



Chinatown Connection

One of the great delights enjoyed by regular visitors to the heart of LA is Chinatown. The Chinatown stop on the Metro Gold Line is elevated, providing a vantage point where you can see your destination from the moment you step off the train. And there is no mistaking the lively atmosphere, great shops, and wonderful food that waits just one stop away from Union Station on the Metro Gold Line. (Metrolink customers: Remember, you can ride the Metro Gold Line for free with your Metrolink fare.)

You can start your exploration at the Central Plaza, which is two blocks up from the station and one half-block to the right. The plaza is distinguished by a five-tier pagoda originally constructed in 1941, which now houses the Hop Louie Restaurant.

Across from the pagoda in the courtyard is the wishing well. The Seven Star Sacred Caverns and wishing pool dates back to 1939 and was created by artist Professor Liu Hong Kay. The Caverns are an artistic rendering of an actual scenic spot in China's Guangdong province. A willow tree was originally planted at the pool by Paramount movie star Anna May Wong. Vandalism and neglect have taken their

toll on the historic pool, but it remains, home to a healthy population of turtles and the wishes of the many visitors who have pitched pennies in hope of good fortune, long life, and wealth.

Clustered around the plaza are many gift and souvenir shops where such treats as paper dragons, mobiles, mini paper lanterns, and other fun novelty items can be purchased at very low prices.

To the south are Saigon Plaza, Chinatown Plaza, and Dynasty Center (800 block of North Broadway). There are some serious bargains on clothing, toys, and knickknacks of all kinds, including this summer's must-have fashion: beaded, mesh, and embroidered flip-flops. Here you can find them at half their usual price in a wild profusion of colors and styles. You'll also find silk handbags, book bags, and clutches of wonderful quality at amazingly low prices.

Also on this block is Far East Plaza, considered the first modern ethnic shopping mall in America. Originally a retail plaza exclusively for food, Far East Plaza still houses several restaurants serving various regional cuisines that can be found nowhere else in Chinatown. It is home to Wing Hop Fung Ginseng and China Products Center (727 N. Broadway), the largest store of its kind in Los Angeles, scented with unusual herbs and tea, and brimming with unique chinaware, clothing, and various arts and crafts.

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Inside



One Evening on the Metrolink

By Michael Coronado

Every once in a while the goodness of people can overwhelm you. With all the negative stories you see on the news and read in the paper, certain moments in life often get overlooked.

One such instance occurred last night, as I rode home aboard a Metrolink train.

First of all, I would like to say that the consistency of my train-riding experience has enabled me to see the same people over and over again, and to witness the relationships they have developed with one another. Having someone to talk to on the train can greatly speed up the commute and make the trip much more enjoyable. I know that the people who ride the train are for the most part very friendly and courteous, yet last night I saw something that went beyond mere friendly courteousness. I saw something that proved to me that human compassion is still alive and well.

I was riding on the Lancaster-bound Metrolink train around 6:00 p.m., as I often do to avoid the traffic. The train departed from Burbank on schedule, and I picked one of the few seats available.

A young boy who looked about thirteen took a seat nearby. He said hello to the people around him and his kindness was instantly felt. A woman next him said hello back, and offered to share her pretzels with him. After we passed Sun Valley the boy began to look confused, and got up to speak with the conductor. He asked the conductor, "Is this the train to Van Nuys?" The conductor politely replied, "Oh no, you got on the wrong train, you were supposed to get on the next one leaving Burbank." The conductor and all the passengers around the boy began pulling out their schedules, trying to find a way to get this young boy to Van Nuys. The only solution was to take several buses from Sylmar.

At this point, the boy seemed very distraught and was unable

to figure out what to do. Then a woman offered her cell phone so he could call his mother. He called her, and almost instantly felt a little more relieved about the long journey he would now be forced to take in order to get to Van Nuys.

When the train arrived at Sylmar, the boy said goodbye to his mom and thanked the woman for the use of her cell phone. It was at this moment that I saw the generosity and compassion that I have long missed. Someone asked the boy if he had any money for his journey. He said all he had was a quarter. When the people around him heard that, everyone started pulling out change. By the time he left the train he had about six dollars in his hands, and the means to make it to Van Nuys.

I can't even explain how good it felt to see this, and I am sure the young boy must have felt ten times better. He was helped by strangers when he was in need, and I know that someday in the future, because of the acts by these people upon this train, that young boy, as well as all the passengers who witnessed this scene, shall one day do the same for another.

Michael Coronado is a regular Metrolink commuter and a hardware engineer at the DreamWorks animation studio in Glendale.



Being a Metrolink passenger can be uplifting.



Jerry and Kim Hooper were happy to take the night off and enjoy their winning tickets to "Miss Saigon." "Thank you, Metrolink!"





Photo: Todd Hansson

The Ventura County Fair Goes Hollywood for 2004

Let Metrolink take you and your family in style to the beautiful Ventura County Seaside Park for the annual Ventura County Fair. This year's "Hooray for Hollywood" theme takes over the gorgeous seaside setting for the first two weekends in August—August 7 and 8, 14 and 15.

The midway will be bustling with carnival rides and games. Take in the one-of-a-kind handicrafts and original works of art. Indulge in a variety of mouth-watering foods and treats while enjoying live entertainment offered on two stages. Cap off your day with an amazing display of pyrotechnics as the night comes alive in flashes of colored lights and fireworks.

Metrolink can make this seaside day even dreamier with the 2004 Ventura County Fair Trains. Traffic? What traffic? Metrolink will whisk you easily to Ventura, dropping you off just steps from the main fair entrance. Convenient departures from Chatsworth, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, and Oxnard give you the freedom

to tailor your day for maximum enjoyment. Are you the early type? Take our first fair train and arrive well before lunch rush. Need that extra bit of sleep to get you going? Our afternoon fair trains will be perfect for those that want to be fresh for the evening's entertainment.

Metrolink's 2004 Ventura County Fair trains require a special ticket that cannot be purchased out of the Ticket Vending Machines. Tickets may be purchased in advance, Monday through Friday, at Simi Valley, Moorpark, and Camarillo city halls or by calling (800) 438-1112. Tickets may be purchased on day of travel at the train stations on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets are also on sale at the Whistle Stop Depot Cafe at the Chatsworth Station. Ticket prices vary depending on the boarding station. Children ages five and under ride free when accompanied by an adult.

Metrolink monthly-pass holders do not need to purchase special train tickets for themselves, but any guests accompanying them will need valid Fair Train tickets. The Ventura County fair opens at 11:00 a.m. and the exhibits close at 10:00 p.m. For more information about the many Ventura County Fair events, log on to www.seasidepark.org/vcfair.

Safety Matters

- Always wait behind the line while standing on the platform.
- Always cross tracks at a designated crossing.
- Always look both ways before crossing train tracks.
- Always store your belongings below your seat or on your lap, not in the aisles.
- Always collect your belongings and move toward the exit as soon as your station stop is announced.
- Always hold the handrail when climbing or descending the stairs on the train and at the station.
- Always secure bicycles at the locations across from the restrooms on each car.
- Never lean on the passenger-car doors or attempt to hold them open.
- Never walk along the tracks or use the right-of-way as a shortcut. Trespassing on the railroad right-of-way is illegal and could result in a citation, monetary fine, serious injury, or death.
- Never cross the tracks when the signal indicates that a train is coming. Flashing lights and ringing bells mean **STOP** and wait for the train to pass.
- Always put safety first—we do and you should, too.



Rail 2 Rail—The Upgraded Version

Rail 2 Rail passengers can upgrade to business class on Amtrak for an added fee. For \$9.50 and up, your upgraded ticket will entitle you to a guaranteed seat; extra leg room; free snacks and drinks in the evening; and free danish, coffee, and newspapers in the morning. Simply go to your closest Amtrak counter and ask to be upgraded to business class. (Business class seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Snacks can be obtained for free in the dining car by showing your business class ticket stub.)

Lost and Found

The Los Angeles Union Station Lost and Found information window in the West portal is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For information on lost articles phone (800) 371-5465.



Billy Joel and Twyla Tharp

LA's Groovin' to Movin'

Broadway LA and Visa present *Movin' Out* at the Pantages Theatre, September 14–October 17. Five-time Grammy® winner Billy Joel and legendary director/choreographer Twyla Tharp have joined forces to create a dynamic fusion of music, drama, and modern dance. The New York Times declares *Movin' Out* "a shimmering portrait of an American generation...that propels the audience into delirious ovations." Win one of five pairs of tickets to opening night of *Movin' Out*, Tuesday, September 14. Just fill out the entry form below and mail it by August 27 to Movin' Out Contest; Metrolink; 700 S. Flower St.; 26th Floor; Los Angeles, CA 90016.



Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____
 All contest winners will be contacted by phone.



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If you are interested in more serious collecting and are willing to wander a little farther afield, Chung King Road, just west of North Hill Street, is home to several fine art and antiques stores such as Alex Cheung, Li Hing, Inc., and Fong's.

You simply can't go to Chinatown without sampling the food, which is available in copious amounts at restaurants, stands, and shops of all varieties. Some favorites are the Plum Tree Inn, across the street from the Central Plaza and featuring a full menu page of daily specials and heaps of seafood. Yang Chow's, at 819 N. Broadway, specializes in the slightly battered, orange-flavored, sweet, and slightly spicy taste of its signature dish—slippery shrimp. For dim sum, we like CBS Seafood at 700 N. Spring Street. In the dim sum style of dining, which is available at lunchtime only, you pick out dishes as they stream by continuously in hot rolling carts. The bill is calculated by counting the empty plates.

If you have a craving for something sweet, you're in luck. Wander up Broadway to the Phoenix Bakery (969 Broadway). The oldest and largest bakery in Chinatown, it has earned a richly deserved citywide reputation for its strawberry whipped cream cakes. Phoenix's proprietors are the originators of the expression "sweets for the sweet." Their repertoire includes, well, any cake or pastry you can think of, plus a few you may have never imagined. The prices are so reasonable, you'll be hauling cakes and buns back to the office for sure.

Just in case you haven't had enough food or shopping, you can combine both by doing some food shopping! In 2002 Chinatown became the first multicultural district in the Los Angeles area to

host a farmers' market. This weekly farmers' market features the usual produce from certified growers and producers in Southern California, but it also offers a tremendous selection of Asian produce. The Chinatown Farmers' Market takes place every Thursday from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the public parking lot at 727 North Hill, between Alpine and Ord.

Don't worry about wandering too far or getting lost in Chinatown. It's all contained within a few square blocks. Plus, the elevated Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station can be easily spotted from most locations in Chinatown.

Don't miss out on one of the great ethnic treasures of LA. Your Metrolink pass or ticket can help you get to all sorts of interesting places where you can explore the many multicultural wonders of Southern California. Chinatown is a great place to let the adventure begin.

Station City News

Santa Clarita—Blue Barrel Blues and Jazz Concert Series. Enjoy jazz and blues song stylings free every Friday, 7:00 to 9:30 p.m., through September 10, on Town Center



City of Industry, home to over 2,000 businesses.

Drive at McBean Parkway, adjacent to the Hyatt Valencia. For more information, call Summit West Management at (661) 290-2911.

Upland—The Annual Kids' Swap meet is Wednesday, August 11. This is a great way to get the kids to clean out the closet, clearing out old books and games (in good condition, please)—all in the name of fun! Children will also learn how to handle money, negotiate a sale, and earn some extra spending money. The swap meet will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Magnolia Park, 651 W. 15th Street. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Detailed instruction will be given at time of registration.

METROLINK MATTERS

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