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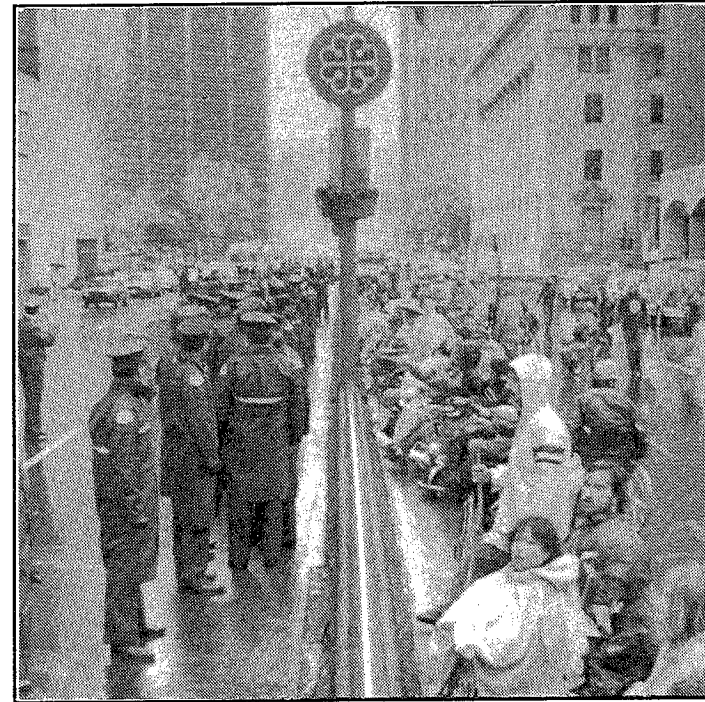
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# INCITEMENT INCITEMENT

Vol. 4, No. 3

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

Winter 1988



Boulevard René Levesque was closed off for over two hours in front of the "Hotel Queen E." as ADAPT protestors and Montreal police came to stand off.  
 Photo: Tom Olin

## ADAPT GOES INTERNATIONAL Transit Access for All

"Dangereux Handicapes en Fauteuil Roulant?" (Dangerous Handicapped People in Wheelchairs?) was the headline used by Montreal's *La Press* to warn of ADAPT coming to town. ADAPT, American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit, was in Montreal to protest at the annual convention of APTA, the American Public Transit Association; the issue: lifts on regular buses and access to public transit for people with disabilities. This fifth year of protesting APTA, and ADAPT's first international and bi-lingual protest, was one of the most successful so far.

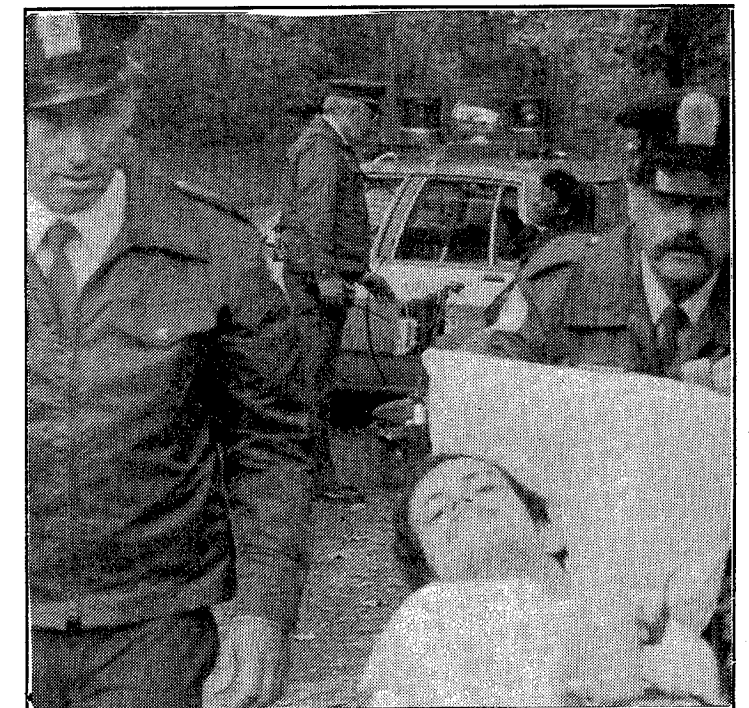
The four day series of eight actions began Sunday October 1st. Despite a torrential downpour and near freezing temperatures, 120 members of ADAPT and representatives of our local counterpart Le Movement des Consommateurs Handicapes de Quebec (the Movement of Disabled Consumers of Quebec) marched down Boulevard Rene Levesque to the Hotel Queen Elizabeth, APTA's 1988 convention site. With at least a one to one ratio of police to protesters, demonstrators swarmed across the road to enter the hotel. Even as a wall of police barricades was hastily erected, protesters climbed down from their chairs and crawled under the barriers only to be carried back by the police, but no arrests were made. *continues...*

## IF IT WALKS LIKE A DUCK, QUACKS LIKE A DUCK... APTA Reaffirms "Local Option" Policy

*Negotiate! Cooperate! Bargain!* How many times has ADAPT heard those words from "leaders" in the disability community regarding how to handle APTA. Well Paralyzed Veterans of America-PVA, Easter Seals and the National Council on the Handicapped learned a lesson about working with APTA and what it gets you.

As mentioned in the last issue of *Incitement*, APTA's Elderly and Disabled Persons Service Task Force developed the proposed draft resolution which called for APTA to adopt a policy which states in part "...that henceforth all purchases of new buses, new rail cars for accessible rail systems and related equipment be accessible to and usable by elderly persons and individuals with disabilities including wheelchair users." The draft was then published in *Passenger Transport*, the APTA newsletter.

In total disregard of their own committee efforts and recommendations, the APTA Board of Directors voted unanimously to reaffirm APTA's local option policy. This action shows the APTA Board of Director's complete lack of respect for the disability community  
*continued on page 7*



Ten more arrests were made at the spouses luncheon on Mount Royal. It took two officers to handle dangerous characters like this ruffian from Austin, Texas—Tim Baker.  
 Photo: Tom Olin

That evening ADAPT took a more undercover approach, no small feat for over 100 wheelchairs. Sneaking through back alleys and a back door, 15 people in wheelchairs were carried down a flight of stairs into one of the satellite hotels in which APTA members were staying. Meanwhile, two other groups converged on the front door using their wheelchairs to push aside makeshift barricades of luggage carts. Singing and chanting, we took over the lobby—blocking elevators, escalators and stairs as APTA members looked on in shock. Finally the police selectively arrested 28 of the demonstrators, including two who had chained themselves to the stairway.

Montreal history was made that night with a judge and prosecutor on call 24 hours and a 3:00 a.m. trial. The judge, dubbed by many locals as the “hanging judge”, sentenced the group to a \$50 fine, to be paid on the spot, or three days in jail, with a probation banning those arrested from entering downtown Montreal for six months. Twenty of the group would not pay the fine and were off to prison. This put no damper on ADAPT’s actions however. The APTA Spouses’ Luncheon and Fashion Show, a favorite ADAPT target, was held at a chalet atop Mount Royal on Monday. Ironically, this was the site of a battle in Canada’s fight for independence. Ten more ADAPT members were selected for arrest as the APTA buses were blocked and the spouses were forced to walk past chanting demonstrators. Monday night another undercover action was staged. Eluding the police, a group of 20 protestors penetrated the Queen Elizabeth through an underground shopping area and chained themselves in a circle inside. Seven year old Jennifer Keelan, who uses a

*“At first I felt like a foreign freak. When I left, I felt like a hero. One restaurant owner treated us to free food; another extended his hours [for us]. Our hotel and the parking lot attendant went out of their way to make sure our needs were met. People stopped us in the street to talk about the issue. A parent of a local child with a disability dropped by one night to thank us. Francois said he hopes this week’s manifestations will encourage more disabled people to step forward to fight for their rights.”*

—Mark Johnson

wheelchair, and her mother were taken into custody, threatened with arrest, but later let go.

Meanwhile, back in the infirmaries of Bordeaux prison for men and Maison Tanguay prison for women, the numbers were mounting, the system was realizing its inability to deal with severely disabled inmates, and the ADAPT inmates were on a hunger strike. Officials decided, due to good behavior, everyone would be out by Tuesday morning. A visit from a US Consulate staff person helped pass the time.

ADAPT swung into its final phase of operation Tuesday afternoon. As requested by MCHQ, the local transit systems, which are completely inaccessible to people with mobility impairments, were targeted. Buses were stopped for an hour at a bus transfer site, while a local woman crawled from her wheelchair aboard a bus and tried unsuccessfully to ride. One of the protesters said to the crowd “we are sorry for the inconvenience, but we are inconvenienced all our lives.”

Wednesday’s action was the grand finale. ADAPT entered the Longueuil METRO subway station and once again tried to ride. With no ramps or elevators and too narrow turnstiles, the effort had dramatic effect. Fifty ADAPT members whose songs and chants echoed in the cavernous station, cheered as 15 others crawled out of their wheelchairs, down the steps, and across the floor to the turnstiles where police blocked their passage. From the platform floor ADAPT held a press conference explaining our simple desire to use the public transit our taxes pay for, and the degradation lack of access causes for people with disabilities. Nous serons transportés... will ride!

*“I thought of all the effort that went into this whole operation—the planning, the organizing, the flying, the driving, the chanting, the riding, and the getting arrested. It was, even to me who was in the midst of it all, overwhelming...When 120 people with disabilities are able to mobilize an entire city’s local police, when 120 people with disabilities are able to compel the print and broadcast media to tell their story, and when 120 people with disabilities are able to bring to a foreign country a revolutionary idea like disability rights, you had better believe we are powerful.”*

—Lillibeth Navarro-Persina

**VIEW FROM THE INSIDE**

by Lillibeth Navarro-Persina  
(Excerpt from a longer piece)

At 2:30 a.m. we arrived at the Tanguay Women’s Prison. They immediately put all the women together in a locked waiting room. As they called us one by one to do more paperwork, I decided to be last so I could use the restroom. But my wheelchair did not have the space to move past the sink. I could not even use the toilet after all, but I decided to wash my face at least...We were forbidden to hold our belongings until we were ready to leave jail. Then they took our pictures...Finally, they escorted me to a prison cell...It was a very tiny room—barely two feet wide and seven feet long, with a bed, closet, desk, a stool and toilet all crammed in that space. All the furniture was permanently fixed to the floor making it impossible to provide access for the wheelchair. The police officer insisted on carrying me to the bed and leaving the wheelchair outside the door but I wanted to try getting in myself by entering the cell backward. It was impossible because the toilet was in the way. In fact, it was the first thing that greeted us. Of all the difficulties of that day, this was to me, the hardest—I felt I had no more control of the situation. I wanted to park my chair next to my bed so I could easily get in and out in case of emergency or whenever I would need to use the restroom.

“You can call the nurse anytime,” the officer said, “all you have to do is reach the alarm button just above your bed.” But the alarm button was 25 inches above my pillow, beyond my reach.

“But sir, it’s not accessible!” I pointed out.

“So then, just call out very loud,” he said “and the nurse will come.” that was no consolation, especially after I met the nurse. She was of the immediate opinion that it was not necessary to give us access since they were already giving us ‘privileges’... They said they’d leave the cell door open so they could hear me. The nurse gave me my white prison gown and a brown bag. It had a bar of soap, a towel, comb and toothbrush, compliments of the Montreal prison system. I had all that I needed except for access. I could not reach the sink which was above the inaccessible toilet. To me, these impossibilities were the real bars that kept us trapped, not the black, steel bars that framed my prison cell window.



Montreal police received special training in “how to handle disabled protestors” before ADAPT arrived in town. They even learned how to add new meaning to the classic phrase “wheelchair-bound”, as Lillibeth Navarro-Persina found out. Photo: Tom Olin

*“As I waited in line to be booked, the police officer who arrested me sat in front of me. I asked him to loosen the velcro straps so tightly tied around my arms and chest. As he did so very carefully he muttered ‘I have feelings too, you know.’ His face started to get red. ‘I have a handicapped seven-year-old boy who uses a wheelchair. The local bus here does not carry wheelchairs, so very often we have to wait two weeks in advance to schedule him for a ride.’ ‘Sir, don’t cry’ I said, ‘That’s precisely why we’re here—to work for accessible transportation.’”*—Lillibeth Navarro-Persina

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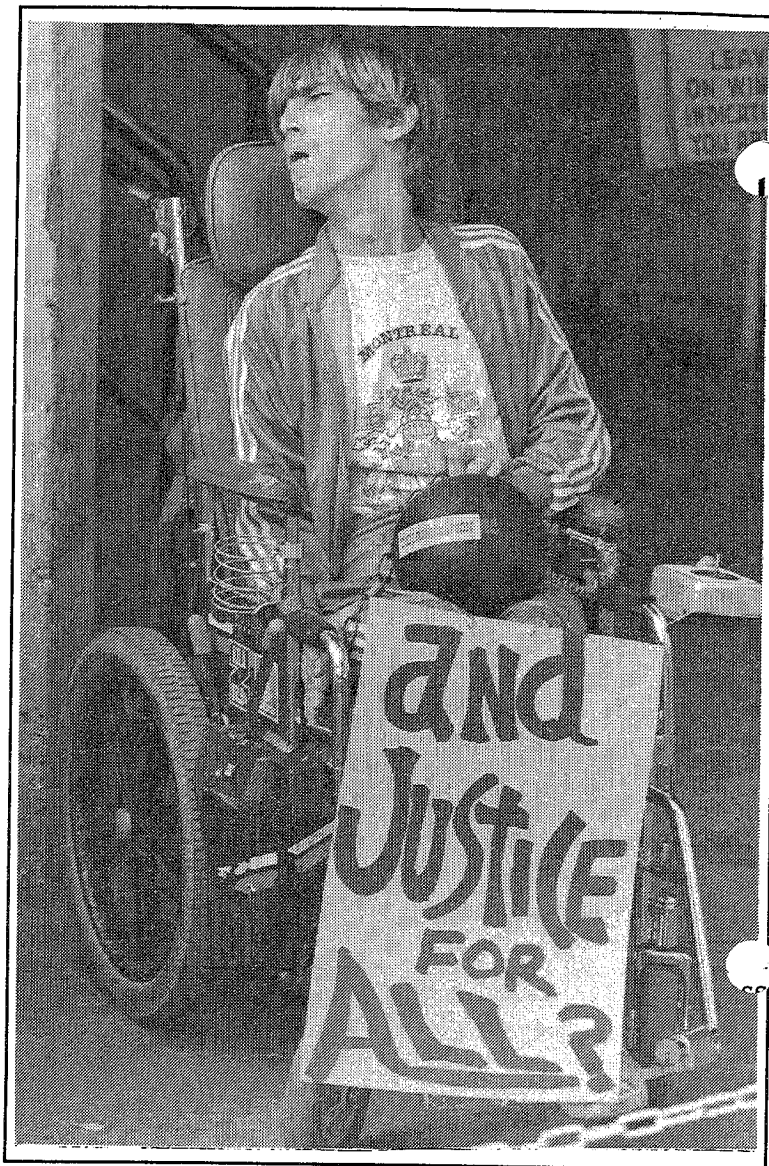
## Greyhound's Dog of a Policy... We Ain't Forgot You

The ADAPT actions this summer have had a rippling effect throughout the country. Two Greyhound vice-presidents and the president of Eagle Coaches met with Wade Blank and Mike Auberger on August 31st in Denver Co. The main issues discussed were lifts on their buses, transportation of wet cell batteries and revision of the Helping Hand policy. ADAPT will be drafting their recommendations for changes in the Helping Hands Policy. Greyhound has not yet responded on the other two issues.

In Hartford Ct., eleven people were arrested this summer and Clayton Jones and Eugenia Evans spent five days in jail. They all will be going to court on December 12th.

Buses were also blocked and arrests were made in Dallas, Louisville, and Phoenix, where Miss Wheelchair Arizona 1988 participated. In Los Angeles protesters climbed under the buses. In Atlanta protesters were joined by New Alliance party presidential candidate Lenora B. Fulani. Denver and Colorado Springs came out in their usual hard hitting style. Demonstrations were also held in Salt Lake City, Chicago, El Paso, and Austin. ADAPT members in Louisville Ky, and Denver Co filed complaints with their Human Rights Commissions and these have had positive effects. Decisions on whether Greyhound is violating state laws these two states will be handed down in December. Expectations are high that the ruling will be favorable to ADAPT.

ADAPT will start phase two of its assault on the discriminatory practices of Greyhound after January 1st. Plans are currently being made to implement a second nationwide campaign against Greyhound. If you are interested please contact Mike in Denver 303/393-0630.



Los Angeles Greyhound demonstrators, including Randy Horton, pictured here, had their day in court shortly after returning from Montreal and lost no opportunity in getting out their message of the oppressiveness of inaccessible transit.

Photo: Tom Olin



Chained inside the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, ADAPT demonstrators, Diane Coleman and Rick James, chanted their message of freedom and equality before being hauled off to jail. Photo: Tom Olin



"A Wheelchair Army Goes to War" read the headlines of the Montreal Daily News. Neither rain nor freezing winds kept these warriors from their appointed rounds. Photo: Tom Olin

## ADAPT Calls for Rejection of Transit Bribe

By Diane Coleman

\$2,350,000 to \$3,000,000 in federal grant funds is hard to resist in this shrinking fiscal environment, and the Public Transit Access Project sounds like an important and worthwhile endeavor. The disabled community is gravitating toward this lucrative project, sponsored by the Urban Mass Transit Administration and administered by the National Easter Seal Society. But we should take a deeper look before we take the money.

On July 5, 1988, the National Easter Seal Society proudly announced its receipt of the first \$1 million check. According to their press release the three-year project will develop a "model program for use across the nation. The project will identify persons with disabilities, develop training programs for both transit providers and persons with disabilities and will seek to apply technology to solve transportation barriers."

The question is, "What is the real purpose of this project?"

The project's enabling legislation was moved forward primarily by the American Public Transit Association (APTA), as well as the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and Easter Seals. APTA staff person, Ralph De La Cruz even stated at a public meeting that Easter Seals was the "front organization" for APTA on this grant. APTA has long opposed ADAPT's position that all new buses should be lift-equipped. It has also endorsed a policy

entitled "local option," which essentially allows each transit district to "provide access" in any way it pleases, however limited or ineffective. As a result of APTA's lawsuit to overturn federal regulations requiring that all new transit vehicles be accessible, only California, Michigan and Maine, and various cities such as Denver and Seattle, have policies that will build an accessible future for all. The majority of our nation's transit districts are inaccessible on any useable basis, and APTA fights for them to remain so.

Could the purpose of the project be to again re-evaluate the necessity for fixed-route access (lifts on buses)? This would merely duplicate another APTA project nearly complete. Less than a year ago, as an "answer" to ADAPT's demonstrations, APTA formed a Task Force on Services to the Elderly and Handicapped, comprised of non-disabled transit district representatives. In June, after a meeting with ADAPT, the Task Force adopted a resolution that all new transit vehicles should be accessible. PVA and Easter Seals supported this resolution. So hasn't the question of fixed-route access been answered (albeit not to APTA's satisfaction)?

Could the purpose of the project be to study how best to implement fixed-route access? This seems superfluous: in 1982, the U.S. Department of Transportation completed its study entitled "Planning for the Phase-In of Fixed-Route Accessible Buses."

So if it isn't what to do, and it isn't how to do it, then what is the purpose of the study? What is the purpose of any study sponsored by an organization rigidly adhering to unsupportable and immoral positions in the face of overwhelming moral opposition?—To study the problem at hand: to study it for as long as possible, to subvert for as long as possible any commitment to the real solution, to delay for as long as possible the implementation of the real solution, and to enlist or co-opt the supporters of change until they lose track of their goals.

ADAPT calls upon all members of the disability community to reject these tactics, the false appearance of reasonableness and the money that sweetens the bitterness of delay. Three more years is too much longer to wait for even just the promise of a bus.

*Editor's Note: ADAPT has recently learned Bob Bergdorf has accepted job of heading up this project.*

**ADAPT**

**National  
Headquarters**

is moving to  
3005 West Gill Place  
Denver Co. 80219



## EDITORIAL

### The Emperor Has No Clothes Approach to Disability Rights

by Stephanie Thomas

My involvement with ADAPT has been like cracking a tumbler lock on a safe. Over a series of events I have felt the heavy and undeniably right sensation of a series of pieces moving into place. The latest piece was moved by my crawling down the steps into the belly of Montreal's Metro system.

The subway station was a dim and echoing cavern. The chanting voices of my brothers and sister rang in my mind with the message that enough was enough, our time is coming and we will take our rights. My courage came from them. Acting as one we were sending our message to any and all.

As I slithered from my chair to the dirty floor of the station and began to clamber down the steep steps I felt a great weight being lifted from my shoulders. Here in its starkest form was what the non-disabled world felt was my worth as a person, as a member of the public. As far as they were concerned, I could crawl through their dirt. My broken leg and broken back are witness to the fact that I am physically destructible, yet if I wanted to use the system I must risk further damage to myself crawling around on structures which take no account of my needs.

The lies and shushing of reality were lifted and we could all look into the eyes of the naked truth. This is what being part of the community means for disabled people when access is not provided. It is not a very nice picture. Imagine for a minute a world in which some people move around freely while others scrub around on the floor. It's not far from many people's reality right now. But we choose not to see it.

Using our dignity as a mask to hide behind, we disabled people have bought into prettying up the picture into a lie. We wouldn't beg, we wouldn't crawl, we wouldn't lose our temper; we are above that and we'll show them. But what have we shown them? We have been locked up in our homes or institutions; prevented from moving about our community; shut out of jobs, entertainment, places or worship; even thwarted from participating in the most American of activities...consuming.

We have been caught in the old trap of blaming the victim. In answer to the question of what's wrong with this picture, (you know the one, the classic picture of the person in the wheelchair looking up the flight of stairs) we have been answering too often: the wheelchair, it can't get up the stairs. Why the hell isn't there a ramp?

As I crawled down those steps I kept feeling a sense of relief. I was not cooperating with my oppressors any longer. Like the child in the old folk tale I was simply admitting the truth. The emperor has no clothes. You deny me access and you say: keep out...or wallow in my filth. I am not keeping silent about it any longer.

### Transit Discrimination Suit Won Under Michigan State Law

In a probable first, a Michigan county court awarded a group of 18 disabled Detroit residents \$2.15 million in damages in a recent lawsuit against the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT). The class action lawsuit is based on a Michigan state law, the Michigan Handicappers' Civil Rights Act-MHCRA, which forbids discrimination based on disability. (In Michigan disabled people are often referred to as handicappers.) AND THEY WON!

While several recent cases on transit discrimination have been won by disability advocates, a more usual decision by the judge is that the transit authority must improve service to disabled persons. This jury decided the civil rights of the disabled plaintiffs had been violated, and they awarded damages. This case may become a precedent and many other cases can be filed and damages awarded. Right now another 130 cases are pending in this class action suit, according to the plaintiff's attorney Justin Ravitz, and thousands of others might be eligible.

Detroit's system runs 589 buses and 243 are "accessible." Yet even with almost half their buses allegedly accessible, would-be riders who use wheelchairs are often passed by, lifts are broken, and/or drivers are told not to use the lifts or do not know how to use them.

Since Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is not as strong as the MHCRA it was not used in this case. Section 504 neither provides for damages, nor does it require equal access, as shown in the ADAPT v. Dole case. DDOT is appealing the decision.



ADAPT protestors charge the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, APTA's convention site, as police rush to put up barricades and keep ADAPT out. Photo: Tom Olin

### Take Aim at Regional Targets

by Jim Parker

Celebrate the New Year in the desert southwest in January! ADAPT is planning to welcome the Southeast Transit Association into the New Year at its Annual meeting in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in January (15-18). So, bundle up and head West to the sunshine; bring your picket signs and your energy as ADAPT continues its protest of lack of access to transit.

Attacking the segregationist policies of APTA at all levels, as there are many meetings and conferences on the regional levels across the country, can serve ADAPT in its efforts to mobilize disabled people across the country into ACTION! Such regional actions also bring the issue to our local population, organizations and politicians, all of which can bring pressure to bear at the local levels. But, most important, it provides an opportunity for local people to see and hear the issues as stated from local leaders.

We all know, and hear, of problems associated with "local option" as the only choice for our disabled brothers and sisters and have said such time and again to local forums, etc. But, by using the meetings and conventions, on a regional bases, as a tool for organizing and public relations we can dig into a deeper mind-set and begin to affect APTA on a local and regional basis—OUR LOCAL OPTION!

Many people with disabilities are NOT willing to be involved in direct confrontation with the legal system (I.E., arrest), but many are more than willing to fight through picket signs and leaflets. It's time we began to diversify our attack as well! We can still "kick 'em in the teeth" with our 'hard core' group, but we need to begin "kicking 'em in the shins" too.

So, if you can't head West for the New Year's first kick at APTA policy, then look locally and regionally for outlets! See you in ATLANTA in '89, or in the desert southwest! Let's bring in the New Year and send a loud and clear message to the new administration, as well as the 'Mercedes Benz dealer', Jack Gilstrap: WE WILL RIDE!!!

### If It Walks Like a Duck... continued from page 1

and anyone who comes to understand and support their point of view. PVA and Easter Seals have responded in uncharacteristically strong language to the APTA affront (see PVA letter).

ADAPT will continue its strategy, which recognizes the need for aggressive advocacy, to bring about a change in the transportation policy of this country. Perhaps now other groups will see the long term benefits of this strategy in dealing with groups such as APTA.

PVA

PARALYZED VETERANS  
OF AMERICA

Chartered by the Congress of the United States

November 18, 1988

James E. Cowen, Chairman  
American Public Transit Association  
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Cowen:

The Paralyzed Veterans of America is committed to assuring that public transportation will be accessible for all people including people with disabilities. Toward that end, we have worked with APTA in recent years to create an understanding on the need for, and benefits of, accessible public transportation.

...Needless to say, when the Board of Directors decided, unanimously, to reaffirm their "local option" policy, the disability community was outraged. We were dismayed and still are, with APTA's decision. It is unfortunate that this reaffirmation had to occur. The disability community was working together with APTA and making progress toward the development of an acceptable policy. Much damage has been done at Montreal and it raises serious questions of future communications with APTA. Any further proposals by the Task Force will need to be even more carefully scrutinized than has already been. It will take more than mere promises to gain our trust again.

PVA will remain skeptical. What happened in Montreal has happened before. Previously, APTA attempted to mollify the disability community by suggesting that if "we work together" a new outlook by APTA will occur. When this possibility was shot down at the previous convention, APTA's response was "oh well, let's try again next year." Such an attitude by APTA is not acceptable. It has become apparent that in order to achieve accessible mass transportation the disability community can only rely on itself. We will need to pursue, more conscientiously, legislative avenues to accomplish our objectives. We may even feel compelled to file more lawsuits against transit authorities who do not provide adequate accessible transportation...

Sincerely,

David M. Capozzi  
David M. Capozzi  
National Advocacy Director

\*Excerpt from a longer letter.

## 1988 Winners and Losers Among U.S. Transit Systems

ADAPT has compiled a list for 1988 of the ten best and ten worst transit systems in the United States. These lists are a start and you may be able to provide valuable information for the 1989 list. Does your system belong on one of these lists? Why or why not? For more information, or to give your input for the 1989 lists contact Mark Johnson (145 Greenmont Circle/Alpharetta GA. 30201/ph. 404-355-9772) or Robert Reuter (P.O. Box 1514/Baltimore MD. 21203/ph. 301-327-6119 or 301-732-6119.)

### America's Ten Least Accessible Transit Systems

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Chicago Transit Authority .....                    | Chicago, IL        |
| Southeastern PA Transit Authority .....            | Philadelphia, PA   |
| Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority .....   | Boston, MA         |
| Metropolitan Transit Commission .....              | Minneapolis, MN    |
| Metro Transit Authority of Harris County .....     | Houston, TX        |
| Detroit Department of Transportation .....         | Detroit (City), MI |
| Port Authority of Allegheny County .....           | Pittsburgh, PA     |
| Mass Transit Administration of Maryland .....      | Baltimore, MD      |
| Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority ..... | Cleveland, OH      |
| Bi-State Development Agency .....                  | St. Louis, MO      |

### Dishonorable Mention

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (Metrobus) ..... | Washington, DC  |
| Via Metropolitan Transit .....                           | San Antonio, TX |
| City and County of Honolulu .....                        | Honolulu, HI    |
| Regional Transit Authority .....                         | New Orleans, LA |
| Queen City Metro .....                                   | Cincinnati, OH  |

### America's Ten Most Accessible Transit Systems

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| New York City Transit Authority (Bus Only) .....          | New York, NY         |
| Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (MetroRail) ..... | Washington, DC       |
| Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle .....                | Seattle, WA          |
| San Francisco Municipal Railway .....                     | San Francisco, CA    |
| Alameda Contra Costa County Transit District .....        | Oakland, CA          |
| Regional Transit District .....                           | Denver, CO           |
| Pace Suburban Bus Division .....                          | Arlington Hts. IL    |
| Santa Clara County Transit District .....                 | San Jose, CA         |
| Tri County Metropolitan Transportation .....              | Portland, OR         |
| Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority .....      | Suburban Detroit, MI |

### Honorable Mention

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Niagra Frontier Transit, (Light Rail System Only) ..... | Buffalo, NY    |
| Golden Gate Bridge Highway & Trans District .....       | San Rafael, CA |
| Miami Valley Regional Transit Authority .....           | Dayton, OH     |
| Sacramento Regional Transit District .....              | Sacramento, CA |
| Cambria County Transit Authority .....                  | Johnstown, PA  |

### Where APTA Goes, ADAPT Goes.

#### APTA 1989 Schedule

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Washington DC | March 12-15     |
| Reno          | April 9-13      |
| Orlando       | May 21-25       |
| Pittsburgh*   | June 4-8        |
| Atlanta       | September 24-28 |

Join the Action Call 303-393-0630

\*Tentative

### Incitement, Bob and Stephanie, and the Austin office of ADAPT of Texas have moved!

Our new address is: 1208 Marshall Lane  
Austin, Texas 78703  
512/482-8543 (same as before)

Please send us your comments, articles, photos, cartoons, etc. We want your input! Also your contributions are always WELCOME!

# AROUND THE NATION

**Philadelphia, PA**—ADAPT's lawsuit against DOT goes on, with another court date of October 5, at which the 25 wheelchair users who attended were noted by the judge. At this time the court consolidated the APTA appeal of the judge's decision to disallow the three percent cost cap, and the ADAPT appeal of the judge's allowance of continuing local option as an alternative. A panel of judges heard the arguments and we are now awaiting results.

Louis Gambaccini new general manager of SEPTA, the local transit authority, decided to change a long-standing policy and make the system more accessible to disabled riders. "It's the right thing to do" he told the *Philadelphia Inquirer* "And besides, under the law we really don't have any recourse..." SEPTA was ordered by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board last February to make its rail stations accessible as it renovated them using federal funds. When local disability rights advocates found SEPTA was ignoring the requirement, a lawsuit was filed in May, and they won. "I thank the decision...is terrific news" said Tim Cook of ADAPT "It shows there is hope for change even in the most backward of systems." December 16 is the date for the lawsuit against the board.

**Washington, DC**—The latest rumor on who will be Secretary of Transportation has focused on Sam Skinner, currently Chairman of the Board of the Regional Transit Authority of Chicago. According to local Chicago advocates he is a tough customer who did not willingly support the buying of lifts for the Chicago buses. So it goes!

**Chicago, IL**—Finally a year after the court ruled in favor of the disability community, the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), will be purchasing 491 buses with lifts. These should arrive in Chicago around June 1989. Negotiations have been going on since last July and the final settlement should have taken place on December 21st. The settlement is complex but the bottom line is that by 1993 Chicago will have 750 buses with lifts. The routes will be picked by the local community and money will be allocated for the disability community to train people to ride mainline. RIDE ON!

**Cobb County, GA**—Cobb County Transit, a new transit system in the suburbs of Atlanta has just purchased 17 lift equipped buses. CCT did not start

with this plan, but rather was considering two vans to run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. five days a week. Several meetings with local ADAPT activists convinced them separate would not be equal, nor would it be adequate.

**Austin, TX**—University of Texas, formidable oponent of disability rights, recently reversed its long term position against providing its disabled students with ANY transit. Carole Patterson pointed out disabled students had been paying the same student fees as their able bodied classmates for the last 20 years since the shuttle service started, and got no service while other students have a shuttle service that covers half of Austin. "We don't want our money back—we want access" she told the student paper *The Daily Texan*. The transit service contract was won by Austin's transit authority, Capital Metro, which has promised to provide accessible service and is buying 87 new buses with lifts to carry out this promise. Disabled and able bodied students staged a climb on and march last spring, with the help of ADAPT of Austin, and wound up winning the justice the courts would no provide.

**El Paso, TX**—(by Jim Parker)—ADAPT of El Paso held a "Build a Ramp" day at a local shopping center, which had thwarted our ever vigilant Department of Public Inspection. Again, about 30 disabled folks and our supporters (including disabled State Representative Paul Moreno) arrived on the scene to construct a ramp where none was built, despite a foundation for such being poured and in place.

What came out was newspaper articles and an editorial in support of access for people with disabilities!

We followed with two actions against Greyhound, again with 30-plus supporters, to address the problems with segregation and discrimination. The local coverage was good, and getting better, as well as in English and Spanish. We even had coverage in a Mexico newspaper, with two pictures! ADAPT's first international coverage (before Montreal).

By the time *INCITEMENT* goes to print, ADAPT/El Paso will have crawled up the steps of the downtown Post Office to point out the lack of access!

As one said prior to the action, "If they take us to jail, they'll have more trouble with us than on the streets."