

# INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT

Volume 1  
Number 2  
December 1985/January 1986

A Publication of American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation (ADAPT)

## Houston: WE WILL RIDE "Changing Metro"

Houston, the city with the largest percentage of mainline buses with lifts in the country!

Houston, the city with not one mainline bus with a lift!

Which statement is true? They both are depending on what year you are talking about.

Houston, a story of advocacy's gains and advocacy's loses.

Houston Metro, ADAPT's toughest challenge. WE WILL RIDE in Houston.

On Saturday, January 18th ADAPT will be holding a workshop on grassroots organizing and transportation for disabled persons. The workshop, "Houston: We Will Ride/Changing Metro," will be held from 10:00 to 4:00 at the Easter Seal Society on West Dallas between Shepherd and Dunleavy.

Many disabled residents of Houston and many who ride the 'separate and unequal' Metro-Lift do not realize that Houston was one of the first cities in the country to purchase mainline buses with lifts. In 1977 Barry Goodman, then Executive Director of the

Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority, signed an agreement with the Coalition for Barrier Free Living that Metro would purchase 326 mainline buses with lifts. When these ill-fated Grumann Flexible (sic) 870's arrived Houston's transit system became 50% accessible.

The actions of the transportation committee of CBFL caused these changes. 50 disabled Houstonians went down to City Council and made a presentation on the need for mainline accessibility. They went from there to the office of Barry Goodman demanding that

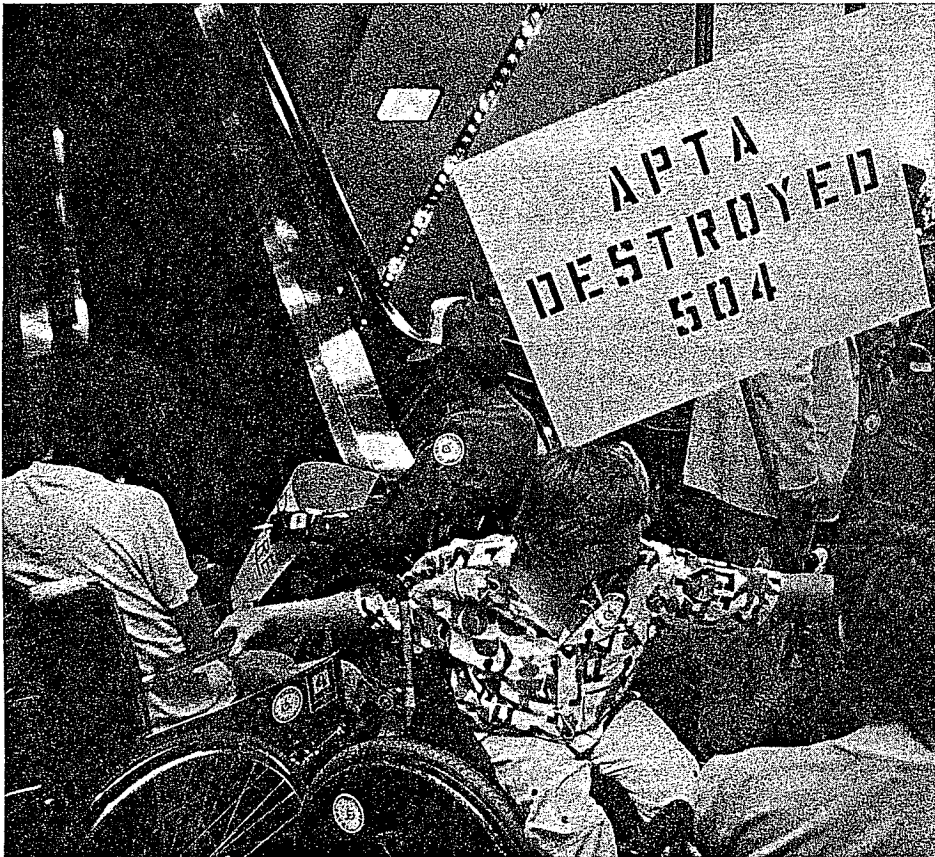
Houston Metro make a commitment to mainline accessibility. He at first refused to meet with these people but after they proceeded to occupy his office for hours he finally agreed to a meeting. At this meeting he would make no commitment but said he would consider this option. CBFL, working with the ACLU, then prepared a lawsuit that would have put an injunction on Metro from purchasing any buses unless they had lifts for disabled riders. The threat of this lawsuit and the street actions of CBFL members brought about mainline accessibility. Bob Geyer, then CBFL president, remembers the day very well. He and other CBFL members took to the streets and blocked buses for a short while. It was an issue that took commitment and in 1977 Bob and other CBFL members had it. Their actions foreshadowed the ADAPT tactics of today.

Unfortunately these 326 buses were never used by the disabled residents of Houston. After their arrival Metro decided that they would design a test route to see how the lifts worked and if disabled people would use them. Metro never said on which routes these buses would be running.

They never developed a public relations campaign to let the disabled community know that the buses with lifts were even on the road. At the same time the CBFL transportation committee became inactive and Metro staff were not questioned on what they were doing with these buses. Shortly after their arrival in Houston, reports of cracks in the front frames of the FLXIBLE 870's were being documented nation-wide. Metro first told the disabled community that these cracks were caused by the EEC lifts which were installed as the front steps of each bus. This was quickly retracted as reports of the cracks on the FLXIBLE 870's without lifts came in from cities throughout the U.S.. The FLXIBLE 870's were soon taken out of service and Houston Metro has not ordered another bus with a lift.

The fight for accessible public transportation is a long term battle. Civil rights don't come easily or overnight. If we organize we can regain what we once had and gain even more. Houston Metro must be made to understand that "separate" will NEVER be "equal."

Join us on January 18th. WE WILL RIDE.



ADAPT "attended" the APTA Convention in Los Angeles with the largest group of disabled assembled for civil rights. See related stories on pages 2 and 3. All photos are reprinted with permission; Copyright 1985; MAINSTREAM, Magazine of the Able-Disabled. Photos by David Stone.

## Dreamtime Dallas

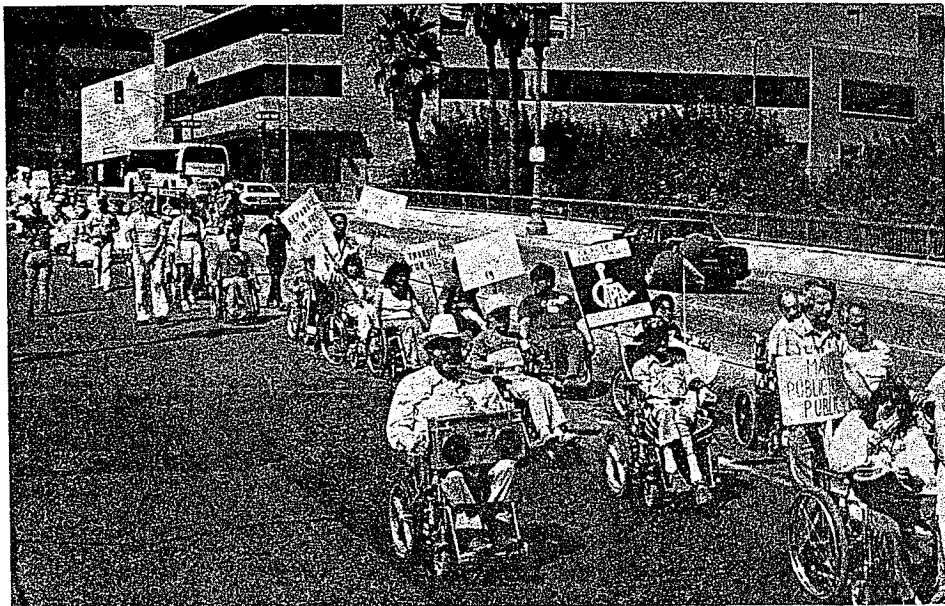
*"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self evident - that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one day the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.*

*". . . With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, struggle together, go to jail together, stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day."*

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

On January 15th, Martin Luther King's birthday, ADAPT will hit the streets of Dallas. Calling for access to this blatantly segregationist transit system, ADAPT will do what ADAPT is best known for - blocking buses. Strategies, begun at the workshop, lead to a meeting with DART director Ted Tedesco, at which they served notice that King's birthday would mark a change in their long and bitter struggle for civil rights. Tedesco is no stranger to ADAPT, having come to Dallas from Denver, where ADAPT began. He once called himself a supporter of mainline access, but now seems to be waffling.

Do you have a dream? Do you long for the day when disabled and non-disabled are seen as equals? When your civil rights and very humanity are not dependent on the whim of some official? When disabled children will grow up side by side with their non-disabled peers, ride the buses when and where they please with everyone else? Join us in Dallas on January 15th. Let dreams become real.



## Why Transportation?

By Jim Parker

Many people, both abled and disabled, often wonder out loud: Why are disabled people becoming so adamant about their right to utilize tax-supported (Federal, State and Local) public transportation — buses, trolleys, light rail and air?

There are many reasons as to why the disabled population all across the country is focusing its demonstrative energy on the transit issue, not the least of which involves economics. Even the independent living centers and consumer organizations are finally coming aboard the ADAPT "bandbus".

The importance of community and country mobility in our movement-oriented society is paramount for disabled people to break the bonds of paternalism and government agency supported dependency. Even the ILCs and "advocacy" organizations have, for the most part, fallen head over heels into the trap of protecting funding, 'good name', etc., in justifying their collective inaction in advocating for freedom of movement through accessible transportation.

Why transportation?

Accessible public and private transportation is essential to enable disabled people to participate fully in all aspects of community life.

In the arena of education, access to transportation can mean a fuller appreciation of educational life on school campuses. Classes can be scheduled at one's desire instead of the dependency that para-transit promotes. And it enables the disabled student to participate in the campus life: make friends, study on your own time at the library, or attend various campus functions. Such participation begins to break down the able-bodied

perception of disabled people as passive, uninvolved people who must be taken care of. Access promotes freedom!

Architectural barriers begin to come to mind when transit is fully accessible as disabled people begin to come in contact with the whole of the community. From the need for a curb cut to get across a street to the need for a ramp at the corner store or a restaurant, the needs come alive in the mind of the public and disabled people. Disabled people become more adamant about the need for access as the freedom of movement via transit opens new doors. Access promotes movement!

The reality of employment comes alive with transit, education and access through barrier removal. The freedom of movement only enhances opportunities for disabled people to actively seek and secure employment (as opposed to the track that social service agencies tend to run on). Transit access means that the ability to get to and from job opportunities is much greater as there is no need for making advance reservations for a ride, and that jobs may be applied for in different places on the SAME day! Access promotes employment!

But possibly the most beneficial aspect of transportation is the ability to enjoy the community. There are increased opportunities for social and recreational enjoyment as there is freedom of movement. Steadily disabled people become part of the community, not apart from. Access changes attitudes!

Your taxes and mine are spend on many, many things which are denied to disabled people due to lack of access to very basic needs. Transportation is the vital link to freedom living, and one should demand such. ADAPT says *we will ride! How about YOU!!!!?*

## Views on the APTA Convention

By Joyce Dawidczyk

Transportation is not just a vague "issue" for me, but rather a vital reality and necessity. The availability of public transportation (or the non-availability, as the case may be) determines whether and where I can work, play, meet people and participate fully and actively in my community. It can mean the difference between total independence and utter dependency. To me, living a totally dependent life is not really living at all.

Thus, I went to Los Angeles to demonstrate my conviction that as a citizen I have a civil right to equal access to public transportation, and that just because I belong to a group known as the "disabled", I should not have to settle for separate and unequal transportation systems either where I live, or anywhere in the country.

When I arrived in Los Angeles, I discovered comrades from other parts of the country with the same enthusiasm and commitment to the cause as I had. Most had been in previous demonstrations against the American Public Transit Association (APTA) and proudly related stories of past battles and struggles, glories and defeats.

The aim of this year's action was to try to get APTA to bring a resolution to the floor of its convention for a vote, stating that all new buses purchased must include wheelchair lifts as part of specifications. We wanted to see how the membership would vote, and hoped that the vote would run in our favor.

On Sunday, October 6th, about 250 people gathered to march to the APTA convention through the streets of downtown Los Angeles. The single-file line stretched for blocks, and I had the spine-tingling experience of being in the very center, so that in looking either ahead or behind me all I could see was this line of people, most of them in wheelchairs. There was this tremendous sense of power in our numbers, that was echoed in our voices, as half of us chanted "We Will Ride!" while the other half shouted "Access Now." It was awesome.

When we reached the Bonaventure Hotel, the site where the APTA convention was to be held, some members of the group chose to remain outside to picket, while the group I was with entered the building to try to get to the convention floor on the lower level. When we tried to use the elevators, we found that the police had turned them off, and when we tried the escalators, these also were turned off, so many began crawling down the stairs. This effort also was stopped by police, and apparently led to a number of arrests.

For me, it was frustrating to not be allowed to speak directly to the confectioners on a personal level, eyeball to eyeball, so to speak. And so I began crawling up the stairs in the rear of the building, only to be ordered down by a policewoman. When I did not stop, she went to get help, and soon I was surrounded by police who put me back in my chair and shuttled me outside like some sort of naughty little child. In fact, at that moment I'm sure that many of us had the sense that we were being treated like naughty

little children, instead of fully capable and functioning adults who had come there to make a point about our lives and our civil rights.

The police had apparently targeted for arrest those persons that they considered to be the "leaders", on the mistaken belief that if they held the leaders and somehow taught them a "lesson", that we would all go home without further incident.

Later, as we gathered together in a large room for the first of our nightly strategy planning sessions, I learned that we all had the opportunity to be leaders in our own right. First, the entire group would gather to plan a general strategy for the next day, with each individual offering input into the brainstorming. When a general plan was agreed upon by the majority of the group, smaller groups of individuals volunteered to form a "core" planning group to hash out the details, and take responsibility for leading and directing the group the next day. Each night, different people formed the "core" group, resulting in an ever shifting and rotating of leadership, and also leading to a real sense of involvement by a large group of individuals.

Of course, no amount of planning can ever account for the real-life experience. A beautifully thought-out plan crumbled on Monday when we came upon an extensive police blockade and other extraneous happenings, and a new plan had to be formulated on the spot.

But we carried it off. The group that I was with decided to peacefully cross the streets, back and forth, in front of the Bonaventure. The huge police squadron that was gathered and decked out in full riot gear to protect the APTA membership was fairly surprised that we never tried to enter the hotel in force. I felt this wicked sense of mirth that APTA felt it needed massive police protection against a motley group of demonstrators in wheelchairs.

Such was the extent of our power. With our presence and our activity, **we were making an impact**, in a way that no amount of letter writing, phone calls or personal plea bargaining had ever done in the past. One of the APTA conventioners that I met reported that we were "pissing off" much of the membership. I explained to her that I felt that anger and gut-level emotion on the part of the APTA membership at this point would lead to far more direct dialogue and understanding than passively listening to "educational" in-service presentations.

And throughout the rest of the week, as we planned new strategies, and took our action "to the streets" — stopping buses that did not have wheelchair lifts, we faced the wrath of the public that was temporarily inconvenienced in a way many of us had been inconvenienced all of our lives. And we became more confident, and more sure of ourselves.

The resolution regarding the purchase of wheelchair lifts on all new buses was never brought to the APTA convention floor. But we served notice that we would be back next year. And, more importantly, we let them know that... **We Will Ride.**

Editor: ADAPT Collective

Austin Area  
Stephanie/Bob  
2810 Pearl  
Austin, Texas 78705  
(512) 482-8543

George Cooper  
1518 Meadowbrook Lane  
Irving, Texas 75061  
(214) 251-1421

El Paso Area  
Jim Parker  
2708 Aurora  
El Paso, Texas 79930  
(915) 564-0544

Houston Area  
Rand Metcalf  
3233 Wesleyan  
Houston, Texas 77027  
(713) 621-3703



By Bob Kafka

Well they got me! I never have thought of myself as a dangerous criminal but after spending 38 hours in the hands of the LAPD and the L.A. County Sheriff staff I may have to reconsider this perception of myself.

What was my crime? Expressing my views about the discrimina-

## Thoughts From L.A. County Jail

tory policies of the American Public Transit Association (APTA). You may ask in disbelief "Surely you did something more sinister than that? They wouldn't throw you out of your wheelchair, then handcuff your arms behind your back, transport you to the County Jail, fingerprint you, undress you and then dressed in "L.A. Blues" place you on the same floor as Richard Rameriz the 'Night Stalker' for civil disobedience. Would they?" Well they did it to me and to seven other ADAPT members who also had an opportunity to experience the hospitality of L.A. County jail. During this time they denied us access to our medication, cut one guy's foot and never told us what we were charged with or allowed us our one phone call. All of us basically committed the same crime. We

were asking APTA to take a position that transit operators in the United States purchase buses with lifts. Our crime was committed in the lobby of the hotel where APTA was holding their national meeting. The haves vs the have nots. Except I'm not sure which we were.

While in jail I asked myself "Is this really worth it? Are my civil rights really worth the indignity of being arrested and the brutality of a prison system that is totally inadequate to deal with the needs of disabled persons." I did commit a crime. Civil disobedience is a time honored method for those who are powerless to get something from those in power. However the penalty for a crime should match its severity. As the hours went by I realized how important our civil liberties are. I realized how much we threatened the status quo by our simply expressing our frustrations with a system that consistently treats us as inferior and unequal. I realized how important this struggle for equal rights is. I began to feel a sense of pride as well as a sense of bewilderment about

our situation. We were becoming celebrities of sorts. Tales of our exploits spread through the County jail. All the inmates were fascinated by our story. 'You're in here for what?' they would ask in disbelief. The fact that taxpayers dollars were being spent to keep us in jail seemed absurd. We were now calling ourselves the L.A. 7. (Edith the one woman arrested was located in a separate women's facility.) We wondered how long they would keep us' and what was happening to our compatriots on the outside.

Little did we know that a perfect example of people power was in the works to get us out of jail. 52 people in wheelchairs arrived at L.A. County jail to voice their concern about our situation. They were told that the County workers were on strike and that the paperwork to get us out could not be processed. Instead of leaving the 52 people lined themselves outside the jail and encircled the releasing area chanting "Free Chris", "Free Bob" and "let our people go." On the inside all we knew was that the sheriff's staff was becoming more and more attentive to our situation. At 4 a.m., 38 hours after our initial arrest, we were free.

Would I do it again? Suffice to say "WE WILL RIDE."

## ADAPT Met APTA in L.A.

*"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and this will continue till they have resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those who they suppress."*

-Fredrick Douglass, 1849

Los Angeles and the 1985 APTA Convention have come and gone. Once again, ADAPT has emerged victorious! APTA's segregationist policy of local option is eroding rapidly as well as becoming very unpopular. Transit officials are now seeing and feeling the impact of their racist policy decisions. APTA and its members are being held accountable for their policies and it's touching them on a very personal level.

ADAPT has taken the single issue — equal access to transportation for all — and created a national movement with a rallying point that far surpasses even the effort to pass '504' in effectiveness. Disabled people from around the country have a reason to unite and organize and our image has gone from that of a group of rag tag radicals to an organized national movement from the grassroots level. The march on APTA the first day of the convention was the largest political gathering of disabled people ever — 180 people from out of town, 80 from the L.A. area — and our numbers force APTA to take us very seriously indeed.

Fifty-one people were arrested, resulting in great publicity for our issue, a show of commitment to winning our civil rights, and a great growth in personal power and dedication on the part of the disabled activists who put their bodies on the line. The Chairman of the Surface Transportation Committee, Rep. Glen Anderson, was introduced to ADAPT and our demands by having his office occupied. The new president of APTA, Larry Jackson of Long Beach, had his buses held, his downtown tied up for hours, and he won't forget our power. ADAPT forced the LA County Sheriff to release Bob Kafka and Chris Hronis by an all-night vigil at the jail. After learning that they were held 'without bail', we sang, chanted, and disrupted their jail until they called the D.A. at 3:00 a.m. and our people were released. Armed with only personal power, with no

media, this is the strongest statement of our collective power we have ever experienced.

APTA is paying the consequences for its racist policies. It is becoming uncomfortable to be a member of APTA and some transit systems are discussing pulling out. Racism should never be comfortable.

It is more and more evident that the disabled civil rights movement parallels that of the Black rights movement in the '60's. We are now receiving aid from churches locally and nationally from the Episcopal, Catholic, Presbyterian, and Methodist denominations, which adds a moral flavor to our demands. Itzhak Perlman, the disabled violinist, contributed money to support us. And the disabled people of ADAPT contribute their money, time, dedication, and lay themselves in the street to win their civil rights.

To reinforce the statement that ADAPT made in Los Angeles, we encourage everyone to write to Rep. Glen Anderson requesting national hearings on the questions of local option and the civil right to ride mainline transit. We must explain to him that para-transit is not only not working but is discriminatory and that transportation for people with disabilities is discriminatory and that transportation for people with disabilities is in a state of crisis nationwide. Send your letters to:

Rep. Glen Anderson  
2329 Rayburn Building  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

If we don't win the right to address the federal transit policymakers in national hearings, APTA and its expensive lobbyists will provide all the input!

Our next chance to meet an APTA convention is the Eastern Regional Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, May 17-22. Planning has already begun. Join us.

P.S. Cincinnati has NO accessible buses!

## Dallas Activists Met

Twenty people from the greater Dallas/Ft. Worth area gathered at the Bachman Recreation Center on October 26th for the ADAPT "Riding Dallas" workshop. Those in attendance included faces that were new and those that are veterans in the battle for transportation services for disabled persons, but all expressed frustrations with the level of services this community has, thus far, been afforded.

The workshop began when ADAPT of TX organizers went over the history of ADAPT from its beginnings ten years ago as a handful of disabled Denverites to today with about 200 disability activists from around the country. ADAPT's issue and tactics have gone national and been taken on by other local communities like Dallas, Austin, and El Paso. Video tapes of various actions, both in and out of Texas, were shown illustrating ADAPT's most visible tactic: disabled riders "inconvenienced all our lives," as one protester put it, stopping buses by wheeling out in front of them and refusing to move.

Tom Morrison, a long time advocate for transit services for disabled persons in Dallas, gave a history of DART's dealings with the disabled community who wish access to their public services. Disability activists will find the story familiar, if not specifically at least generally. 1977 to 1980 saw two almost identical studies of the "need" commissioned. Their findings were similar. The second one, published in March 1980 and done by the Community Council of Greater Dallas, found 180,000 significantly mobility impaired persons in the greater Dallas area (not including Arlington and Tarrant County.) In addition this study found that 86% of that population could use mainline transit if lifts and tie-downs were provided. Only 14% were deemed unable to use mainline buses. In

1981 Dallas' para-transit service, Car Care, was expanded by 12 vans for a whopping total of 23 vans (for a potential 180,000 riders.) In 1982 Dallas tried its great experiment with mainline access for three months (February to April.) 85 buses with lifts were dumped into the transit system. After three months operating with no coordination of routing or schedules and no publicity to let disabled persons know about the service, (in other words, an experiment designed to fail) DART went to the press with cost figures like \$28,000 per rider and said it just was not cost effective. The various committees advising DART never had more than 40% disabled consumer representation and although the committees continued to recommend mainline accessibility their recommendations were ignored. Sound familiar?

The afternoon session of the workshop covered the basics of organizing: defining **power** and **who has the power** to give us what we want; choosing an **issue**; defining **goals** and **objectives** and outlining a **strategy** of actions to achieve them. While the group made it clear much has been done by them and others, there has never been a unified front following a long range plan. DART so far has been able to individualize each effort and thus has been able to play one off against another, making activists feel or appear to be ignorant trouble makers belittling their issues as just the grumblings of "crazy old georges" or "silly little marys."

The workshop ended with a commitment to meet again to develop a strategy for on-going actions and to recruit more supporters.

ADAPT is very grateful to George and Evaughn Cooper and to Charley Young for their support and organizing skills, without which the workshop would not have been the success it was.



# Around The State

## Dallas

By George Cooper

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit still has no intention of providing lifts on fixed route buses — nor has it ever in the past. As a result of a lawsuit filed by several disabled persons when DART reneged on the Final Service Plan calling for 50% of off peak hour buses be lift equipped, a lawyer from DART contacted Carol Taylor, in Public Relations of the Los Angeles R.T.D.. When he asked in terms of money, about accessible buses in Los Angeles, he was told by Carol Taylor that it was not a matter of \$\$\$ money but a matter of Civil Rights. What right does DART have to put a "Price Tag" on our Civil Rights!!

After six years, there is no valid transportation for disabled persons in the Dallas metroplex.

ADAPT will come to Dallas on January 15, 1986. Want to help?? Contact ADAPT of Texas.

## Fort Worth

...and the suit goes on! On October 15, 1985, Mr. and Mrs. Wooten, Paul Duffey and the Texas Paralyzed Veterans Assn. (TPVA) represented by the West Texas Legal Services, filed a lawsuit against the City of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Transportation Authority and the Mobility Impaired Transportation Services (MITS). The city, rather than responding to the charges that they are discriminating against disabled people by not utilizing their 29 mainline buses with lifts, have asked for a dismissal of the charges. This obvious delaying tactic was accompanied by a hastily called public hearing on accessible public transportation. Since few disabled people were informed about the hearing the turnout was low.

If this suit is successful it will set a precedent for the rest of the state to follow. Fort Worth — The eyes of Texas are upon you!

The CITRAN General Manager, John Bartosiewicz, stated on television that he didn't think a lawsuit was necessary for the lifts on the 29 fixed route buses that

were bolted down to be reactivated, in that the Fort Worth City Council was taking the matter into consideration.

If there were any truth in his statement, why weren't the lifts unbolted and put back into service when a formal complaint was filed over three years ago with the Civil Rights section of Urban Mass Transportation Authority, D.O.T.?? The West Texas Legal Services staff tried numerous times to negotiate with the City Fathers, CITRAN, et al. to no avail. It was only after a lawsuit was formally lodged that our existence was acknowledged. Access is a Civil Right! We Will Ride!

## Houston

By Rand Metcalf

Over the past year, Metro Left, Houston's only alternative means of public transportation for the disabled, has taken great steps to insure that the disabled are satisfied with the existing transportation system. They have initiated a voucher subsidiary program with the local taxi companies with the goal of increasing spontaneity. However, the real problems have not been addressed: the demand responsive paratransit system takes away the rider's freedom of choice; the paratransit system does not serve persons outside their area; the paratransit service does not serve persons who are not in the computer system; paratransit, in a nutshell, only serves a small minority and separates the disabled from the rest of the "public."

The MTA board refuses to include fixed-route accessible mainline buses in its immediate and long range plans. What the Board fails to realize, is that persons with disabilities, will never be satisfied with a transportation system which treats the disabled as second class citizens, no matter what the system is.

## Austin

Austin ADAPT is rallying around their victory with the 100 lift equipped buses. These new buses, in combination with those already on the system with and without lifts, will mean a system that has 60% accessibility among its mainline buses. Several of the new Dillos (as Austin cutely calls its downtown trollies) will be lift equipped and the western half of that service which passes by the community college, the courthouse, UT and several other important destinations will be fully accessible. These changes are expected to take place in July. Tensions heightened with the issue of Over the Road Coaches, when staff mis-reported to the Capital Metro Board and the mobility impaired services committee that no equipment was available to make these buses accessible. ADAPT members did not allow this lie (lift equipment for these buses has been developed by Eagle, Neoplan and one other company) to remain unchallenged, but the board voted four to two to buy the Over the Road Coaches as bid—without lifts. Austin ADAPT supporters are awaiting the Board's taking a position on mainline accessibility, which they have tentatively said they would do in March. ADAPT has initiated several recruitment efforts in the meantime, as well as some close encounters of the Christmas kind with carolling and other yuletide festivities—with that distinct ADAPT flavor.

## El Paso

By Jim Parker

It was all there for disabled consumers — full access to the city transit system that was to be voted into being. . .all new pur-

chases of transit vehicles to be accessible; improved paratransit (more vehicles, a board of disabled consumers to certify riders, and more); improved bus shelters and curb cuts at bus stops. . .

The only problem was that election day the measure FAILED by less than one percent (49.7% for/50.3% against), or 153 votes. That small margin of defeat is a PRIME REASON why disabled people MUST become registered voters and participate in the political process!!! WE could have made the difference with proper organization! It wasn't for lack of effort from the El Paso ILC which strongly participated, as did WTAH (West Texas Association for the Handicapped). The problem was that when EPOCH (El Paso Opportunity Center for the Handicapped) phoned consumers it found that about 70% were NOT registered to vote! That's quickly changing.

The main reason for the defeat of the issue was that Mayor and city council, which has been saying that the city cannot afford to support mass transit, did not campaign actively for passage of the proposed transit authority.

However, the issue is not dead. Mayor and city council voted overwhelmingly to try again by holding a public hearing (set for Dec. 17) on creation of a transit authority and appointing an interim board. The projection is that an election will be held in August of 1986. This will be El Paso's third attempt to approve a sales tax and transit authority to operate the transit system.

The first authority board had a disabled person on the board — Gene Ormsby — who was very supportive of full access and did much to shift the thinking of the board toward access. ADAPT is currently working with other groups in the city to insure that interests of disabled people are represented on the board.

WE WILL RIDE! But, it's going to take a strong step forward by disabled people to become part of the political process to ensure that issues affecting us are addressed by the community.

## ADAPT

2810 Pearl

Austin, Texas 78705

