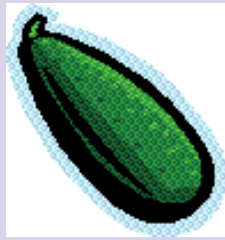




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# The PIONEER

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## Killer of CSUH Student Takes Plea Bargain

By Rebecca Malone  
LAS VEGAS SUN

A man accused of killing a (Cal State Hayward student) at Harrah's in September has avoided a possible death sentence by agreeing to a deal with prosecutors Tuesday.

(Heather Vitarelli was killed by a stray shot from the pistol of Stephen Mullen Jr. as he struggled with security personnel at the casino.)

Mullen, 32, entered the type of deal that doesn't require him to admit guilt. Instead, Mullen admitted that the state has enough evidence to convict him of first-degree murder and attempted murder.

As a result of the deal, Mullen will receive a life prison sentence with parole possible after 40 years. It will be up to District Judge Michael Cherry to decide if the attempted murder sentence should run at the same time or after the life sentence.

Mullen was accused of killing Vitarelli, 29, and wounding Frank Willis, 43, while he struggled with casino security guards on Sept. 8.

Chief Deputy Attorney David Schwartz planned to seek the death penalty if the case went to trial and

Mullen was convicted. Schwartz said in addition to calling witnesses, he would have admitted as evidence surveillance tapes from the casino.

Deputy Public Defender Steve Immerman said Mullen took the deal because he wants to provide the Vitarelli family closure.

"Mr. Mullen will punish himself more than the court ever will," Immerman said. "In my 13 years as a public defender, I've never seen anyone more remorseful."

Security guards of Harrah's confronted Mullen and Michael Frimmel, 31, that night because they believed the two men were responsible for a number of thefts within the casino.

Both men tried to get away, but Mullen was wrestled to the floor by casino guards who tried to handcuff him. Mullen managed to pull a gun from his waistband and fire two shots before guards could take the gun, police said.

One of the shots hit Vitarelli in the back, and the other hit Willis in the abdomen. Willis survived.

Frimmel was taken into custody without incident, and the case against him is still pending.

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## 92 Line Losing Rowdy Image

By Tiffany Harris  
Staff Writer

The 92 bus, which was once seen as a transport for rowdy Hayward High students and a frustration for Cal State Hayward students, appears to now have a kinder and gentler reputation among frequent riders.

According to current riders and drivers, the incidence of unruliness decreased during the 2000-2001 school year.

Many observers say that they have seen a significant reduction in the number of fights, use of offensive language and other unpleasant activities on the popular bus line.

"Things have gotten a lot better," said Harry Coffee, an AC Transit bus driver. "I drove this line all last school year and I only had one incident at the very end of the school year."

According to Coffee, he had to threaten to eject a high school student for playing a radio to loudly on the bus.

"I asked him once and he ignored me, so I got up and told him he had to get off if he didn't want to do what I asked," said Coffee. "Well the next thing you know, the radio is off and he's sitting quietly."

The 92 bus line runs through south Hayward before picking up the majority of its Cal State Hayward and Hayward High passengers at the Hayward BART Station.

The 15-minute ride includes stops along C Street as well as at Hayward High. Cal State Hayward is the final stop.

During the week, buses run every 15 minutes between 6:05 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Between 7 and 10:17 p.m., buses run every 30 minutes. On the weekends the buses run hourly between 8:10 a.m. and 8:17 p.m.

According to Tony Divito, a spokesperson for AC Transit, the 92 bus line carries an average of 3,233 passengers each weekday, approximately 40 pas-



Study bus: AC Transit's 92 line is many students' primary means of reaching the CSUH campus from the flatlands.

Photo/ Nicole Pestana

sengers an hour. On Saturdays, the line carries 1,191 passengers, or about 64 passengers an hour.

Divito estimates that about 10 buses are assigned to the 92/90 bus route during the week. The number of buses used on the weekend was not available.

"The ride is pretty calm," said "Valentina", a Cal State Hayward student. "The young people that I've ridden the bus with have been pretty quiet - although, I do ride to campus early in the morning and leave at 4 p.m. That might have something to do with it."

According to Divito, in the event there is an incident the driver would contact AC Transit's central dispatch center in Emeryville. From there the county Sheriff would be called to the site.

"Our first concern is the comfort and

safety of all of our passengers," Divito emphasizes.

AC Transit is the fourth-largest bus-only system in the nation, with a fleet of 815 and a 153-route bus service network. The system has been serving the East Bay since 1960.

Currently, the fare for adults between 18 and 64 and youths 13 to 17 is \$1.35. Disabled passengers pay 65 cents. There are various monthly passes and tickets, sold at discounted rates for frequent riders.

Persons wishing more information about the 92 bus line, fares, or schedules may go to the Commute Information Center (CIC) in the CSUH University Union, room 314, or call AC Transit at (510) 817-1717. Information also is available on the Web at [www.transitinfo.org/AC/](http://www.transitinfo.org/AC/).

## Rock On, Dude!



Up in the world: Rock climbing was one of the featured events for kids and adults at the Zucchini Festival in Hayward last weekend

Photo/ Jessica Cahill

## Shuttles Link Campus, Rapid Transit Stations

By Yuka Sugawara  
Staff Writer

The Hayward BART Shuttle and the Castro Valley BART Shuttle provide hundreds of students comfortable rides to and from Cal State Hayward every morning and evening.

Both shuttles depart from the BART stations and arrive at the shuttle stop in front of the Warren Hall, beside the AC Transit 92 stop, from Monday through Friday. After letting the students off, the shuttles pick up new passengers and take them to the BART stations.

The service is free. Elfrid Zalamea, CSUH coordinator of alternative transportation, said the university provides this service "to make the university accessible as much as possible to everyone, and to make the university friendly to students."

Shuttles are available from about 7 to 10 a.m. and about 5 to 10 p.m. Schedules are available at the Associated Students office in the Student Union, in Warren Hall room 795 and inside the shuttles.

Hayward BART shuttle service started in 1994 and Castro Valley shuttle service started in 1998.

Zalamea says statistics show 1,832 students use the shuttle weekly during the fall quarter. During summer quarter, the number drops to 982.

One vehicle with capacity of 32 passengers serves the Hayward BART station, and another vehicle with a capacity of 20 serves the Castro Valley BART station.

According to Zalamea, the one vehicle for each route has provided capacity so far.

Drivers are not employed by the university but by San Francisco Oakland Airporter (SFO Airporter).

Shuttle services are not available during weekends, but limited service is available during quarter breaks. During breaks, Hayward BART shuttle service ends with the 6:12 p.m. run, and Castro Valley BART shuttle service ends with the 6:24 p.m. run.

A senior speech and language and pathology major, who lives in San Leandro, uses the Hayward BART shuttle and transfers to a BART. She calls the system "very convenient."

However, she thinks it would be more convenient if service were provided in the early afternoon, around 2 or 3 p.m.

Zalamea estimates the cost would be close to double if the university expanded the service hours.

"Drivers spend about 50 hours a week driving the shuttles, and if we add more service, another set of drivers will be needed, and we might have a funding problem," he said.

Some students don't find lack of shuttle service after 10 p.m. and on weekends a problem.

A biology major from Castro Valley said, "It'll be good if we have it, but I wouldn't use it anyway."

Jennifer Yu, a senior from Castro Valley, said, "The Hayward BART shuttle is pretty good, but sometimes the Castro Valley BART shuttle is not on time. If it keeps its schedule, it'll be better."

An employee at the library uses BART and the Castro Valley BART shuttle from Oakland. He said the transfer from BART to the shuttle works fine.

"BART runs often and it's pretty reliable, because it keeps its schedule," he said.

Zalamea said the service is available to campus visitors, because "shuttles are like show windows to the outside world, so people can see our facilities."

## City Will Try To Make Carlos Bee Boulevard Safer

By Beverly Chu  
Staff Writer

Cal State Hayward students may be frustrated with the lack of adequate roads to get to school, but they still manage to get to class on time.

There are only three available routes from the flatlands of Hayward to the campus: Harder Road, Carlos Bee Boulevard, and Second Street/Campus Drive.

A concern for students is the steep slope of Carlos Bee and Harder. The City of Hayward Transportation and Engineering Division is work-

ing on making improvements on Carlos Bee Boulevard due to the number of accidents on that road.

"When driving up those roads, I always wonder about my brakes," says Jesse Love, a student who lives in Union City.

In the year 2000, Carlos Bee Boulevard had 10 reported collisions, Harder Road had none, and Second Street/Campus Drive had five.

These collisions include car-to-car crashes as

**"When driving up those roads, I always wonder about my brakes,"**

**Jesse Love**

well as single car crashes into trees, lampposts, pedestrians and bicycles but they do not include intersection accidents.

The City of Hayward is working on putting in curve warning signs, advisory speed signs, texturing of pavement - so motorists will know when they are out of a lane - and guard rails.

But the emphasis is more on the driver than the road when it comes to safety, with chief concerns being driving under the influ-

ence or reckless driving.

"For the most part, the roads are safe, but some of them need to be repaved in Hayward," says Deanna Pennix, a student living in Castro Valley who takes Second Street to school. "There are still continual problems of people running red lights while kids try to cross the street."

Mission Boulevard is a widely used road for students and people who need to get to work, and traffic congestion is a major concern for all.

"There could be a difference between a 12-minute commute and a 20-minute commute if I leave my house after 7:20 a.m.," says Pennix.

See Roads , page 4.