).

First, if you are concerned that you are being "shut out" of PRS decision making, please consider this an open invitation to attend any and all Board of Directors meetings. The time and place are set forth in each issue of *Wheel Clicks*. To volunteer immediately for any job for which you are qualified, go on line and leave an e-mail at PRSexcursions@live.com, or call (626) 570-0033 and leave your call-back number for Marti Ann. Within a week, we will have you hooked up with a job.

As part of the discussion over the budget, some members (notably those who bear the responsibility of implementing such a change) averred that "PRS is not a business." I've got my best lawyer answer for that: it depends.

PRS is a business in the sense that it is a legal entity, a "person" separate from any of its members or officers. It is legally authorized to transact business. So, we can advertise and sell things, hold events, and own property just like any other

business entity.

Yet, we are not like a business, in that no part of our income or assets may accrue to the benefit of any member. This is unlike a for-profit business, which is supposed to make money to benefit its owners.

Our activities are carried on entirely by volunteers. You may have heard us cite this as an explanation of why your dues checks are slow to go through, or why a question asked takes longer to answer. Most people understand this and many even understand that having exclusively volunteer staffing is a great asset. Not only does it save us money, but it keeps us looking honest in the eyes of the IRS and state regulatory agencies, who have their hands full keeping up with “non-profits” which are really fronts for a cushy job for their organizers.

Here’s the downside. Any delay in furnishing information or completing a program, due in reality to the fact that we are volunteers, can be seen as a shortcoming. If we are transacting business in the real world, along with or in competition with for-profit private entities, we will be judged for our efficiency and professionalism by the same standards. Railroads, for example, won’t accept a late bill payment with the excuse, “Our volunteer bill-payer was on vacation.” A lapse in insurance coverage can’t be fixed by the excuse that “our insurance chairman was too busy.” And if we fail to qualify for a grant because the grantor is not impressed by our ability to finish projects, “the volunteer who was in charge of that died” won’t get us that grant.

Tom Grose and others want to hold our feet to the fire and demand excellent work up to the professional standards of any other business. We are a business, but a very special one. We need lots of help to accomplish this mission.

Anyone want to volunteer?

[**METROLINK RAMBLE** from Page 1]

and gave us a guided tour. This museum has grown quickly in the last two years and features a wonderful array of authentic artifacts and interpretive displays.

David Dion and Linda Vaughn chose to stay on Train 366 down to Riverside. They returned just in the nick of time to join us on Train 377 back to Los Angeles. Their total train mileage was 275.8 miles! Conductor Bill Blackwell devoted the entire cab car to our use, although some of the members still favored riding in a Comet car on that train. We returned to Los Angeles on time at 8:40 p.m.

Thanks go to our excursion hosts, to Neil Bjornsen for planning, to Glen Icanberry and the staff at SBR&HM, to all the operating crews on Metrolink who made us feel welcome, and especially to those of you who went on the trip. Some participants were dismayed by the length of the event, and suggested that we make clear the return times for future trips. We also encountered technical difficulties when our ice chest upended, spilling all the ice out of our cold water supply on the first leg. Still, we learned that we could have a great day of train riding with friends for only \$25 apiece, and other trips to other destinations on Metrolink will be planned in the future.

CULVER CITY AND IVY SUBSTATION

Culver City began as 1.2 square miles centered around the 1913 Main Street. A series of more than 40 annexations brought

the city to nearly 5 square miles – with a very unusual shape. In 1895, the Los Angeles Pacific Railway was built by M.H. Sherman and E.P. Clark. In 1906, the Southern Pacific bought L.A. Pacific Railway, but operated it as a separate company until 1911. The Pacific Electric was formed in 1911. Eight separate companies became the Pacific Electric Western District.

In its early history, a small park was adjacent to the depot and Ivy Substation. Although that first park in the area remained a part of Los Angeles, it appeared to be the entry to Culver City. The depot was eventually torn down, but the 1907 Ivy Substation, built by the Los Angeles Pacific Railway for switch service to electric cars, remained – eventually becoming an eyesore. By 1954, the historic Mission Revival-style building stood empty, a haven for transients.

In the 1970s, noted railroad historian David Cameron, past member and President of Pacific Railroad Society, learned that Los Angeles planned to widen Venice Boulevard. Plans called for demolition of the Ivy Substation. Cameron, a member of several historical societies, including Culver City’s, worked against the clock to place the Ivy Substation on the National Register of Historic Places. His efforts were successful in 1981, and the structure was also recognized as Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 182.

Although recognized for its historical significance, the structure and Media Park remained an eyesore until the Culver City Redevelopment Agency eventually took the reins. The agency entered into a potential 50-year lease with the city of Los Angeles for the Ivy Substation and Media Park. With significant support from Cameron and others at the L.A. Conservancy, the building and park were renovated to comply with the standards established by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. San Diego-based architect Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, was hired to prepare and oversee the design and construction plans for the 1990 rehabilitation. Donaldson sat on the Historic State Capitol Commission, after which the governor asked him to serve in his current position as the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Today, The Actors’ Gang is the resident theater company in the Ivy Substation. Stop by the Culver City Historical Society Archives and Resource Center to see photos of the early Ivy and the depot.

[Info. from Julie Lugo Cerra of *Culver City News* via Ken Ruben and from Charles Varnes]

STREETCARS IN SACRAMENTO

The streetcar era in the United States ran from 1890 to just after World War II. In Sacramento, streetcars linked downtown with residential neighborhoods and workplaces until 1947. Streetcars ran across Tower Bridge until 1941. In cities across the country, starting with Portland, Oregon, streetcars are making a comeback as a tool to spur downtown development. Streetcars provide an alternative to driving short routes of a few blocks.

Changes in federal transportation policy, including new grant funds, mean that cities around the nation, including Sacramento and West Sacramento, hope to build new streetcar lines within the next year or two.

The first phase, in the planning stages since 2006, is ready to go. It would link West Sacramento to Old Sacramento across

Tower Bridge, with stops at West Sacramento City Hall, Tower Bridge Gateway, Raley Field and Old Sacramento.

The aim is to begin construction in January 2012, with a planned opening in April 2013. West Sacramento already has been doing road improvements (including track base and special foundations to support overhead lines). On Tower Bridge, the old streetcar tracks were removed but the support structures remain, making it easy to install new tracks. The city has set aside \$5 million, and developers along the line have pledged \$5 million for the \$35 million project.

The four partners to the project, YoloBus, Regional Transit, West Sacramento and Sacramento, also have applied for a federal grant of \$25 million for this first phase, competing with 18 other cities. Getting such a grant would be a big plus, getting the project underway quickly.

Operating funds already exist. West Sacramento voters in 2008 dedicated a quarter-cent sales tax (expected to generate \$1.25 million a year beginning April 2013). Add in fares and sponsorships, and the expected \$1.4 million annual cost would be covered.

A second phase would run along Capitol Mall, connecting to the existing light-rail system in downtown Sacramento at Seventh and Eighth streets. Future connections – to Township 9, the railyard or R Street – are being discussed. Other cities have found streetcar lines a development magnet because developers like their stability and high quality. They also find that people who wouldn't ride a bus will ride a streetcar.

Portland's ridership has been beyond all projections. The city estimates that more than half of its development since 1997 has been within a block of a streetcar line. The Sacramento region needs better short-ride connections between the river-front, homes, jobs and entertainment – and streetcars could be a big part of that, as they have been elsewhere.

[Info. from *Sacramento Bee* via Robert Blymer]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

MAY 2010	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	151,523	76,368	40,344	32,434
Saturday Ave.	106,713	52,018	22,530	27,516
Sunday Ave.	77,701	49,006	17,851	19,545
Monthly Total	4,030,234	2,081,479	1,026,645	903,535

[Info. from Metro via Ken Ruben]

EXPO LINE

A hearing officer for the California Public Utilities Commission moved the Expo light-rail project closer to completion on June 23 by tentatively approving construction of a controversial street-level crossing next to Dorsey High School. The proposed decision by Administrative Law Judge Maribeth A. Bushey supports a revised plan for a station, speed restrictions for Expo trains, motor vehicle gates and other safety improvements for a rail crossing at Farmdale Avenue and Exposition Boulevard in central Los Angeles.

“The now-proposed Farmdale Station addresses directly the greatest risk for pedestrians – trains moving through the crossing at top speed – by mandating that each train come to a complete stop at the station and then proceed through the intersection,”

Bushey wrote. Expo officials say trains will not enter the intersection unless it is clear, and the line will have an automated system to prevent trains from going faster than 15 mph across Farmdale. Bushey's decision, however, must still go before the state commission, which has the power to adopt the ruling, modify it or come up with its own crossing plan. It will be at least a month before the matter is considered, officials said.

Estimated to cost \$900 million, the Expo Line will run 8.6 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City via Figueroa Street and Exposition Boulevard – a 30-minute trip one way. Construction is scheduled to be completed next year. Extensions of the line are planned in the future.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

TORRANCE

Responding to an increasing number of complaints from residents, Torrance is pursuing a plan that would make it unnecessary for trains to toot their horns at the eight railroad crossings in the city. The city has hired a consulting company to advise it on how to comply with federal regulations governing railroad crossings so that a “quiet zone” can be established in the city.

Improvements to railroad crossings that can include raised medians, signals and gates are necessary for a quiet zone designation to win approval, said Engineering Manager Beth Overstreet. “If the construction cost for all eight crossings is determined to be \$5 million or less, it would be a viable option the city could pursue further,” Public Works Director Rob Beste said. The study, which was approved by the City Council in April, should take four months to complete.

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

SACRAMENTO

In response to an estimated \$25 million budget shortfall for Fiscal Year 2011, the Regional Transit Board of Directors voted to reduce bus, light rail and paratransit service at a special meeting on March 29. The service reductions include the elimination of 28 weekday routes, 13 Saturday routes, and four Sunday routes – affecting 41 of the 91 bus routes Regional Transit currently operates. Service frequency will also be reduced on six weekday routes, three Saturday routes, and four Sunday routes. In addition, light rail service frequency will be discontinued after 9 p.m. on daily service and will be decreased to 30 minutes on weekend and holiday service.

The changes were to be implemented on June 20, 2010. Plummeting sales tax revenues, reduced state transit funding and lower than projected ridership due to the slumping economy created the estimated \$25 million budget shortfall for FY 2011.

While last-minute state funding reduced the FY 2011 deficit by approximately \$11.8 million, major service reductions and an expansion of the Park-Pay-and-Ride program will be necessary to close the gap. The cuts will result in additional layoffs of operators, mechanics and RT staff that support the operation and maintenance of bus and light rail service.

The action to reduce service was only taken after a number of other cost-cutting measures, including two fare increases, a freeze in employee pay, furloughs and scheduled layoffs. Mike Wiley, General Manager/CEO, said. “We've worked hard to maintain a vital transit network for the Sacramento region and will implement a comprehensive recovery plan as funds become

available.”

On May 3, RT launched NextTrip – a new automated bus schedule system – providing customers with an additional communication tool to quickly access schedule information using a touch-tone phone. RT also began selling \$100 Basic monthly passes online at www.sacrt.com. Other projects scheduled to be completed this year include the expansion of RT’s Transit Alert system to include light rail, the installation of electronic passenger information signs at approximately 20 light-rail stations, and the implementation of a “real time” GPS tracking system for major bus routes.

RT hosted an open house on May 6 at Sacramento City Hall to offer the community a chance to review project materials and ask questions about the Green Line to the River District. The first phase of the Green Line to the Airport light-rail extension project will extend light rail 1.1 miles north to 7th Street and Richards Boulevard at the Township 9 development. Construction began in December 2009, and service is scheduled to begin in January 2011.

[Info. from RT’s *The Connection* via Bob Bellinger]

**PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES
AMTRAK**

Historical On-Time Performance

The June 2010 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	June 2010	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	80.8%	86.9%
Texas Eagle	68.3%	64.1%
Southwest Chief	61.7%	79.2%
California Zephyr	31.7%	56.4%
Empire Builder	70.0%	79.4%
Coast Starlight	96.7%	93.1%
City of New Orleans	81.7%	84.6%
Pacific Surfliner	71.7%	77.9%
San Joaquin	86.9%	89.0%
Capitol Corridor	91.4%	91.5%
Amtrak Cascades	73.4%	68.3%
Illinois Service	67.1%	77.9%
Michigan Services	57.7%	67.6%
Missouri River Runner	88.3%	91.9%
Acela Express	76.9%	80.0%
Northeast Regional	69.6%	74.4%

The percentages shown above are for the overall on-time performance for each route. The primary cause of delays (Train Interference, Operational and Track and Signals for each railroad over which the train travels) is presented along with the performance of individual trains on the route. For example, in June the westbound *Sunset Limited* had a 76.9 percent on-time performance and a last 12-month 85.6 percent on-time performance. The eastbound *Sunset Limited* had an 84.6 percent on-time performance and a last 12-month 88.5 percent on-time performance.

A recent addition to the Amtrak route performance web page is a symbol indicating a routes Wi-Fi availability. Currently, the only route identified is the *Acela Express*.

AmtrakConnect Expansion

Amtrak currently offers AmtrakConnect Wi-Fi service

aboard its *Acela Express* and *Coast Starlight* trains.

In June Amtrak announced plans to expand Wi-Fi service to other routes contingent on available funding. It issued a request for proposals for vendors to identify, procure, install and maintain Wi-Fi on its fleet nationwide including for: its remaining passenger equipment in the northeast, the *Northeast Regional* service; for long-distance, overnight trains; and for passenger equipment used in corridor services across the U.S. This work is expected to begin by late fall 2010 and will start with *Amtrak California* services followed by *Northeast Regional* service.

On-line Reservation Changes

Reservations that were made at Amtrak.com can be modified online now. Dates and times, class of service and ticket delivery method can be modified. Reservations made by telephone, or in a station, can only be modified by a reservation specialist. To modify those reservation call 1-800-872-7425.

DEPOT DOINGS

BEAUMONT, Texas. No station services are provided at the platform used by *Sunset Limited*. The platform will be replaced with a new, brick, gabled roof passenger shelter scheduled for completion by February 2011. The new shelter is simply that. There will be no station services or rest rooms provided. The \$1.2 million structure is paid for with federal stimulus money.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

RAILFANS AND RAILROADS by DENNIS GILKEY

I became interested in trains at a young age. As young as three, I would climb into a box and pretend it was a train with my parents pushing me around the living room. A little later, I visited friends whose boy had a O-Gauge train set. I turned the train controller on before they finished putting the track together. It derailed and the engine and cars uncoupled and rolled across the room in different directions, but all the cars stayed upright.

My mother related about being on a streetcar. Someone had his head in the door giving the operator a hard time. The operator asked the person to move, but he wouldn’t, so the operator closed the door on him.

When I lived in Hampton, Virginia, in the mid-fifties, a C&O branch ran across a golf course. Golfers had to drag their carts across the rails. When I lived in Tucson, Arizona, in 1956, an SP steamer was on display near the University. One night, some kids stuck a flare in it to make smoke come out.

In Glendale, California, I was told that in 1962, Center-Cab switcher (PE No. 1653) was pulling some cars up the Brand Blvd. PE Branch and a lady driver stopped her car on the track. The engineer stopped the train and patiently waited for her to move. Then he moved the train up until it was two inches from her car. She still wouldn’t move, so he gave two short blasts on the horn. She looked up, saw the train in her face, and moved out of the train’s way.

In 1969, I was at a Jack ‘N The Box on Balboa Blvd. by the SP in Northridge. An SW1500 passed by (westbound). Two minutes later, the gates came back down, the locomotive backed up, parked behind the restaurant, and the crew got off and went in for dinner. In 1970, the *San Diegan* left L.A. with a war bonnet F7A&B and blue and yellow F45, but none of us knew

why the F45 was there.

In 1972, I met some rail fans in Chatsworth. Trains would pull into the siding to wait for other trains, while the crews would go to get some coffee. I hid my boombox and played the sound of a train. The crew wondered what train it was, why the gate wasn't going down, and why the block signal wasn't on. When they found out my trick, they would usually laugh. I have asked them to blow the horn (or give the signal)t, or rev up the engine as they pulled away for a recording, or shut the engine down and crank it over, so I could record them on my boombox. I quit asking them to shut the engine down because they almost didn't start when a couple of them had weak batteries. The crews wondered what the dispatcher would say, and people wondered what the horn blowing was about when there was no grade crossing in the area.

In 1973, I went on a PRS trip to Surf (F7's A-A-B-A and Nos. 457-8791-6450-6449). The conductor let us go for a cab ride during the photo rub-by. We didn't realize the photo run-by was over in 6449, and the train pulled away while we were still in the cab. The three of us realized we were on our way to Santa Barbara when the train got to full speed. We opened the nose door on the F unit and climbed through and back into the coach. [To be continued next month.]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDRO

In June, the Caltrain Board unanimously declared their annual fiscal emergency, which will make it easier for them to cut service and raise fares, enroute to a total shutdown in 2012. This year's fiscal emergency took effect on July 1. Originally, Caltrain was facing a \$36 million gap, but savings from last year, decreases in operating costs, and an increase in state funds have cut about \$10 million from that figure.

Among the proposals, which could take effect as early as January 2011, are the elimination of Gilroy service, elimination of weekend service, and elimination of some off-peak trains. In addition, an increase of 25 cents in the base fare or a 25 cent increase per zone will also take effect. The fare increases would correspond to the Day Pass, Monthly Pass, and 8-ride ticket. A public hearing has been set for September 2 at Caltrain headquarters in San Carlos to receive public input on the proposed service cuts and fare increase. In addition, community meetings will be held in mid-August to give the public additional opportunity to review the proposals, ask questions, and provide comment.

One of the first victims of Caltrain's budget crisis will be the annual Toys For Tots holiday train. Caltrain officials announced they will not run the train this year, but could return it in 2011. The Toys For Tots train has been a public relations hit for Caltrain since 2001 and has collected thousands of toys for the United States Marine Corps Reserve to distribute to needy Bay Area children at Christmas.

Caltrain is continuing to run special trains for events like the Fourth of July fireworks display in San Francisco. This year, three special southbound trains were run, following the display. The first left San Francisco at 11:15 p.m., ran express to San Carlos, then made all weekend stops to San Jose. The following trains left at 11:30 p.m. and 12:01 a.m., and made all weekend stops.

On July 10, two special trains were run following a Paul McCartney concert at AT&T Park. The usual operating pattern was followed. The first special left 15 minutes following the concert, ran express to San Carlos, then made all weekend stops to San Jose. The second special left 25 minutes after the concert and made all weekend stops. No northbound trains were run, but extra cars were added to regular scheduled trains.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during May 2010 were 40,688, which was an increase from the previous month of 1 percent. May 2009 averaged 41,803, so May 2010 was a decrease from the previous year of 3 percent. The San Bernardino Line was the most active, averaging 11,754 for May 2010.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide passholders on Amtrak during May 2010 were 1,981, which was an increase from the previous month of 2 percent. May 2009 averaged 2,047 passholder trips, so May 2010 was a decrease from the previous year of 2 percent.

Metrolink schedule adherence for May 2010 averaged 94 percent for the total system.

AMTRAK CONDUCTORS

Amtrak conductors were at the controls of Southern California's Metrolink commuter trains on June 26 – the latest change the regional rail agency has made since a 2008 collision that killed 25 people. Amtrak took over train operations after the Southern California Regional Rail Authority's agreement with private contractor Connex Railroad LLC expired on June 25.

Metrolink has also instituted personality tests to identify those best able to avoid distraction while conducting a train, and last year it became the first commuter train agency in the nation to install cameras to monitor engineers. Both moves saw resistance from railroad labor unions.

Engineers of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen threatened a boycott before Metrolink clarified details and reassured them that a poor score would not automatically disqualify them from operating trains. Amtrak has used the tests for its conductors since 2002.

Next year Metrolink will begin replacing its train cars with what it calls "crash-resistant" models built by Rotem, a division of Hyundai in South Korea. The agency hopes to have 117 cars ready at a cost of \$229 million sometime in 2011.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT

"If we do our job right, we don't hear from customers," says Gary Jarboe, director of Metrolink's Equipment Department. The department's job is to keep Metrolink's trains and locomotives in good working order, inside and out. From the tiniest detail to the vastness of a new train car, the physical assets that make up Metrolink are managed and monitored by the Equipment Department. They oversee routine interior cleaning and safety checks close to home, and they also travel to inspect new cars at points of origin like Korea.

Every night, when Metrolink trains conclude their day's service, they land at end points such as San Bernardino and Lancaster. Here, the trains are cleaned, tested, repaired if

necessary, and otherwise readied to resume service in the morning. This includes both creature-comfort maintenance – for instance, making sure the air-conditioning is working – and checking the functionality of components essential for safe operation.

“The wheel-to-rail interface is where safety starts,” says Jarboe, and so that is where an external inspection starts, with mechanics looking for wear points or any other signs of concern. They walk the trains’ exteriors, examining wheel contour, couplers, and braking systems. They also check locomotives, performing tests to ensure that brakes and all other components are functioning at 100 percent.

Metrolink’s Equipment Department oversees the maintenance subcontractor Bombardier, ensuring that contractors perform not only the maintenance required by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) but also adhere to Metrolink maintenance schedules that exceed FRA requirements. Periodically, the Equipment Department’s compliance officers perform audits to ensure that all safety regulations and operating rules are being complied with, and that all maintenance is being performed in accordance with Metrolink’s high standards.

When it’s time for larger equipment overhaul – for instance, several Metrolink locomotives are being overhauled in June-July – the Equipment Department oversees the entire process. To do the job well, “You must be a fanatic about safety,” Jarboe says. The members of the Equipment Department, with their mix of engineering training and customer service experience, are all about putting their passion for safety into practice.

[Info. from *Metrolink Matters*]

METRO GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY (Authority) is an independent transportation planning and construction agency created in 1999 through legislation authored by then State Senator Adam Schiff. The Authority was created to design and construct the line following suspension of work on the project by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in 1998. The Authority completed Phase I (Union Station to Pasadena) in 2003, on time and under budget.

A LETTER FROM HABIB F. BALIAN, Chief Executive Officer, follows.

A decade ago, we began our journey when we broke ground on Phase 1 of the Gold Line. We had no idea what the future had in store or how certain our success might be. But with the strength and courage of many, we steadily pressed on – completing Phase 1 in 2003, and moving on to ready Phase 2.

Just eight months ago, we celebrated a key victory: the long-awaited inclusion of Phase 2 in the county’s Long Range Transportation Plan. That milestone spurred a significant effort to formalize agreements between the Authority and Metro to transfer funds and solidity roles, coordinate with other agencies (like Caltrans and the California Public Utilities Commission) to finalize plans related to their jurisdictions, prepare procurement documents to hire design-build teams for Phase 2A (Pasadena to Azusa), and more.

I am proud of the progress our team has made over the last eight months, and pleased with the caliber of world-class teams

that have vied to be part of this exciting project. Just a few weeks ago, the Authority board awarded a nearly \$20 million contract to the Skanska/AECOM team to design and build the first major element of the project, the 584-linear foot iconic Freeway Structure (IFS) spanning the I-210 freeway near Santa Anita Avenue. This bridge will connect the track in the center median of the freeway with the track on the south side, and replace the bridge that was removed after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake.

Additionally, three teams have been prequalified to compete for the nearly \$500 million Phase 2A Alignment design-build-finance contract. The winning contractor will be responsible for building the six stations between Pasadena and Azusa, a 25+-acre maintenance facility, and nearly 12 miles of new track, bridges, crossings and utilities. Proposals are due early next year, and we expect to award the contract in Spring 2011. The winning team will enter into a public-private partnership with the Authority, using private financing to expedite the project four years ahead of schedule. The prequalified teams have given us positive feedback on this approach, and each team has shown that it is qualified to design, build and finance this significant infrastructure program.

I am often asked what people can expect over the coming months, and this month’s groundbreaking ceremony has heightened that interest. The first component to start construction will be the IFS, followed by the Alignment. However, because we are using a design-build process, major construction will not begin until several months after each contract is awarded. During that time, final designs will be completed, permits acquired, and contractors hired. That is when the majority of the estimated 7,000 jobs and nearly \$1 billion in economic output (wages, sales, and taxes) to be created by the project will begin to be realized.

Finally, we are also making progress on advancing the remaining phases of the line. This summer, the Authority will initiate the final FTA-required study for Phase 2B (Azusa to Montclair), readying it for funding by the end of 2011. At the same time, Phase 2C (Ontario Airport Extension) will be studied to identify alternatives, the precursor to securing environmental clearance.

Destiny has called upon us to continue what we started ten years ago. The groundbreaking for the Foothill Extension is the result of that vision and San Gabriel Valley commitment to building a stronger, more vibrant community. The journey continues.

CATERPILLAR BUYS ELECTRO-MOTIVE DIESEL

Caterpillar Inc. has agreed to buy locomotive manufacturer Electro-Motive Diesel for \$820 million to expand its rail and transit businesses. The company will become part of Caterpillar’s Progress Rail Services unit. The purchase of LaGrange, Ill.-based EMD, which had 2009 revenue of \$1.8 billion, is expected to close by year’s end.



Many freight trains passed the San Bernardino depot as our excursion group explored the San Bernardino Railroad and Historical Museum inside. One of them was headed up by this green duo, with Dennis Gilkey noting, "Cruising in my 1973 vintage SD40-2 number 1827." Photo by Dennis Gilkey



An audience of many people is seen, while loud speakers and a dignitary platform are to the right. Photo by Tom Geer



With Tom Geer at the entrance, a sign shows the surrounding cities, the alignment and stations. Photo by Bob Johnson



Groundbreaking for Phase 2A had small tents displaying different stations and news of related organizations, while large tents on the other side of the park clearing served refreshments of sandwiches, salads and drinks. Photo by Tom Geer



Groundbreaking occurred with many dignitaries moving sand with golden shovels in L-and-R photos. Photo by Tom Geer



Dignitaries spoke, and the Azusa High School Marching Band and Boy Scout Color Guard performed. Photo by Tom Geer