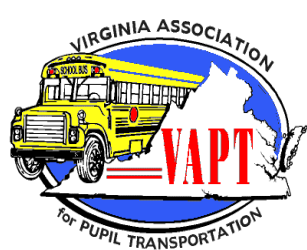


# The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia



March

2012

## Love The Bus

### Inside this issue:

VAPT Conference	2
Fairfax County Training	2
Laugh Often	4
Virginia's Best Technician	5
Trip of Your Life	5
Driver a Hero	6

The month of February was designated as "Love the Bus" month by the American School Bus Council. The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation (VAPT) membership hosted a celebration on February 16, 2012 at the Bell Tower in Capitol Square, Richmond, Virginia.

The day was full of entertainment, refreshments and enthusiasm. Virginia was well represented by our Transportation family. Also on hand to celebrate were Mr. Mike Martin, Executive Director of NAPT, the key note speaker and Mr. William J. Howell, Speaker of the House. One of the highlights of the day was a musical performance by students from Waller Mill Elementary Fine Arts Magnet School, under the direction of Terri Lensenmayer. They did a great job!

Three very generous sponsors also played a part in making this such a memorable event. Thank you to Sonny Merryman, Inc., Kingmor Supply and IC Corporation and the Virginia Truck and Commonwealth Bus Sales.

Mark the second week of February, 2013 on your calendar and start planning your Love The Bus event for next year.

### VAPT Board Members

President: Dwight Elam, Mecklenburg Co.

Vice President: James Day, Arlington Co.

Secretary: Ann Pilson, Patrick Co.

Treasurer: Kermit Shaffer, Spotsylvania Co.

Past President: Michael Ashby, Hanover Co.

Region 1: Allen Buford, Hopewell Co.

Region 2: James Lash, York Co.

Region 3: Margaret Hill, Stafford Co.

Region 4: Cheryl Fisher, Fauquier Co.

Region 5: Charmane White, Albemarle Co.

Region 6: Rebecca Mummau, Montgomery Co.

Region 7: Tom Williams, Washington Co.

Region 8: Bill Mayhew, Charlotte Co.



Mike Martin, NAPT Executive Director



Mr. William J. Howell, David Pace, Mike Martin



Waller Mill Elem. Fine Arts Magnet School



Vincent Ashley





## 2012 VAPT Conference Registration

The link and registration process is now available for your use at [www.NAPT.org](http://www.NAPT.org). Instructions are available on our VAPT website at [www.VAPT.org](http://www.VAPT.org).

The conference will be held at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel & Conference Center, June 18-21. Hotel registration is separate from the conference registration. VAPT has reserved a block of rooms but they go quickly. Re-

serve yours early.

The conference agenda, member packet, vendor packet and scholarship information are also available on our website at [www.VAPT.org](http://www.VAPT.org).

Two NAPT professional development courses will be offered during the conference; Course SNT #101, course instructor Dr. Linda Bluth and Professional Development Course 204-Team Communication Strategies,

course instructor Barry Sudduth.

Along with a variety of break-out workshops we will once again have an all star discussion panel when we meet to see if you "Are You Smarter than a Transportation Director?"

See you in Roanoke!



## Fairfax County Public Schools Spices up School Bus Driver Training Source: STNOnline.com



Fairfax County Public Schools has a long history of promoting excellence in school bus driver training to both prepare and keep our drivers ready for their duties. Due to our size and turnover, we train over 100 new drivers annually.

Recently, our bus training center was moved from a renovated shop classroom that was subdivided at a local high school to a newer location that better provides for our instruction needs.

With the advantage of more space at our new location, we have added some additional training aids in the classrooms to make the learning experience both easier and more enjoyable. One of these areas is the Special Needs Classroom. In the rear of the classroom is a school bus... well, part of one anyway.



We have a "mock" section of flooring complete with tracking for wheelchairs and bus seats. This allows both new trainees and established driver/attendants to have hands-on experience securing car seats and wheelchairs in the bus, and securing passengers (using various youth-size dolls or classmates) in car seats and wheelchairs. There is even tracking along the wall to practice securing the shoulder belt on a wheelchair passenger.

This allows not only practice, but also affords a much better vantage point to observe the instructor or others demonstrate or practice the processes. It's hard to see through the sides of a normal bus... This one is open for the eyes and allows class participants to get closer to the action. We now have several different types of wheelchairs (electric and manual) to help understand how and where attachments should be made.



## Fairfax County Training cont.

Another training area is for radio practice. We now have a dedicated room with four stations that simulate being in the driver's seat. Each station has fully functioning radios located right where they would be on an actual bus. These stations also include the real ignition switches, emergency buttons, microphones, etc., in the same locations as the actual buses. This brings more realism to the learning experience and allows four trainees to practice radio drills at the same time.



We now have an actual working FUELFORCE, or automated fueling system terminal, in the classroom. This allows students to practice how to login, report the vehicle number and mileage and do everything except dispense fuel. This system provides experience and early exposure for new drivers on how bad odometer readings, or a bad entry of an odometer or vehicle number, can prevent proper access to the system, as well as some other common mistakes our driver encounter from time to time. This will help them to avoid mistakes or at least know how to correct their information errors and fix the problems.

How do the lights, doors, stop arm, crossing gate, interlocks, hatches, doors, and child check systems work? It used to be that we would try to describe them in class, and even show pictures to try and help new drivers understand. But, usually it wasn't until they actually got out on a bus and were able to interact with these parts and sounds that it actually began to come

together in their minds.



Now new drivers can actually see and practice how these work in the classroom as we first introduce the concepts. They can hear the buzzers, horns and alarms that come on to alert them when something is not just right. They can experiment with figuring out which component is still locked and if that is why the bus will not start.

They can see it all on one board, at one time, and actually practice what changes cause or fix problems. They can also practice disarming the child check system or find out what happens when it isn't done fast enough. All of these things sound simple to those of us who use them every day, but it can be overwhelming when new drivers are just beginning to learn about a school bus.

You can find the complete article at [stnonline.com](http://stnonline.com), March 19, 2012 issue. Fairfax County has proven to be a leader in innovation for the pupil transportation industry, job well done!





## Virginia's Best School Bus Technician Competition

The third statewide competition to identify the "Best" School Bus Technician will be held on April 4, 2012 in Henrico County. The competition begins at 9:00 AM.

The competition is limited to one participant from each school division (or city/county/contracted maintenance operation, responsible for school bus maintenance). All participants must be currently employed as a School Bus Technician, working full time with primary duties of school bus maintenance and service.

The competition will consist of a written exam and a hands-on exercise. The application can be found on the VAPT website at [www.vapt.org](http://www.vapt.org). Deadline for submitting applications is March 30, 2012.

Congratulations to Jason Sharne from Henrico County, 1st Place Winner of the 2011 Virginia's Best School Bus Technician Competition.



2nd Place went to Sheldon Pratt from Loudoun County and 3rd Place went to Anthoni Bobeau from Prince George County.

## Laugh Often



### Keep On Smiling

Laughing 100 times roughly equals 15 minutes on an exercise bike.

A smile is the most frequently used facial expression. It takes as few as five pairs of facial muscles and as many as all 53 to smile.

Smiling releases endorphins and make us feel better.

Even "faking" a smile can lead to feeling happier.

Women smile more than men!

A person who studies laughter is called a "gelotologist"

### Have You Smiled Today?





## Happenings

Arlington Public Schools are hosting their annual School Bus Safety Rodeo on April 21, 2012. The rodeo will be held at the Arlington Trades Center, located at 2770 S. Taylor St., Arlington, VA. Anyone interested in judging please contact Mr. James Day.

There have also been some recent personnel changes around Northern Virginia:

Mr. Barry Sudduth, formerly the Assistant Director for Stafford County Transportation, is now the Supervisor of Bus Operations in Prince William County.

Stafford County Transportation also has a new Supervisor of Transportation,

Mr. Carey Roessel as well as a new Director of Fleet Services, Mr. William "Doug" Clements.

Welcome!

Fauquier County would like to honor one of our own, Mrs. Lois King. Mrs. King has been driving a school bus for Fauquier County for 51 years! The only time Mrs. King misses work is when she is bringing in the hay on her farm - Amazing!

The Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation Poster Contest deadline is fast approaching.

Completed poster designs must be post marked by April 30, 2012.

Anyone enrolled in public school in a Virginia Public School is eligible to enter. Five winning divisions that include: Division #1-Grades K-2; Division #2-Grades 3-5; Division #3-Grades 6-8; Division #4-Special Education; and Division #5-Computer Aided Drawing (CAD).

The theme for 2012 is "Stand back from the Yellow and Black"

Complete information can be found on the VAPT website.

## The Trip of Your Life

### School Transportation News

Trans-Consult has been working on a program with the school bus builders association to visit China and see their school buses and factories. The school bus builders will be sending their school buses to the United States to be sold in the near future. You will be the first to know all about their buses by seeing them and learning how they are being manufactured. You will be able to talk to the engineers and share ideas with them about our buses and equipment and possibly pick up some new ideas from them.

The trip will be 7 days, (longer if you wish) so you will get time for shopping and sightseeing as well as walking on the Great Wall of China. This trip of a lifetime will be in June and July 2012. Cost for airline is about \$1700.00 round trip air per-person plus motel, meals, sightseeing, etc.

These buses are designed to carry over 50 passengers. The driver is able to observe the condition at any time with 360 degree no dead zone design. Tire pressure warning devices and smoke detectors are installed to monitor potential threats.

For more information you can view the entire article on line at [stnonline.com](http://stnonline.com).





## Tornado Preparedness - Make a Plan

Virginia Dept. of Emergency Services

### Emergency Procedures When Outdoors or in Vehicles:

Cars and buses are extremely hazardous in tornadoes since they can be easily flipped and crushed. If you are in a vehicle and in the area of a tornado, do not try to outrun the funnel. Tornadoes can change direction and speed without warning. If you are in a bus when a tornado is approaching, the bus driver should return immediately to the school if time permits and evacuate the passengers to the school building. If you are unable to return to the school, seek shelter

in a solidly built structure. Remember to avoid a structure that has a large free-span roof or a large amount of glass windows. Once inside, students should assume protective posture.

### Finding Outdoor Shelter:

If you are unable to get to a safe structure, or if the threat from a tornado is immediate, evacuate the bus and move away from it and any other vehicles. Seek shelter and assume the protective posture.

The primary feature to look for in determining an outdoor shelter should

be appoint below the average ground level. Look for a culvert, a ditch, or a ravine in which to take refuge and assume the protective posture. Be aware of the potential danger of rapidly raising storm water.

It is extremely important that students keep their heads down and covered so that they will be protected from any flying debris.

<http://www.vaemergency.com/threats/tornado/>

## N.C. School Bus Driver Hailed a Hero

The school bus driver of a Charlotte, N.C. school bus is being hailed a hero after sensing trouble on her bus on February 8, 2012.

She was filling in for another driver that afternoon, heading down a suburban block in southeast Charlotte, when she sensed something was wrong. A strange smell came from her bus as she neared the end of the route. Soon, smoke began pouring out of the bus' dashboard. She quickly ushered the six children on board out the back door. Shortly after, flames and black smoke consumed the vehicle.

They watched as flames engulfed the bus and smoke poured out of the windows. Within just over a minute, fire had consumed about half the vehicle and shot up through the roof.

The driver's colleagues and the school district hailed her as a hero, crediting her with saving the lives of the children, aged 5 to 10 years.

The driver credited her training!

With most localities preparing to or having recently completed their second semester bus evacuation drills, this example becomes an excellent training tool.

Source: Charlotte Observer



Safety First—preparedness can never be stressed enough. Do your drivers conduct each drill as if it were a real emergency?

Don't wait until something happens!

## We Need You!

VAPT is always looking for articles for the VAPT Newsletter. My goal will be to provide a newsletter every three months. Please submit your articles by the 15th of the previous month to Cheryl Fisher at [cfisher@fcps1.org](mailto:cfisher@fcps1.org). Our next newsletter should be ready in June, so please send your articles by May 15th. Thank You!