

RTP News and Views
Sample Issue 2008
Free



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Rapid Transit Press

Dedicated to Preserving Transit History

**Sample Issue 2008
Free**

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On the Cover

Sun Line Orion 512 in downtown Palm Springs in June 2006. (Andrew Novak Photo)

Message from the editor:



"I started Rapid Transit Press as a way to share transportation information and photos with everyone. The idea of preserving the past is important to me and that is why I write books and this newsletter. The News and Views is a combination of current news, transportation history and some personal views on transportation. Thank you for purchasing the News and Views."

-Andy

"We have checked and rechecked item by item against official records and eyewitness accounts. We trust those mistakes which will inevitably creep in will be few in number and minor in importance"

-Jim Walker



Adventures of Super Rider – Golden Empire Transit

By Andrew Novak (Photos by author)

On Friday November 23, 2007 I joined several other transit fans for the Southern California Transit Advocates' (SOCATA) famed "Day after Thanksgiving" trip. Every year SOCATA plans a trip for the day after Thanksgiving, usually to ride weekday-only bus service, since most transit agencies run regular service that day and most SOCATA members have the day off. The group also tries to visit distant transit agencies that we would not normally visit. I have been taking these trips on-and-off since 2001, and I planned the group excursions in 2003 and 2005. This year the group voted for Golden Empire Transit (GET) in Bakersfield.



Amtrak Van Hool 63196 at the Bakersfield Amtrak Station

My day began at 6 am when my friend Charles picked me up and we made our way to Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal (Union Station) via a breakfast stop at McDonald's. Once at Union Station we meet up with Dana, Woody, and Ken who were going with us on the day's adventure. Around 7:20 am we made our way over to the Amtrak bus boarding location. Charles and I boarded Amtrak Thruway Van Hool C2045 63185 which was out of the Long Beach Coach America yard. The others boarded the second Van Hool, and Armando wound up on the third section from Union Station. After everyone boarded their buses, our driver Felix, gave the safety speech. I

remembered this driver from earlier in the year when he and several other Long Beach drivers helped Anaheim during the International Travel Pow-Wow in April. We made good time going over the Grapevine and were in Bakersfield earlier than expected. Since we made such good time, Charles our trip planner, decided to revise the trip, and with our new itinerary, we were able to ride some additional routes that were not part of the original trip plan.

At the Amtrak station we all came off our respective buses and met up with Kym who had come on the Amtrak bus from Van Nuys Flyaway. Our group of 7 walked over to Truxtun and Q Streets to wait for the Line 9 bus. While waiting, Lionel, who rode Greyhound up from LA, met us at the bus stop. Our first GET bus of the day was Orion V 9922 on Line 9 from Truxtun to the downtown Transit Center. There we decided to take an early lunch break since we had the option of Sonic Burger and Jack-in-the-Box within walking distance. Mark joined us at this point and now our group was 9 strong. Most of the group, myself included, decided that since the weather was good we would enjoy the outdoor seating of Sonic Burger.



GET Orion 9716 outside the downtown terminal

After lunch our group boarded Orion V 9707 on Line 2 for the trip to the north end of the GET service district in

the unincorporated section of the city known as Oildale. As we traveled through Oildale, a couple businesses stood out, one was called "Oildale's Finest" with no clue as to what they were finest at, and right next door was "Jesus Name House of Worship." We returned on Line 2, same bus, back downtown, and after a short layover we boarded another Orion V, 9916, on Line 4. At this point John joined up with us after coming south on Amtrak, so we now had 10 in our group. Line 4 took us to the northeast section of town where Bakersfield College is located. At the college there is a small loop that serves as the transit center.



GET Orion 0600 at Bakersfield College

We did not have to wait too long at Bakersfield College before Orion VII 0600 (our first non-Orion V of the day) arrived and boarded passengers on Line 17, the Crosstown Express. The Crosstown Express runs from Bakersfield College to Southwest Transit Center (Valley Plaza) on California State Route 178 and Interstate 5. It is interesting that a city the size of Bakersfield actually operates a freeway express route. A good number of people were on this bus which also makes a stop in downtown at the Transit Center. The southern end of the line, the Southwest Transit Center, is a small transit center located next to the Valley Plaza shopping mall. Here we waited a couple minutes before boarding New Flyer C40LF 0511 on Line 13. As we passed the north side of the mall I snapped a photo of the former Robinsons-May store that closed

after the Macy's takeover in 2006. You could see the ghost of the old May Company name on the side of the building.

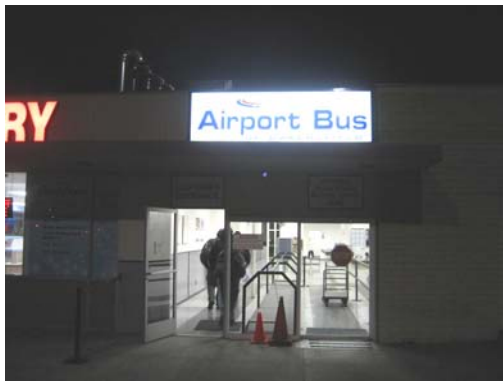


GET Orion 0214 at the Southwest Transit Center

We rode Line 13 south, to the end of the line in the community of Greenfield. Since Line 13 travels to the southern end of the GET service area we had been to both the north and south ends of the system. We alighted the Line 13 bus on Panama Lane, after riding to the end of the 13 and back, and crossed the street to catch Line 2 back into downtown.

After another short wait, Orion V 9908 arrived on Line 2. I think the longest we had to wait for a bus all day was 30 minutes. We rode Line 2 back into downtown, and at this point had covered the entire Line 2, which is the busiest line in the system. Back in downtown at the Transit Center, we boarded Orion VII 0211 (our second Orion VII of the day) on Line 3. Line 3 travels out Buck Owens Boulevard, past the late Buck Owens Crystal Palace, up to the Meadows Field Airport where the bus serves the old airport terminal. The new airport terminal is not served by any regularly-scheduled bus service at this point in time. Like several of the other lines we had been on today, Line 3 was also a loop that took us back to downtown. The sun was beginning to set while we were on board Line 3, and when we returned to the downtown Transit Center it was dark.

At this point we decided to take a dinner break before heading back to Los Angeles. We all walked over to Lorene's Ranch House which is a block north of the downtown Transit Center. This has become the official place to eat after a SOCATA trip to Bakersfield; first in 1999 and then again in 2002. Dinner was great, and afterward many group members began to head for home. John left first, getting his dinner to go and headed for the Amtrak station to catch a northbound train. Ken, Woody, and Kym returned to Los Angeles on the Amtrak bus after dinner, and the rest of us decided to take Airport Bus of Bakersfield (ABOB), a Coach America Company, back to LAX.



The ABOB terminal

Those of us opting to ride ABOB to LAX made our way over to the Transit Center at 6:30 pm. We boarded Orion V 9703 on Line 12 for the trip up to the ABOB terminal at Golden State and F Street. On our way to the terminal we rode past both the Coach America yard and the GET yard, although by now it was well after dark. Our driver on the GET bus pointed out the ABOB terminal to us since we were not 100% sure where it was. The ABOB terminal is a store front in a shopping center in the shadow of a large building known as the Golden State Mall. We walked into the office and checked in with the ticket agent and then waited for the 8 pm bus for LAX. During our wait, we all

bought ice cream from the vending machine in the terminal just to watch the machine work. It was one of those ice cream vending machines that uses a vacuum to pull the ice cream out of the cooler and dispense it. After enjoying a Chaco Taco I made my way outside to check out the Golden State Mall building next door to see if I could tell which department store it had once been. The door handles on the building had the distinctive MW logo indicating the building was originally a Montgomery Ward.



The former Montgomery Ward store, now the Golden State Mall

After taking a couple night pictures of the former Montgomery Ward, I returned to the ABOB terminal and continued to wait for the bus. Shortly before 8 pm we boarded Coach America Prevost H3-41 69614 for the trip over the Grapevine to LAX. Traffic was light on the freeway and we had a nice conversation with our driver Jesus. We arrived at LAX shortly after 10 pm and from there everyone began splitting off. Lionel took the LAX G Shuttle to the Green Line while Dana opted for the Westwood Flyaway. Charles, Armando, Mark and I boarded Coach America MCI 102DL3 67125 on the Union Station Flyaway at about 10:30 pm. The bus arrived at Union Station around 11:15 pm ending what turned out to be a great trip to Bakersfield. NV

Adventures of Super Rider (Photos by Andrew Novak unless noted)



GET New Flyers 0521 (left) and 0506 (right) at the downtown Transit Center on November 23, 2007



Kern Regional Transit RE B151 (left and right) outside the downtown Transit Center on November 23, 2007.



Get New Flyer 0518 (left) in front of the downtown Transit Center on November 23, 2007. Get Orion 9916 at the Bakersfield College Transit Center on November 23, 2007.

Adventures of Super Rider (Photos by Andrew Novak unless noted)



Get New Flyer 0506 (left) at the Bakersfield College Transit Center on November 23, 2007. (Mark Strickert Photo) The former May Company store at Valley Plaza in Bakersfield also on November 23, 2007.



Get New Flyer 0503 (left) and Orion 9904 in the late afternoon at the downtown Transit Center on November 23, 2007.



Get Orion 0501 (left) after nightfall at the downtown Transit Center on November 23, 2007. Coach America Prevost 69614 unloads passengers at LAX after making the trip from Bakersfield on November 23, 2007.

Notes from the editor's field book and General News

Park Link Shuttle ended in November

The Park Link Shuttle operated in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area with service to Malibu and Agoura Hills. The weekend and holiday-only service started in July 2005 and was designed to reduce traffic in the national park while transporting visitors to various points of interest in the park such as the Paramount Movie Ranch, Zuma Beach, and Malibu Creek State Park. Park Link was operated for the National Park Service by Connex/Veolia from their yard in Sylmar using five International Harvester cutaway buses numbers PL-1 to PL-5. When the buses were down for repairs, Veolia would use Ford vans as substitute vehicles. The service operated two loops, clockwise and counter-clockwise, that began and ended at Malibu Creek State Park. By November 2007 the funding for the demonstration project had run out and the last weekend was scheduled for November 24th and 25th. Due to wildfires in the Malibu area, the service did not run on the 24th and 25th and the last weekend of service was November 17th and 18th. With the ridership on the shuttle not being what the park was hoping for, there are currently no plans to bring the service back.



*PL-2 and PL-3 (left) at the Paramount Ranch Stop, and PL-2 in Malibu; both on May 29, 2006.
(Both photos by Andrew Novak)*



*PL-2 (left) sits at the Paramount Ranch with the Park Link bus stop shelter in the background on May 29, 2006. Veolia Ford Van 324 while operating on Park Link at the Zuma Beach stop on July 4, 2006.
(Both photos by Andrew Novak)*

Houston Metro Sells Museum Buses

In March 2008, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Harris County (Houston, Texas) listed several buses for sale on the Public Surplus sales website. Each bus was listed as one that had been held for a possible museum project. When contacted about the sale of the historic vehicles, officials at the agency were unsure as to the exact reason for the sale, but speculated that due to rapid growth of Houston, the agency's priority has shifted to service expansion and not to old buses. Below is a list of the buses that were for sale.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Built</u>	<u>Manufacturer</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>Vin/Serial Number</u>
1200	1979	Eagle	SE-05	30101
1322	1985	Eagle	AE-10	1EVAN6A1XFB031503
1627	1983	Grumman	40102-8-1	1GF5AA1K1DD095095
1759	1978	GMC	TH8-201	TH8201202
2052	1983	GMC	T8J-204	1G0YT82J8DV821352
2281	1985	Flxible	40102-6T	1GF5AAAK3FD096994
3922	1992	Stewart Stevenson	Ferroni T-29	4AHG4AAT0NH001053



Three of the former Houston Metro fleet buses: front view of Eagle 1200 (left); and rear views of RTS 1759 and 2052 (middle and right) in storage, waiting for new owners. (All three photos from Public Surplus.)



Flxible 2281 (left) and Stewart Stevenson 3922 (right) in storage, also waiting for new owners. (Both photos from Public Surplus)

Buses across the Nation – (Napa Vine)

All of the following photos were taken by Andrew Novak during the spring 2005 Motor Bus Society Convention in San Francisco, California. All photos at the Vine yard in Napa on April 16, 2005.



RTS 106 (left) in the new paint scheme and RTS 126 in the old paint scheme.



Gillig 128 (left) and New Flyer 152 pose in the sun for photographers.



*Trolley 403 (left) parked in the yard next to one of the Coach USA buses used on the MBS charter.
Vine's public relations bus inside the shop building.*

Rails across the Nation – (Best of 2007)

Just some of the best train photos I took in 2007. (All photos by Andrew Novak)



Amtrak California GE 2051 (left) leads train 711 in Bakersfield on August 3, 2007. BNSF 2738 and Santa Fe 2428 travel westbound across Rosecrans Avenue in La Mirada on August 26, 2007.

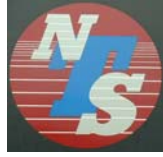


Metrolink F40PH 800 (left) brings up the rear of train 609 at the Norwalk Station on September 13, 2007. Union Pacific Genset 2723 in Downey on October 22, 2007.



Coaster Cab car 2302 (left) at Los Angeles Union Station while on loan to Metrolink, on November 16, 2007. Former Rio Grande Southern 2-8-0 41 sits at the Ghost Town station inside Knott's Berry Farm on December 19, 2007.

A page from the fleet fact book



Agency: Norwalk Transit System
City: Norwalk, California

Bus Numbers: 7043-7051

Built Date: 1997

Manufacturer: Nova Bus

Model: T70606

Serial Numbers: VR832613 - VR832621

Engine Type: Detroit Diesel Series 50

Fuel Type: Diesel

Wheel Chair Lift: Yes

Status: Active

Notes: Coach 7047 was the Santa Fe Springs Tram bus until it was replaced by Gillig 7065. Coach 7051 was decal'd for Whittier Transit (WT) in 2005 when Norwalk Transit took over the WT operation.



Norwalk 7043 (left) at the Norwalk Green Line Station on April 6, 2005. Norwalk 7047 as the Santa Fe Springs Tram bus at the Norwalk Transit yard c.1999. (Both photos by Andrew Novak)



Front and rear views of the Whittier Transit RTS at the Whittwood Town Center on April 3, 2007. (Both photos by Andrew Novak)

The Bus Stops Here!

Between September 25, 2006 and February 27, 2007, Norwalk Transit completed a bus stop improvement project within the city of Norwalk. Besides new bus stop signs, this project also brought shelters to some bus stops, solar powered lights, night time stop signal lights, and information cubes. Other improvements include bus cut outs, benches, trash cans, and improved ADA access. The lights and stop signals worked at the stop I tested. Although no cubes have received transit information at press time. All photos by Andrew Novak.



One of the information cubes (left) with the control buttons for the light and stop signal. One of the improved bus stops with bench and shelter at Orange and Pioneer in Norwalk.



A close up picture (left) shows one of Norwalk Transit's new bus stop signs. The same sign with the stop signal and passenger light at the Orange and Pioneer stop in Norwalk.

The Contemporary Photo Gallery



*CAT double-decker 248 (left) cruises “The Strip” in Las Vegas on August 1, 2005. (Albert Novak Photo)
Recently restored Montebello GMC 9364 at the Montebello Roadeo on March 24, 2007. (Craig Barnes Photo)*



*Regional Transit Services GMC 3015 (left) passes the former Pacific Electric building at 6th and Main Streets in Los Angeles on November 5, 2006. LADOT TMC 1375 at 7th and Hill in Los Angeles on March 9, 2006.
(Both photos by Scott Richards)*



*Long Beach Transit New Flyer 9406 (left) enters the Los Cerritos Center on January 30, 2007.
Glendale Beeline Blue Bird B30 exits the Burbank Metrolink Station on April 17, 2007.
(Both photos by Andrew Novak)*

The Historic Photo Gallery



RTD Grumman 7504 (left) on Rosemead Boulevard in Pico Rivera in May 1980. (SCRTD Photo) San Diego Transit MAN articulated buses 1042 and 1027 at the Imperial Division in 1979. (Harry Gershen Photo)



BART Express MCI MC9 802571 (left) BayFair BART Station on May 16, 1995. (Ron Hook Photo) GMC Transbus Demonstrator at Junction Boulevard and 62nd Road in New York on January 11, 1975. (Douglas Grotjahn Photo/Joe Testagrose Collection)



Metro MCI MC-9 9940 (left) at Division 7 in West Hollywood in 1994. This was one of five former Greyhound MC-9s leased by Metro to supplement service after the Northridge earthquake. 9940 was originally Greyhound 8962. (Phil Cegielski Photo) A former British Double Deck bus owned by Regional Transit Service in the early 1980s was used in a Montgomery Ward commercial. (Scott Richards Photo)

Coming Soon From Rapid Transit Press!

At RTP we are currently working on a number of projects that we hope to finish in the near future. Contact us for updated information on these projects or if you have any information you would like to contribute to them.

Coming in 2008

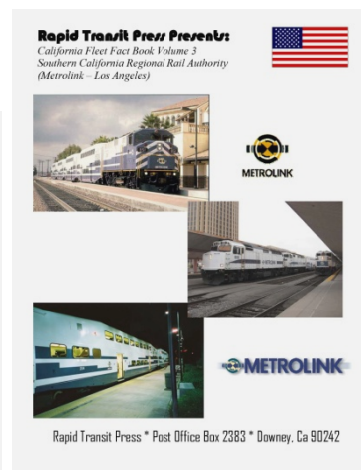
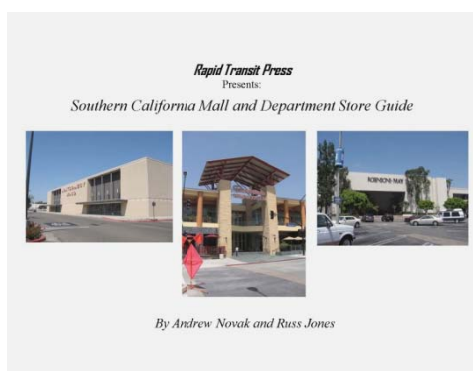
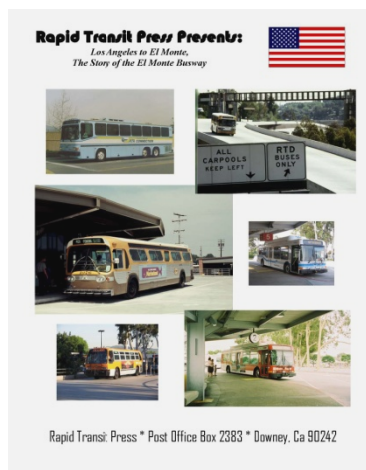
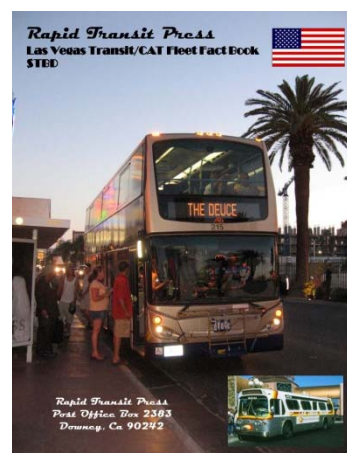
- California Fleet Fact Book Volume 2 – Riverside Transit Agency
- The Adventures of Super Rider – 2007 edition

Coming in 2009 and later

- Las Vegas Transit/CAT Fleet Fact Book
- 2008 Bus Auction and Sales Book
- The story of the El Monte Bus Way
- California Fleet Fact Book Volume 3 – Metrolink
- Southern California Mall and Department Store listing (Co-authored with Russ Jones)

Plus more great Issues of the “News and Views” and “The Plaza.”

(The pages below are samples, and they may differ from the final product.)



For more information on any of these projects contact Rapid Transit Press at:

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