

Coast Observations

BUSH ADMINISTRATION RESISTANCE to funding Amtrak continues, with Transportation Secretary Mineta and Federal Railway Chief Alan Rutter both holding to a \$900 million budget figure for 2005 that Amtrak President David Gunn calls a "shutdown budget."... THIS WEEK, the Bush administration sought information from states on how they would contract rail service to private companies if Amtrak were dismantled and some or all of its routes were open to competition. The Transportation Department's regulatory filing also sought to determine which states or group of states would be interested in bidding out and overseeing privately run city-to-city service and which states would be best positioned to move forward... PRO-RAIL STATES generally view the Bush privatization scheme as a method to end a national Amtrak network, rather than a bona fide reform, and see the latest federal request for information as a divide-and-conquer ploy... YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS needs to know that starving Amtrak is unacceptable. Please write or send an e-mail to your Senators and Member of Congress NOW to assure you can ride next year. Send to: Hon. _____, House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515 or Sen. _____, Senate Office Building, Washington DC 20510. At www.capitoladvantage.com you can enter your zip code and get the name of your member of congress, then click to send an e-mail... \$32 MILLION SPENT TO DOUBLE-TRACK the Yolo Bypass causeway has finally helped the Capitol Corridor's late train problems. One remaining issue is that Union Pacific cut out the planned west-of-causeway crossover. "Now UP dispatchers are using Davis-Sacramento like a huge piece of single track," says one irate commuter. "Freight interference is now rare, but when it happens, we wait west of Davis and are 20 minutes late."... SEN. JOHN KERRY has put forth a transportation platform including "increased spending on Amtrak and rail infrastructure." Kerry believes that "a strong investment in intercity passenger rail is necessary to maintain a balanced transportation system and promote economic growth." As a member of the Senate Commerce Committee, Kerry consistently was a good vote on Amtrak's budget and proposals to upgrade the railroad's aging infrastructure... THE TOLL INCREASES TO \$3 VOTED BY BAY voters have temporarily saved BART's bacon, and contain amounts for the Caltrain Transbay Terminal extension and Dumbarton Bridge. It's a great time for activists to push for the right spending package for the funds... THE SIERRA CLUB'S 3 BAY CHAPTERS transportation committees sent a letter to Sec. McPeak asking that Governor Schwarzenegger use his influence to see that the entire BART toll bridge allocation is devoted to the \$1 billion backlog of seismic safety needs at the district, and not on the budget-breaking Warm Springs and San Jose extensions estimated to cost \$5.7 billion... AS OBSERVED BY THE SIERRA CLUB, conventional rail connections to San Jose could be in service this decade instead of BART's estimated timeframe of two decades in the future...

New TRAC Board Members

GERALD CAUTHEN P.E.

Alameda County

Mr. Cauthen is a California registered professional engineer whose professional experience as a transportation engineer began in 1970 and continues today. His transportation positions since 1970 have included Manager of the San Francisco MUNI Transit Improvement Program, SFPUC Chief Project Manager with responsibility for all MUNI capital projects; PBO&D Transportation Vice President and Senior Engineering Manager, and Korve Engineering Manager of Transit Systems. During this period he served as Project Engineer or Project Manager and/or Chief Cost Estimator on many rail projects including the Curtis E. Green Rail Maintenance Facility, MUNI Metro East facility, MUNI Metro subway fare collection and electronic sign systems, various intermodal station designs, Western Washington Corridor Project, Caltrain upgrade and extension projects, MUNI, VTA and RT surface light rail developments and others. He is currently an independent transportation consultant.

His interest in regional and inter-city rail transportation systems developed while he was living in West Germany between 1960 and 1963. "The Bay Area and California have long needed an integrated system of local, regional and inter-city rail and bus lines such as exist in much of Europe," he says. He became a TRAC board member, he says, "because TRAC has been very effective in developing and advocating the right kind of transit-integrating ideas for California." As a board member he wishes to participate in furthering this effort.

LYNN FRANKS

Sacramento County

Mr. Franks has worked in the public transportation field for 27 years. For the first five he was employed by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) in Washington, D.C. where he certified employee protection agreements for recipients of federal mass transportation funds (this included review of the agreements, providing advice, and mediation). He also conducted arbitrations in connection with the National Rail Passenger Service Act for a small group of railroad and Amtrak employees. Since then he has been in California involved mostly with inter-city rail passenger matters and active in the Sacramento chapter of the Modern Transit Society. Mr. Franks has been a member of TRAC since its inception and is an officer of the California Rail Foundation (TRAC's educational foundation arm).

He was part of a very small unit at DOL that had to deal with the much larger Department of Transportation over contentious issues such as the employee protection section of the Federal Transportation Act [then the Urban Mass Transportation Act]. This was complex and sometimes a source of hostility and division, as DOL employees were expected to be advocates for the working men and women who were operating and maintaining the publicly funded trans-

portation systems. That sense of advocacy, he says, helped DOL employees perform their jobs better. Mr. Franks says he will bring that sense of advocacy to intercity rail passenger issues in California as a member of the TRAC Board.

MICHAEL KIESLING

San Francisco County

In 1992, Mr. Kiesling presented a plan to extend Caltrain to a rebuilt Transbay Terminal in downtown San Francisco. For more than a decade, he fought to make that plan happen and made many important connections with transportation activists and professionals along the way. Now he's turning his attention to ensure California builds a high-speed rail system that draws on decades of worldwide experience, not parochialism and kick-backs. TRAC worked together with Mr. Kiesling on a multi-organizational task force, which shared information prior to the release of the HSRA draft EIR. We were impressed with his work and asked him to join our board.

Mr. Kiesling operates an independent architectural business that creates graphics for transportation planners. His work includes bike paths and maps, traffic calming plans, pedestrian safety projects, urban design and marketing materials. He also serves on the Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Transbay Redevelopment CAC, and served on the San Francisco Transportation Sales Tax Expenditure Plan Committee, which will provide over \$300 million for the Transbay project and Caltrain. He is also active in the Regional Alliance for Transit (RAFT).

WILLIAM F. MCGEEHAN, III

Contra Costa County

Bill grew up in Hazelton, Pennsylvania where he attended both public and parochial schools. He then secured a degree in Audio Technology at the University of Missouri Kansas City Conservatory of Music. In Kansas City he worked in that field and also became manager of a furniture home-based store. He then moved to California and worked in the recreational vehicle business where he is a part owner now.

Bill constantly heralds the beauty, the ease and the glories of Amtrak. He has been a huge fan and customer of Amtrak for over twelve years. He is always selling Amtrak to anyone who knows him and perhaps people who don't. He has deep, passionate and altruistic convictions about why Amtrak is and must be successful.

Bill, as those of you who read our Nov-Dec 2003 issue know, is disabled. His ocular albinism and cerebral palsy have never deterred him seeking his dream. In fact, he always said he was very lucky because he knew what he wanted to do in his life. He has never succumbed to the "handicapped life" but has gone "mainstream" all the way. His drive and energy demonstrate his fierce loyalty to his beliefs, including the expansion of user-friendly intercity and urban rail.

