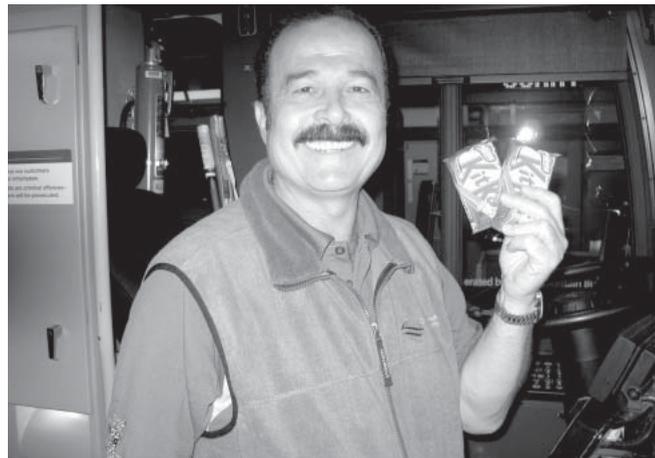
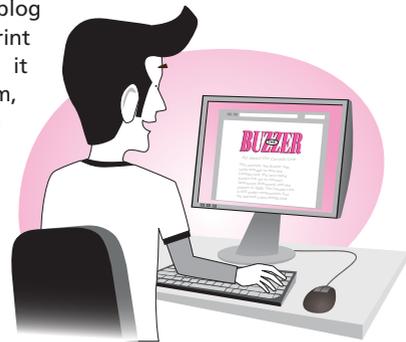


The Buzzer has a blog!

Your favourite transit newsletter now has an online home!

That's right—the *Buzzer* launched a blog on Monday, October 6, to help us better bring you news and stories from behind-the-scenes at TransLink. Visit buzzer.translink.ca for fresh content every weekday; you'll be able to get involved, too, as you can post comments and interact directly with us!

Of course, the blog won't replace the print *Buzzer*. You'll still see it on the transit system, just publishing once a month instead of every two weeks, starting in October. Never fear: we're huge fans of the print *Buzzer* and we're committed to keeping it going!



John Abou-Samra runs a popular trivia contest on his trolley bus, where he hands out smiles and chocolate bars.

Bus driver delights riders with trivia and chocolate

Ride on John Abou-Samra's trolley route, and chances are you'll walk away with a smile—and maybe even with a chocolate bar.

John regularly runs trivia contests over the public address system on his bus, challenging his riders to answer questions on all types of subject matter. Winners get a chocolate bar, which John provides in a hanging pouch at the front of the bus. The winners also get to announce their name and job over the intercom.

"I make some fun for them on the bus, and also I give them chocolate bars to start their day with something sweet," John said. "And in the afternoon, after a long day of work, I try to put a smile on the face of my passengers."

It's hard not to be cheered up when John gets on the intercom. He hosts his trivia game with a friendly manner and a quick wit, and knows just when to drop hints if his riders are calling out the wrong answers.

The questions aren't easy. John makes sure they are a challenge for his often well-educated crowds. The day the *Buzzer* was on the bus, John asked two questions: what age was Mozart when he died (35), and what was the one piece of artwork that Michaelangelo signed (the Pieta).

A former finance manager who speaks five languages, John has a vast amount of general knowledge he draws on for the

trivia game. He also keeps up with current events, and compiles questions from trivia contests he enters on cruise ships—he is a self-described cruiseaholic who does four cruises every year.

John, who started driving buses in 2000, launched the contest in October 2003 when he was driving the #17.

"I wanted to do something special," he said. "Make our company stop receiving complaints from the passengers and start receiving commendations."

Most of his riders were UBC students, and a campus newspaper picked up John's story, writing that many left class early to catch John's bus and participate in the contest.

Since then, he's given away over 4,000 chocolate bars to lucky riders. (He buys the treats with his own money.) More attention has also come his way: the contest has been covered in the Vancouver Province, Sun, and on CTV. John also received a 2006 Vancouver Tourism award and a commendation letter from Coast Mountain Bus president Denis Clements.

For John, however, the contest and its rewards have been simply the result of his life philosophy.

"I am successful because I love my job," he said.

"I love to give and love is giving. And when you love what you are doing, you give all the talents that God gave to you to be successful in your work."

To hear the trivia game and an interview with John, visit the *Buzzer Blog* at buzzer.translink.ca!

The Buzzer's contest corner!

LAST ISSUE'S FARECARD WINNER We had 528 eligible entries in our last contest, and Liana L. won the FareCard. The answer? Spirit of the West played at the TransLink Ride-Share Week kickoff event.

WIN A FREE FARECARD! It will be for 1, 2, or 3 zones, based on where the winner travels. Email thebuzzer@translink.bc.ca with the answer to the question below, your full name, daytime phone number, and where you got the *Buzzer* (include the route number if you got it on a bus). Make sure you include everything—entries missing any of this info will not be entered to win! One entry per person, please.



What is the web address of the new *Buzzer* blog?
(Hint: it's in this issue!)

Enter by **Mon Nov. 3 at 9am**; we'll draw a name from all eligible entries if more than one is right. See who won in the **Nov. 7** issue!

COMING EVENTS

✓ **Mood Disorders Association of BC** presents a free talk by Dr. Melinda Suto, UBC Dept of Psychiatry, on "Strategies for Living Well with Bipolar Disorder." Dr. Suto will discuss self-management strategies for people living with depressive disorders, and how family and friends can be partners in their recovery. Thu Oct 16, Sunrise Hall (1950 Windermere St, Vancouver), 7pm.

✓ **Renfrew Park Community Centre** hosts two events in fall at 2929 East 22nd Ave, Vancouver. The **Community Diwali Celebration** is Sat Oct 18, 5pm to 9:30pm, with display booths, Henna, Rangoli, Diya, and entertainment. Includes dinner and door prizes. \$5 adults; children and youth and free. The **6th Annual Craft Fair** is Sat, Nov 8, 10am–4pm. Book your table early as space is limited. \$20/table; admission free.

✓ **Vancouver Women's Musical Society** presents two pianists, Devon Joiner & Benjamin Marks Woo, Wed Oct 15, 11am, Unitarian Church, 49th & Oak, Vancouver. Info: Janie 604-732-9986.

✓ Happy Anniversary! The **Gallery Singers of Vancouver** will hold a 40 year anniversary chamber music concert on Sun Oct. 19, 3pm at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 12th and Hemlock, Vancouver. Tickets at the door; adults \$18, students/seniors \$13. Reception to follow.

✓ **St. Augustine Church** holds its Annual Fall Fair at St. Augustine's School, 2145 West 8th Ave, Vancouver, on Sun Oct. 19, 10am–1:30pm. Crafts, needlework, jewelry, household treasures and baking for sale, plus a silent auction.

✓ The second annual **Pan African Film and Arts Festival** is on Oct. 24–26 in Vancouver. African film, paintings, music, and dance will be on display. More info and tickets available at vpaff.org.

✓ Have you worked in Britain? The **Canadian Alliance of British Pensioners** invites you to a free info session on the new pension laws, followed by a pension application process workshop. Two Vancouver west side dates: Sat Oct. 25, 4:30pm at Kerrisdale Community Centre, 5851 West Blvd; and Sat Nov. 8, 2pm at Kitsilano Community Centre, Snowy's Lounge, 2690 Larch St. Of interest to those 45+. Info: britishpensions.bc.ca or 604-683-3445.

✓ **Free weekly Scrabble group** gets together Tuesdays at 7pm, Grandview Legion Hall at 2205 Commercial Drive. Easily accessible by SkyTrain and #20 and #99 buses. Info: Andrea at (604) 518-3541.

✓ **Sir Charles Tupper Secondary School** invites former students, teachers and staff to its 50th anniversary celebrations in September 2009. For info, email friendsoftupper@telus.net with your name (and name at Tupper if different then), contact info, and grad year or period of work at the school. We hope to hear from you soon!

Send your community events to
thebuzzer@translink.bc.ca

Printed on recycled paper. Vol. 92 No. 19, ISSN 0714-1688.

Win a free FareCard!



BUZZER

THE

PUBLISHED BY TRANSLINK • FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2008



Who's behind the voices of SkyTrain and SeaBus?

We found out!
More inside.

Also in this issue...

- » Trolley bus driver John Abou-Samra runs a trivia game on transit
- » GoCard mobile sessions for high school students
- » Maintenance on SkyTrain: look out!

Visit the *Buzzer* blog at buzzer.translink.ca

Who's the voice of the SkyTrain?

Hop on a SkyTrain and you'll soon hear a woman's voice on the public address system, telling you what line you've boarded and what station is coming up next.

Well, that voice belongs to Laureen Regan, president of Regan Productions, a video production company in Calgary, Alberta.



Laureen Regan, the voice behind the SkyTrain announcements.

She's been the voice of the SkyTrain since 2001, when the Millennium Line was launched and new station announcements were required. She heard her voice on the train system for the first time shortly after the Millennium Line began service.

"I took the train and I laughed," she said.

"It was so amazing to hear it—to sit there and go, 'Oh my God, that's my voice.' You remembered when you recorded it. ... And everybody has no idea, which makes you laugh."

Laureen came to be the voice of the SkyTrain through her connection to InterAlia, another Calgary-based company. InterAlia makes automated voice systems, and knew Laureen had done voice work for her own productions in the past. They asked Laureen to do a demo voice for their system, which they were about to show to TransLink for the Millennium Line.

Then, when TransLink bought the InterAlia system, Laureen was asked to record the real announcements for the trains.

Recording wasn't too tough.

"Millennium Line is hard to say, I've got to say," she said. "But I don't remember any of the names being particularly difficult. The challenge sometimes with recording for places you don't know is that you may not know the proper pronunciation [of local names.]"

It's a challenge she's faced again over the years. Laureen has also done voice work for the Salt Lake City train system and the BART trains in San Francisco, both through InterAlia.

The chance to do voice work like this has been a gift, she says.

"It's not been something that I've planned—it just happened," said Laureen. "And I enjoy it every time I do voicing. I love it."

Want to hear Laureen's voice? Visit buzzer.translink.ca to hear an audio podcast related to this story on the Buzzer blog!

Who's the voice of the SeaBus?

For the last six years, every SeaBus sailing has featured a safety announcement from Transport Canada: a man's voice describing the locations of the life jackets and rafts aboard the vessel.

"He sounds very in control, like he means business and we should follow his direction," said Kat Giesbrecht, a SeaBus marine attendant who hears the announcement many times a day.

But it turns out Rik Kiviaho, the man behind the announcement, wasn't really trying for that.

"It had to fit into a thirty second slot, so I wasn't really thinking about anything," he said. "Two takes, and there you go."

Rik is a Vancouver actor who works for Consumer Electronics, the company who installed the SeaBus's public address system. Over the past 15 years, he's done voice work on video games, radio commercials, and industrial videos.

"I thought it was just an in-case-of-emergency announcement, I didn't know that it was going to be on every time the SeaBus pulled in and out!"

He had no idea it would end up on every SeaBus sailing.

"I thought it was just an in-case-of-emergency announcement, I didn't know that it was going to be on every time the SeaBus pulled in and out," he said.

"I was very surprised when I found out. It took me a year to find out, when somebody asked me, 'Did you do that voice?' I said I don't know, so I rode the SeaBus and sure enough, that was me."

He doesn't try to tell everyone about it, but it's become an inside joke that his girlfriend and others share among their friends.

"Friends of mine rib me constantly when they ride the SeaBus," he said. "All my friends started to ride it just to get a laugh."

Want to hear Rik's voice? Visit buzzer.translink.ca to hear an audio podcast with Rik on the Buzzer blog!



Rik Kiviaho, the voice behind the SeaBus safety announcements.

So, when SeaBus staff asked Consumer Electronics to make the recording—Transport Canada made it mandatory for all passenger ships to make such an announcement in 2002—the company just asked Rik to lend a hand.

Did you miss your GoCard photo session?

Apple Photographic Services' Mobile Unit will park at the following locations in Greater Vancouver to take your GoCard photograph.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11	
South Arm United Church Parking Lot 11051 No.3 Rd. (@ Steveston) Richmond	9–11 a.m.
Ladner Bus Exchange	Noon–2 p.m.
Scottsdale Mall (Scott Road parking lot beside McDonald's, across the street from the Sikh Temple)	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18	
Main Street SkyTrain (at street level)	9–11 a.m.
Vancouver Transit Centre (across from 9149 Hudson St)	Noon–2 p.m.
Lougheed Town Centre SkyTrain Station (bus exchange level)	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25	
Coquitlam Centre Bus Exchange	9–11 a.m.
Scott Road SkyTrain Station (bus exchange level)	Noon–2 p.m.
Staples Business Depot Parking Lot 20055 Willowbrook Drive, Langley	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1	
Edmonds Station Bus Exchange	9–11 a.m.
Brentwood Mall Bus Exchange (behind the bus exchange on the mall side of the chain link fence)	Noon–2 p.m.
22255 Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge (Liquidation World parking lot)	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8	
Lonsdale Quay Bus Exchange	9–11 a.m.
South Arm United Church Parking Lot 11051 No.3 Rd. (@ Steveston) Richmond	Noon–2 p.m.
Ladner Bus Exchange	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17	
Main Street SkyTrain (at street level)	9–11 a.m.
Vancouver Transit Centre (across from 9149 Hudson St)	Noon–2 p.m.
Lougheed Town Centre SkyTrain Station (bus exchange level)	3–5 p.m.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Scottsdale Mall (Scott Road parking lot beside McDonald's, across the street from the Sikh Temple)	9–11 a.m.
Staples Business Depot Parking Lot 20055 Willowbrook Drive, Langley	Noon–2 p.m.

Photo sessions are conducted from a silver Honda Element in the parking areas, **not** in the malls or other locations.

To get their photo, each student must bring:

1. Completed 2008/2009 GoCard application form obtained from school office and signed by a school official;
2. Proof of age (birth certificate or passport);
3. \$11 cash fee to be paid to Apple Photographic Services.

Rent a bike locker at Metrotown or Stadium

We've got bicycle lockers now available for rent at Metrotown and Stadium SkyTrain Stations.

Bike lockers are for people who want to ride their bike to connect with rapid transit. Each locker has space for one bicycle and related equipment (sorry, you can't put anything else in there), and costs just \$10 a month, with a minimum three month rental period.

To rent a locker, you can either fill out a locker request form on the TransLink website or contact C-Media at info@cmmediaoutdoor.com or 604-924-1076.

By the way, you can also rent bike lockers at other SkyTrain stations, West Coast Express stations and transit exchanges throughout the Lower Mainland.

The other SkyTrain stations with bike lockers are Main Street, Renfrew, Rupert, Gilmore, Brentwood, Sperling-Burnaby Lake, Lake City Way, Production Way, Lougheed Town Centre, Braid, Sapperton, 22nd Street, Scott Road, and King George.

The transit exchanges are Ladner Exchange, Sexsmith Park and Ride, Phibbs Exchange, and South Surrey Park and Ride.

As well, most West Coast Express stations have bike lockers, but for more info, call West Coast Express Customer Service at (604) 488-8906 or 1-800-570-7245 (Mission).



SkyTrain Dispatches

Upcoming SkyTrain track maintenance

LATE WEDNESDAY EVENINGS – SURREY AREA

Track maintenance continues in the Surrey area, affecting service after 9:30pm on Nov. 5, 19, 26, and Dec. 3. Service is as follows.

- » Normal evening service on Expo Line from Waterfront to Scott Road (every 8 min), and Millennium Line from Waterfront to VCC-Clark (every 8 min); combined service every 4 min between Waterfront and Columbia.
- » Reduced frequency between Scott Road and King George (every 16 min). All passengers must change trains at Scott Road.

Passengers to/from Gateway, Surrey Central, or King George, please allow an extra 10 minutes for your journey.

SATURDAY OCT. 11

At the Plaza 88 complex near New Westminster station, construction of an overhead concrete slab requires a one-day closure of the westbound platform and track. Service is affected throughout the system.

- » Millennium Line trains will run only between VCC-Clark and Columbia stations, every 5 min. Passengers must change to/from Expo Line trains at Columbia or Commercial/Broadway.
- » Expo Line trains (Waterfront-King George) run every 5 min.
- » At New Westminster station, trains will run in both directions on the eastbound track.

We do not expect any significant delay along the Expo Line.

SATURDAY OCT. 18 AND SUNDAY OCT. 19

SkyTrain will replace rail sections east of Edmonds Station—the original Expo Line tracks have carried more than two million trains, so a few sections are due for renewal. This affects service all weekend.

- » Millennium Line trains will run only between VCC-Clark and Columbia stations, about every 8 min. Passengers must change to/from Expo Line trains at Columbia or Commercial/Broadway.
- » Expo Line trains (Waterfront-King George) will run less frequently, leaving end stations every 7 to 10 min, and may be held up to 5 min at Metrotown, 22nd Street, or New Westminster.
- » Additional trains will run from Waterfront to Metrotown, to provide a combined 5 min frequency in the west half of the line.
- » At Royal Oak and Edmonds, trains will run in both directions on the "westbound" track, with a waiting time of up to 15 min.

Please allow an additional 10 to 15 minutes for your trip if travelling through the Royal Oak-Edmonds area.

Watch out for signs and announcements, and follow directions of SkyTrain staff. We will do our best to minimize delay and inconvenience. More details and any updates are at www.skytrain.info and on the new Buzzer blog. Thanks for your patience and cooperation!