



GAPT Newsletter

December 2007



Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Season's Greeting to all.

As the calendar year ends, your GAPT Board is excitedly looking forward to our summer conference and numerous other opportunities to serve each other and the students we transport. For in the end, that is really what our work is about . . . **service**. We have a gentleman leaving us this month that is not leaving service work, but rather changing the type of service work to which he commits the majority of his time. As a State organization, we bid farewell and God speed to **Carroll Pitts** as he retires from Cobb County to devote all of his energies to missionary work.

CARROLL PITTS BIO

Carroll Pitts, Jr., Executive Director of the Cobb County School System in Marietta, Georgia will be retiring at the end of December, 2007. He has dedicated over 30 plus years to school transportation. He has been diligent in his role as head of several School District Transportation Departments, from Columbia and Myrtle Beach, South Carolina to Marietta, Georgia.

As a young man, Carroll had a dream to become a missionary. After high school graduation, he planned to do missionary work in Africa, only to be told he had to achieve an education degree in order to enter the country as a missionary. He obtained his masters degree, and embarked on the next requirement: missionaries had to serve as the pastor of a church for five years, and raise support for the trip. Sadly upon completion of this, he found that there was an age limit of 29 years old, which disqualified him.

He is one of those unique individuals who has been able to attain success in both his personal and professional life. His contribution to student transportation has not only impacted his local school system, but the State and Federal level as well. Through a career that has spanned over 35 years, he has left his mark on the lives of any and all individuals who have had the opportunity to work with him or for him.

Since 1994, when Carroll and his wife Becky completed their first humanitarian aid trip, they have undertaken at least one such journey each year. They have traveled to Mexico, Romania, India and Liberia with missionary groups: taking medicine to local children's clinics in Romania; working at an orphanage in India and offering eye exams and glasses for people in Liberia on their last mission trip. Retirement will enable Carroll and Becky to devote more time to help people in third world countries. They have set their sights on opportunities in South Africa, which had been a dream of Carroll's as a young man. Both have been attending "well drilling" classes. This is a much needed ministry in Africa and one that I am sure we will be hearing a lot more about after his retirement.

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His accomplishments at the Cobb County School District alone are unequalled. He has proven to be an innovative leader whose sincere desire to improve the lives of all those around is inspirational. From being the first school transportation department in the state of Georgia to require "reflective tape" on all buses and bus crossing gates, to designing and implementing the "Partners in Transportation" program for the state of Georgia. This program allows buses to transport students on field trips outside their county with the assurance that should emergency road service or mechanical assistance be needed, they would be able to contact the transportation department in that county for immediate assistance.

The bus driver training program in Cobb County is one of the strongest in the nation, with 4 "certified" bus driver testers. A continuous training/retraining program has been in effect for the bus drivers of Cobb County for over 15 years. Carroll believes that sufficient training is required before qualifying a bus driver and putting them on a bus. He takes serious the fact that transporting students is an awesome responsibility. The training program in Cobb County requires 50-60 hours of pre-employment driver training. That is followed up with annual safety training sessions for all active drivers. This intense training not only builds the self-confidence of his drivers, but focuses them on the goal of his department.....safe transportation of all Cobb County School District students to and from school each day.

He maintains an open door policy for each and every member of his 1,100 plus department. There is never any doubt as to his dedication and loyalty to his employees and the school district he represents. He is able to draw from his experiences on the mission field to guide him in his professional life, and he is able to utilize his day to day experiences in running a large transportation operation in the mission field.

He feels blessed that he has been able to live such a full life and is looking forward to the opportunities retirement will bring.

Upcoming Events

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- February 23, 2008 Special Needs Road-e-o / Suwanee, GA
- March 7-12, 2008 17th Transporting Students with Disabilities Conference
Little Rock, AK
- March 26, 2008 GA Special Education Workshop
Forsyth, GA



Yes it's December - but let's think summer!!

GAPT Summer Conference

Now let's talk a bit about our summer conference, held June 16 – 20, 2008. Our President, Beverly Skipper, is already well along in setting up the conference. There are a couple of things we would like from you as we plan for this year.

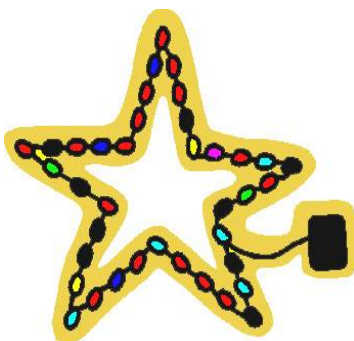
First, what workshop topics would you like to see addressed? We will run concurrent workshops similar to last year, so you can choose between either of the workshops or visit with the trade show vendors. But we want to make sure we are providing the workshops that are of value to you. So please send back to me any **workshop topics by January 15, 2008**.

Second, we would like a list of all of the vendors you do business with at your local levels. Attached you will find an excel spreadsheet. Just fill it out for all of your vendors and email it to Rick Wheeler at rwheeler@docoschools.org . We want to invite your vendors to join us for the conference. It will give them broader exposure and help build our GAPT team.

You should also know the “*Skipper*” has decided to do away with the stuffed shirt coat and tie banquet. This year's banquet will be a Gilligan's Island theme, run by our Skipper. Plan on wearing your best island garb and join us for the Luau.

A heads up about under classed bridges

The guys at DOE are looking at this topic around the state, but in the interim, we have received a list of bridges buses cannot cross in the city of Atlanta. Since almost everyone in the state takes field trips there, it seems prudent to share this information. Attached you will see the list of bridges under the 10 ton limit. Make sure your field trip drivers know where these bridges are so they can route around them.



Have a wonderful holiday!