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## Metrolink Train Crash Claims the Life of Metro Storekeeper Donna Remata

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### Metro to Offer Transportation for Employees Attending Remata Services

- Two buses will leave from Patsaouras Plaza for Friday services

(Sept. 24, 2008) Metro will provide transportation to and from Donna Remata's funeral services on Friday, Sept. 26, for all employees who wish to attend. The services will begin at 10 a.m. in Simi Valley.

Two MTA buses will be available. The first bus will leave Patsaouras Plaza at 8 a.m., and the second bus will leave at 8:30 a.m. The buses will stage at Berth 3 in the plaza. Each bus's head sign will read "Special."

If you have any questions regarding the bus transportation, please call Glendora Walker in Bus Operations Control at 2-4602.

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### Services for Donna Remata will be held Sept. 25 and Sept. 26 in Simi Valley

(Sept. 19, 2008) Services have been scheduled for Donna Remata, one of 25 passengers killed in the Friday, Sept. 12, collision between a Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train.

A memorial service for Remata will be held from 4 to 8 p.m., Sept. 25, at Reardon Mortuary, 2636 Sycamore Dr., Simi Valley, 93063 (805.526.6677). A rosary will be said at 7 p.m.

On Sept. 26, funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, 1305 Royal Ave., Simi Valley, 93065 (805.526.1732).

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- Twenty-one-year Metro veteran managed Gateway Tower Stationery office
  - Remembering Donna Remata - [Share your memories here](#).

By Ned Racine, Editor

(Sept. 15, 2008) The Sept. 12 Metrolink train crash tore at the Metro family with news that Donna Remata was one of 25 passengers killed in the Friday afternoon collision between the 3:35 p.m. Metrolink train and a Union Pacific freight train.

"I know I speak for the entire Metro family in mourning the death of Donna Remata, who was killed in Friday's Metrolink train crash," said CEO

Roger Snoble. "In addition to keeping her husband Larry, a mechanic for Division 8, and her two children in our thoughts and prayers, I would like to offer my condolences to all the families who lost loved ones in that terrible accident."

As usual, Remata, 49, a storekeeper in the Gateway Tower's Stationery office, was riding in the first car—facing the engine—when that car was heavily damaged in the crash of Ventura County Line 111. Her body was pulled from the wreckage on Sept. 13 at 3 a.m.



Maggie Cook, customer information agent, sits at Donna Remata's desk. Cook holds a box where employees can drop off their memories of Remata or condolences to the Remata family. The box can be found outside the Stationery office on P1.

Remata, a mother of two, began working for Metro in February 1987 and became a storekeeper in 1999.

Born in Oct. 1958 in Manhattan Beach, Calif., Remata was a resident of Simi Valley and was traveling home at the time of the crash. She planned to go out with her 17-year-old daughter Tiffany that night, while her husband Larry and son Larry II, 18, concluded a vacation in Hawaii.

**Remata spoke with sister**

According to Maggie Cook, customer information agent, Remata was speaking to her sister, Debra Nieves, until 4:20 p.m. on Friday, three minutes before the crash.

"She was happy," Cook learned from Nieves. "She was looking forward to being home with her family."

After news of the crash, Cook and other Transportation Communications Union (TCU) members began calling friends and acquaintances for information on Remata. Her co-workers reached out to contacts at Metrolink, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and West Valley Division 8.

TCU members weren't the only ones concerned.

Marie Tervalon, customer information agent, began worrying for Remata while she was on her own train home, one train behind Ventura County Line 111. One of Tervalon's "train buddies" received a cell phone call describing a train accident just outside the Chatsworth station.



Marie Tervalon grew worried when she learned the train her friend was on had crashed in Chatsworth.

"I knew immediately what train it was," Tervalon said

Thinking she had Remata's cell phone number, Tervalon called her friend. Instead, she reached the Remata home and Tiffany. Tervalon asked her friend's daughter to turn on the television to check on news of her mother's train.

Tervalon's husband picked her up at the Van Nuys Metrolink station and took her home to Simi Valley, where she lives only two blocks from the Remata home. Tervalon drove to the home and stayed with Tiffany until family arrived.

**'I've done all my crying'**

"I've done all my crying," Tervalon recalls Tiffany telling her when she arrived. "No, you haven't," Tervalon replied.

Kenny Allen heard about the accident on Friday on the radio. He called Tervalon early that evening because he remembered Tervalon and Remata sometimes took the same train. He reached Tervalon after she had left the Remata home.

"I was worried about both of them," said Allen, a stock clerk, who worked with Remata for five years in the Gateway Tower Stationery office.

As Allen and Tervalon spoke on the phone later that night, watching television coverage, Tervalon recalled that Remata always rode in the first Metrolink car—the one now swarming with urban rescue teams rescuing passengers. Then, Allen recalls, their conversation stopped.

"Marie, it doesn't look too good," he told Tervalon.

Particularly poignant for Tervalon was the fact she had planned to ride with Remata on that train. In fact, Tervalon had taken the 3:26 train the day before. But on Sept. 12 she could not finish her Friday work in time.

"I had told her that morning, 'Donna, I might be on your train this afternoon. Can I get a ride home?' She said, 'Sure, Doll [Remata's nickname for Tervalon].' And that was the last I saw her."

Tervalon said she will remember Remata's "great personality" and her willingness to help people. Allen will remember her wide knowledge of current events and their conversations about "everything."

Kenny Allen, stock clerk, stands beside the floral arrangement Metro Support

Services Center Logistics donated to commemorate the life of Donna Remata. The arrangement sits outside the Stationery office on the P1 level.



**‘Truly dedicated worker’**

“People who didn’t know her are going to miss a truly dedicated worker,” said Allen, who describes himself as still in shock.

Elena Sanchez, records clerk, shared another example of the regard co-workers felt for Remata. On Saturday morning, Sept. 13, Sanchez wrote a retired Metro employee with news of Remata. Since then she has received 20 phone calls and emails full of sadness and praise for Remata.

“The main two things I heard over and over again were her sense of humor and her smile.”

Cook finds that Remata’s death illustrates the ties binding Metro employees. “This is our Metro family,” Cook said. “I explain that to the union members and the people I meet.”

Remata is survived by her husband and children; parents Evelyn and Tony Nieves of Henderson, Nev.; and three sisters, Debra, Terri and Jo Ann Nieves.

Services are pending.

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- See myMetro.net initial report: [Metrolink Crash in Chatsworth](#) Takes a Violent Toll on Metro Family