

NW DRIVER TRAINER NEWS



For Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish and the Island County School Bus Driver Trainers

A News Letter Just for YOU!

We are pleased to announce this, our first edition of the NW Driver Trainer News. Your ideas and articles are welcomed. The NWDTA is fired up and rolling with the new school year. Planning for the spring School Bus Driver Workshop and the NW School Bus Rodeo have already started. We look forward to seeing you at the monthly meetings where there will be something new and meaningful for you.

Mark Miller, One of our Own

Mark Miller, a 30-year-old substitute school bus driver from Bellingham School District, recently won first place in the 40th annual School Bus Driver International Safety Competition! This was Mark's first time competing in an International bus "rodeo" competition, which he qualified for following wins in both the Northwest Regional and Washington State competitions two years in a row (2009 and 2010). The International competition was Mark's fifth rodeo competition and fifth win since he began driving school buses a year and a half ago. He had driven a total of eight times prior to winning his first competition.

A full time airline Captain for Allegiant Air, Mark has been fascinated with engines, machinery and transportation for as long as he can remember and he thought it would be fun to be a school bus driver. After going through training, he became a substitute school bus driver May 2009 for Bellingham School District.

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Rae Anne Thon, Bellingham's School Bus Driver Trainer says, "From my perspective as his trainer, he is the most technically perfect driver I have instructed. He applied all the concepts of reference point driving and took them to a whole new level! More importantly, he really enjoys driving kids to and from school." There are days when Mark drives kids to school in the morning and flies 150 passengers to and from Las Vegas in the afternoon.



Mark Miller
National Champion

Mark enjoys staying active and busy. He has a wide range of interests and enjoys trying new experiences. Mark recently ran the 26.2 mile Vancouver Marathon, which he did as a way to overcome his dislike of running, and finished in the 42nd percentile. He has a deep love for music and plays the guitar and drums. Mark is an ordained minister and officiates at weddings, and is also an FAA certified flight instructor. He holds a world record for the highest commercial bungee jump on Earth (1053 feet off the bridge in Royal Gorge, CO). He has packed a lot of memories in his life including back flipping off icebergs in Greenland,

Mark Miller continued on page 2

Visiting State Codes



Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code include specific Rules of the Road, as well as Requirements for School Bus Drivers and School Bus Operation. This section is dedicated to a review of those codes.

WAC 392-145-050 (7) All school buses shall slow down to ten miles an hour or less before making a ninety degree right or left turn.

For most drivers turning a corner is as easy as...driving down the road. For school bus drivers, making a professional ninety degree turn is a point of pride.

1. Approach the corner 3 - 5 ft from edge of roadway
2. Signal 100 ft before corner
3. Mirror and traffic checks
4. Slow to 10 mph or less before the corner (5 -7 mph preferred)
5. Check Intersection Left-Right-Left for clearance and obstructions
6. Align reference points
 - a. Example: Go straight ahead until the center of the door lines up with the white line/edge of roadway as if it extended all the way across in front of you and connected to the line on the other side of the road
7. Rapidly turn steering wheel 100% and hold it until the bus pivots around corner ending 3-5 ft parallel to edge of roadway
8. Watch left mirrors for tail swing when you first begin turning to be certain you won't hit a passing car.

"...making a professional ninety degree turn is a point of pride"

Mark Miller - Continued

driving motorcycles around the US and Europe, helicopter-snowboarding in Alaska and flying aircraft overseas. Mark enjoys seeking adventures that are "just outside the box." Mark is also a volunteer at a local hospital.

Originally from Portland, Maine, Mark has lived all over the country prior to moving to his 30th residence in Bellingham two years ago. He graduated from Colby Sawyer College in New Hampshire with a BA in Business Administration and lives at home with his dog Rocky, a Hairless Chinese Crested "with a ton of personality packed into that little 9-pound body."

When asked what's next, Mark replied "I would like to retire by age 50 and sail around the world in whichever direction the winds take me." Mark hopes to become a driver education instructor and is currently learning the art of kite-boarding. He is looking forward to defending his championship title in school bus driving competitions for years to come. In the meantime, he will continue driving school buses, flying airplanes, and enjoying the variety of experiences that life has to offer. Mark finds great satisfaction in transporting students to and from school safely. We congratulate him for his wonderful attitude towards school bus driving and for winning the regional, state and national school bus safety competitions!

By Elaine Howell

Please see *Driver Trainer Birthdays* on page 4



... he couldn't hold himself up in his chair. It didn't matter to William. He was happy to be alive and celebrating his birthday.

William's Story

By Debbie Heide, Selah SD Transportation

I would like to tell you a story that I think should be passed on throughout the entire association.

William's Story:

Five years ago I came to work at Selah School District in Selah, Washington. One of my first things to do here was to ride all of the routes and get to know the drivers on a personal level. There was one particular day, which I will never forget for the rest of my life. I was on a special needs bus when a student by the name of William got on the bus and introduced himself to me. Along the ride we chatted about several things but one thing was important to William that day. It was his birthday.

So here we start with a little family history. William is in a wheel chair because he was born with MD. He started out the first part of his life walking. Slowly he moved to a walker, then his illness progressed to the point that he was in a wheel chair. William had to have a steel rod put in his back because he couldn't hold himself up in his chair. It didn't matter to William. He was happy to be alive and celebrating his birthday. What he told me that day almost brought me to tears. I couldn't cry because I knew that William wouldn't want me to feel pity for him.

This is what he said. "Tami (to his bus driver), you know I am lucky to still be here. The doctors didn't expect me to live very long. And you know what else? I lived longer than my sister did". It was complete silence on that bus. I asked him what happened to his sister. He told me a long story and then told me that she died of pneumonia when she was very little. He said that she should have lived longer than he did but he has long out lived her. About 15 minutes later we arrived at William's house. It was an older farm house with a dirt walk way that William had to travel. It was also a long steep hill. That didn't stop William. At the top of the hill was another person sitting in a wheel chair. It was William's father. Several years ago, right after he got out of the military, he was diving in a pool and had an accident. He was paralyzed from the waist down. I couldn't believe it myself. William was the last student to drop off that day. It was such a long and quiet ride back to the bus garage. I couldn't take my mind off of what I just heard.

From that day on, I fell in love with that family. William's mom is my true hero. She took care of both William and dad. She had a full time job as well to support them. She also had animals to take care of. For such a little tiny thing, she was tough. She never complained. NEVER! She loved William unconditionally.

William's Story continued on page 4

Williams Story from page 3

On a rare occasion dad or mom would call to tell me if William was sick and they didn't need a bus. We would get into long conversations. If his bus driver was sick, I'd be the first person to want to go out and sub on the route so that I could visit with William. William loved school buses. He loved the drivers and the drivers loved him. He would wave at the passing buses and they would wave back.

Everyone here knew William's family story. During William's Junior year, I asked him if he would like to come down here to my office and help out. He was excited. I had the bus drop him off as soon as he got out of school. Mom came down at closing time to pick him up. I let William dispatch on the radio.

William's Story will be concluded in the next issue of NWDTA

Of course I had to hold down on the receiver because William could not coordinate his hand to move that far. That radio would go like crazy. The drivers knew that he was here and they called in continually with some of the craziest things just so that William could respond to them on the radio. My mechanic took William out to the shop to show him around. William was amazed. He wanted to learn more.

NW DRIVER TRAINER BIRTHDAYS

Karen Heying 9-13

Marlene Mattson 9-2

Marlene Rosenbach 9-25

Happy Birthday to YOU!

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
NAPT
CONFERENCE & TRADE SHOW
October 30 – November 4, 2010
Portland, OR
<http://www.naptonline.org/summit.html>**

Please send acknowledgements, stories and information and we will do our best to include your contribution in future editions.



"To catch the

1939 Mack 43SB School Bus