E: Various items from Novack's desk



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ACCESS-A-RIDE

ATLANTIC EXPRES

POT STREET

Rebecca Cooney for The New York Times

A woman boards a van for the disabled at a hospital in Manhattan.

## No Easy Ride for Disabled

Left virtually crippled at 48 by a hip infection, Susana Lopez-Lira has come to rely on a city service that provides door-to-door transportation for the disabled. Yet booking a ride on that service can be a stressful ordeal that sometimes feaves her stranded.

Users of the service, Access-a-Ride, say that reservations must be made seven days in advance, but that this does not always guarantee a ride. At 10 A.M. last Wednesday, for example, Ms. Lopez-Lira called to request a ride from her Sheepshead Bay home to Bellevue Hospital for a 9 A.M. appointment next Wednesday.

"I told them I didn't care if they picked me up at 6, but they told me they did not have any space for me," Ms. Lopez-Lira said. "I'll have to cancel my doctor's appointment if I can't get a ride because I don't have money to travel other ways."

Her experience is not uncommon, said Frieda Zames, president-elect of Disabled in Action, a local advocacy group. Ms. Zames said the problem of reserving rides was a major issue among the city's disabled.

The Federal Transit Administration, which monitors city transit systems, has also been concerned. Its frame of reference is the Americans With Disabilities Act, which requires all cities with mass transit systems to provide a comparable service to the disabled. With 442 of New York's 468 subway stations inaccessible to the disabled, Access-a-Ride is responsible for doing just that. It charges disabled riders the basic mass transit fare of \$1.50.

The F.T.A.'s dissatisfaction with

New York City Transit, which runs the service, involves the city system's stated goal of being able to provide rides to 94 percent of those requesting them. That is a 6 percent denial rate.

denial rate.

In a letter to the agency last May, Arthur Andrew Lopez, director of the Federal agency's office of civil rights, advised the city to eliminate this fixed-denial policy. To do otherwise, he wrote, "is clearly discriminatory." The agency is continuing its investigation into the policy.

Melissa Farley, a New York City Transit spokeswoman, said: "We have no comment on the issue that the F.T.A. has with our denial rate. We are in discussions with them."

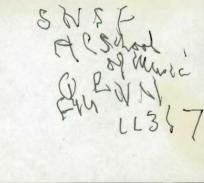
Al O'Leary, a transit spokesman, said that the city plans to increase the Access-a-Ride fleet to 370 vehicles by next spring from the current 281. He also noted that use of the service was expanding rapidly. During the first seven months of this year, he said, more trips were made than in all of 1995.

The Federal involvement arose from a complaint that Mark Green, the New York City Public Advocate, filed with the transit administration agency in April, Mr. Green's office found that the program's denial rate was 10 percent and as high as 25 percent for trips between boroughs.

"They are shafting people who are utterly reliant on this transportation mode," Mr. Green said last week.

His complaint also said that some riders had to wait as long as three hours for pickup and that trips were sometimes circuitous.

RICHARD WEIR



Dear Mom and Dad,

There's nothing much new to report. Things be have been going pretty well, and I'm still enjoying writing my paper of taoism. If I enjoy a subject, I am really able to work hard at it and read non-fiction on it.

Mrs. Wood has an appointment to speak with President Wallace. She suggested it herself after she wrete the letter. I wrote to the dean at Princeton to tell him that, and also that I expect to go to Columbia this summer. I wrote to B. Solomon's friend asking for info. Also sent for Cornell application.

Rimi wants me to spend New Tear's Eve at her house--the boys will be there and it should be fun. So I think I'll do that since she is my closest friend and I haven't been to a young people's party in ages (New Year's). I will be working a lot during vacation, since I want to get two papers out of the way. But don't pressure me. I will function my own way.

I found out from my friend Ando (the Japanese boy), that his friend) the philosophy grad student, is very impressed by me. I hope that he'll take me out one of these days, but he de goes out very rarely (he's being chased by a blonde student of his). There's no one else I'm really interested in. Tom Brown (N O Brown's son) is a great guy and we're getting friendly. But so many girls like him:

I am certain that I have found the field of my life--Chinese Lit.

I am really happy that I enjoy it so much, and can't wait till I plunge into more readings next semester. I also enjoy the language.

Tonight's concert will feature Beethoven's 3rd - plane concerto.

I really love listening to all my fine records. I especially enjoy the harpsichord, the Boccherini, the Beethoven plane sonata, and the Each.

I don't particularly care for the Copland and Sessions. Ando said that Jim (philo. grad) only gets very emotional when he is arguing about Viet Nam, philosophy, or listening to Bach. I think that's funny.

How do you like our actions in Hanoi, by the way? First it's "accidental", and then (whee would you believe) we admit the fact that we're bombing residential areas? Yesterday we held a vigil on the quad. We hold them every Tuesday from 11:30 to 1:00 ( as if they do any good-though maybe they make some people stop and think for a minute or so-awareness is the first step to change).

Q Well--must hurry off to Todd to mail this, and then go to the lib.

Hope all is well! Sorry this to short. Love, me



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