



Full Speed Ahead

 METROLINK.

**HOW METROLINK
CHANGED MY LIFE—
REFLECTIONS BY
METROLINK
PASSENGERS**

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This booklet of essays is dedicated to Metrolink riders...past, present and future. The essays represent only a portion of the over three-hundred that were submitted for our 5th Birthday Essay Contest.

We proudly present them here for your enjoyment. Our passengers say it best, "Metrolink is much more than just a way to get to work."

Parked on the freeway, I heard a strange sound;
As a train passed me by, it was Los Angeles-bound.

All aboard were content, a smile on each face;
I couldn't keep up, it was not even a race.

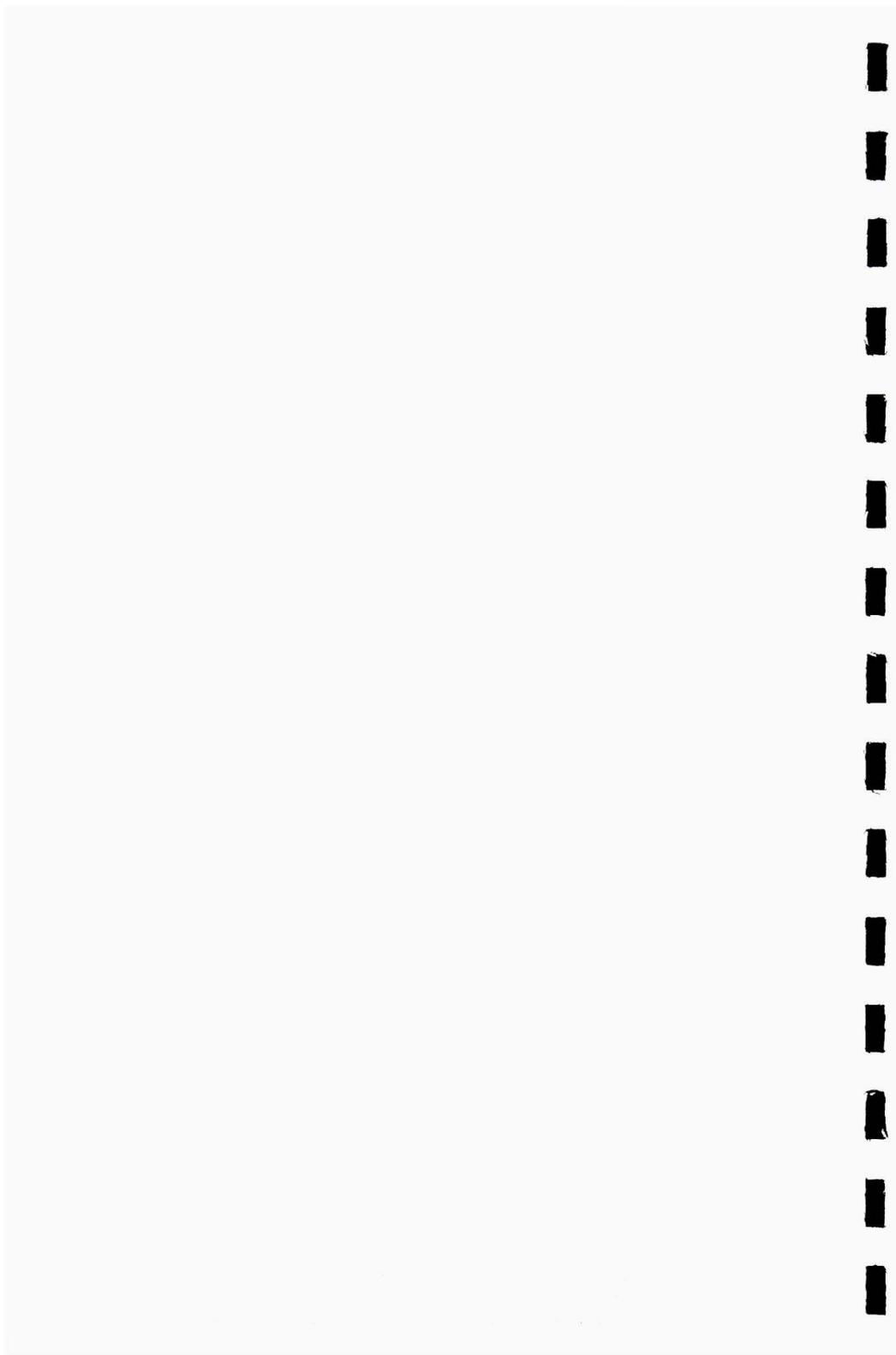
So I quickly got wise, and climbed right on board;
Since then I have slept, and maybe even snored.

My trips are relaxing, and sometimes plain fun;
Whether working or chatting, the train is second
to none.

So thanks Metrolink, for saving my life;
I come home nice and happy, which pleases my
wife.

—D. Bein, Los Angeles

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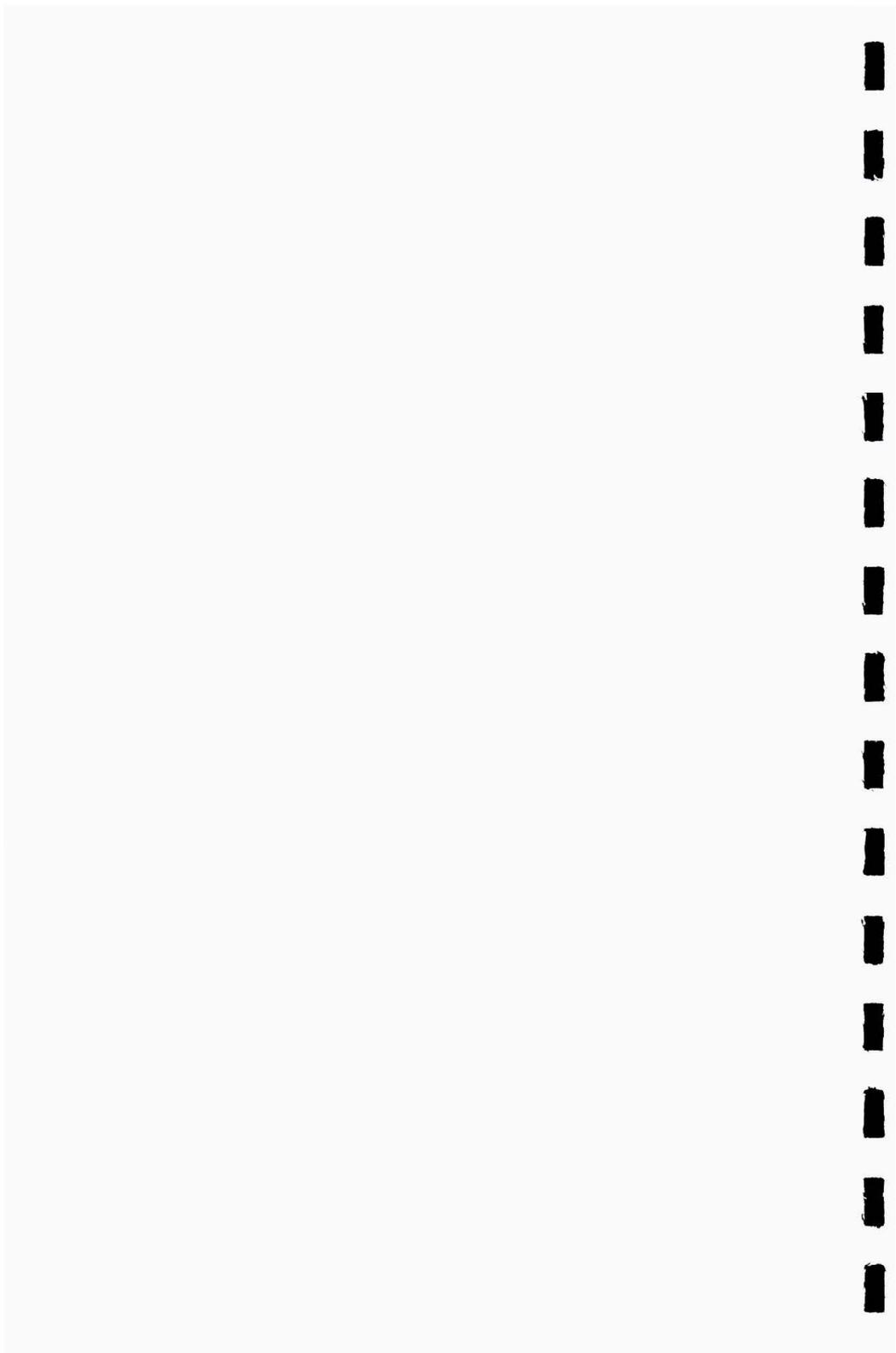


Metrolink saved my marriage, my job,
and my life.

Since Metrolink opened the Sylmar
Station I rarely drive. I'm calmer and
look forward to evenings with my
husband and family. After three major
car accidents in 11 years I no longer
have to deal with traffic, bad weather,
Dodger traffic, or distracted vehicle
cellular junkies who cause major
accidents

I considered changing jobs after the
accidents because I became phobic about
getting in another car accident. Now I
sit back, visit with my Metrolink
family and laugh all the
way home.

— S. Ballin, San Fernando

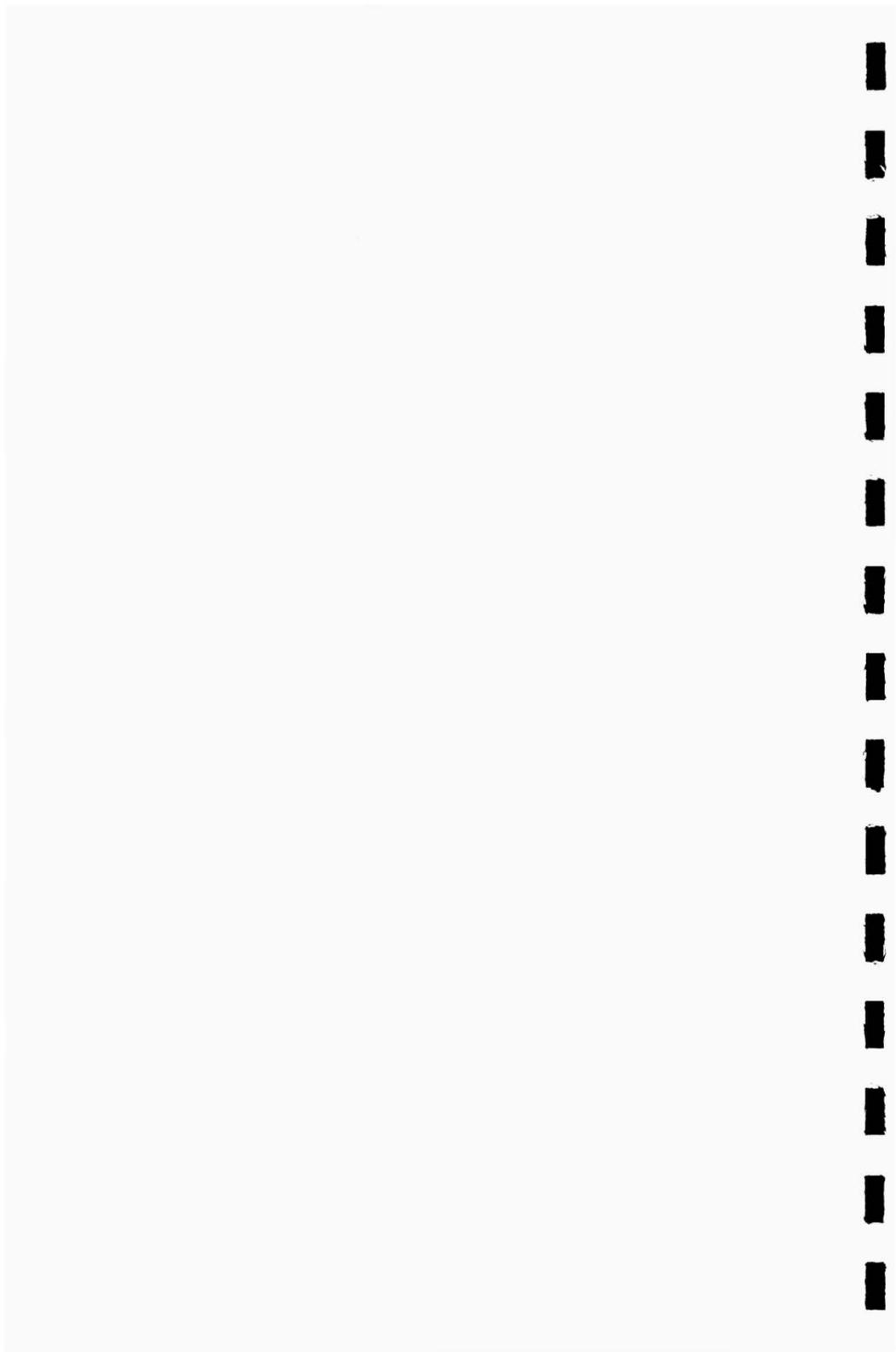


When Metrolink train riding I did start,
I had to learn to be rail smart.
My life was changed meeting people all new,
New sights and sounds, how my experience
grew.

The smells of L.A. on a warm summer day,
The jets of El Toro, down Orange County Way.
The diversity of places and people was great,
Would you believe, I even found a new mate.
I discovered a new meaning for confinement,
And encountered people who lack basic
refinement.

The most valuable lesson: slam and lock rest
room door,
Or your intimate rituals will be secrets no
more.

—H. Bell, *Oceanside*



There's Nothing Like the Train

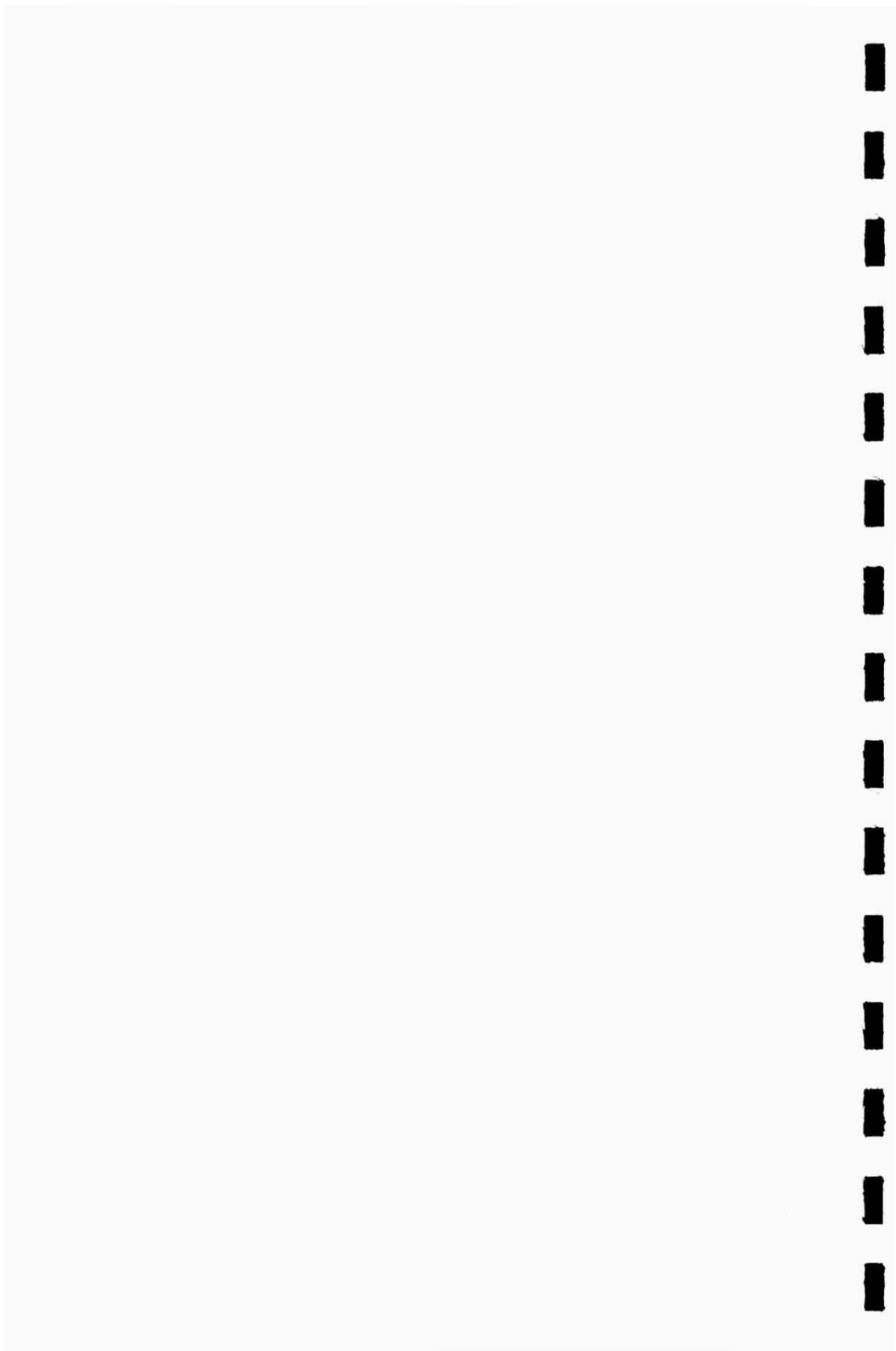
I've flown a million miles,
I drove from here to Maine,
I take my bike on local trips,
but there's nothing like the train.

My commute was 90 minutes
Add 30 when there's rain,
I got home tired and angry,
Man!! There's nothing like that train.

Now I read my paper front to back,
and chat with those more sane,
than people sitting in their cars,
instead of on the train.

I'll get to work really early,
at home there's much less strain,
I finally have my life back
'cause now I ride the train.

—S. Bentz, Pomona

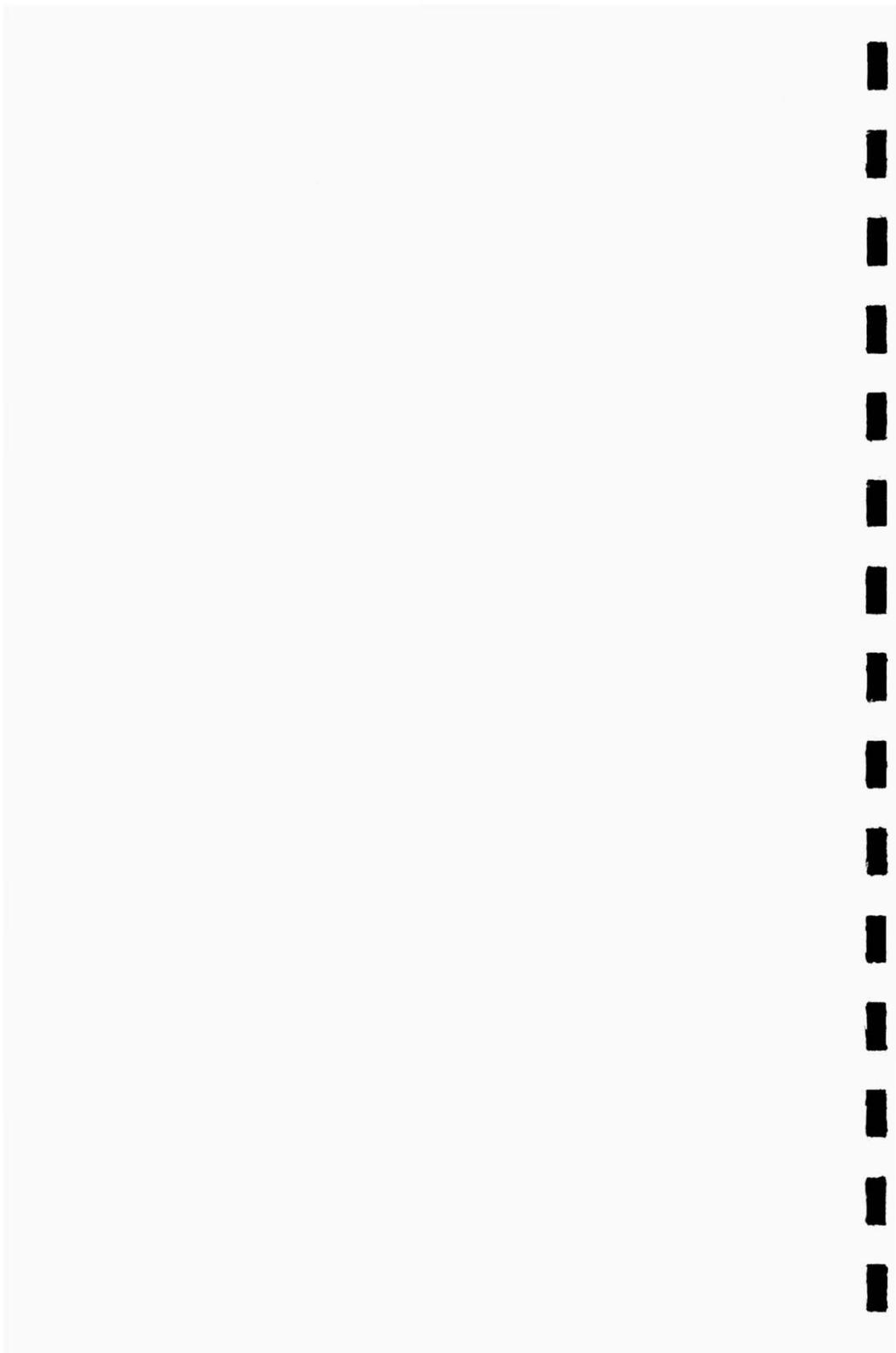


**There once was a girl named Eileen
Driving to LA everyday made her mean
So, she tried the train
That took stress off her brain
Metrolink was an idea that was keen!**

**And then on this train one day
She saw him just a half car away
His name was John
He had a suit and tie on
She couldn't let this guy get away!**

**Well, that was five years ago
They've been married two years now,
you know
Still together on the train
Every morning and evening the same
Metrolink; for the family on the go!**

—Anonymous

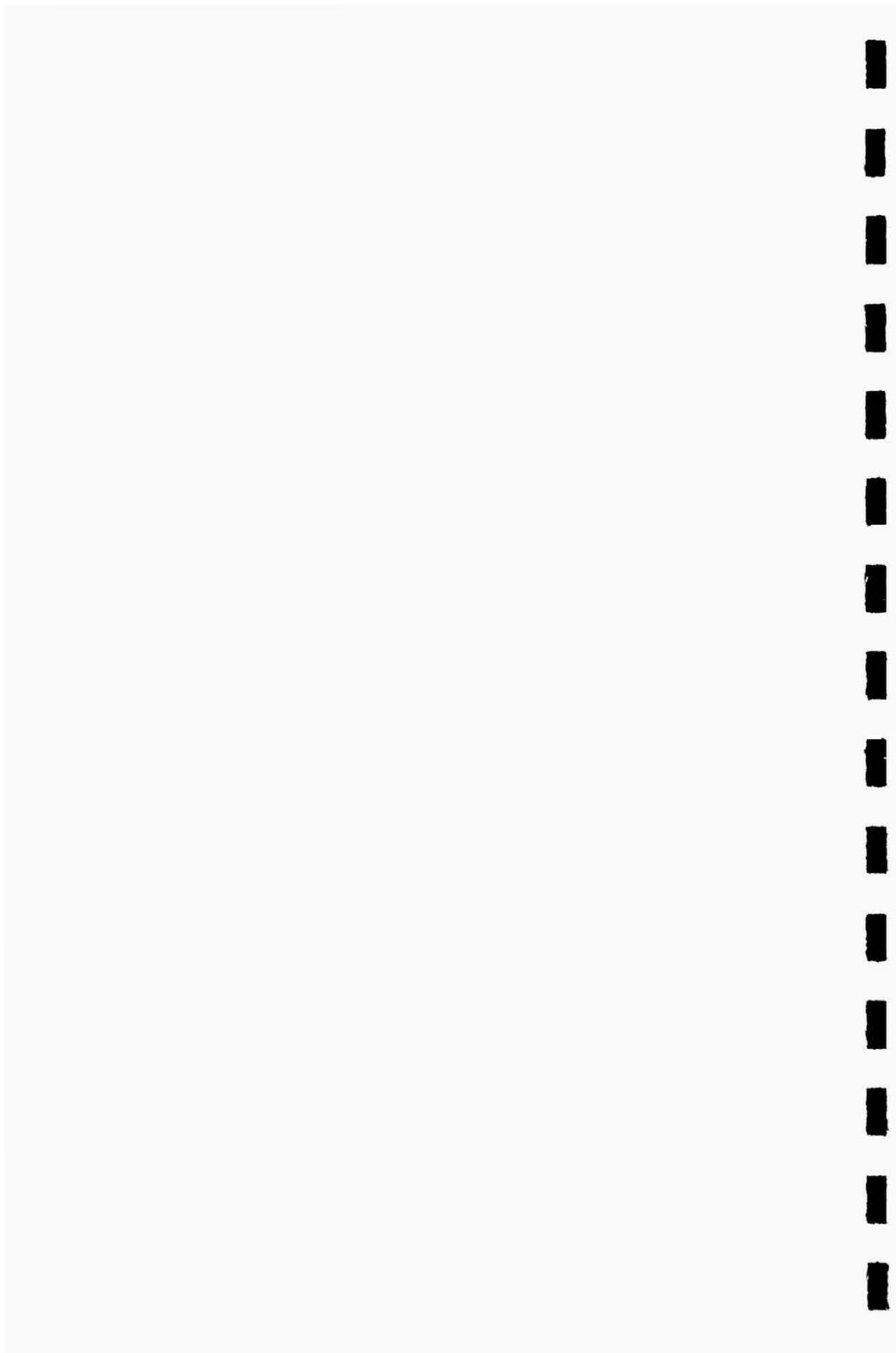


Metrolink has changed my life. It has made my commute stress and worry free. It's a very relaxing and enjoyable ride. I don't have a car so I depend on Metrolink to get me to my job and return home each evening. So far 90% of the operating time has been accurate. This is good for me. This accuracy saved my job.

Metrolink has changed my way of thinking. Before I was feeling alone and that no one cared. But to be greeted by the conductors, engineers and ambassadors saying, "Good Morning, Dora, how are you today?" makes me feel special and I know that someone cares.

One can't ask for any better service than the service that I receive from Metrolink.

—D. Bossett, San Bernardino Line



As Metrolink celebrates its fifth birthday, I celebrate four years of riding the train.

Metrolink has set me free!!! Free from driving my car, car maintenance, to relax, and wanting to move closer to work. Free to do whatever would normally take time away from my family such as pay bills, study, read, or catch up on work. I am hooked!!!

This is the biggest lifestyle improvement I have had in the last fifteen years. It ranks up there with getting the college degree, marriage, and first job. I have found my time is so valuable that all my meetings and work schedule revolve around the Metrolink schedule.

—C. Bradshaw, Rialto



In 1995 my mother lost her job and our house. We then had to move to Upland. I tried school in Upland, but I just wasn't happy. I didn't have a car so I couldn't drive to school; then my mom came up with the perfect solution, the Metrolink. Ever since then I have been riding the train. I am in my senior year at Baldwin Park High, and thanks to the train I have been the 1997 Junior Prom Prince, Friday Night Live President, an officer in ASB, and an honors student.

—G. Cabral, Upland



Life with Multiple Sclerosis can be interesting as well as challenging

Advice is everywhere:

“Take care of yourself, get plenty of rest, and most of all, avoid stress.”

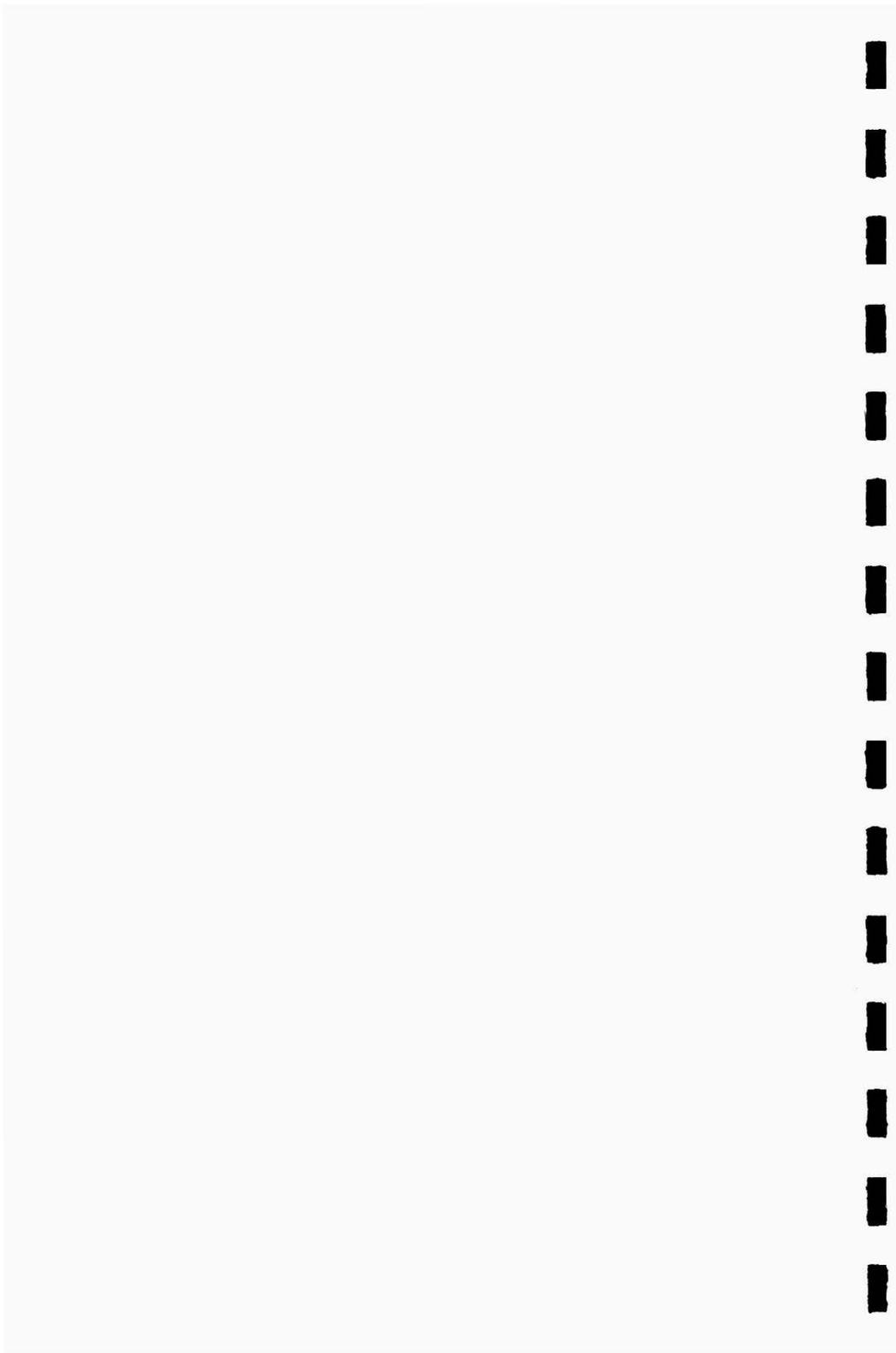
There is no such thing as life without stress.

However, Metrolink has eliminated the stress in my life that came with commuting. To be able to sit back, relax in air conditioned comfort, instead of fighting traffic on the freeway is a Godsend.

Multiple Sclerosis may have changed my life, but Metrolink changed my commute.

Thanks for being there!!!

—K. Cumming



I learned how to crochet on Metrolink. A fellow female passenger taught me that one could do more than sleep during our daily commute, despite the fact that I am “only” a man. The aftershocks from learning this craft have been numerous. I have since received over 50 afghan crocheting orders from fellow riders, earning extra money, and am currently teaching *The Art of Crocheting* at a local college. I have also been referenced in three Southern California newspapers due to crocheting. Metrolink created the opportunity; I changed my life. Thank you, Metrolink!

—M. Feldstein, Los Angeles



Without riding Metrolink, I would have never met the man of my dreams.

I met him by pure accident. One day I left my purse on the train and he turned it in to the conductor.

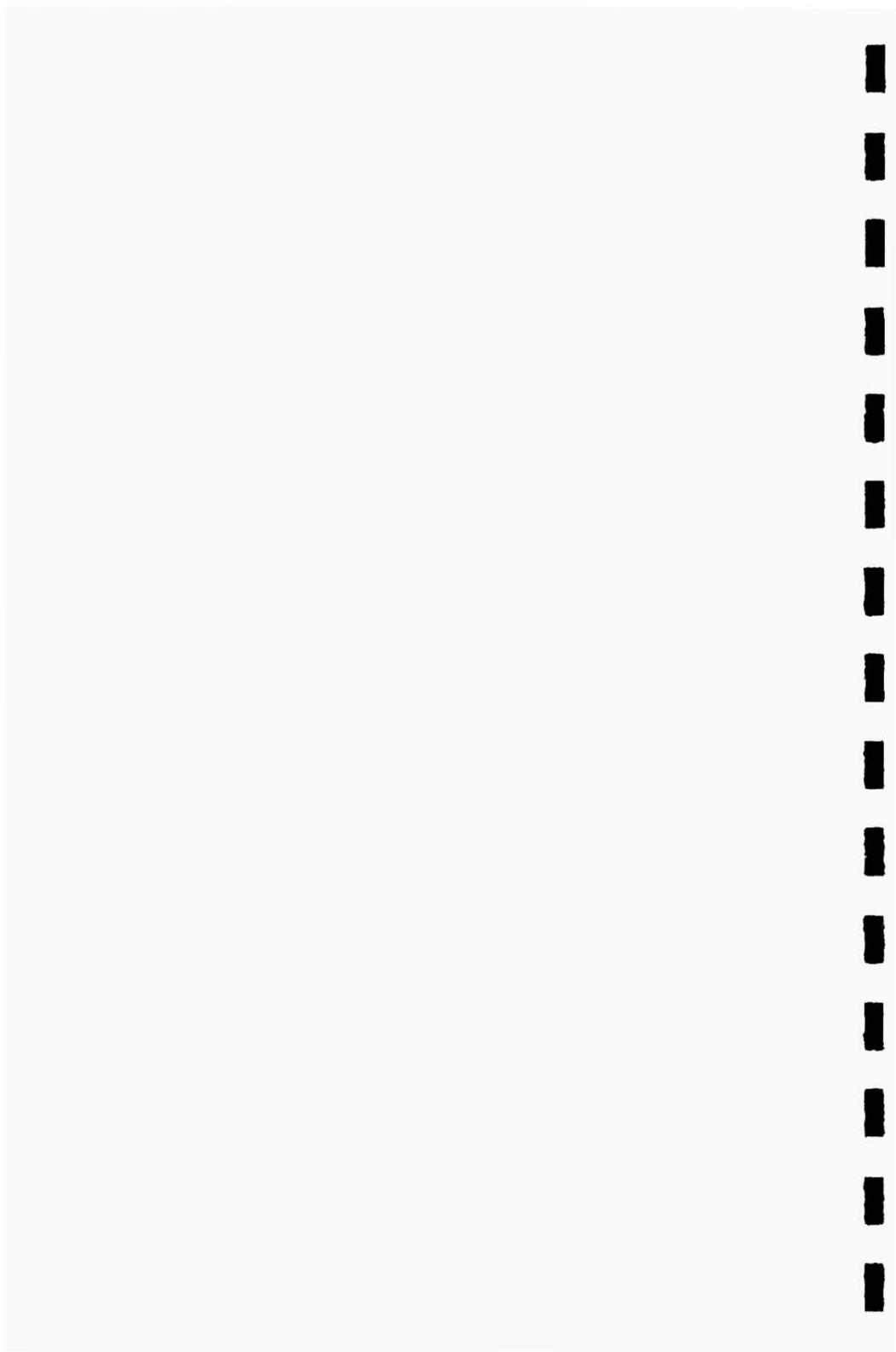
The next day I thanked him and ever since then, we have been friends.

This man does the craziest things just to save me a seat so that we can sit together.

I'm crazy about him and he is just clueless of my feelings toward him. Someday he'll realize it, but until then, I will treasure the two hours a day I spend with him.

Thanks Metrolink!

—Anonymous Rider



I do not know where to start. About three weeks ago, I started riding the Metrolink with my three-year-old daughter, Samantha. As a mother, I can only tell you that the Metrolink has been an answer to my prayer.

I enrolled my Samantha into a toddler program at my work. I was so worried about getting her to Los Angeles with me.

One Saturday, we took the Metrolink to Los Angeles. Well, Samantha thought we were riding the same train as she rode at Disneyland. What a ride. Her face was so excited. She felt very important and grown up.

Ever since that day, Samantha and I ride the Metrolink to her school and my work. It has been so easy to get her to school because she loves to ride her blue and white train. The passengers always smile at her.

It has been a pleasure to enjoy the time with my daughter. Thank you for giving me peace of mind when I ride with my three-year-old.

-S. Fortier, Covina



We owned a home in Fontana
we both worked at Kaiser Steel
When the mill closed, I replied,
I'll go to L.A., no big deal.

The traffic was hectic, I soon sold
my home.
The driving ruined each day.
I'd rather live in a crowded apartment
than drive 60 miles one way.

I heard about the Metrolink trains
and when they would arrive.
Now I could buy a house way out here,
and I wouldn't have to drive.

We're in our new home
Metrolink changed my life.
It's the best of both worlds,
with no traffic or strife.

—P. Garrett, Mira Loma



Remember That Feeling?

Walking late into a silent and focused room, it seems my arrival has disturbed an effort of mountainous proportions. Classmates glare at me as I make my disheveled entrance. An entire class focuses on how awkward they can make me feel; they do a good job. I remember that feeling. There-but-for-the-grace-of-Metrolink go I. Zipping from Orange to Union Station, I now arrive, heaven forbid, early — unheard of in the canon of hurried student life. Gone is my battle-fresh look. Now, I assume my place with my Metrolink brethren, as the late and unprepared enter the classroom. We remember that feeling.

—J. Gundel, Placentia



I have been an Upland/Los Angeles Metrolink customer since 1995. My reliance on the Metrolink system has given me the freedom to pursue my life long dream, a law degree.

The other day, while riding the train, I saw an industrial building, full of activity. Suddenly, I realized that it had been two years since I had put down my homework to notice the passing scenery. Yes, I'm already in my third year of law school and my life long dream is in progress - thanks in large part to the time Metrolink has given each day. Thanks!!

—K. Hutchinson, Alta Loma



As a single mom of two sons and a foster son living in South Central L.A. at the flash point of the 1992 L.A. Riot. My worries were making a living and keeping my family safe, and how to get them out of that dangerous area.

My eldest son had two wishes. That he'd get a College Scholarship, and his two brothers and I could move to safety.

1994, before he was killed by gangbangers, my son saw one wish come true. We moved to Moreno Valley.

We were able to move and keep my L.A. job because of Metrolink.

—I. Irvine
Moreno Valley



Everyday I ride the train.
There is no more commuter strain.
I no longer think I need a car.
To get to the radio station called STAR.
There are new people to meet.
Or I can take a nap, which can't be beat.
You will usually find me reading.
And there is always plenty of seating.
I no longer have to worry about racking up
miles on my car.
Everything about the train is up to par.
So it's off to work I goes.
With no more commuter woes.

— B.N. James, Newhall



Because my parents didn't have a car and I was 20 when I bought my first car, I thought I would always be so happy to have a car that I'd never get tired of driving.

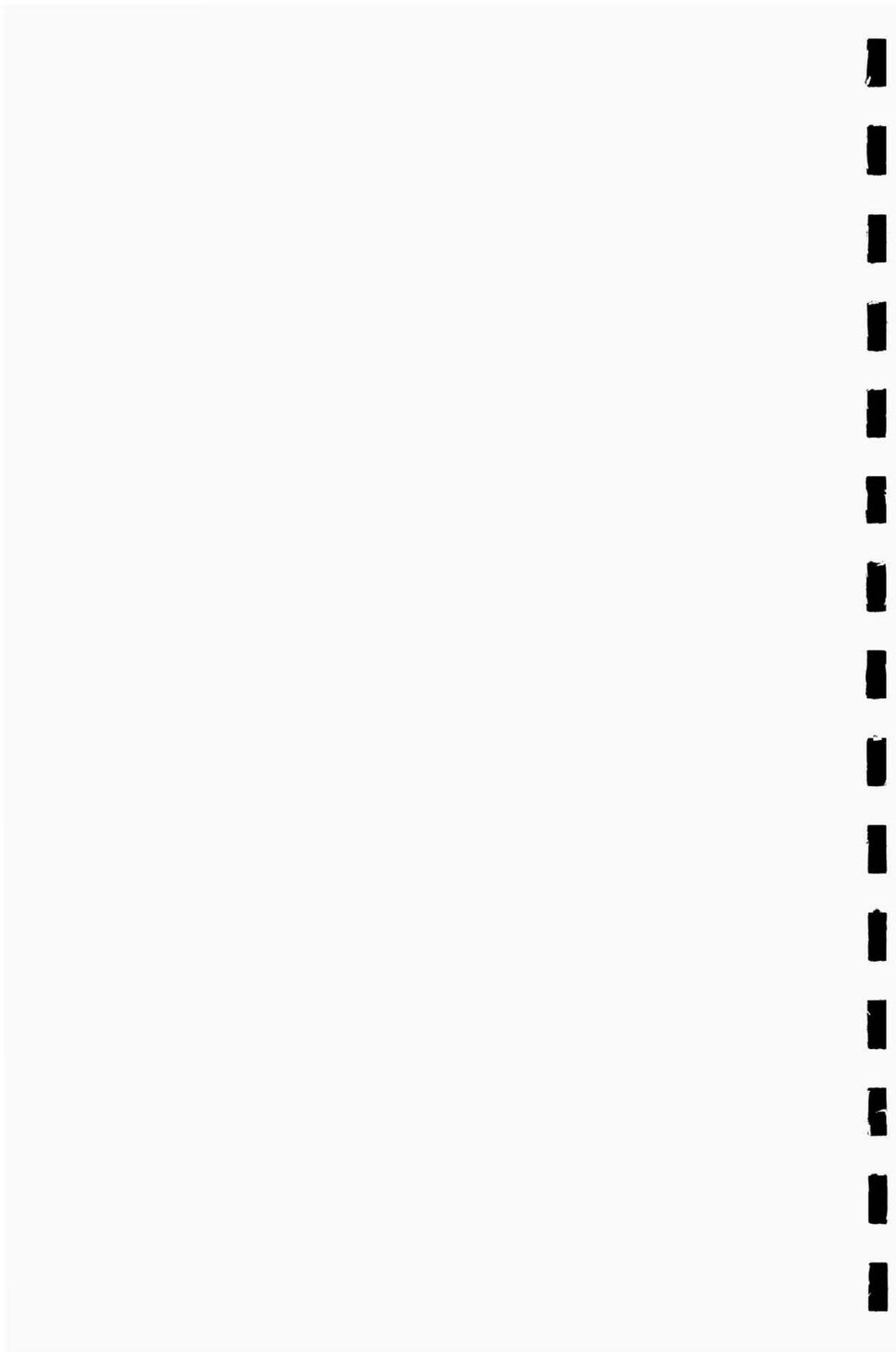
But five years of spending two hours a day commuting took its toll.

Now the two hours a day I spend on Metrolink are my best two hours of the day. I'm neither at home or at work.

Metrolink is two hours of complete relaxation that I look forward to each day.

Now I wish my commute was more than two hours a day.

—B. Katus, Simi Valley



I'm oh-so-happy
and rarely blue
since my hubby
commutes
aboard a Metrolink choo-choo.

His smile is broad
His humor intact
As long as he's able to
Ride the track.

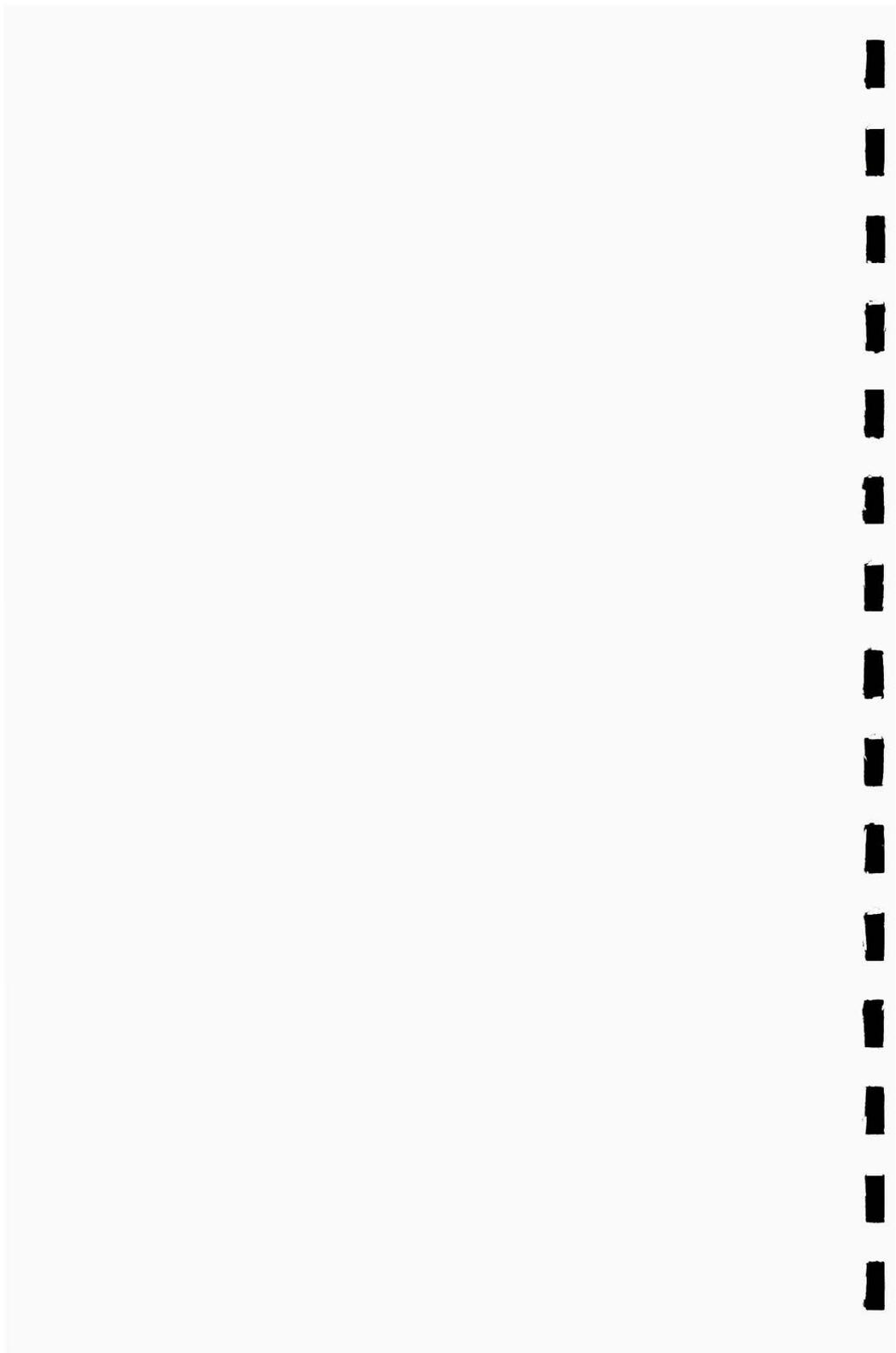
The stress is gone
High blood pressure down
He loves to read as he's
chauffeured to town.

The hum of the train
As it enters the station
Brings such satisfaction
It borders on elation.

No honking, no gestures
No tension or strain
Sit back, relax, even
Sleep on the train

If only the Metrolink
Would go to more places
L.A. would be filled
With the happiest faces.

--J. Kushner, Montrose

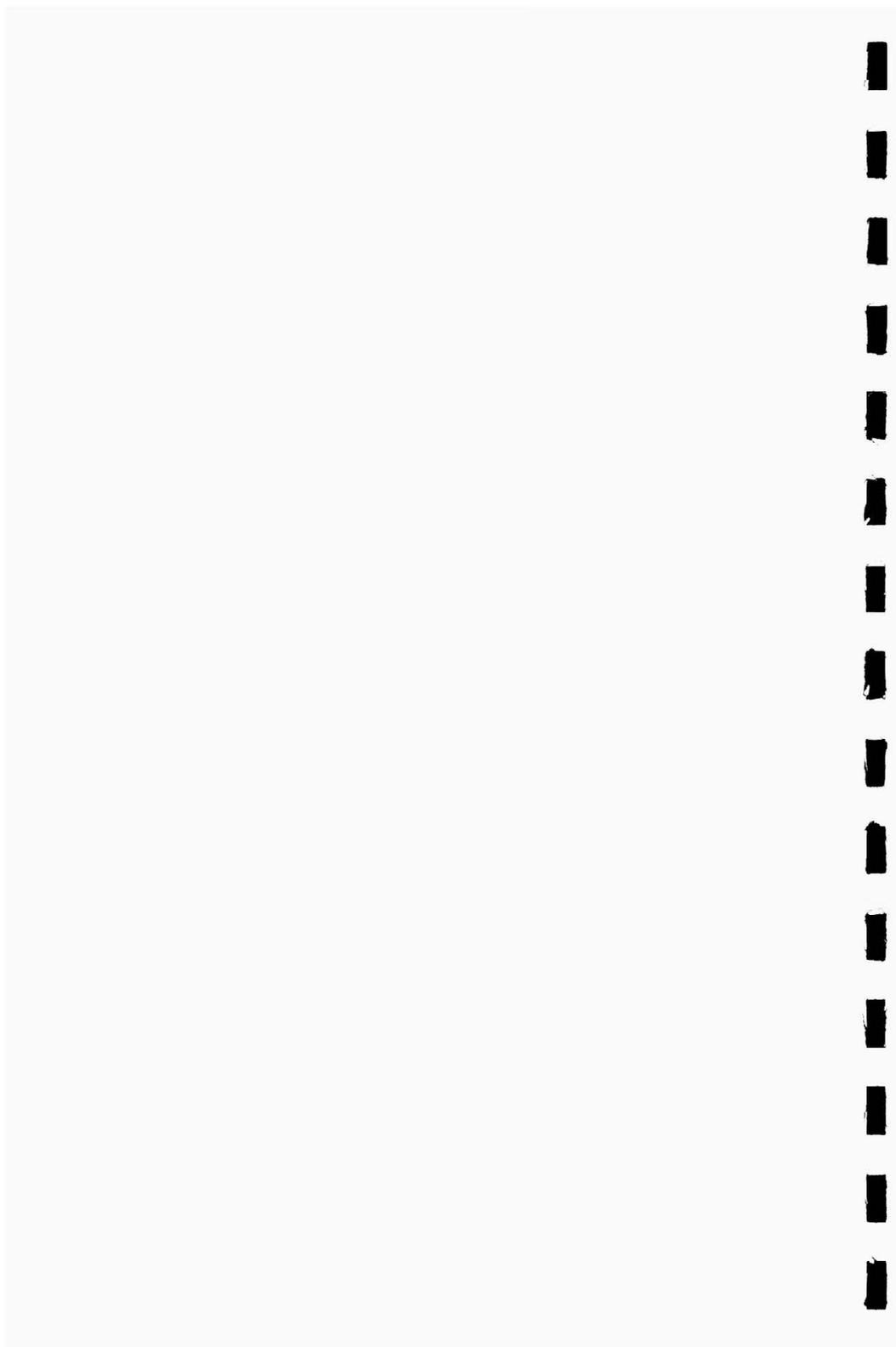


For eleven years I commuted to work by car. Now I take Metrolink. Metrolink saves me money. (It now costs me about 7 cents a mile to get to work.) I arrive at work fresher, because I didn't have to fight traffic. I constantly meet interesting new people and have even made some new friends.

I have begun writing children's stories in the time I used to spend just getting to work. But the best part is that, when my wife picks me up from the train station, we have a few uninterrupted minutes to talk.

Thank you, Metrolink.

—M. Larsen, Oceanside



I See Los Angeles Singing

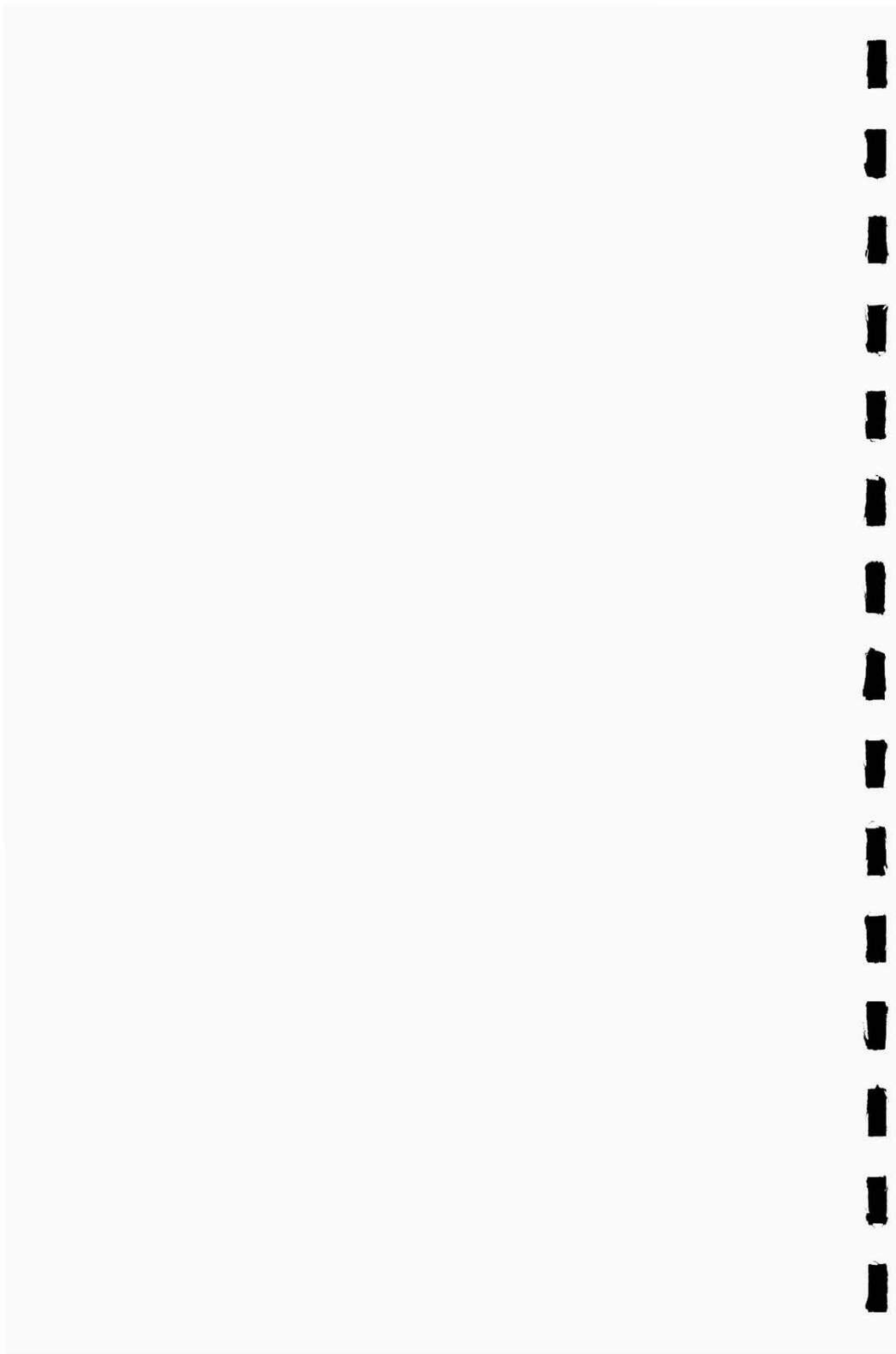
I see Los Angeles singing
silent through spotty windows of
Steel Horse's Morning Ride.

I lose track
of time

communing with
pebbles passing Santa Susanna;
watching
engine wind cast ripples
in Northridge pools;
musing
about steam-rise outside Van Nuys;
chuckling
as sleepy, smoggy eyes
 wonder which Burbank stop
we're stopped at;
seeing
spectres—button-shoe women,
men in top hats—strolling chain links
around old Glendale;
wondering
when rain will raise the river;
and, writing it all down
 (before Union Station steals me)

so I can tell Joey or Judy or whoever listens
about the music I saw
from the train.

—L. Lemieux, Thousand Oaks



Metrolink Top Ten List

1. THE EL TORO "Y" HAS BECOME THE EL TORO FLY.
2. ABLE TO FINISH MY COFFEE INSTEAD OF DUMPIN IN MY LAP.
3. KEEPS ME ON SCHEDULE.
4. ABLE TO GET HOME AT CONSISTENT TIME FOR DINNER.
5. INSTEAD OF "CUSSIN" AT OTHER PEOPLE DRIVING TO WORK, AM ABLE TO DISCUSS WITH PEOPLE ON WAY TO WORK.
6. MORE CONSISTENT IN WORKOUTS AS I AM ABLE TO MAKE A MIDWAY STOP ON MY MORNING COMMUTE AT HEALTH CLUB, THEN CATCH LATER TRAIN TO WORK.
7. MY WIFE AND EVEN MY DOG THINKS I AM MORE RELAXED UPON ARRIVING HOME FROM WORK
8. ABLE TO AVOID RUN-ON BORING MEETINGS AT WORK, AS EVERYONE KNOWS I HAVE THE CATCH THAT "LAST TRAIN".
9. ABLE TO COMPLETE NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD PUZZLE WITH EXTRA PERSONAL TIME AFFORDED.
10. PLAYING "KNEESIES" WITH THE PRETTY LADIES IS A SPORT NOT TO BE UNDERRATED, AND ONE I AM TRYING TO PERFECT. J.MANLEY, DANA POINT



Metrolink has changed my life a lot.

First of all, my Dad moved to Oceanside.

My brother and I used to take Amtrak to

Oceanside all the time. Amtrak costs

about \$18 each for my brother and I to

ride. Now that Metrolink is here it costs

only \$9.50 each. Now that's a great deal!

Metrolink is always on time and it's

convenient! Metrolink has changed my life

by taking me from Chatsworth to

Oceanside in just a few hours.

There in Oceanside my Dad picks my

brother and I up at about 7:30 pm each

Friday. This whole system works to help

my whole family. Thank you so much

METROLINK! —R. Mc Bride, West Hills



The Metrolink is Smooth 'n Easy
[sung to the tune of "Feelin' Groovy (the 59th
Street Bridge Song),"
music by Simon & Garfunkel]

I was stuck in traffic . . . nothing movin' . . .
gettin' so mad . . . I was far from groovin'
that daily grind was not for me
I was stuck on the freeway . . . goin' crazy.

Then, my friend said, "Hey there . . . aren't
you knowin' . . .
Metrolink goes where you're goin'
give it a try, and you will see . . .
riding the 'Link . . . is smooth 'n easy."

Now I've got no lanes to change, and no horn
to beep
If I get drowsy it's ok to sleep.
If the traffic goes crazy, it can't get to me
'Link, I love you . . . you're smooth 'n easy.

fade out repeating: *the Metrolink is . . .*
smooth 'n easy.

—D. McMonagle, Upland



I thought Metrolink would increase my rail transit options by adding trains and building stations. Instead, Metrolink trains were scheduled at the same time as existing Amtrak San Diegans, new stations are not served by Amtrak, and San Juan Capistrano was bypassed.

My rail options are fewer now than before Metrolink. I no longer have the choice of going Amtrak with its vastly superior amenities which are totally lacking in Metrolink. Metrolink is cheaper than Amtrak and has a better on-time record. But Metrolink does not want competition.

I have two words for Metrolink, and it ain't "Happy Birthday".

—D. McPherson



I BEGAN SERVING AS A JUROR ON A FEDERAL TRIAL IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR. SINCE I LIVE IN NORTHRIDGE AND THAT ANTICIPATED TIME OF THIS TRIAL WAS 8-12 WEEKS I HAD TO FIND A WAY OF COMMUTING.

I'LL GIVE METROLINK A TRY, WAS MY THOUGHT FOR THE DAY. WELL, IT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE FABUOULS. IT'S FUN TO OBSERVE THE DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES ON BOARD. THE SLEEPERS, PC USERS, THE KNITTERS, EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE HAVING THEIR OWN BRAND OF FUN. I TELL ANYONE WHO WILL LISTEN TO ME HOW GREAT THE TRAINS ARE, CLEAN, AND THE ONLY WAY TO GO AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED.

I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THIS TRIAL WILL LAST BUT ONE THING I DO KNOW FOR SURE IS "METROLINK, I LOVE YOU."

—S. PARKER, NORTHRIDGE

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A frazzled commuter I used to be
crawling along the 60 ever so slowly
Bumper to bumper
going 15 miles max
My nerves were jangled,
my patience taxed.

UNTIL METROLINK!

Now, I travel by rail, Metrolink style
I arrive in L.A. all happy, all smiles.
The seats are quite comfortable,
The ride so sublime
HAPPY BIRTHDAY METROLINK -
You came just in time!

—P. Nakayama
Los Angeles



Either park it or drive it!!! . . . the light's not going to get any greener!!! . . . you see my signal light's blinking, g----- it, let me over!!! . . . did you steal your driver's license or what?!!! . . . Idiot!!! With my pulse racing, eyes bulging and blood pressure rising, this was my normal weekday conversation with my fellow commuters during my 45 minutes to 1½-hour drive from the San Fernando Valley to downtown Los Angeles.

Thanks to Metrolink, my conversation with my fellow commuters is "Good morning! . . . is that a new outfit! . . . that's a great picture of your kids! . . . have a nice day!"

Thanks, Metrolink!

—E. Neal, Lake View Terrace

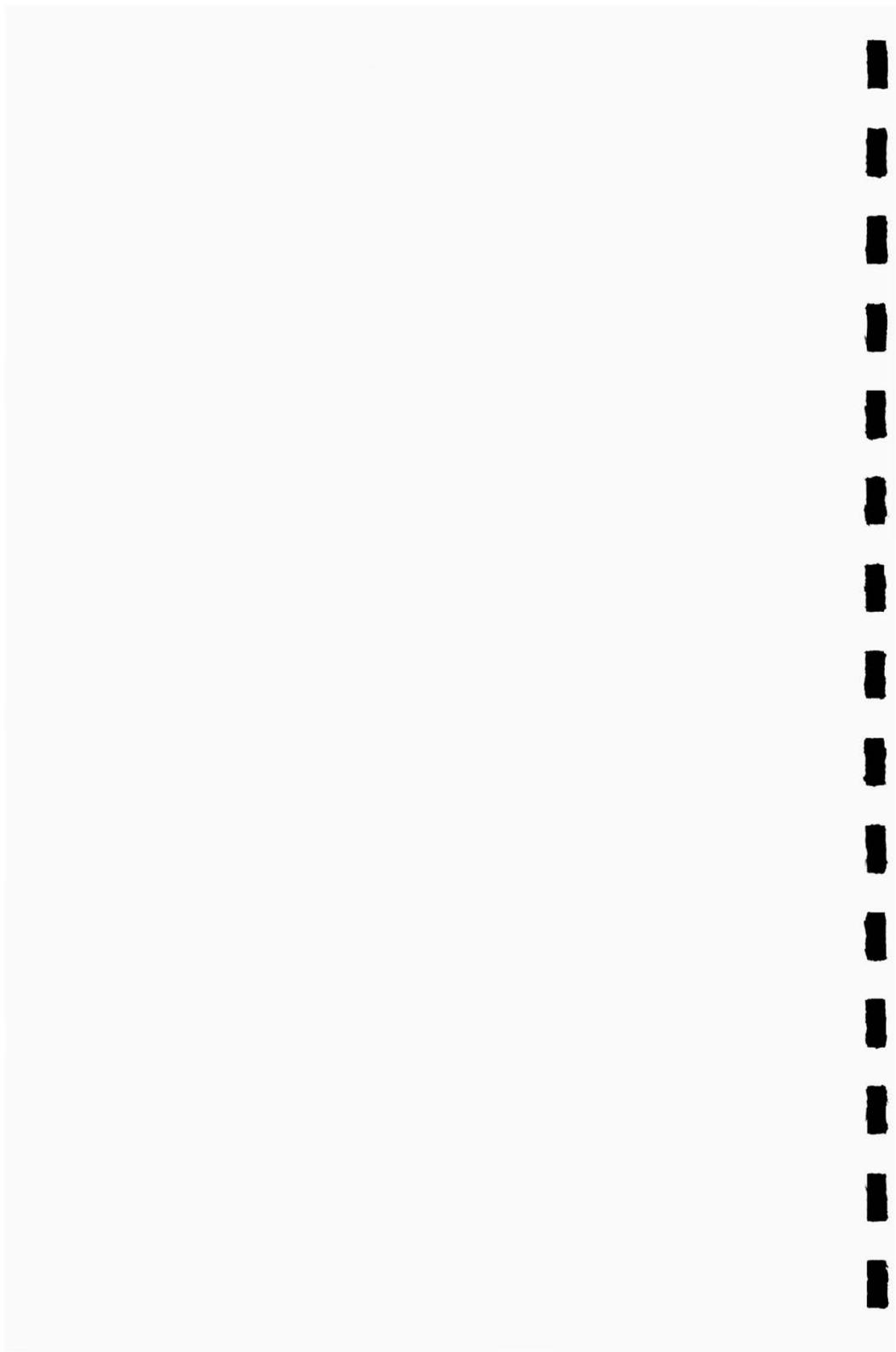


For many years I drove to Chatsworth from Camarillo. Commuting became increasingly stressful. After the earthquake, I decided to retire because of added congestion. My company suggested I try Metrolink. I said "No". "I was born in California. Train commuting is East Coast - style."

I finally tried Metrolink one month after the earthquake. It made such a difference in my energy level that I have been a daily user ever since. Without Metrolink, I surely would have retired by now.

I now feel like I can go on forever. I will be 70 this month. Thanks for changing my life!

— C. C. O'Reilly, Camarillo



I am disabled and Metrolink has given a new meaning to my life. And has also given me a new outlook on life. It has made me more independent, and has made my life a little easier.

I have made a lot of friends and acquaintances in the five years I have been riding Metrolink.

I have also fulfilled a childhood dream of riding on a train since I have been fascinated by both model trains and real trains since the age of five.

—S. Riggio, Alta Loma



When my husband and I got engaged in 1996, we knew we wanted to start out our married life in our very own home. As most couples, we had certain dreams and expectations of our new home. Searches in our current area proved futile, as housing costs were high and we couldn't find the home of our dreams.

On a whim, we checked out Oceanside and found a house with everything we were looking for. But what about our jobs? Would the commute be worth it?

Luckily, Metrolink goes all the way south to Oceanside, making our dream of owning a house and keeping our current jobs come true!

On the train, I've read more books than I have in the last 3 years, worked on Christmas gifts since July (much to the chagrin of some of my procrastinating train mates), and met a great group of people that I couldn't have met in gridlock on the I-5! Thanks, Metrolink, for making this possible!

—W. Romagnoli, Oceanside



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, METROLINK!

**Once frustrated and depressed;
Caught in traffic, overcome with stress;
Commuting became a chore of deep regret;
Incapable of performing to my maximum best;
Driving by faith, hoping to be blessed;
Prayed for divine intervention to get me out of this mess;
Job performance suffered, my work output less;
Supervisor finally asked, "What can I do to add to your rest?"
A change of hours would be great;
Which would allow me to ride a train that's never late;
A monthly pass I do now possess;
Metrolink has changed my life for the best;
If the one sitting next to you seems to chuckle and grin;
It might be me enjoying the ride from beginning to end.**

—A. Smith, Moreno Valley



For four years, I drove from San Bernardino to La Mirada for my master's. Then, I was accepted by US for Ph.D. studies! But after the long, grueling drive for my MA, I didn't want to drive even farther to 'SC.!

Metrolink has made getting my Ph.D. possible. I couldn't keep up with my studies and teaching if I also had to drive. Resting, studying, and eating dinner on the train helps me get my work done and be more relaxed. Plus, a variety of departure times means I don't have to get up extra early or stay late.

Thanks!

—S. Smith, San Bernardino



“THE 101 IS JUST NO FUN!”
GROANED THE LITTLE HONDA IN THE
BLAZING SUN.

“I KNEW THE MOVE TO L.A. WOULD
BE AN ADJUSTMENT, BUT DID NOT
ANTICIPATE THIS MUCH
PUNISHMENT!”

I CALLED METROLINK AND RECEIVED
A WARNING
THERE WAS NO PARKING LOT WHERE I
WOULD BE BOARDING
SO WE CONTINUED TO DRIVE EVERY
DAY,
CONVINCED THAT THERE MUST BE A
BETTER WAY

TWO WEEKS LATER, MUCH TO MY
ELATION
A PARKING LOT APPEARED AT MY
METROLINK STATION!
NOW THE LITTLE HONDA DOESN'T
COMPLAIN,
I PARK IT THERE AND TAKE THE TRAIN.

-J.Taschetta, Van Nuys



Metrolink Rules!

One month after my son's 16th birthday, a light bulb went off in my head. You see, we had this problem – his obtaining a driver's license led to a struggle over vehicles. I certainly was not going to let him use my new 'vette to commute to school – I mean, he's a good kid, but not that good? And I was not going to use it for getting to work; stop-and-go traffic would not do the car justice. That's when I told him, "O.K., you drop me off at that Metrolink thing and if I use it you can take the truck." Together we figured out the ticket machine. I boarded, and the rest is heaven . . . Instead of bickering in the mornings, we BOND. Being a single dad, I can't tell you enough how special the mornings are now. To put it his way –
METROLINK RULES!

—R. Taormina, Ontario



Metrolink has NOT changed my life
BUT HAS SAVED MY ABILITY TO WORK.

In addition, Metrolink presents me with day to day experiences of people's good nature.

"I live by the kindness of strangers." One of the good people is Rebecca Thompson - who typifies the caring employees of Metrolink.

We get off the train at the same station, and she checks to see if I need help (I carry a big awkward case.) She takes it to my car which lightens my way. Being disabled, I appreciate this very much, since my walk is often slow and painful.

You could not ask for a better employee representing Metrolink. Metrolink enables this rider to be employed.

-E. Thomsen



I took a new job,
but the freeway's a mob . . .

My car's on the blink,
and my neck's in a kink.

I fumed and saw red,
So my best friend said . . .
Use your brain: Ride the train!

The conductors are keen,
and the cars are so clean.

I arrive on the hour,
full of go-power.

My face is all smiles,
despite all the miles.

I'm home before eight,
which pleases my mate.

Now I tell everyone,
the train's really fun!

You can start a new life,
and avoid all the strife . . .
Get your life in synch,
Ride the Metrolink!

—C. Walker, San Bernardino



My wife and I had just seen the birth of our twins when Metrolink announced the San Bernardino and Riverside Lines.

That announcement prompted our move from a two-bedroom apartment in Long Beach to a two-bedroom house in Hemet.

I was on the first San Bernardino train into Los Angeles, and the first Riverside train into Los Angeles.

In the intervening years we've purchased a five-bedroom home and seen three more children born, making a family of nine. All due to Metrolink.

I'm not too sure I should say 'thanks!'. Thank you very much!

—M. Wheeler, Hemet



Ode To The Metrolink

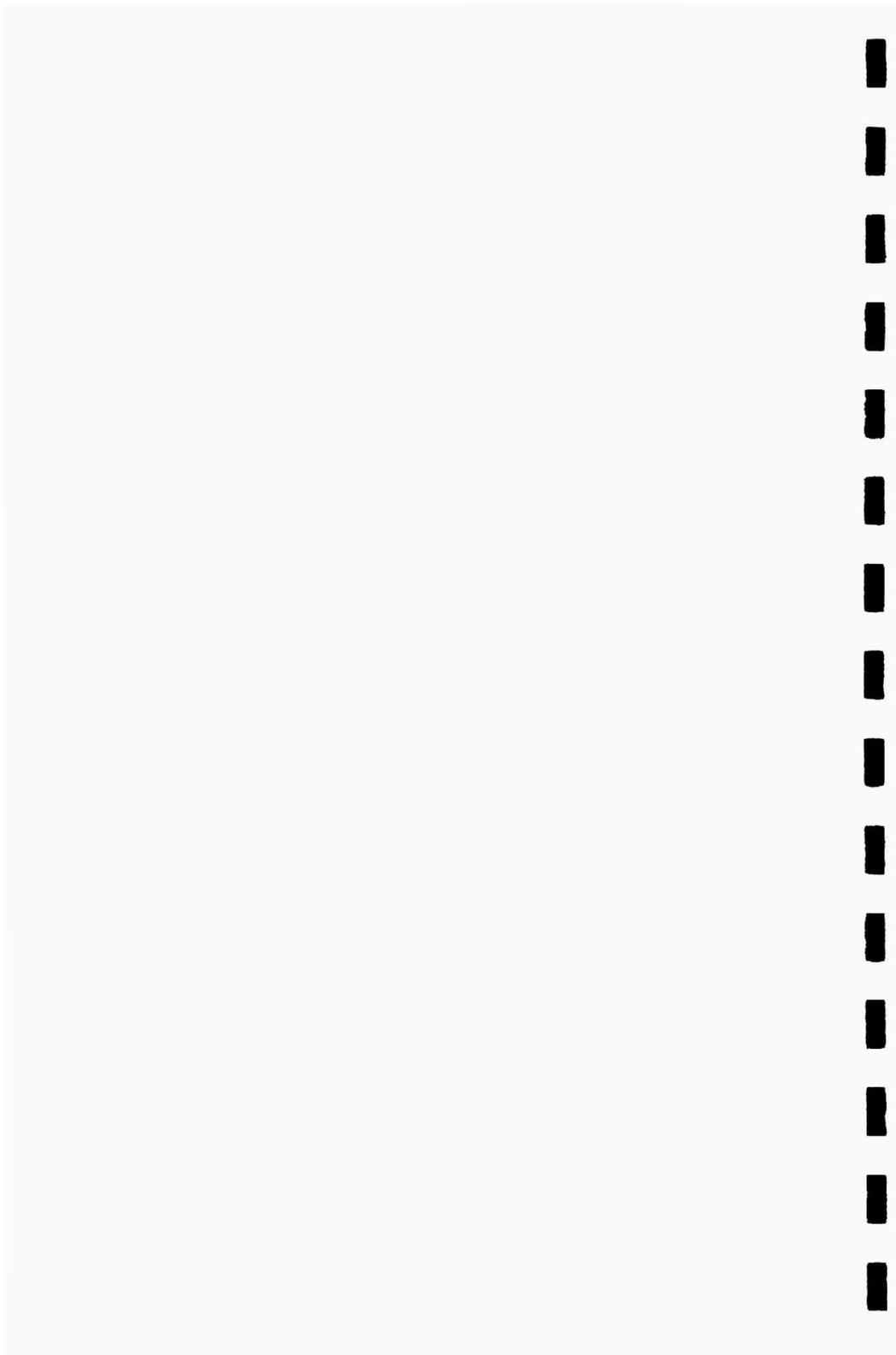
Oh, most sacred Metrolink,
You always save me from the stink
of the traffic in downtown LA,
A city full of disarray.

Everyday you take me to class,
Traffic jams we always pass.
Sun, rain, hot, or cold,
You're always on time, and you never
get old.

No theft, no gas, no parking fees,
Never a worry, and time to catch some
Zzzzs.

Thank you for everything you do for
us,
Now home I go without a fuss.

—A. Umutyan, Glendale



Best of Both Worlds with Metrolink!

Metrolink has made my dreams come true by making it feasible to live in Norco (where I can have my horse in my backyard) and work in Hollywood at the career of my dreams. I am a country music lover who works at the Academy of Country Music. I have had the time of my life the last few years meeting and working alongside artists like George Strait, Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire, Randy Travis, etc.

Commuting time is not wasted time anymore. I can relax, read, listen to CD's, and catch up on paperwork. I enjoy life more. Thank you, Metrolink!

—L. Zandstra, Norco

