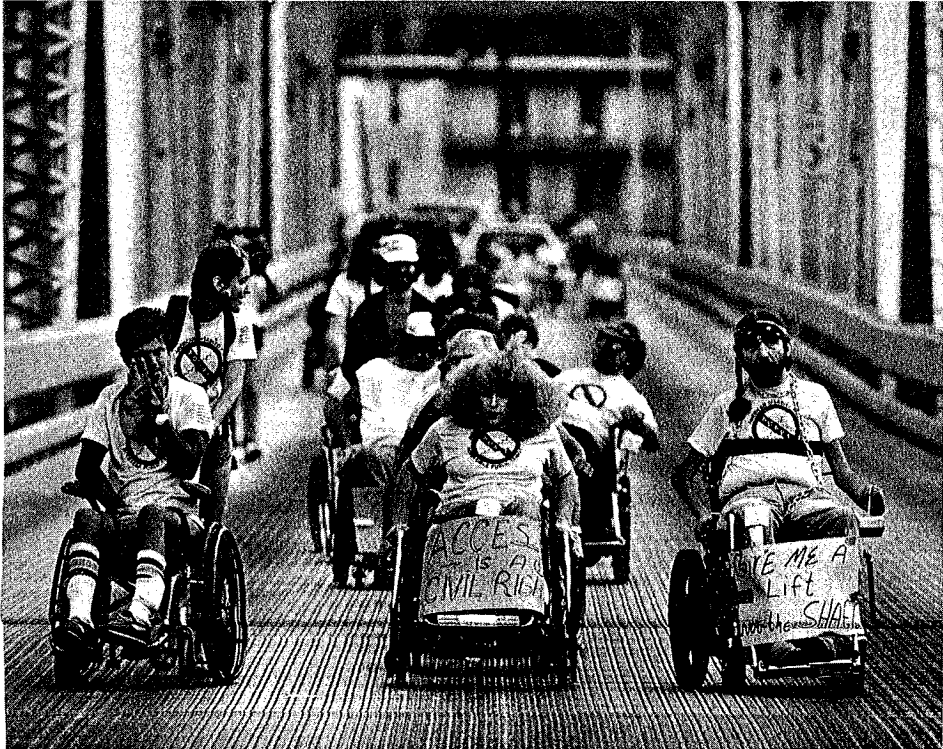


# INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT INCITEMENT

Volume 2  
Number 3  
September/October 1986

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

## FROM CINCINNATI... ONTO DETROIT...



Freedom March across the Ohio River. ADAPT enters Cincinnati and begins its segregationist policies. WE WILL RIDE.

### Cincinnati Actions a Huge Success

#### THE MARCH

At noon on Sunday May 17th, ADAPT's "crack troops" of seventy civil rights activists headed over the central bridge toward the Queen City. In a single line which almost covered the half mile bridge across the Ohio River, ADAPT members from Austin, Dallas, EL Paso, Louisville, Salt Lake City, Chicago, Syracuse, Hartford, of course Denver, and more, chanted and marched through downtown to the Westin Hotel, temporary strong-hold of APTA and the police had totally overreacted, guarding chained blockades at all entrances to the posh hotel.

Breaking into three teams ADAPT members began picketing and chanting at all ground floor entrances to the hotel. From inside the inaccessible second floor "skywalk" entrances, Cincinnatians and APTA members looked down on the beginning of the four day protest in the cold gray drizzle of a Cincinnati spring. Back at the Travel Lodge, FBI agents had taken up residence alongside the "dangerous protesters."

At the strategy session that evening, Joni Wilkens, a local attorney who had agreed to represent us if the need arose, went over possible implications of various protesting techniques ADAPT might employ. As it turned out Wilkens and her consulting attorneys, would be of supreme assistance with a judicial system "reminiscent of Judge Roy Bean's law west of the Pecos" (as George Cooper put it.)

Plans were laid out for ADAPT's assault on APTA, its segregationist policies and Queen City Metro (part of the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority—aptly called SORTA transit.) Queen City Metro had 87 buses with lifts, but due to the "extra-ordinary" costs these lifts had been welded shut.

Representatives of the local disability group, Southwest Ohio Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, SOCCD, Dan Cleary and Dixie Harmon met with ADAPT saying they supported our goals (though perhaps not our tactics) and had been calling for improved para-

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### Making History in the Motor City

Hundreds of ADAPT supporters from throughout the country will be driving and flying into the Motor City for a fun filled action packed week, October 4th through 8th. ADAPT will converge on Detroit's Renaissance Center, where members of the American Public Transit Association, APTA, will be holding their annual convention. APTA is the organization which has led national efforts to destroy 504 and continue discriminatory practices of only segregated transportation for disabled people. You are cordially invited to join with ADAPT as we once again try to convince APTA to acknowledge our rights as full citizens and our right to ride public transit.

On Sunday, October 5th, Rosa Parks will lead a march to the APTA hotel site. Rosa Parks is the courageous black woman who refused to give her bus seat to a white person and move to the back of the bus. Ms. Parks will hold a press conference at the APTA convention site to support the integration of people with disabilities into our communities. ADAPT is privileged to have her join with us in Detroit.

On Saturday, October 4th, experienced disabled organizers and Shel Trapp, a nationally known organizer from Chicago, IL will hold a training in community organizing techniques. Shel has had numerous successes over the past 25 years working with people who at first thought they had little power, but who, through people power, have won major victories for their causes. Shel and these disabled organizers have worked together for ADAPT many times in the past: in Washington, Cincinnati, Denver and Chicago. In addition

to transportation victories, they were involved in ADAPT's protests that led to McDonald's use of disabled persons in their advertising. This training is planned to get people ready for the protests and demonstrations that will follow, Sunday through Wednesday.

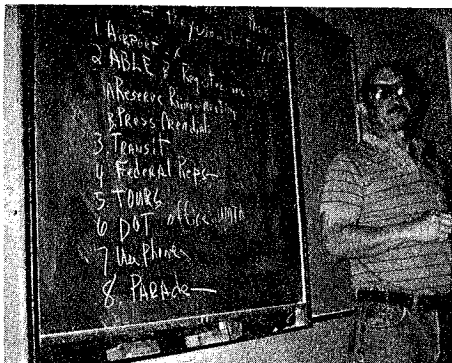
ADAPT spokespersons believe Detroit will be a turning point in the history of the disability rights movement. The issuance of the weak Department of Transportation 504 regulations and the recent Supreme Court ruling on airline access have caused a stirring in the disability community not seen since the early 1970s. Detroit may see the disability community stands together and loudly says "we won't have our civil rights taken away piece by piece. Access is a civil right."

Lest we forget, 504 and many other initial victories of the disability rights movement were won with disabled people taking to the streets and the doorways of the government calling for their civil rights. These rights are now under attack, join us in Detroit. Let's work together for these basic rights: to be full citizens, to be counted among the public, to move freely in our communities, to live without apology, to be equal.

It is easy to be a part of this historic event. Arrive in Detroit on the third. Motel accommodations are reserved at Days Inn. Cost is \$15.00 a day plus food (four to a room). Needed attendant care will be provided by volunteer Atlanta personal care assistants. Call (303) 393-0630, Mike or Wade, for more information. BYOB. We need you!!!



ADAPT gears up for march across the bridge.



Shel Trapp lists ideas thrown out by ADAPT of Texas members at the July training.

## State Training for Texas Organizers

ADAPT activists from El Paso, Houston, Dallas and Austin met in Austin, July 26-27, for a nuts and bolts training in community organizing techniques. Funded by a grant from the Live Oak Fund for Change, the training was the final component in a year long ADAPT of Texas project designed to foster grassroots advocacy in support of accessible mainline transit in Texas. Community activists selected, in part, from the local workshops ADAPT has held around the state came to Austin for the further training designed to assist them in their efforts to mobilize their own communities.

Led by Shel Trapp, of the National Training and Information Center, ADAPT members participated in role plays, brainstorming sessions, discussions and problem analyses as they worked to hone their skills in grassroots organizing. Each is expected to take what they have learned back to their home community where they continue the struggle for access. Recruiting new members, identifying issues, developing strategies, and designing action plans were all covered during the two day session. It was a long weekend and all looked a little worn as the training came to a close, but all agreed they had learned a lot and felt much better prepared to tackle the homefront.

Of course real success will depend on how the training is utilized in the months and years to come. Already however, several of the local ADAPT activists have called to let us know of ways they have been able to make use of techniques they learned from Shel and the training.

### Editor: ADAPT Collective

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# DOT Releases 504 Regs. . . A TRAVESTY

"Don't Mourn, Organize"  
Joe Hill

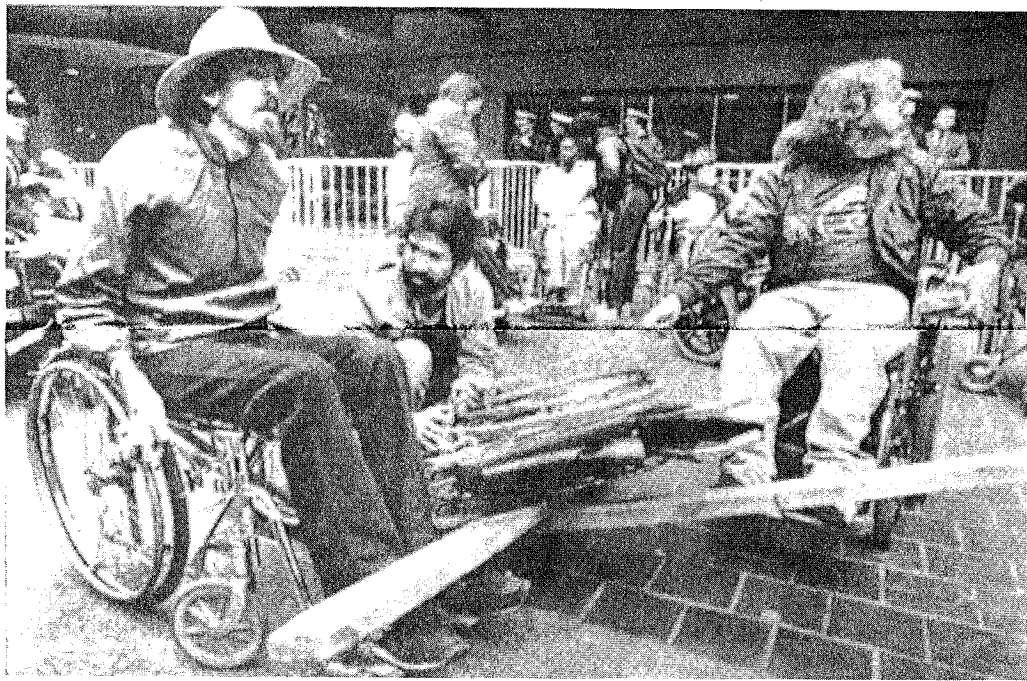
After several law suits and a seven year wait the United States Department of Transportation released their new 504 regulations. The new regs are a slap in the face to disability rights activists who have worked long and hard on the issue of transportation, so critical to the independence and integration of disabled people. Numerous national and local organizations of many kinds, not the least of which has been ADAPT, have repeatedly documented and illustrated the need for accessible transit. Even the National Council on the Handicapped, a federal agency appointed by President Reagan, in their report "Toward Independence" call for equal access to transportation, including lifts on mainline buses, as vital to disabled persons.

The DOT however, has chosen to ignore all this and focus instead on cost. Of course there are six criteria of service that are supposed to ensure equality (covering the same geographical area as regular transit, comparable fares, same days and same hours, service within 24 hours, no trip priorities or trip restrictions because of trip purpose, and funding only to serve people who are physically unable to use regular transit). Yes, did you catch that last one? Physically unable. People with mental disabilities are apparently excluded in the regs. The transit issues of visually and hearing impaired riders are pretty much ignored. Worst of all, transit authorities need only comply with these criteria if meeting them costs less than 3% of their operating costs. Here in Texas the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities did a survey of transit systems.

Of the nine cities that responded, six were spending well over 3 per cent on paratransit alone, and none were meeting the criteria at current spending levels.

What kind of requirement has written into the requirement such an easy out? No kind of requirement at all. What kind of rights are dependent on cost effectiveness? No kinds of rights at all. The Department of Transportation has sold out disabled people's rights to the industry, to APTA (which is cited repeatedly throughout the regs) without batting an eye. Disabled public transit riders know from experience the degree of service one usually gets when things are left to the "goodness" of a transit authority bureaucracy.

ADAPT has joined in a lawsuit against the DOT, but the fight must continue on many fronts.



Jim Parker, Frank Lozano and Bob Conrad (L-R) raise the ten foot cross which symbolizes APTA's crucifixion of disabled people and their rights.

## Well-Wishing Achieves Little

By Cathy Thomas

A few of us are waging a war. A war to make this world accessible for the disabled and the elderly. And when the war is over we will be able to say, as Churchill said, "Never was so much owed by so many to so few". In the seventh chapter of the book of Judges we read how Gideon declared war against the oppressor and summoned the nation to his side. Thirty-two thousand people who wished him well responded. But the trouble was most of them were just that: well-wishers; not doers. The movement for accessible transportation in this nation does not lack for well-wishers. But mere well-

wishing seldom achieves anything. Gideon used a twofold test to sift out the doers from the well-wishers. The tests worked well in his day and still do today. One test was that of **casualness**. Only a minority of the people felt so pressed by the urgency of the job to be done that they hardly paused to drink from the stream. While the rest got down lazily on their knees to drink. The same attitude is abroad today — "What's the hurry?" "Don't make waves." "Don't rock the boat." Or even worse, "Let George do it."

Another test was that of **fearfulness**. Gideon told the people, "Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back. . ." (Judges 7:3) Twenty-two thousand turned back! Fear of what people might

think; fear of being laughed at, fear of being criticized and fear of being in the minority.

When Gideon got through sifting out the well-wishers only ". . . three hundred men" (Judges 7:6) were left to save the nation. But isn't that always the way it is in every group? Only a handful of people do all the work. Therefore let us never feel ashamed nor discouraged when we find ourselves a member of the minority. Let us remember Gideon's three hundred saved a nation. Jesus' twelve turned the world upside down and you and I can make this world accessible. If you want to be a member of this minority call ADAPT in your town. In the Dallas area call (214) 255-1213.





Cincinnati police remove ADAPT activist Jim Parker from a Metro bus. Parker and several others climbed aboard and paid their fares, but were denied the right to ride the public vehicles.

## Cincinnati

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transit and mainline access for years.

### YOU PAY YOUR FARE, YOU GET ARRESTED

Monday brought more demonstrating and many examples of the tokenism of disabled persons are expected to accept with gratitude as equality. Again ADAPT's three teams took up their posts at Westin entrances. At noon a small contingent moved to the bus bays down Fifth St. and tried to ride the buses. They paid their fares, they climbed aboard the inaccessible buses and police began selectively arresting or removing the would be riders. The charge? Criminal trespassing, but even the local authorities realized the ludicrousness of this and changed it to "being physically offen-

sive" a type of disorderly conduct. Although the excuse was that it would be unsafe for people in chairs to ride, it was safe enough to transport two of the three to jail in the very same bus on which they were "physically offensive."

George Cooper of Dallas, Bob Kafka of Austin and Mike Auberger of Denver were the ones chosen for arrest. Bail was set at \$3,000 each later that day. Judge Albanese was telling the cripples not to step out of line, not to get ideas about their station. Thinking they had a right to get a ride on a public transit vehicle was apparently too close to mutiny in the eyes of APTA and Cincinnati's criminal justice system.

### THE COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

With three ADAPT members behind bars for simply trying to ride buses our tax dollars had paid for, the civil rights issue had been laid bare again, even for the "unbelievers". Monday evening APTA members were to have dinner just outside of the city at the College Football Hall of Fame. ADAPT decided that if our people were to have dinner as guests of the state, APTA members could choke down a little food for thought at their gala event.

On our arrival local police, already waiting, would not allow us to park near the hall, but the van drivers quickly found a public space and within minutes the "troops" were lined up and waiting along the six lane road outside the hall. The cry "there they are!" rang out twenty minutes later as the big APTA Over the Road Coaches came into view. In a kamakazi move, several ADAPT members hurled their chairs out into the road in front of the buses (which were traveling a good 30mph). As they dodged in a vain attempt to



You pay your fare and get arrested. A TV reporter interviews Dallas ADAPT member Cathy Thomas while Jack is told he is "trespassing" and is "being physically offensive".

escape, the buses managed to block off all traffic and ADAPT pairs took up their posts at the front and rear of each bus. APTA members were forced to unload in the street and make their way past angry chants of "we will ride" and "APTA discriminates, APTA segregates".

Right in their midst was the perfect example of their tokenistic approach to access. While all the APTA members rode comfortable OTR coaches, their "guests" for the evening, Mr. Cleary and Ms. Harmon, rode apart from the able-bodied "counterparts" in a para-transit van. While APTA members sashayed up the elegant staircase to the front of the hall, Mr. Cleary and Ms. Harmon were led alone around back to an accessible entrance. It was an ugly sight: local advocates selling out to segregation in the name of "keeping the dialog open" and APTA not even having the courtesy or smarts to have some of their members ride with the "untouchables" or all go in the same entrance.

### THE ARRAIGNMENT, THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND THE CROSS

Tuesday morning brought the protests and the response to new heights. SOCCD held a pre-planned press conference to state that while they agreed with the goals of ADAPT, they did not agree with the tactics and were concerned about repercussions from SORTA transit. Clearly, the spokesperson pointed out, that para-transit did not cover the same geographic area, did not run the same hours, required advance reservations, and had long waiting lists. . . . this despite years of negotiations and resolved goals similar to ADAPT's. Individual members of SOCCD stated that if protest was what it took they were all for it, and an ADAPT member pointed out later on the news that SOCCD probably would not have the media coverage they had if not for ADAPT's actions.

Meanwhile across town Judge Albanese held the arraignment for the three arrested Monday and banned them from the city until their trial in August. Even the American Civil Liberties Union took exception to that and filed against the decision.

But the temporary loss of these three did not stop ADAPT, as it had

not stopped them the night before. Congregating in front of the Westin, ADAPT members again took up their protest. Chanting "access is a civil right," they raise a ten foot wooden cross with a wheelchair hung from the crossbar to symbolize the crucifixion of disabled people's right to equality by the federal government and APTA. From their glittering glass tower, protected from "the dangerous mob" by the city police, APTA members looked down on the angry protesters and watched as two wrote on the crossbar "APTA segregates".



Beverly and Queen City cops in a stand off.

### SEVENTEEN COMMIT

Tuesday night's strategy session was a heavy one. Wednesday was the last day and we knew any arrests could well mean thirty days in the county jail. But the commitment was strong and we hammered out a plan to climax the week's events.

Wednesday morning we crammed into vans, as usual, and headed over to the battle grounds in the front of the Westin. An ADAPT press conference had been called for noon that day. Our troops spread out in a line that stretched across the front of the hotel complex. Again APTA members looked down from their crystal and chrome fortress. Cops dressed in black and white, clicking away with their little cameras, swarmed pseudo-casually in behind their blockades. We had

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APTA members use inaccessible skywalks while ADAPT members protest in front of the Westin.

# TEN DAYS IN JAIL

## The Ante Has Been Raised

by Bob Kafka

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 1986

4:30 p.m.— One by one they haul us off, seventeen in all. We go through the usual procedures: giving name, address, next of kin, all our property, a list of our medications. We sign the papers, are fingerprinted and photographed. We go into the detention center for hours of waiting while the powers-that-be decide what to do with us. Handicappism raises its ugly head again as Judge Albanese releases six ADAPT members on their own recognizance. His reason: medical problems. The real reason: he can't understand those with CP and Frank, the one blind man, freaks him out. We become the Cincinnati Eleven.

8 p.m. — Mike Montgomery, the "head keeper" at the Hamilton County jail has a dilemma. Eleven people in wheelchairs and not one empty bed in the infirmary. Where to put us? The decision had obviously been made to keep us together and apart from the rest of the prison population. They convert a training classroom into what looks like a hospital ward without windows. Eleven WW II hospital beds are hauled in. Two guards are stationed with us at all times, and for some reason, three from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. The accessible bathroom is down the hall. At first we are guarded each time we go to empty our leg bags; soon they realize we are not going to try the "great escape". The starkness of our surroundings is stifling: ugly green concrete block walls, grey tiled floors, buzzing florescent lights and two clocks on the walls always counting time and exactly how long we have been in jail.

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1986

6 a.m. — The room is quiet. Without windows the difference between night and day can only be separated by the morning eggs and the changing of the shifts. We are a curiosity to our keepers. Faces peer in the doorway all morning to look at "the handicaps."

11 a.m. — The doctor and nurse arrive to evaluate our "condition." We again list our medications and the daily supplies we need. Two bladder infections, two decubitus ulcers, one strained back, and many who need assistance dressing, showering and toileting. They leave saying everything will be taken care of. (This is not to be.)

3 p.m. — The social work staff arrive. They are here to make sure we are treated OK, we have access to the library, gym and telephone, and to take care of any crises. (Again, this is not to be.)

4:30 p.m. — Joni Wilkens, our attorney, comes to discuss how we will handle our cases. We decide to stay together and not plea bargain.

6 p.m. — It is obvious by now that we are not going to get our proper medication. Substitutes for drugs they don't have don't

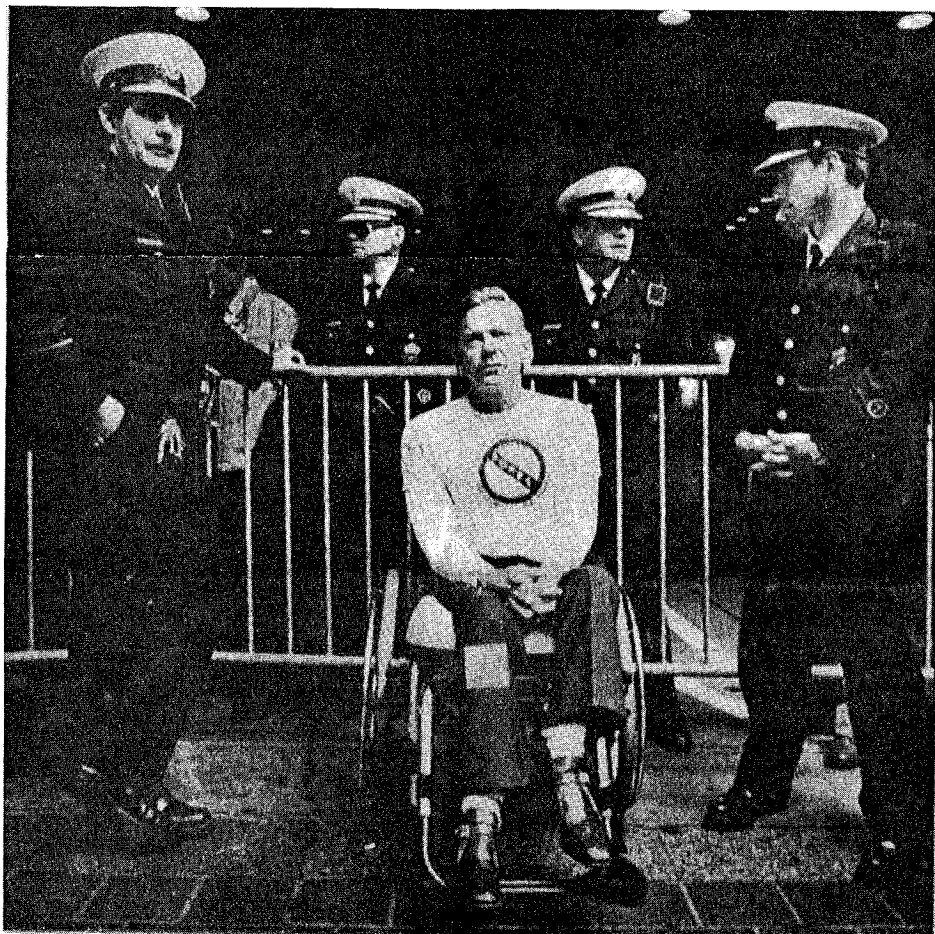
work. Those needing Valium are told it can't be dispensed in a jail setting. George again asked, to no avail, for his raised toilet seat and "booties" to protect his feet from sores. Mike asked about his bowel program. The nurse and guards give us only blank looks.

10 p.m. — Lights out. The guards assist those who need it. By the time we leave many of them will make pretty good attendants.

FRIDAY, MAY 23, 1986

6 a.m. — Lonnie went to the hospital late last night. His decubitus started to bleed and they rushed him over around 1 a.m. He came back around 3 a.m. and remained in bed all day.

12 p.m. — Boredom is starting to set in. George is rolling back and forth in the halls. Bill is constantly talking, which helps to keep us awake during the day. We fill out commissary forms, but as Joe predicts, we never see the items ordered. Lunch arrives. Mike has the guard melt his spoon so he can feed himself. He makes them do it each meal. George R.



Glenn Horton, one of the 17 arrested on Wednesday awaits his turn on the paratransit vans (which were available for once on a 2-minute call-in basis) which took ADAPT members down to the justice center.

again devours his food. ET is lying in bed shivering from his bladder infection.

2 p.m. — Joni arrives with her partner, after a long session with the Cincinnati judicial system. The Judge and DA will accept a plea of disorderly conduct and a fine of \$60 (2 days already served) for the eight who were charged with disorderly conduct. They would go free. Lonnie's charge of resisting arrest would be dropped, but there are no guarantees for Mike, George and me.

4 p.m. — The eight are released. Mike, George and I receive 10

days, with credit for two served. Eight days to go.

9 p.m. — The room seems empty without the other eight ADAPT members. The guards kid about us being the hardened criminals. George continues to ask for his raised toilet seat, I for my correct medication and Mike about assistance with his bowel program. Again, no response.

SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1986

7 a.m. — The library, gym, and telephone are not available on weekends and holidays, Monday is Memorial Day. We realize we will not have access to these amenities until Tuesday. Very much like a hospital stay. We also realize our medical needs will not be met; however, we continue our demands that something be done so Mike and George can get the help they need with their bowel program. Security continues to relay this to the medical staff. Medical staff continues to say it is security's responsibility. The double think has been go-

ed in the guard's record book, but as usual no action. Joni and Art Wademan, a minister who has been invaluable throughout the week in Cincinnati, came about 2:30 p.m. We share our concern that if we don't get some assistance one or all of us might get very ill. They go to the supervisor and suggest that if medical is not going to act then we should be transported to a hospital. Going to a hospital for a bowel program might seem extreme, but after 5 days, impaction is a real possibility. To our amazement, Mike is taken down to medical and then to the hospital. A raised toilet seat is borrowed from Good Samaritan Hospital. We are finally allowed to take our own medications which are brought in from the outside.

MONDAY, MAY 26, 1986

Memorial Day, a quiet day, a day for reflection. If non-disabled prisoners were prevented from relieving themselves for five days it would be considered torture. Equality is as much a farce in jail as it is out of jail, maybe more so. Cincinnati's judicial and penal systems obviously feel it is fine to use a person's disability as a means of punishing that person. Documented omissions which place disabled people in potentially life threatening situations don't raise an eyebrow even from the defenders of justice or the media. Reports that the jail is well equipped to handle our needs but that we will simply be "less than comfortable" go unchallenged. The fact that we have two people who care, who spend some time and resolve our problem, only highlights the injustice to those who do not have a Joni or an Art and must suffer because of ignorance of the needs of disabled persons.

TUESDAY, MAY 27, 1986

11:30 a.m. — The court is two blocks from the jail. They usually transport the prisoners to the court by van for security reasons. We present a problem since the van is inaccessible. They look to a supervisor and after a half hour the answer comes down. Let the prisoners roll to the courthouse with a Deputy Sheriff guarding each of us. Babs, Trisha, Reverend McCracken, Art and Vivian (friends and family) are waiting for us in the hall. The guards hurry us into the courtroom. The media is out in force. As we wait, we wonder what the DA will do. Joni enters the room and her face is blank. Rubenstein, the DA, is his usual arrogant self. Joni states that the 6 days served are both punishment and deterrent. Rubenstein surprisingly agrees, but asks the court to get our statement, had we learned our lesson? He wants us to grandstand for the cameras, and get the Judge mad at us again. Instead we suppress the urge to yell "WE WILL RIDE" and simply state we will be returning to our homes and work, Cincinnati will be only a memory. Judge Sundeman accepts the motion to mitigate. We are free.

2 p.m. — We are sitting in Skyline Chili, a local restaurant, and talking over the last six days. Needless to say much of the talk is also about Detroit, October 5-9th, our next battle with APTA. Spending six days in jail makes one think about commitment. Detroit will take commitment from us all, but...

SUNDAY, MAY 25, 1986

4 p.m. — The day passes as usual. Up at 6 a.m. with breakfast of cold eggs and boiled water that had looked at a coffee bean. After lunch our daily request for medication, supplies, and bowel program assistance is dually not-

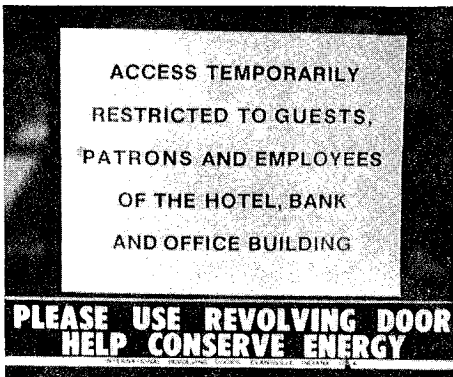
WE WILL RIDE



# Cincinnati

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recently learned another Judge had over-turned the banning of the three from the city, saying simply they could not protest in front of the Westin. We had also learned the US Dept. of Transportation had ended its seven year tease with a set of the most abominable 504 regulations to the adopted to date. After a brief press conference to explain ADAPT's position, our purpose, and our plan for the day we moved around to the 4th St. side of the hotel where automobile traffic was going in and out of the hotel. ADAPT members took up our posi-



Disabled denied access. This sign was posted on all entrances to the Westin Hotel.

tions along the sidewalk. Fourteen of these who had committed to get arrested took their places in front of the entrances, which were already blockaded by the police. Quite a number of SOCCD members had joined us, some because they were protesting for transit and some because they had found Cincinnati's selective justice and selective civil rights had touched them personally. Their city's cops were denying them access to the hotel complex—simply because they were in wheelchairs.

It was a long and emotional

scene as one by one our people were hauled off in paratransit vans by the cops. (As in all the other cities we have visited, we found the only way to get a ride on short notice is to get arrested.) In all, fourteen were taken in from the front of the hotel as the rest chanted and cheered. The final three arrested, the same three that were arrested Monday, went around the corner at the end and tried to visit the Queen City Metro Office, but were turned away at every floor. So finally, with a chain laid across their laps, they blocked the entrance and were arrested and eventually held for six days (see related story this issue).

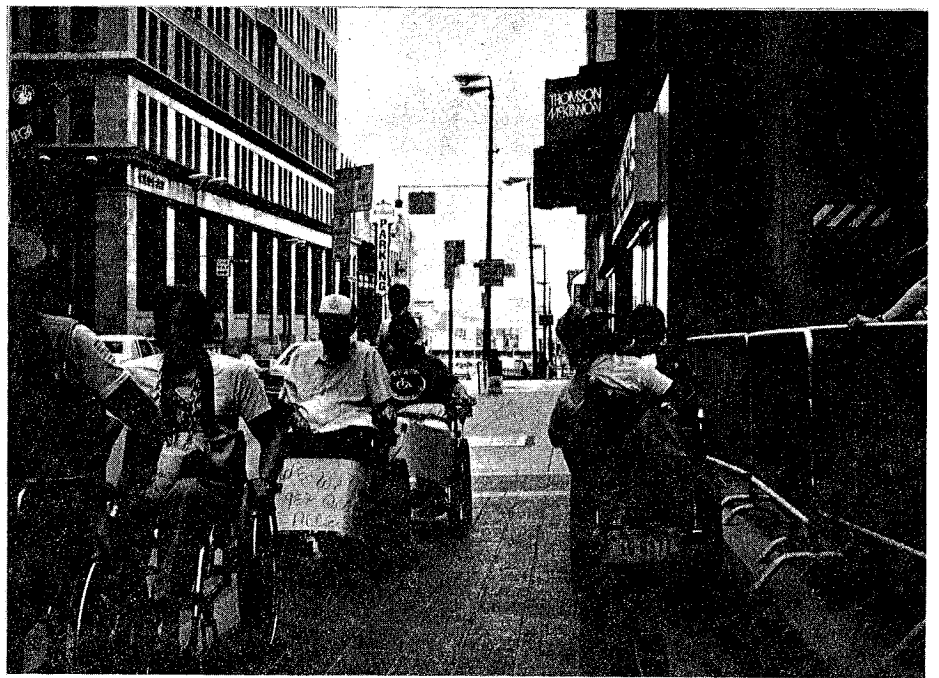
Access is a civil right. Cincinnati went a long way toward proving that; and it went a long way toward showing how deep seated the resistance to accepting that fact can be. We will ride. We will not go away. We will return "again and again and again and again. . ." as Greg put it, until we have overcome, not our disabilities, but the prejudice and discrimination. See you in Detroit!



Renata, Frank and Vivian (L-R) wait in lobby of the Justice Center. Hours later eight are released.



Cincinnati police received in depth training in how to handle the handicapped protesters. Some even asked for specific ADAPT members by name. Here it takes two trained police to temporarily immobilize Rick James.



Marching and picketing in the Cincinnati drizzle. Even the parking garage was blockaded and guarded.

## ADAPT Opens Regional Office in Dallas

Thanks to a Campaign for Human Development Grant, National ADAPT opened a regional office in Dallas on September 1, 1986. Joe Carle, Glenn Horton, and Cathy Thomas, aided by George Cooper and others, will head up the organizing effort against DART and the inaccessibility of the glittering Dallas metroplex.

ADAPT has already challenged DART and its discriminatory services on several occasions. The sustained and mounting efforts which a regional office will pro-

vide should shake up the "Big D" and add some heat to a situation which has been on simmer for far too long.

The scope of the grant is larger than just accessible mass transportation. ADAPT will also be working in the issues of segregated schools, access to the community and similar issues affecting disabled Dallas area residents. With the potential for renewal for the next three years, "access is a civil right" will be addressed in the active ADAPT style.

## Incitement Lives... Thank You Live Oak

Yes, through the generosity of the Live Oak Fund for Social Change, you will be receiving at least another six issues of *Incitement*. Live Oak has given us funding for another year to help offset our publication costs and continue our organizing efforts in Texas.

*Incitement* is the way ADAPT gets information out to you. You can help us by sending informa-

tion from your area on your battle for accessible mainline transit. This will help others learn what is being done in other areas and how it is being done.

We need your information, but we also need funds to keep *Incitement* alive after Live Oak funding ends, and to help with growing postage costs. We need your support. Even a dollar will help. Anything you can do to help will be appreciated.

## Now You Have It, Now You Don't

Two proposed bills at the Texas State Legislature may have a major impact on the funding of the Dallas, Houston, and Austin metro transit systems. If passed the bills would require elections in these three cities to cut the current one cent sales tax (given to the transit systems) to a half of cent. The effect on accessible transportation is unknown, but we can guess that the cost of lifts would be heralded as the reason why accessible mainline transportation cannot be done. We know the priority disabled people's transit gets today. Stay tuned for updates.

"Good ideas must not only have wings, they must have landing gear."



"Justice will come when those who aren't hurting are as indignant as those who are."



# Around The State

## Houston

### Open Letter

July 23, 1986

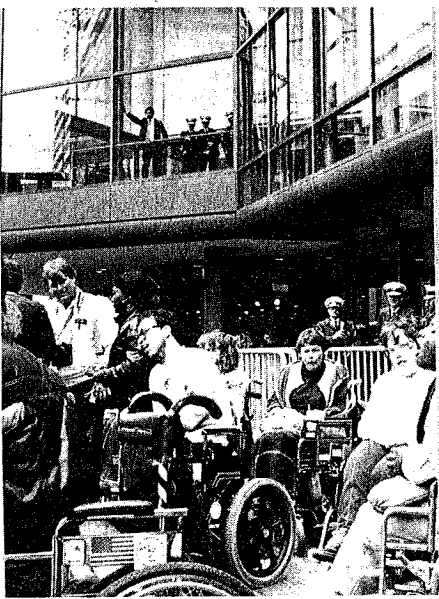
Mr. John J. King  
Metropolitan Transit Authority  
500 Jefferson  
P.O. Box 61429  
Houston, Texas 77208-1429

Dear Mr. King:

I am not going to second guess your intentions. All I know is that you have slammed the door of opportunity shut in the face of the disabled community by the Board's decision not to buy accessible buses. You can rationalize that your and the Board have listened to and studied "wheelchair patients" all you want, but still your policy of keeping a separate transportation system for the disabled is SEGREGATION, DISCRIMINATION, PATERNALISM, and is APARTHEID in nature.

Equal access is not just some concept ADAPT has been advocating for, "WE WILL RIDE" is not some slogan shouted by radicals. The disabled community will no longer be ostracized from the public. "WE WILL RIDE" means we will decide to take control of our lives. We will no longer passively accept the Board's "well meaning intentions".

Yes, I was there when 10 persons with disabilities testified last month before the Board to keep the status quo. There will always be strong resistance to change by those afraid to disrupt their comfortable fish-bowl existence by fear of the unknown. The majority of the disabled community have been brainwashed not to expect, nor fight for rights that others take for granted. The disabled community is perceived as a fragmented voiceless minority. What I find that Board most contemptible of is that you used



APTA members and Queen City cops looks down on ADAPT "riff-raff" protesting segregation and discrimination.

the fear of losing the only transportation the disabled have to divide the community.

When I heard the debate over accessible buses I found myself agreeing, for the first time, with the General Manager, Alan Kieper, when he said "buying sixty accessible buses for a pilot project would be a cruel hoax". A feeble attempt with a pilot project is doomed to failure. ADAPT has always advocated for the Board to buy only buses with that are accessible to all.

The issue of the right to equal access will not go away because of your arrogant decision of NO to the disabled community. You and the Board may think that by placing a gag over our mouths you need not listen to what we have to say. You found out last February how wrong your estimates of the disabled community are. You and the policies of the Board forced us to the practice of civil disobedience by not making a commitment to buy accessible buses. Now you and the board have made a commitment NOT to buy accessible buses at all!

February 12, was just a beginning for the disabled community in Houston. ADAPT members will not tolerate anything less than a written policy from the board to insure that the disabled will have equal access to the public transportation system.

"WE WILL RIDE!"

Rand Metcalfe  
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### Metro Seven Get Probated Sentences

It was a three day court drama in downtown Houston, complete with jury challenges and surprise witnesses, a trial reminiscent of a Perry Mason story. Six of the original Metro Seven arrested in Houston February 12th were found guilty of obstructing traffic. One of the original seven was unable to appear at the trial.

The Metro Seven had pleaded not guilty to charges of obstructing traffic to test a Texas state law which allows for a defense to this charge if your are protesting for social, political or economic reasons. Unfortunately, this central issue was lost in a mass of technicalities regarding the specifics of the arrest.

Though the jury found them guilty, Judge Ross, who passed sentence, understood the underlying freedom of speech and civil rights issues.

He parcelled our sentences up to six months in jail and \$1,000 fines, but all were probated. This

meant no time served, no court costs and no fines to pay.

The issue went before the Houston public for three days and most of the media was positive. However, it is unfortunate that the Texas law is still unclear in the issue of our social, political and economic right to ride the mainline buses. Overall the action from February 12th to the court case was another illustration of the resolve of ADAPT members to fight for access, in the streets, in the court, wherever necessary.

## El Paso

By Jim Parker

LAS CRUCES, NM—Welcome Jack Gilstrap! Or, was that Fire Jack Gilstrap?

Anyway ADAPT of El Paso ventured across state lines in early April to "help" inaugurate the Roadrunner Transit system with signs and 22 people, of which 12 were from Las Cruces. And what a welcome it was for Roadrunner and the American Public Transit System (APTA). They thought the only time ADAPT strikes is in large metro areas or at convention time.

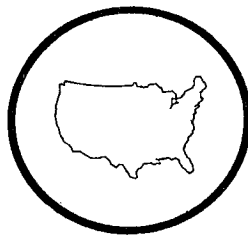
Were they wrong!

The spokespeople for APTA held sway for the most part, even though we distributed literature and brochures. However, ties and business suits seemed to draw attention for the "correct" information. However, our gathering sent a shaft of light into the disabled community and the University (New Mexico State), both of which had understood from previous talk that the system would be accessible. Not until they saw that NO(!) paratransit was for disabled people, did they realize they had been duped.

An editorial in the Las Cruces called it a good cause, but the wrong time, and called us outside agitators from El Paso and Denver (we couldn't find anyone from Denver in our group). Bad timing? Only in that disabled people were questioning being left out of the system at its beginning.

All in all it was a good action with the potential for some people being involved with ADAPT locally and nationally.

Hi to Jack Gilstrap!!



# Around The Nation

## Illinois. . .

One of *Incitement's* roving reporters relates that in Springfield disabled persons were BANNED from attending their local transit board meeting during which the board was planning to discuss purchase of lifts for the mainline buses. In Juliet, where transit board members are discussing the purchase of 68 buses, a delegation of mainline supporters from Champaign joined local disabled people in August to speak to the board about lifts. Chicago ADAPT will be bringing twenty five people to Detroit, according to the Denver folks.

## Kentucky. . .

A mid-summer action in Louisville culminated in ADAPT members chaining themselves to the door of their Metro Building. Three people were arrested.

## Colorado. . .

Denver ADAPT swung into action at Stapleton Airport in response to American Airlines new policy of charging passengers who use electric wheelchairs an addition-

al \$50 to transport their chairs. As one protester put it "I've been inconvenienced all my life. Now I have to pay extra to transport my legs." The protest, along with letters and calls of outrage from disabled travellers from around the country convinced American the best idea would be to forget that policy.

### Denver RTD Ridership By Jim Parker

They said we wouldn't do it. Ride regular buses that is.

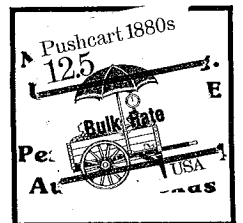
Is that true?  
The latest stats from RTD in Denver prove the contrary.

During the months of October, November and December there were 45,000 wheelchair riders on RTD. That's right 45,000, counted on a new sophisticated counting system. When questioned the director of RTD said the stats were valid.

When the system is maintained and wheelchair users and disabled people develop confidence in the reliability of the system, it will be used, because for disabled people it means freedom and is economically sound!

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED