
Subject: Is Amtrak falling apart? Father of Pacific Palour Car forced out of Amtrak!

From: Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)

To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

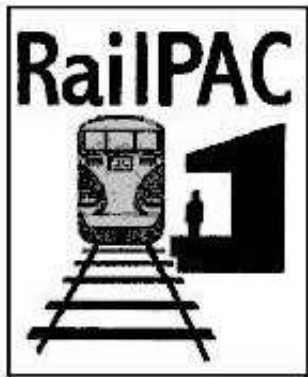
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for November 25, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California

www.railpac.org

Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



The Coaster running in the slow, single tracked hilly area just south of Sorrento Valley. Future plans for this area are for double tracking plus a faster, straighter alignment as part of a \$860 million dollar plan to double track most the 60 mile railroad in San Diego County in the next 20 years. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Last night Amtrak and Baltimore escaped a potential disaster](#)

Baltimore Brew-Nov 20, 2013

A passenger train derailed in the B&P Tunnel used by more than 20,000 Amtrak and MARC passengers a day. The southbound Silver Meteor came to a sudden, jolting halt at 7 p.m in the Baltimore & Potomac Tunnel built shortly after the Civil War.

According to preliminary reports, the lead wheels of the locomotive had left the track, but all of the cars, carrying 158 passengers on the Miami-bound train, stayed upright on the rails.

[Amtrak derailment halts commuter trains](#)

Washington Post- Nov 18, 2013

However, late trains on MARC's Penn Line commuter service between Baltimore and Washington were halted and Amtrak said its service between the two cities was also suspended. A MARC spokesman said buses were being provided for passengers whose trains stopped short of their destinations. Single-track service was restored by 9:30.

[Amtrak investigating wrong-turn train](#)

Philly.com-Nov 19, 2013

An Amtrak train with 130 passengers took a wrong turn on its way to New York last week and ended up at SEPTA's Bala Cynwyd station.

[Amtrak train stuck outside station for 6 hours](#)

Chicago Tribune-Nov 18, 2013

A Detroit-bound train from Chicago made it a couple miles outside the station before it stopped for six

hours because of an equipment problem.

This train left Chicago with a flat wheel. NB

[Amtrak train stalls out near Michigan-Indiana border](#)

WXYZ-Nov 21, 2013

MICHIGAN CITY, Ind. (WXYZ) - More than 100 people riding an Amtrak train were stranded near the Indiana-Michigan border after the train stalled out Wednesday night.

[Schumer Brokers LIRR-Amtrak Deal On East River Tunnels](#)

CBS Local-Nov 18, 2013

Delays are often blamed on tunnel problems. Amtrak owns the four tunnels that run under the East River, which carry 300,000 daily Long Island Rail Road in and out of Penn Station – even though the tunnels do not carry Amtrak passengers.

['I survived the deadliest train crash in Amtrak's history'](#)

The Guardian-Nov 18, 2013

When I got home from the States, I was contacted by a Californian legal firm with the formidable name of Kananack Murgatroyd Baum & Hedlund. They wanted to sue on my behalf. I had qualms, but my mum and dad overrode them. I filled in a form recounting my experience, and a few months later was awarded thousands of dollars in compensation. It paid me through university, then allowed me to earn next to nothing for a year or two while I found myself a career.

[Why Can't Amtrak Get Food Right?](#)

The Atlantic Cities-Nov 20, 2013

Last week, Congress held the latest in a series of hearings on Amtrak's inability to manage its food service. That's putting it kindly. Amtrak has lost more than \$609 million on food and beverage since 2006. The situation is so bad that the \$72 million loss it posted in this area last year is considered real progress:

This author took Amtrak Accounting at face value like many reporters and did little in the way of investigating. One of Amtrak's more pressing and constant problem is deferred maintenance on its trains. NB

[Congressmen use adorable dogs to persuade Amtrak to allow pets on trains](#)

Washington Post (blog) - Nov 21, 2013

Grimm and Sebastian headlined the news conference outside Union Station designed to pressure Amtrak to allow dogs and cats on pet-approved train cars. The event, heavy on canine cuteness and human speeches, featured bill sponsors Grimm, Rep.

[Boardman fires more Amtrak upper managers](#)

Trainorders.com Nov 19, 2013

On Monday Nov. 18, Amtrak fired more upper managers, eliminating twenty senior positions. Casualties reportedly included a 40-year Amtrak veteran and visionary whose last two decades were directly involved with the long distance trains and customer service, with many innovations to his credit.

Comment

The person who Gene Poon refers to in the original post was indeed Brian Rosenwald. He wasn't fired, but chose to retire this week after being passed over for several positions in the new management structure. Brian is a bright and creative man, and his energy, integrity, and creative problem-solving skills will be missed.

Fred Frailey

[New Amtrak Cars, But \(sigh\) Not For The West](#)

Commentary by Russ Jackson, URPA/RailPAC

On October 24, 2013, Amtrak rolled out the new low-level Viewliner cars at the manufacturer CAF's plant in Elmira, New York. The order is for 130 cars: 25 sleeper cars, 25 dining cars, 25 baggage/dormitory cars and 55 baggage cars, and Amtrak is excited. They should be.

[Bill would eliminate federal transportation funding](#)

The Hill Nov 15, 2013

The measure, which has been dubbed the Transportation Empowerment Act (TEA), would lower the gas tax that currently pays for most federal transportation projects from 18.4 cents-per-gallon to 3.7 cents in five years...

"The legislation would solve myriad problems, not the least of which is the flawed dynamic between the federal government and the states with regard to how federal gas tax dollars are spent," Heritage (Foundation) Action said in a "key alert" to its members.

So what source of money will replace the funds from the gas tax for these "Block Grants"? NB

[Denham weighing rail trust fund](#)

Politico Nov 18, 2013

Rep. Jeff Denham, (R-Modesto) chair of the House Transportation Committee's rail panel, told MT that he's open to the idea of a dedicated rail trust fund—but it all comes down to funding

[Senate Bill Calls for Infrastructure Bank](#)

The Hill Nov 14, 2013

Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) are reviving a push to create a national infrastructure funding bank in a new bill he unveiled on Thursday.

Warner and Blunt's bill would create a "infrastructure financing authority" that would receive \$10 billion in initial funding, his office said.

The infrastructure funding would be used as leverage to lure private sector investments that could reap as much as \$300 billion in new transportation projects, according to Warner's office.

[Professional Rail Critics Hired to Weigh In on North Carolina Project](#)

STREETBLOG Nov 19, 2013

There is a certain class of "transportation expert" that does just one thing: poo-poops rail projects. The Reason Foundation in particular has found a niche issuing easily discredited doomsday reports on local rail.

[Fossil-Fuel Subsidies Outstripping Climate Aid by Factor of Five](#)

Businessweek -Nov 19, 2013

Industrialized countries paid \$58.7 billion in 2011 in subsidies to the oil, coal and natural gas industries and to consumers of the fuels. That compares with climate-aid averaging \$11.7 billion a year from 2010 to 2012, the Washington-based campaign group Oil Change International said today in a report released in Warsaw.

[Caterpillar probed for dumping train parts into sea](#)

Reuters-Nov 22, 2013

(Reuters) - A unit of Caterpillar Inc (CAT.N) is being probed by federal investigators to determine if it had dumped train parts into the ocean off California as part of a scam to charge customers for parts they didn't need, the Wall Street Journal reported...

Railroad operator Union Pacific Corp (UNP.N) was one customer believed to have been affected by the alleged activities, the newspaper said,.

[Two busy Amtrak train lines set ridership records in California](#)

Los Angeles Times-Nov 21, 2013

Amtrak-California set ridership records last year on two of its busiest long distance lines in the state — the Pacific Surfliner along the coast and the San Joaquin through the Central Valley.

[Capitol Corridor Statistics October, 2013](#)

By David B. Kutrosky, Managing Director

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority

Service Performance Overview

FY2013 Projected Results

Year-over-year ridership on the Capitol Corridor trains was even with last September. 132,937 passengers rode the Capitol Corridor trains in September 2013, closing out FY 2013 with a total of 1.70 million riders and representing a ridership decrease of 2.6% (or a loss of approximately 45,000 riders).

The decline in ridership happened after the new platforms were finished at Sacramento.

Passengers complained that the extra time need to catch trains caused some to miss their train.

Ridership is particularly down on for service between Auburn and Sacramento. NB

[Capitol Corridor Thanksgiving Travel Advisory](#)

Be prepared for Thanksgiving Travel!

Wednesday, November 27, 2013 will be a busy travel day onboard the Capitol Corridor. Unlike previous years, service WILL NOT be extended between Oakland Jack London and San Jose for Train 551. Train 551 will operate normally and terminate at Oakland Jack London.

We wish all of you a safe and wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!

WEEKEND/HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Capitol Corridor will operate a weekend/holiday schedule on Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29, 2013 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

[High-speed rail consultant costs near \\$600 million even before ...](#)

Fresno Bee-Nov 20, 2013

To date, the authority reports it has spent \$587 million on contracts with consultants for project management, public outreach, preliminary engineering and environmental assessment on various project sections. The largest single contract, valued at \$295 million, is a statewide project management agreement with Parsons Brinckerhoff, an American subsidiary of English engineering and construction firm Balfour Beatty. That contract expires in June 2015.

[California's high speed train project zips forward](#)

Visalia Times-Delta-Nov 22, 2013

Jeff Morales, California's high speed rail chief, says he's confident lawsuits filed by South Valley local officials will not stop the project.

Morales, who sat down for an editorial board interview with the Times-Delta Thursday, said the ongoing suit filed by the Kings County Board of Supervisors will not upend the \$68 billion project to build a high speed rail line between the Los Angeles Basin and the Bay Area.

[Judge dismisses Kings County challenge to high-speed rail contract](#)

Fresno Bee-Nov 22, 2013

A Sacramento County Superior Court judge gave the California High-Speed Rail Authority a partial victory Friday as it seeks court approval to sell bonds to build a high-speed train system.

[Central Valley Land Sink Issue For High Speed Rail, Flood Control ...](#)

Capital Public Radio News-Nov 20, 2013

Large groundwater withdrawals are causing land in California's Central Valley to sink. It's become so serious that it's threatening flood control and water deliveries. The proposed high speed rail system will also have deal with the changing terrain.

[High-speed Barcelona-Paris trains from 15/12](#)

ANSAmед-Nov 20, 2013

MADRID, NOVEMBER 20 - A high-speed rail link (TGV) will connect Barcelona and Paris starting on December 15, Spain's minister for infrastructure, Ana Pastor, told the Catalan radio station RAC1 Wednesday.

[High-speed rail from Fort Collins to Springs would cost \\$9.8 billion](#)

Denver Post-Nov 19, 2013

GOLDEN — A proposed high-speed rail system from Fort Collins to DIA and then south to Colorado Springs would cost about \$9.8 billion and ...

This is a distance of about 122 miles, slightly less than from Los Angeles to San Diego. The population of all of Colorado is just over 5 million people. NB

[The Case Against Cars in 1 Utterly Entrancing GIF](#)

The Atlantic Nov 18, 2013

We continue to lead advanced economies in per-capita carbon emissions, 28 percent of which come from transportation. But even if the crunchy granola argument isn't good enough to make you see the benefits of public transit, consider that trains, trams, buses, and the like reduces traffic congestion, which is good for the life satisfaction of everybody behind the wheel, since science shows long commutes make us unhappy.

[Cities with rail-to-airport connection boost hotel revenue](#)

METRO Nov 20, 2013

Hotels in cities with direct rail access from downtown to airport terminals receive nearly 11% more revenue per room than hotels in cities without a rail airport connection, according to a study released by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and the U.S. Travel Association.

[Good news, California: Surplus is \\$2.4 billion](#)

San Francisco Chronicle - Nov 21, 2013

"The state's budget has come a long way in the past three years," said state Director of Finance Michael Cohen. ...

Cohen said the focus should remain on paying off the state's debt and building a reserve to "ensure that we do not return to the days of \$26 billion deficits."

[BART resumes service - freeways clogged](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Nov 22, 2013

BART engineers are trying to determine why a regular, nothing-special system update managed to crash the transit district's computers on Friday, slowing late-night train traffic to a crawl and shutting down morning commuter service for hours.

[Strike three? BART workers considering next steps as directors reject paid-leave ...](#)

San Francisco Examiner - Nov 21, 2013

BART workers are "considering all options" — which could include litigation or the third strike of 2013 — after the transit agency presented to its unions Thursday a different labor contract than the one

overwhelmingly ratified earlier this month.

BART's elected board of directors voted 8-1 to remove a provision from the transit agency's hard-won contract allowing for six weeks of paid medical emergency leave, repeating earlier claims that it was never meant to be included.

[SMART approves \\$68 million contract for next phase](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat-Nov 20, 2013

The board of the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit system awarded a \$68.7 million contract to an Oakland firm on Wednesday for the next major phase of construction, primarily for track work in Marin County but including a new Petaluma River bridge and bike paths in both counties.

[Caltrain strikes car, delaying service again](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Nov 21, 2013

Caltrain service has resumed in both directions after a southbound train struck a car abandoned on the tracks, causing systemwide delays and shutting down service in the San Mateo area for the second consecutive night.

[Metro Seriously Planning for Next Sales Tax Initiative](#)

The Source Nov 18, 2013

First, the caveat: The Metro Board has not — emphasis on the HAS NOT part — decided to take a ballot measure to Los Angeles County voters.

That said, in recent months, both the Board as a whole and individual members have said they want to explore the idea of taking a ballot measure to voters in 2014 or 2016. Furthermore, the Board has instructed Metro to ask local cities what kind of transportation projects that may want funded in such a measure.

[Regional Connector Station Could Get Pedestrian Bridge](#)

DTLA News Nov 18, 2013

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - As plans move ahead for the \$1.366 billion Regional Connector, a potential new design element is coming into focus: a pedestrian bridge at the proposed Second and Hope streets station.

[So Maybe This Whole Gate-Locking Idea Wasn't Well Thought Out](#)

LA Times Nov 17, 2013

Still, the majority of light-rail stations won't ever be locked because some platforms are too small to accommodate turnstiles and others sit too close to the tracks, Metro said. If turnstiles were at some of the smaller stations, people would be lining up on the tracks trying to get through the gates.

[Metrolink receives grant to promote railroad safety](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Nov 20, 2013

In collaboration with California Operation Lifesaver, Metrolink will use the grant to continue efforts to reduce the number of people killed or injured in grade crossing collisions, Metrolink officials said in a press release.

[Train Horns to Continue Blasting as City Waits on Supreme Court](#)

Patch.com-Nov 19, 2013

But freight train company BNSF Railway argued the PUC doesn't have the authority to weigh in because the pedestrian walkways aren't in a federally established quiet zone.

An appellate court in August agreed with BNSF.

[What's Up with the Coaster?](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Fares on the Coaster today are lower than they were a few years ago. The Day Pass originally was \$14 dollars and then was still a good deal. There was also originally 4 zones between Oceanside and San Diego but now there are 3. By eliminating one zone the price of a ticket between Oceanside and San Diego went down. Why did the Coaster lowered fares? Because it has increased ridership, and with increased ridership this has increased Coaster's revenue.

[VINTAGE RAIL DAYTRIP - SEE VANDENBERG!](#)

Santa Ynez Valley News-Nov 16, 2013

Presented by the South Coast Railroad Museum, the Central Coast Flyer is a regional treasure! This is a unique opportunity to enjoy day trip travel on a privately owned railcar, fantastic scenery along California's most beautiful coastal rail route and quality time with friends and family.



Brian Rosenwald seen here at the RailPAC/NARP Meeting held in Sacramento on September 15, 2012. Brian was best known for his work in the 1990's upgrading the Coast Starlight with the Pacific Parlour Car. To read more about the work of Brian Rosenwald click to [What did I learn from listening to Amtrak's Brian Rosenwald?](#) Commentary by Russ Jackson, RailPAC

We Get Email

Re:Disney Trolley Plan

I just recently joined RailPAC & read today's eNewsletter. I'm curious about your information on the Disney Red Car Trolley. 1st off, its probably been brought to your attention already by others but the Disney Red Car Trolley is not powered by the overhead wire as you indicate, its a dummy pole & wire

just for looks.

2nd, I've not heard about Disney's plan for a Trolley Line b/w the Resort & the ARTIC station, can you please direct to a website or railPac archival information on this plan? I would like to read more about this.

Thank You!

Kelly Walton-Harper

Here is a link to several stories about Streetcars, most of them about the [Disneyland-ARTIC Streetcar](#).

I was surprised just to see the wires for the Street Cars at Disney's California Adventure. Most people complain about how ugly wires are and that is likely the reason the Disney Corp is opposing wires around Disneyland for a future streetcar. I'm not surprised that the cars didn't draw power from these wires. I noticed there weren't sparks coming from the wires and I thought it would be uneconomical to electrify such a short rail line for 2 cars. But these non-electrified wires for these two cars at California Adventure are no more unsightly than real power lines for Light Rail. NB

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

The RailPAC Mission: Passenger Rail advocacy, Publications...both print and electronic, Representation at regional meetings, and Rail education.

Join us! More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

For those who would like an additional copy of the eNewsletter with plain text (minus photos and graphics) just email me at nbraymer@railpac.org with your name and email address. NB

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