LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This year’s National Conference was held in New York City on May 17 - 19 with a record number of attendees. Thanks to the support of Frederic R. Harris, Inc., I was very fortunate to be able to attend once again. A national conference offers many opportunities to experience what WTS really stands for “Women Working Together to Share Experiences in Transportation and to Promote Women in the Industry”. A National Conference is a very positive experience, offering networking opportunities, very interesting and exciting keynote speakers, panel discussions in multi-model forms of transportation and a great way to meet other women in the transportation industry who are attending the conference for similar reasons. In addition, the conference agenda contained several technical tours as well as special functions (site seeing tours related to the area of the country where the conference is held). My own personal experiences over the past three (3) years have been so wonderful that I look forward to attending each year with high hopes and great enthusiasm.

This year, as the President, I began the conference with a day-long Chapter Presidents and National Board Meeting. I was greeted by many familiar faces offering a very comfortable atmosphere where I could learn and ask questions about the organization at the national level. The agenda was packed full of a variety of business items including Membership Initiative, Corporate Membership, Interactive WTS Website, Scholarship program and the WTS National Annual Report.

In addition, WTS was proud to announce APTA as the new Technical Support team. APTA Representatives joined the conference and explained their strategic plan that they have agreed to offer the association. Some of the services they will supply are financial planning, communication, technical services, member services and conference planning. The day was a great success and provided me with a great deal of information to bring back to the Connecticut Valley Chapter to help expand and strengthen the organization.

The rest of the conference was full of exciting people to meet, interesting stories to hear and innovative transportation technologies that have our industry on the cutting edge. I continue to encourage those who have not attended an annual conference to set their sights on May 2001. The conference is schedule for Long Beach California – I can promise you that you will not be disappointed.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer!

Lori Long
Frederic R. Harris, Inc.

2000 APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference

By Lisa Rivers and Maureen Shea both of the Connecticut Department of Transportation

The 2000 American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Bus and Paratransit Conference was held on May 8-11 in Houston, Texas. Mr. Gordon Bethune, President and Chief Executive Officer of Continental Airlines in Houston, TX provided the conference opening address. This was the first time that APTA held a combined bus and paratransit conference, so sessions addressed a wide range of topics that affect transit operations of all sizes: operational issues of equipment and maintenance, route planning and marketing, diversity programs, accessibility for the disabled and critical incident management.

The conference was not solely for providers of transportation. Sessions offered a combination of topic overview and specific examples benefiting almost anyone involved in the development, improvement and implementation of public transportation and paratransit services.

The topics of particular interest to some of the attendees from Connecticut were bus rapid transit, access to jobs, welfare to work and new technologies in equipment and delivery of service. ConnDOT’s own Mr. Michael Sanders, the Transit Administrator of the Office of Transit and Ridesharing in the Bureau of Public Transportation, was
both the moderator and a panelist for a session entitled "Hot Topics in Bus Rapid Transit." This concept of a right-of-way exclusive to buses is not new, but federal funding to support these projects as part of a package of alternatives is new.

The use of private for-profit transportation providers for paratransit services, such as a taxis, was covered by a panel of speakers. Each discussed specific barriers to the use of taxicabs in their region and how those barriers were overcome. One benefit of using taxicabs to provide paratransit service is that many more vehicles are available to provide service to approved clients, therefore making more service available. Transit agencies can use taxis when flexibility is required, freeing up space on transit agency vehicles for pre-scheduled trips. In many areas of the country, taxis have been able to provide on-demand trips for a much lower cost than traditional paratransit services. In Houston a standard paratransit trip cost $13.10 on average, but the average cost per ride using the taxi is only $4.84 per trip. One of the barriers that would need to be overcome to bring a program like this to Connecticut would be the huge difference between the current requirement for insurance levels of paratransit providers compared to the insurance levels required under state statute for taxi providers. Another issue would be federal requirements for random substance abuse testing of paratransit drivers.

Another conference highlight was the Bus Display. There were numerous manufacturers represented with a wide variety of equipment. There were buses of all sizes with many different seat configurations, propulsion systems, driver amenities and wheelchair securement systems as well as several low-floor buses on display.

For more information about APTA and conferences related to transportation check out their website www.apta.com.

MEMBER INFORMATION

Kimberly Clarke of Rizzo Associates, Inc., our second term secretary, and her wonderful husband Bill, have designed and built a new home in New Hartford, CT. Congratulations to you both.

WTS Dedication to Excellence

"WTS is dedicated to excellence in transportation through the achievement and success of women."

The founding of America required people to work together to ensure survival. They needed to work together to provide food, shelter, protection and an economy on which to live. Pioneers settled in inhospitable places and made them safer and easier places to live in. They shared their knowledge and expertise with others so that their towns and lives would thrive.

In today’s world a career is necessary for a person to provide these same essentials i.e. food, shelter, protection and an economy on which to live. Choosing a career or making a career change can be arduous and confusing. A good education coupled with student and adult guidance is a great start as one launches into the job market. However, once someone is on a career path there is one more important link to career advancement and that is networking.

Networking is the modern solution to a career advancement or changing careers. It is like teamwork in the workplace. Through networking you can keep abreast of industry movements and current events. It allows people to share their knowledge and expertise about their field of interest. In addition it is a great way to meet people in the same industry who may be able to help in future opportunities.

The best way for WTS to make good on its mission statement "excellence in transportation through the achievement and success of women" is through networking. Because each program offered is not always interesting for each member it is difficult to meet other WTS CT Valley Chapter Members and learn the interests and backgrounds of each.

Over the past few years board members have tried to compile a listing of profiles of each member. My name is Holly Stone and I am a new WTS member. I have heard about this profile project and I have volunteered to assist with it. It is essential that WTS members know each other and interact on different levels. This will help us all become a more cohesive association where teamwork is utilized to assist members professionally.

I cannot do this without your help. I will be e-mailing you each a form to complete by the end of August. You are not obligated to complete any areas that you do not feel you want to share with the membership.

Please complete it and return it to me. I will then compile a booklet for distribution to each member. We believe this resource document will be very helpful to you on a professional basis. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the survey please feel free to contact me.

Thank you, in advance for taking the time to complete the survey for this project.

Holly Stone
Hs84737@hotmail.com
CTT Employees Have Acting Debut

By Barbara Weidt of Connecticut Transit (CTTRANSIT)

On Friday, April 15, more than a dozen CTTRANSIT employees participated in the taping of a bus video that will be used by the state Department of Transportation to promote the proposed Hartford to New Britain Bus Rapid Transit Service. Thirteen employees took part in the video and were joined by four relatives of employees.

The prevailing atmosphere during the taping was great enthusiasm, laced with a little apprehensive (considering none of the participants were actors). However, perhaps even more important was the feeling of camaraderie that was evident throughout the event.

Taping began at approximately 9:15 a.m. on the grounds of the Connecticut Department of Transportation with groups of three to four “passengers” at a time, entering and disembarking the bus and walking away. Cathie Reese, a producer contracted by Wilbur Smith Associates, was also prompting the group to walk either left or right after alighting.

The next phase was taping the passengers while riding the bus, i.e. “businessman” using his laptop, mother riding with an eight-week-old infant, rider with Walkman, passenger engaged in friendly conversation.

Thanks to all the children who participated! They literally stole the show. Krysia Kapalczynski, niece of Martin Kapalczynski, delighted the camera crew, as well as the passengers, when she crossed her legs and leaned into Uncle Martin with a winning smile on her face (while begin taped). Producer Cathie Reese was also impressed with the performance of Oliver Fawell, grandson of Mary Torza. “He’s going to get the Academy Award for skipping up into the bus while being taped.

Wil Parson, the bus operator, received praise from CDOT and from Wilbur Smith Associate’s crew for his professionalism, good attitude and calm demeanor. He has the hardest job of all - responding to the constant demands to back up, move forward a “couple of feet,” open the door, close the door, etc. The entire crew affectionately called him “Willie” throughout the day.

The taping concluded at approximately 11:30 a.m. with the busload of “passengers” happy but a little drained from their acting debut.

Sandy Bartenstein, of CDOT, remarked that she was very pleased with our efforts and felt the event was very successful.

The video will be used to promote bus rapid transit at presentations, public hearings and meetings across the country and on public access TV.

The Tenth Annual Connecticut Statewide Transit Roadeo

By Barbara Weidt of Connecticut Transit (CTTRANSIT)

A new decade and century brings changes to the annual Connecticut Statewide Transit Roadeo. The year 2000 marks the tenth anniversary of the Roadeo and, for the first time, CTTRANSIT is sponsoring and organizing the event. It will be held at the Buckland Commuter Park and Ride lot in Manchester on August 13th from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Historically, the Roadeo has been bigger and better each year, and it is anticipated that the 2000 version will continue that great tradition. We are planning a fun and competitive day of the participants and their families to enjoy. Undoubtedly, the competition on the course will be fierce, as always, but the camaraderie of visiting with fellow transit operations, renewing old friendships and making new ones, will be a highlight of the day.

Prizes, prizes, we will have prizes! The three categories of competition will be large bus, van and body-on chassis. Each of the first place winners in the three categories will be sent to the National Roadeo, all expenses paid. Plus, the second, third and fourth place finishers in each class will be awarded prizes.
The Roadeo competition does include the completion of a written exam by participants. A study guide and the exam will be distributed to the General Manager/Executive Director of each participating organization.

So come join the fun and cheer on the competitors!

June Program Postponed

The Bus Trip to Boston to tour the Central Artery “Big Dig” Project scheduled for June 24, 2000 was postponed. The program committee has decided to reschedule it for later this year. We have not determined when, however, we need your help. We are requesting your input and response to three (3) short questions.

1) Is this a program that you would like to see rescheduled?

2) If we were to reschedule this program, would you prefer September or October 2000?

3) What types of programs are you interested in seeing planned for the remainder of this year or 2001?

Please e-mail your responses to Kim Clarke of Rizzo Associates at kclarke@rizzo.com. Please understand that your input is very important to us. We will read, discuss and respond to each of your e-mails. Thank you in advance for your thoughts and ideas.

UPCOMING AGENDA

Mark your calendars with the upcoming program dates. Hope to see you all soon. If you need more details regarding these programs please don’t hesitate to call any of the board or the person listed as running the program.

September 23, 2000, Connecticut Ladies Build. WTS is volunteering time to assist in a program called Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity. The program was designed to build homes for women. We are seeking volunteers to assist us in this daylong event.

Please contact Katie Breen at 860-683-8410 to sign up. It is important that we secure 15 people for this date.

Your time and energy toward this event will be greatly appreciated by many associated with the organization.

October 4, 2000, Expansion of Bradley Airport. The location of this program is yet to be determined. The presentation will be given by David Gilbert and Rebecca Sanders of the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

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Mr. David will discuss the expansion construction of the airport and Ms. Sanders will give an overview on the new services and marketing aspect of the project. If you have any questions regarding this upcoming program please contact Leslie Haines of Parsons Technology at 860-633-0223 or e-mail at Leslie.A.Haines@parsons.com

December 2000, Annual Holiday Social, donations made to a local charity. If you would like to see WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter support a specific charity, we would like to know.

Note from the editor: Thanks to all who have submitted articles this month!!

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