

## The Voice and Vision for Pupil Transportation in Virginia



### NOVEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

Bill Carr

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### A Message from our President, Michael Ashby...

We are already near the end of October and schools have been in session eight or more weeks, depending on the locality. It seems like just yesterday we were in Roanoke at the 2009 VAPT Conference. Rest assured that planning for the 2010 conference is well underway. Our annual conference for 2010 will be held at the Holiday Inn Koger Center in Chesterfield County, using the same format as the 2009 conference. All indications appear the conference will continue to provide many learning opportunities. If you have any requests in regards to the conference, please email them to me at [mashby@hcps.com](mailto:mashby@hcps.com).

I feel very fortunate to be a member of such a professional organization as VAPT, made up of great folks. Did you know our first president (1977) was Nathan H. Young, Jr. from Henrico County? That's 33 years ago and our association is still very active and growing!



## Virginia Association for Pupil Transportation's

### 2009 CLYDE W. MORRIS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

JESSICA LEE SHENK is from Shenandoah County. Jessica will be attending the University of Virginia this fall with career aspirations of becoming a Pediatrician. Jessica graduated from Stonewall Jackson High School in Shenandoah County and was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in her graduating class. She was active in her school's Student Council Association and was a Class Officer in her sophomore, junior and senior year. Among many co-curricular activities, she was a member of the National Honor Society, the Future Educators Association and the Future Business Leaders of America. Active in sports, Jessica lettered in volleyball, basketball and soccer. She participated in several community service projects high school while balancing several part-time jobs.

## Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference

### 2009 BUSTER BYNUM SCHOLARSHIP VIRGINIA RECIPIENTS

JONATHAN MICHAEL MARSHALL is from Scott County. Jonathan has been accepted into the General Engineering program at Virginia Tech this fall. Maintaining perfect attendance while attending Twin Springs High School in Scott County, Jonathan distinguished himself with the highest class average in Chemistry, Biology and Physics. A member of the National Honor Society, he was active in the Boy Scouts of America – attaining the rank of Eagle Scout and gaining membership in the Order of the Arrow (the Boy Scout honorary society). Jonathan was a member of the Varsity Golf and Track and Field Teams while in high school and spends quality time with both his father and mother as all three serve the local community volunteering with the Rescue Squad.

CHAD LEE RAINES is from Montgomery County. Chad will be attending Virginia Tech this fall with plans to study aerospace engineering. An outstanding student at Eastern Montgomery High School, Chad was active in Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Educators of America, Beta Club, and Boys State. Chad also participated in the regional area Governors School, traveling almost an hour by school bus every morning to begin classes by 7 am. He successfully juggled his challenging academic schedule with sports – football, baseball, basketball and track – and found time to work a part-time job to save money for his college education. He enjoys farming with his dad and hopes to have a small farm of his own one day.



Welcome to all our new VAPT members. We are looking forward to working with you and hope you will find this organization to be all you had hoped it would be. We feel VAPT is the voice and vision for pupil transportation in Virginia. Please do not hesitate to contact any committee chairperson, officer, or director to let them know if you are interested in sharing your time and talents.



Virginia is considering changes to its pupil-transportation rules to improve school bus safety. (Richmond Times Dispatch - Holly Prestidge - August 26, 2009)

The Virginia Department of Education is looking at regulations to prevent students from standing in the aisles, to cap bus drivers' hours and to change the way crashes involving school buses are reported.

If the regulations are approved, it could be the 2010-11 school year before they're implemented, Department of Education spokesman Charles Pyle said.

One of the changes would require school divisions to report a crash to the Department of Education if damage to any vehicle involved totals at least \$1,000, or if someone is injured.

Currently, divisions have to report crashes with damage of less than \$1,000 as "incidents." Pyle said the department heard from school divisions that "the threshold for reporting an accident was too low."

The department also would be required to report annually on school bus and activity bus crashes, which they currently are not required to do.

"This is to provide some transparency," Pyle said of the annual report. "If [school divisions] fail to report, that would be something that the public could see."

Among the other proposed changes and additions:

\* Students would be prohibited from standing in the aisles on buses except during temporary emergency situations and for short distances, and these occasions must be determined and approved by local school boards.

Students currently are allowed to stand in the aisles for short distances during the first 30 days of the school year. That gives divisions time to accommodate unexpected increases in student riders at the start of the year.

\* School Bus drivers and Activity Bus drivers would be prohibited from driving more than 13 hours in a 24-hour period. This follows a state law.

\* High school students who drive to school would receive training on how to approach stopped school buses as well as on safe following distances.

\* School officials would be required to review bus stops and school bus routes once each semester. Currently, they are required to review them once each year.

Michael Ashby, Transportation Director for Hanover County public schools, said some of the proposed regulations back up what drivers already are doing, such as the regulation about students standing in aisles. Additionally, he said the time limit on drivers' hours is for everyone's safety. Though most drivers won't come close to driving 13 hours on a typical school day, he said, there are some drivers who may drive for field trips or sports activities after the school day or on weekends.

Lisa Drinkwater, a school bus driver in Henrico County for 22 years, said the proposal to keep students in their seats makes sense.

"It's a distraction when they're standing up" in the aisles, and when there are too many children on a school bus, "we're advised to let [school officials] know immediately," she said.

She also said the proposed reporting procedures about crashes may "cut down on a lot of red tape and paperwork."

"I think that's a sensible thing to do," she said.

Mary Peters, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, proposed new rules to improve school bus safety. After Peters rode a school bus she said more buses should have shoulder and lap belts and 24-inch seat backs.

- Adding seat belts to school buses reduces the number of students who can ride in a seat.
- A standard school bus without belts can carry 64 elementary, 55 middle or 44 high school students. A school bus seat can hold three elementary pupils or two larger children.
- Such a rules change will reduce the capacity of a school bus because, when you get the lap shoulder belt, you have two people to any seat.
- Larger-capacity school buses would be needed to continue to transport the present number of students on each school bus due to the shoulder and lap seat belts.
- The increase in pupil transportation costs would depend on whether the requirement for shoulder and lap belts and 24-inch seat backs is specifically for school buses of a specific vintage or for all school buses.



Now.... Don't delete this just because it looks weird. Believe it or not, you can read it.

I cdnuolt blveiee that I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd what I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid Aoccdrnig to rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in what oredr the ltteers in a word are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is that the first and last ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can still raed it wouthit a porbelm. This is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the word as a wlohe. Amzanig huh?



## HISTORY OF NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

School Bus Safety Week was established in 1966 by the National Association for Pupil Transportation, National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services, and National School Transportation Association. The week is used to educate students, parents and the motoring public about the safety of the nation's children who are transported daily on yellow school buses. The week also recognizes the hard work and dedication of school professionals, especially the school bus drivers who ensure a safe journey for children each and every day.

How did your city or county observe National School Bus Safety Week this year? Please share with Bill Carr at [feb945@yahoo.com](mailto:feb945@yahoo.com) and he will put an article together to share with our members regarding ways NSBSW was observed throughout Virginia.



Have you ever been guilty of looking at others your own age and thinking, "Surely I can't look that old?" Well... You'll love this tale from a woman! I was sitting in the waiting room for my first appointment with a new dentist. I noticed his DDS diploma, which bore his full name. Suddenly, I remembered a tall, handsome, dark-haired boy with the same name had been in my high school class nearly 25 years ago. Could he be the same guy that I had a secret crush on, way back then? Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was way too old to have been my classmate. After he examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended Morgan Park High School. "Yes, yes, I did. I'm a mustang." He gleamed with pride. "When did you graduate?" I asked. He answered, "In 1968. Why did you ask?" "You were in my class!" I exclaimed. He looked at me closely, then, that ugly old wrinkled, bald, fat, decrepit slob asked, "What did you teach?"

# I Believe



That a birth certificate shows that we were born and a death certificate shows that we died and pictures show that we lived! Have a seat . . . Relax and read “I Believe” slowly.

## **I BELIEVE THAT...**

Just because two people argue, it doesn't mean they don't like or love each other. And just because they don't argue, it doesn't mean they do.

We don't have to change friends, if we understand that friends change.

No matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.

You can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life.

You should always leave loved ones, family and friends, with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.

You can keep going long after you think you can't.

We are responsible for what we do, no matter how we feel.

Either you control your attitude or it controls you.

My best friend(s) and I can do anything or nothing and have the best time.

Sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down will be the ones to help you get back up.

Sometimes when I'm angry I have the right to be angry, but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel or act hateful.

Maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated.

It isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.

Our background and circumstances may have influenced who we are, but we are responsible for who we become.

Two people can look at the exact same thing and see something totally different.

Your life can be changed in a matter of hours by people who don't even know you.

Even when you think you have no more to give, when a friend cries out to you - you will find the strength to help.

Credentials on the wall do not make you a decent human being.

The people you care about most in life are taken from you too soon.

You should send this to all of the people that you believe in.



(I included a couple of items below you may want to use in your local school bus drivers' newsletter. Bill)

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY – IT'S EVERYONE'S JOB



### SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS -

- Light up your school bus to be seen at all times, regardless of weather conditions.
- Don't tailgate.
- Know and Obey all traffic laws and state regulations for the operation of a school bus.
- Don't assume anything! When in doubt – Don't! Depend on your vision, your hearing, your intelligence and that ole "gut feeling" before deciding what you are going to do.
- Signal every move you make; turns, changing lanes, backing, making pupil stops.....
- Activate the traffic warning lights AT LEAST 100 feet prior to reaching a pupil stop if the posted speed limit is less than 35. Notice, at least that distance before stopping.
- Activate the traffic warning lights AT LEAST 200 feet prior to reaching a pupil stop if the posted speed limit is 35 mph or more. Notice at least that distance before stopping.
- Make sure all traffic from all directions has stopped before permitting children to cross the road.



Riding in the school bus with you are several dozen children whose lives are in your

hands and who depend on your good judgment.

