



Some of ADAPT's most seasoned warriors are also our best fundraisers.



Wheelchair Santas increase awareness and get the troops to the actions.

ADAPT of Texas
2810 Pearl
Austin, Texas 78705

We
Will
Ride

Just A Start

By Linda S. Johnstone

After being arrested and spending the night in the San Francisco jail for blocking inaccessible city buses, I felt empowered to "tackle" Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) by utilizing their "accessible" buses. My first step was to arrange for scheduled lift equipped buses on my route and at transfer points. My letter writing campaign, which began by requesting lift equipped buses, was answered with "we will work on it." Shortly after this reply, I noticed there was an accessible bus on my route, so I decided to see if the system worked.

As I waited for the bus to arrive I was excited and apprehensive. It felt good to be in my motorized wheelchair not having to walk down the hill on my crutches. When the bus arrived

it wasn't lift equipped, so I had to wait for approximately 20 minutes for a lift equipped bus. In the meantime, a supervisor arrived to "check" it out. When the next accessible bus arrived I boarded the bus and rode downtown where I was met by another supervisor. I waited over 30 minutes for a lift bus on a route that has lift buses scheduled at regular 15 minute intervals. Needless to say, I was late for work. I began self-advocacy upon arrival at work by calling DART to get things worked out. It took five days of working with DART to get transportation arranged. I am now riding mainline service daily. There are problems, but working together they can be resolved.

This is only the beginning. Listen, Dallas, WE WILL RIDE!!!

Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 166
Austin, Texas

INCITEMENT INCITEMENT

Vol. 4, No.1

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

Spring 1988

Wheelchair Warriors

The action in San Francisco will go down as a milestone in disability rights history. Four days of hard core actions - over 500 people participated, having come from all four corners of the continental US and Alaska. The energy of the disabled people there for the four days was electrifying, and TIME magazine called us "wheelchair warriors." APTA, The Department of Transportation, and the country knew that ADAPT was a force to be reckoned with.

Much thanks goes to those who came and gave local support. Special thanks also goes to the top notch legal team who did an outstanding job!

Rally and March

The sound of 500 disabled activists chanting "We Will Ride" and "Access is a Civil Right" echoed through Union Square on Sunday afternoon.

Listening to speakers like Cecil Williams, the Pastor of Glide Memorial Church, Elenaor Smeal, Past President of NOW, and Justin Dart, Jr., then Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration fired the crowd up to begin the march to City Hall, where APTA was holding their Sunday social, hosted by Mayor Feinstein and the City of San Francisco.

The march began led by six year old Jennifer, being pushed by her mom, and Justin Dart, Jr. It was a powerful scene: 500 people stretching six blocks through the hills of San Francisco. On arriving at City Hall we surrounded the building. APTA members would not get in without an ADAPT welcome, and it was a welcome they will long remember. Chanting "Access is a Civil Right" we linked arms and APTA was forced to climb over our wheelchairs.

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"ADAPT calls for APTA to come out and face the music"

Meet Me in St. Louis Let's Make History Together

There can be no doubt the momentum of our movement is carrying us on to victory. St. Louis is the next link in the chain. The smell of the sweat and tears of our labors is around us, but also the faint scent of victory hangs in the spring air. Today the vision of a tomorrow when justice and equality will be ours, when we'll be treated as we are...people...today that vision is strong.

The attitude, actions and tone of APTA when we were in DC spoke volumes. It was clear they see the tide is turning. When DOT lost the case in the district court in Pennsylvania (see article this issue) Jack Gilstrap was interviewed and used his sorry old line equating providing lifts on buses to buying each disabled person a Mercedes Benz. Yet less than two months later the man who could not stand to be in the same room with us came out to talk with us twice and told us (with

his best "be polite" manners) APTA will be addressing this issue. We are very near to a national policy of wheelchair access on all public transit.

When ADAPT went out to St. Louis in March the local transit authority, Bi-State, requested a meeting to explain their 504 plan committed them to mainline access. As we sat in the office of Diamato, Bi-State's Executive Director, overlooking the famous arch, he and all his chief assistants made it clear they did not want to mess with ADAPT. ADAPT, in turn, made it clear we would not mess with them... as long as their support of mainline access proved genuine, and only until then. It was ironic that the disabled services advisory committee with whom we had met just before, had not been clearly informed of Bi-State's positions nor had they ever been informed of the position of Mayor Schoemehl; but his Com-

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"Over 500 strong, ADAPT and local disability rights supporters marched from San Francisco's Union Square to City Hall to spread our message... 'We Will Ride.'"



Clayton Jones, Bob Kafka, Leslie Holden and others push for their rights, while San Francisco's finest try to hold back the tide.

St. Louis

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missioner of the Office of the Disabled, Deborah Phillips, let ADAPT know the Mayor supports full access.

Interestingly, St. Louis' Old Court House was the sight of the Dred Scott case, in which a slave sued for his freedom, but was denied it by every court in the land up to the Supreme Court. The Court House is just down Market St. from where ADAPT will be staying. About two blocks down the street from ADAPT is the old train station, Union Station, which is now a mall and the site of the Omni Hotel where APTA will be staying. The Cardinals will be playing in town the weekend we arrive.

Our dates for St. Louis are Friday May 13th through Thursday May 19th. We will be staying at the Holiday Inn - Market. Please make you room reservations through the Denver ADAPT office (303)393-0630. As Wade put it "Be there for yourself. Be there for others. Be there."



Bill Bolte of ADAPT of California, presenting Itzhak Perlman with the latest issue of Incitement.



Around The Nation

Chicago, IL - ADAPT of Chicago has won a major victory for accessibility and the right to ride. On January 19th, Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, the district court judge went from her home to a press conference to announce her decision that the Chicago Transit Authority was in violation of the state human rights law by not providing access for disabled people on the mainline public transit system. Chicago Transit Authority, realizing the tide is turning, shortly thereafter passed a motion to buy only accessible buses, and their first purchase order has been made. This victory for ADAPT of Chicago is making waves across the USA.

El Paso, TX - On a broiling hot day in June 1983, a small demonstration in San Jacinto Plaza began the local struggle for accessible mainline transit. As the demonstrators blocked the bus and attempted to use the lift, which had until then been ignored, they were choked by a cloud of dust and papers. That cloud has barely settled four years later. Finally (November 1987) El Paso has voted in the 1/2 cent sales tax to fund a transit authority which will provide access for persons with disabilities. Denver ADAPT was there to help the first demonstration get off the ground. Local activists both in the streets and in the dark halls of government have kept the pressure on until this dream became reality.

Dallas, TX - Atlantis-ADAPT of Dallas recently held a people power training led by Shel Trapp. The event, held in conjunction with the Texas Transit Association conference, was a great success. Disability activists from across the state came for training and found the old saying is true...you learn best by doing." The power of ADAPT was made very clear when ADAPT rolled into the transit conference's swishy evening soiree and enjoyed free cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while letting transit directors, board members, state and federal representatives know...we will ride. The demand to have the regional UMTA director meet with local activists was quickly met. Finally Dallas Area Regional Transit felt ADAPT's displeasure when several members staged a crawl-on at rush hour onto the recently purchase inaccessible over-the-road coaches. Downtown traffic was snarled and riders were forced to change buses, inconvenienced, as Tom Pugh put it once "as we have been inconvenienced all our lives."

Oklahoma City - Rumor has it, a local ADAPT chapter in this neck of the woods is really making the "authorities" sit up and take notice. Only a few months old, this group has over 25 regulars and is holding weekly actions. Look out Oklahoma...ADAPT will ride!

continued

Seattle, WA - Washington state has organized an ADAPT chapter. Even this transit system needs a little fine tuning according to the users, and local ADAPT activists plan to work on other issues too, including access to public buildings and attendant care.

Austin, TX - Now that 80 percent of the buses in the local transit system, Capital Metro, are accessible, 15 wheelchair protesters took to the sidewalk in front of Katz's famous deli to demand a ramp and access. Carrying signs reading "Katz's Lox Us Out", "We Want Access... Not Crumbs", "Vegetables Eat Sandwiches Too" and "Let Our People In" protesters chanted and passed out leaflets to those going inside. Katz has agreed to meet with the protestors and further actions are planned if he is not yet convinced.

Albany, NY - Another transit system has seen the benefits of mainline access, according to Capital

District Center for Independence Director Todd Eggert. After years of knee-jerk nos to a small group's ongoing push for mainline access, CDIC suddenly saw the light and voted in a new policy which promotes mainline access.

Briarwood, FL - The Briarwood disability community is struggling with their local AMTRAK. Apparently AMTRAK in this area believes disabled people are just so much baggage and can be loaded as such. The Briarwood Center for Independent Living is taking this on along with some issues with their local transit system, Coordinated Transit Systems.

Charlestown, WV - Handicapped United of West Virginia has been struggling for over a decade for decent accessible transportation. Finally they are making some progress, but they call out to ADAPT to keep up the struggle and keep the fires burning for our civil rights.



Three trollies in one blow. Claude Holcombe master bus stopper!

Wheelchair Warriors

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Moscone Center

Monday began with a march to the Moscone Center. Our numbers were smaller, but the intensity was still there. The police had blockaded the front of the center so we could not get close to the building. In typical ADAPT fashion we went to "plan B" and immediately captured a bus shuttling APTA delegates from their hotel to the Center. 15 arrests were made and all were released that day.

Inside Moscone local disabled APTA delegates unfurled a banner supporting ADAPT and access, but to their frustration they were ignored.

Cable Cars

Tuesday's target was the cable cars, one of the most famous transit systems in the world. Local disabled folks had some reservations about the selection of the cable cars, but agreed to the strategy.

It worked perfectly. We marched to the Powell and Market turnaround where barricades had been set up. Clayton Jones, of Connecticut, leaped out of his chair, under the barricade and sat on the cable car turnaround. Michael

Winter, local California activist, joined him as did eight others. Soon the streets were filled with other people in chairs who had entered from different directions. The Powell Street hill was dotted with cable cars, which other groups had captured. The street was closed down and no cable cars were moving. The ADAPT message reached the national media. While on-lookers cheered us on, police arrested 76 people, and 43 wound up spending the night in a gym which was under construction.

DOT and Court

Those who had not been arrested at the cable car show down did not remain idle. An evening vigil was held outside the jailhouse, and Wednesday morning before the court appearance we headed down to the DOT building to let them know ADAPT held them accountable for the trashing of our rights. ADAPT took over the lobby, but left in time to show support at the court house. As one woman, Connie Arnold put it "They're our heroes. They're standing up for us and everybody."

Mercedes Benz

(To the tune of Janis' "Mercedes Benz")

Oh Jack won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz
My friends all ride buses
I must call in
Worked hard all my lifetime
No access my friend
Oh Jack won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz

Oh Jack won't you buy me a lift on a bus
It don't cost a fortune
Tho' you say it must
Local option won't cut it
Tho' you say it's just
Oh Jack won't you buy me a lift on a bus

Oh Jack won't you buy me a night on the town
Institutions we live in
Won't take us off the grounds
So prove that you love us
And drive us on down
Oh Jack won't you buy me a night on the town

Oh Jack won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz
My friends all ride buses
But I'm forced to call in
worked hard all my lifetime
Little help from my friends
Oh Jack won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz

(Adapted by Jim and Barbara Parker)



Justin Dart, Jr., former Commissioner of RSA speaks at the San Francisco ADAPT rally.

Justice for Justin

Justin Dart, Jr., Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration has been a public supporter of ADAPT and actively showed his support at the San Francisco action by speaking at the Sunday rally and leading the march to city hall that afternoon.

When ADAPT members learned of his forced resignation by Assistant Secretary of Education Madeleine Will, plans were started for a nationwide display of public support for Justin and his civil rights positions. On December 14, 1987, "Rallies of Conscience" were or-

ganized at the Rehabilitation Services Administration, RSA and Education Department regional offices in: DC, Boston, New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco and Seattle. ADAPT members, with surprisingly, little assistance from the independent living movement, organized small but effective protests throughout the country.

Note: After being forced to resign, Justin Dart, Jr. is now receiving the President's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped highest award. Strange Celebration.

Compare and Contrast

The reaction of the deaf students at Gallaudet University to the hiring of a hearing President.

To

The independent living movement's reaction to the forced resignation of their titular leader Justin Dart, Jr.

Question: Is "independent living movement" and "disability rights" an oxymoron?

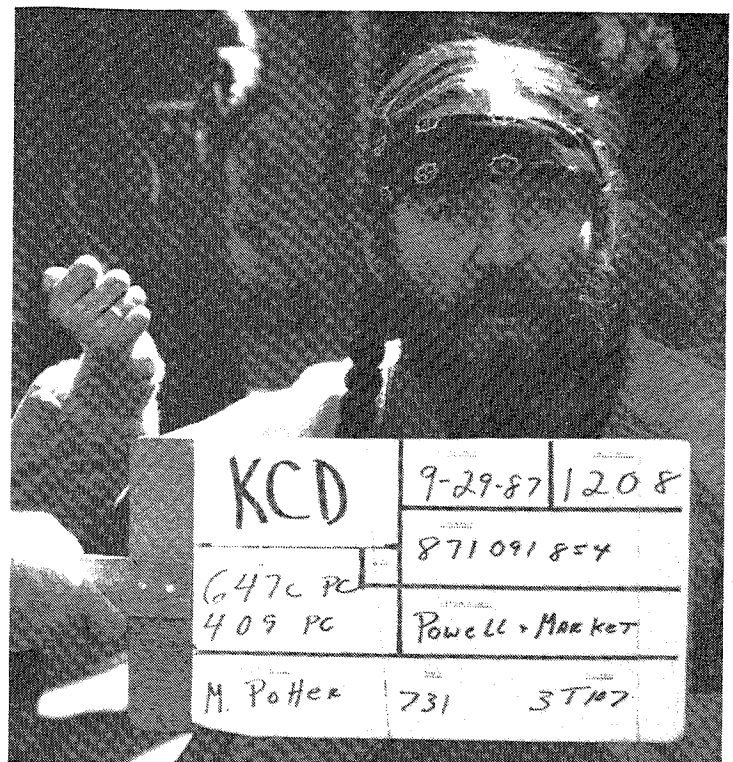
In the Streets and in the Courts

Celebrate the victory! This ADAPT victory was won not in the streets but in a Federal District Court in January 1988. Judge Marvin Katz ruled that the Department of Transportation's (DOT's) three percent cost limitation was "...arbitrary and capricious." (DOT had previously required transit systems to spend only three percent of their total operating budget on services to disabled riders.) In striking down the DOT cost cap Judge Katz said "DOT grantees maybe permitted to take the least expensive or most cost effective route toward providing services to their disabled patrons but these services must in fact be provided. The cost limitation at issue there permits the burden of cost to eviscerate (wipe out) the civil right."

One irony of the suit was that Eastern Paralyzed Veteran's Association was listed as the main plaintiff with ADAPT. PVA has attempted to keep its members from "associating with" ADAPT, but joining the ADAPT lawsuit obviously does not defy the PVA resolution. The lawsuit was filed in June 1986 by Tim Cook of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia, PILCOP.

Though a major legal victory for the disabled community, the changes may still be a long time in coming. The DOT appealed the decision in March and the outcome is still unsure. The street strategy must continue.

We Will Ride!



Mike Auberger posing for pictures for his mother.

Curb Cut Creators Shake Both Coasts

"If I had a hammer
I'd hammer in the morning
I'd hammer in the evening
All over this land...
I'd hammer out justice
I'd hammer out freedom
I'd hammer out love between
my brothers and my sisters
All over this land"

ADAPT may have a new theme song if the newest series of actions take hold. Not willing to put up with lack of access to public sidewalks, disabled activists from Los Angeles and Hartford said enough is enough.

Sledgehammers in hand, 40 Los Angeles ADAPT members converged on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, or as they called it ... "the Walk of Shame." This is where all the famous people's stars are imbedded in the concrete- so obviously they have sidewalk modifying equipment out on a regular basis. Yet after five years of requests, no access has been made. So one by one ADAPT members let the curb have it while chanting "Walk of Shame" and "We Will Roll." The local media was out in force and surprisingly enough the local Congressman, Mike Woo, promised to have curb cuts installed and the sidewalk resurfaced to protect against slipping within two weeks.

Two days later Hartford ADAPT members descended on their Union Station, which provides only very limited access for disabled persons. "People don't have to come at us with sledgehammers" said Arthur Handman, Greater Hartford Transit District Director. But it seems they did. "We're equal citizens and we're tired of waiting" said ADAPT member Lynda Hanscom. Almost immediately after the protest started four people were arrested and held over night, as they refused to sign written promises to appear in court.



Groups of protesters held APTA shuttle buses taking APTA delegates to and from the conference. Bernard, Cindi and Greg work with others to block this bus.

ADAPT Visits Department of Transportation

The strategy was laid out. We would take the accessible DC Metro subway to the Department of Transportation, DOT, building on 7th and D street. We would break into four groups of ten people each and chain the four entrances to the DOT building shut. The symbolic message would be - "no access for us...no access for you."

The plan worked perfectly. The DOT was under siege. 40 disabled people had taken the doors. Federal police were directing the 4,000 DOT employees out of the building through the underground garage. Secretary of Transportation Burnley, came down to assess the situation. The police had decided not to arrest any of us. We decided to spend the night at DOT.

The temperature dropped steadily to 11 degrees (with wind chill factor, 18 without) in what turned out to be the coldest March 14th in DC history. The local community supported ADAPT by supplying blankets, sleeping bags, food and hot drinks. The Center for Creative Non-violence, the Endependence Center of Noarthern Virginia, Justin

Dart, Jr., and the local Department of Human Services all brought supplies. Looking around the DOT courtyard all you could see was mounds of blankets heaped over people in wheelchairs. As the sun rose it became apparent the police were again going to direct arriving employees through the underground garage entrance.

ADAPT sprang into action. Unchaining ourselves from the entrance of the building, we moved to block the entrance of the underground garage. Police moved people out of the driveways but other ADAPT members filled their places. Still others took to the streets in roving hit teams which would grab a bus, hold it until the police pulled us off and move onto the next one. 24 ADAPT members were finally arrested for obstructing traffic.

After quick processing at the police station, ADAPT members were shuttled to court to face the same Judge who heard their cases in 1984. The judge commended ADAPT for our goals and allowed time for statements to be made for

the public record.

Other ADAPT actions during this visit to DC included a Sunday night welcome to APTA at their hotel by singing them Elaine Kolb's "We Will Ride", and a visit to APTA offices and Jack Gilstrap on Tuesday to sing him ADAPT's version of "Mercedes Benz" as written by Barbara Rameriez and Jim Parker.

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