



"Buses uncrowded" says bus company

PHOTO Dave Eriker

Commuters scrunch

by Andi DeWahl

Blueprint Staff Writer

"Our bus has two and three in a seat, and some standing."
 "That's nothing. The bus I ride...lots of kids have to stand up, and our bus is one of the biggest ones!"

"Kids have to sit THREE in a seat!"
 What is an over crowded bus? Asked what "crowded" could be defined as, Elaine Gritner, junior, answered, "I think three in a seat is crowded because you're uncomfortable. It's awful, especially in the winter."
 All students questioned agreed with this definition.

Mr. Martin Walsh, owner of the Columbia Transit Bus Company, disagrees. "Students must ride three in a seat regardless of whether or not they are grade school or high school students. This is a state law."

Walsh and Principal Curtis Johnson agreed that there shouldn't be any overcrowded buses "unless the students are getting on the wrong bus," said Johnson.

There is a map in the office showing where each student lives. Bus routes are set up according to the number of students in certain areas.

Johnson said that problems come up since buses covering adjacent areas come at different times, and some students that get up late might take the later bus even though it might not be the one they are supposed to ride.

Another reason for crowding, is that students ride buses to Har Mar or Rosedale after school.

"These kids will find out which bus goes by Har Mar or Rosedale, and take that bus instead of their regular one," Johnson explained. "If we find that too many students

are riding the wrong bus, we will have to set up a system of identification so they can only ride the one they are supposed to."

Many precautions are taken to insure that school buses be safe.

Each year the bus driver has to get a physical comparable to that given an airplane pilot.

School buses must be equipped with things like fire extinguishers, first aid kits and seat belts for the driver. They are inspected annually by the local sheriff.

Walsh said that he is opposed to seat belts for the passengers because a study made on their use in school buses in California showed more injuries from misuse of the belts.

Walsh stated that until motorists are educated about laws concerning busing, school buses won't be completely safe.

"We get reports every day of motorists driving through the stop signs on buses..." he said.

The bus drivers commented about their "crowded" buses.

Jim Nippert, who has been with the company for three years, said, "My bus is about ten kids short of capacity, but that's three to a seat."

"If a bus is crowded, it's up to either the bus driver or the kids to report it. If it doesn't get reported nothing can be done."

John Gustafson, who has been driving Route 4 since Sept. 2, said his bus is usually about half full.

Craig Kuehn, who has driven with the bus company for about a year; said the buses are very safe. There is a staff of full-time mechanics watching over them.

Mini-courses fight boredom

by Kathy Haggerty

Blueprint Staff Writer

Mini-courses are free and open. Mini-courses are non-credit and non-graded. Mini-courses may be the solution to fifth hour boredom.

"We'll be getting guest speakers from the University and from Mankato," commented Lynn Anderson, chairman of the Student Council mini-course committee. "Teachers will have to be present during the discussions, but I hope that the teachers will be selected so that they can add to the discussions, not detract from them."

Peggy Stevenson, a member of the committee, admits, "It's basically a selfish idea. It's entirely programmed for the students needs. And although it's not intended for the teachers, we are not banning them from listening in."

The mini-courses already begun are astrology, speed reading, theater workshop, expressionism in poetry, pollution, and art history. Anyone interested in having other discussions or classes can get them started as soon as Lynn Anderson is notified, if at least ten students are interested, and an available room can be located.

"We're really anxious for students to come up with other ideas. If you've got an idea just come talk to me," pleads Lynn.

Most mini-courses will last eight or nine weeks, but will meet only once or twice during each week, depending on how often the students involved can attend. Mini-courses can and probably will be repeated for more than one eight or nine week period, according to popular demand.

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