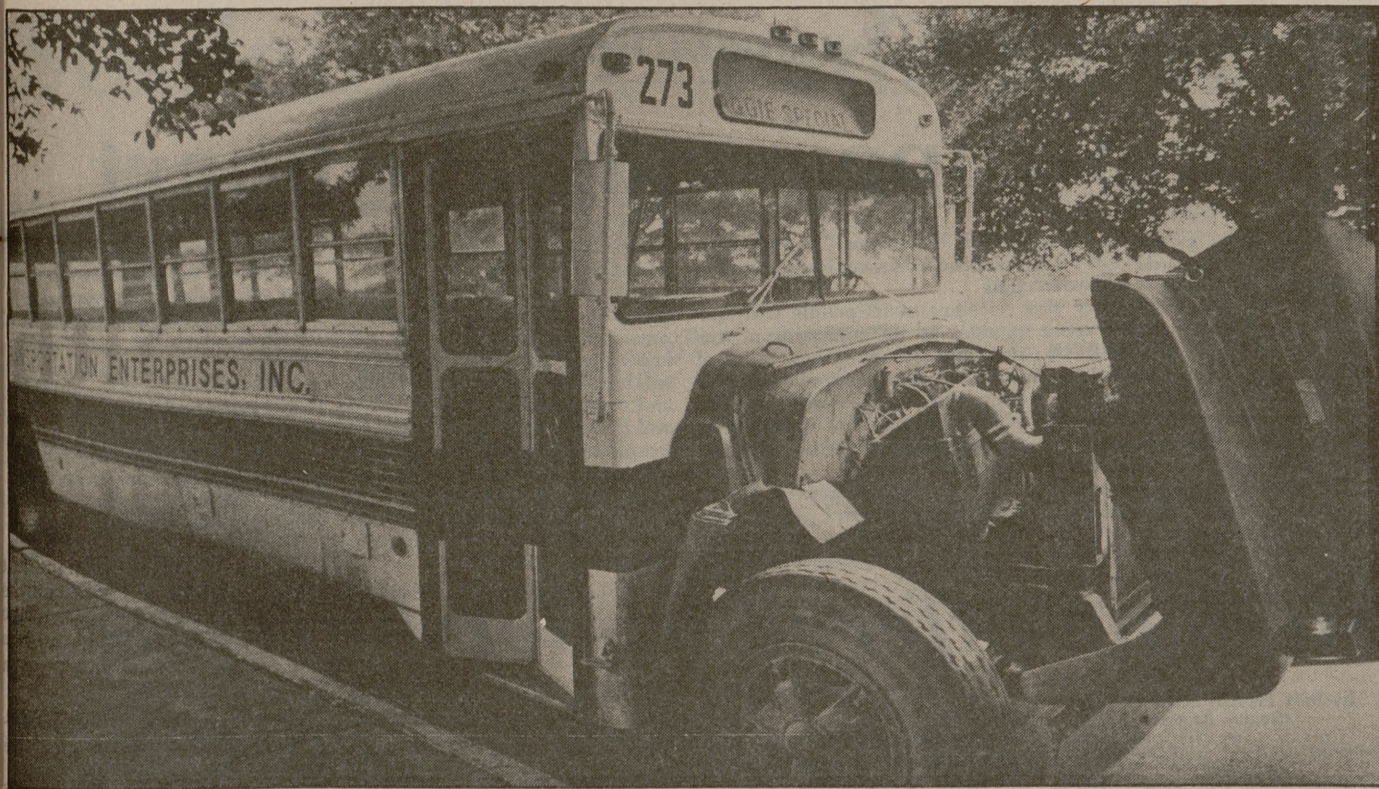


Local



Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Problems with the shuttle bus system, owned by Transportation Enterprises, Inc., have caused University administrators to consider a University-owned system. Three buses this

semester have developed mechanical or maintenance problems.

Shuttle bus changes are unlikely

By BERNIE FETTE
Battalion Staff

Three shuttle buses had maintenance or mechanical problems the first three weeks of this semester, and University officials have said that although no changes in the system are coming, alternatives are being considered.

The shuttle bus system is owned by Transportation Enterprises, Inc. of Austin, but is contracted by the University. The company presently has one year remaining on its contract.

On January 28, one of the buses slammed into a tree while making a turn when a steering rod broke, causing the driver to lose control of the bus. None of the 35 passengers were injured.

TEI Bryan Branch Manager Brady Burnett said the accident was caused by a broken center bolt in the front left leaf spring and that recently the driver was released from all responsibility. "It was not his fault," Burnett said.

Problems with two more buses caused students yet more inconvenience on Feb. 5 — one on Finfeather Road and one in front of the Teague Research Center on campus.

Burnett said the bus in front of the Teague Center overheated and the one on Finfeather ran out of gas. He said there are two part-time service workers at the local TEI branch and that evidently the two buses were overlooked.

Sentiments are mixed regarding the condition of the buses, most of which are eight years old. William Thomas Reese, driver of the bus whose steering failed late last month, said that some of the other drivers had complained about the bus, saying they had problems making right turns.

"They do have their problems," Reese said. "But they do a good job for the money they (Transportation Enterprises) have to work with."

Harold Jaschke, another driver said most of the buses are in good condition and that "you can't judge the whole system on just one bus."

Darrell Walton, a Texas A&M University student who worked as a driver for TEI from the beginning of last semester until Feb. 3, said some of the buses have signal indicators, heaters, or horns which do not work. Also, some of

the buses have windows which are stuck open permanently, he said.

Concerning the windows, Burnett said there is a certain part which must be replaced in order to have the windows repaired and the parts have been on order to the distributor in Fort Wayne, Ind., for more than a year.

Last semester, a gas tank fell off a bus on the Holleman route "at least twice," Walton said.

"Some of the radios in the buses don't work either," he said.

Burnett said the repair work on the radios has to be done at the local TEI branch because there is no place in Bryan-College Station which will do guaranteed repair work on them. Repair manuals for the radios are on back order.

Gene Oates of Texas A&M's Department of Business Services said the present shuttle bus system was initiated in 1972 at the request of former Texas A&M President Jack K. Williams.

Oates implied a possible explanation for the recent problems.

At the beginning of this semester TEI had only one mechanic, he said. The chief mechanic at the local division of the company worked during the Christmas break getting the system prepared for the spring and then left on vacation. His absence left only one mechanic on duty, Oates said.

Further complicating the problem, Oates said, at the beginning of the semester TEI was operating with two buses less than last semester — 26 instead of 28. Normally two buses are out from the fleet in the spring because enrollment drops, he said. However, enrollment was underestimated this semester and they had to be added back.

One alternative to the University's present shuttle bus system considered from time to time is a University owned and operated bus system, agreed Oates and Don Powell, also of the Department of Business Services. However, business services receive no state funds to help finance a bus system. Powell said he had made no study recently regarding the cost of such a system.

But cost is not the only factor to consider in such a venture, he said. Drivers, maintenance and service personnel and organization must all be considered in a

long planning period.

Powell said the only other possibility he could think of would be a city or county-owned transportation system. But he said, "That alternative has only been tossed around."

Dr. Charles McCandless, director of the Five-Year-Master-Plan Committee said his personal preference to improve the present system would be to see an additional system which would provide transportation from the parking lots located around the periphery of the campus to the center of the campus.

The peak load for the system occurs between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. each weekday morning. That's when the system has its problems.

"They (TEI) seem to have sche-

duling problems out there," Walton said. "There aren't enough buses on Holleman, Villa Maria or Anderson Parkway. If you're waiting for a bus and one comes along with standing room only, you get passed up."

But scheduling and assigning the buses is the responsibility of the University, Burnett said, not the responsibility of TEI.

"Everyone wants to get here at ten minutes till eight," Powell said. "But once things get rolling, the system runs just fine," he said.

TEI also operates systems in San Marcos, Dallas and in its home base of Austin. Oates said he believes the buses at the other schools are about five or six years old.

Guitarists' love for music satisfies Aggie audience

By STEPHEN BONIN
Battalion Reporter
My piano teacher once told me about musicians: "Music becomes such a love in your life that you take it to bed at night."

Classical guitarists Celin and Pepe Romero displayed that special kind of love for their music and their instruments Thursday night for a crowd of 900 in Rudder Auditorium.

Whether playing together or alone, the Romeros took full advantage of the evening's intimacy and seemed unaffected by the empty seats. In fact, the intent on their faces personified a love affair with their guitars that went undisturbed the entire performance.

The audience was treated to a spectrum of sound and imagery, thanks to the diversity of the duo's repertoire. They made their guitars sing. Several times during the evening I closed my eyes, allowing my mind to hear violins, harps, and harpsichords and see a parade of elegant horses or a festival of Spanish dancers.

The Romeros opened and closed both acts as a duo. When

one brother yielded the stage to the other, the solos showcased their individual personalities and styles. These were the best moments of the show.

the second act, Pepe amazed me with his characterizations on "Capricho Arabe" ("Spoiled Arab") and "Leyenda" ("Legend").

And to make the evening of Spanish flavor complete, Pepe and Celin closed with a climactic "Noche en Malaga," ("Night In Malaga") written by their father, Celedonio. Immediately after the Romeros strummed their final chord the audience jumped out of their chairs — something unusual for hesitant Texas A&M crowds.

The Spanish bug had delivered an electric charge.

Review

Pepe eased up and down the neck of his guitar as if it were greased with spray lubricant. He used every muscle in his fingers to make his nylon strings chime, trill, and vibrate like a violin. In



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