



Quarterly Newsletter for Friends of Golden Arrow Bus Services

INTERCHANGE

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Golden Arrow's Mission:

To operate safe, reliable passenger transport services designed to meet the needs of our customers and by applying sound business principles, to create a secure future for the company and its people.

Golden Arrow's Missie:

Om veilige, betroubare passasiersvervoerdienste te lewer, gerig op die behoeftes van ons klante en, deur gesonde sakebeginsels toe te pas, 'n seker toekoms vir die maatskappy en sy mense te skep.

Umnqophiso kaGolden Arrow:

Ukufaka iinkonzo zothutho luka wonkewonke ezikhuselekileyo kunye nezithembekileyo kwaye nezilungiselelwe ukukhawulelana neemfuno zabakhweli bebhasi zalenkampani oku kufezekiswa ngokusebenzisa imithetho-siseko yoshishino ephilileyo, nokwakha ikamva elikhuselekileyo lwalenkampani kunye nabantu bayo.



Nic Cronjé
CEO: Golden Arrow Bus Services

NOTE *from* NIC

If it ain't broke, don't replace it!

After more than 20 years of virtually no investment in public transport infrastructure and national treasury's inability to keep abreast of the growing demand for subsidised services in the wake of rapid urban sprawl, the much acclaimed IRT system has been foisted onto the City of Cape Town as an intervention set to overhaul what has, in essence, been a functional, albeit neglected, local public transport system.

The Passenger Rail Agency of S.A.'s (PRASA) recent commitment of R51bn to acquire 3 600 new suburban service coaches over the next 10 years is a tacit acknowledgement of the demise of Metrorail as the backbone of Cape Town's public transport system over the last two decades. The last new trains, which comprise only two percent of the commuter rail fleet, were purchased in the mid-1980s.

During the same period, Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS) as the contracted provider of scheduled bus services in the metropole, was coerced into a month-to-month interim contract that effectively stifled any route expansion and cast a pervasive shadow over long term capital investment to effectively meet growing commuter demands.

Nonetheless, GABS steadfastly plied its trade, having to contend with the intense strain of community upheavals and violent taxi wars during the struggle years, with drivers in some instances paying the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. With limited and diminishing state support, GABS has continued to provide ordinary Capetonians in the far flung corners of the City with an affordable, reliable and safe travel option.

The company's wish to serve its customers to the best of its ability has, however, been frustrated by not being able to respond to constant service requests from communities such as those in Kraaifontein, Brackenfell and Delft as the moratorium on additional services, together with the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) capped kilometres precludes residents from these suburbs to benefit from subsidised public transport.

Instead of heeding the widespread calls from commuters to expand present services and to upgrade interchanges, the City of Cape Town seems hell-bent on introducing a system, which, at current levels, costs five times more than the existing system, but with less capacity to accommodate the overall commuter demand.

/... continued on page 3

Engineering pilots fuel efficiency project

After manpower, fuel is the highest operating cost in the commuter bus industry. The 1 100 strong Golden Arrow fleet of buses consumes 28 million litres of fuel annually and presents formidable challenges to ensure that this strategic commodity is used efficiently in the company's operations. The Golden Arrow Engineering team consistently pursues innovative solutions aimed at reducing the fuel consumption of the fleet, and the most recent initiative has been done in collaboration with VOITH, the automatic transmission specialists.

A project using the VOITH topography-dependent shifting program, SensoTop, which adjusts all gear-shifting points to the acceleration, line profile and load of the vehicle, has been piloted on the company's fleet of MAN HB2 buses since January. The program, which prompts a tilt sensor to deliver the necessary information to the transmission control for the smooth adjustment of gear-shifting points,

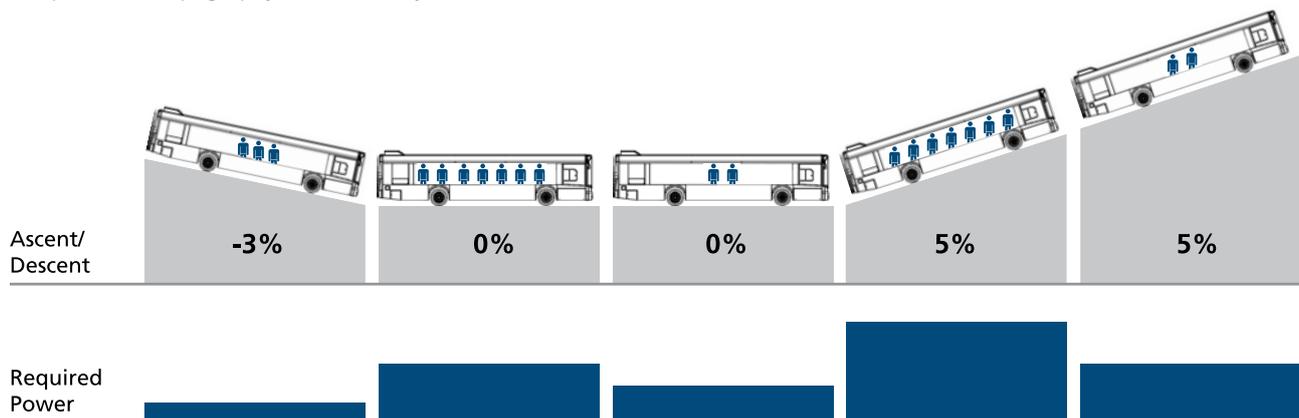
provides the most optimum engine power for level roads, mountainous terrain and variable mass loads.

According to company engineer, Roger Overton, the initial results of the pilot programme have yielded a 2,5% saving on fuel and he expressed optimism that this could be improved since VOITH trials elsewhere have yielded fuel savings of up to 7%. "While the 7% is very much dependent on topography and vehicle use, the SensoTop program has the potential of making a significant contribution to economical and environmentally-friendly vehicle operations. The next step is for a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis to ascertain the feasibility of rolling out the technology to the full fleet complement" says Overton.

The efficient use of fuel is a strategic imperative for the company as it impacts on our financial performance and sustainability profile and the SensoTop pilot programme symbolises the on-going efforts of the company's engineering team to enhance energy saving solutions. 

Optimum fuel consumption with SensoTop

Adaptation to topography and vehicle dynamics



Source: www.voithturbo.com

NOTE from NIC continued...

The question that begs to be answered is: "Is the City of Cape Town really spending its money to enhance public transport or is it intent on creating a prestigious system which will not be sustainable in a

spatial environment and demographic formations which run counter to conventional IRT operations?"

There simply have not been enough funds available in the treasury kitty

to accommodate the demands of the current system and it is mind-boggling to contemplate where the reserves will be sourced to fund the new system which is fivefold more expensive! 

Premier receives first copy of the Golden Arrow commemorative publication



The first copy of the GABS 150th anniversary coffee table publication was handed to Premier Helen Zille at a function held in the City Bowl at the beginning of May. As the political custodian of public transport in the Western Cape, it was fitting for the Premier to receive the first copy of this richly illustrated manuscript which narrates the chequered journey of road based public transport since the humble beginnings of horse drawn carriages in Cape Town in 1861.

The book recounts the story of the incredible ingenuity and resilience of the men and women who pioneered the commuter bus industry in Cape Town over different historical periods, including world wars, the apartheid period and the bitter taxi wars. It also provides an insight into the intricate web of an unbroken chain of mergers and acquisitions that has evolved into what is the Golden Arrow Bus Services of today.

Most of the important episodes of the company's rich legacy are captured without compromising the truth thus providing the reader with sufficient discretion to appreciate the trials and tribulations navigated over this period.

Work on the publication commenced towards the end of 2010 and the published copy was finally delivered in March of this year which equates to just over two years that went into the completion of the 125-page publication. This process involved a broad ambit of consultations to endorse and verify an exhaustive chronology of events and developments that had the most profound effect on the company's operations and which gave shape to the business model it follows today.

Handing over the first copy to the Premier, Chief Executive Officer, Nic Cronje, remarked that he was appreciative that the Premier and the Western Cape Minister of Transport were present to receive the first copies to symbolically launch the publication for broader public consumption.

He further stated: "This publication will serve as a memento of the trials and tribulations that had to be overcome to reach the service and operational excellence that is embodied in the Golden Arrow

brand and it will serve as an important frame of reference for posterity that will hopefully guide and inspire the future custodians of bus transport in Cape Town."

In her acceptance of the publication, the Premier acknowledged the important contribution Golden Arrow has made to public transport in the City. "This bus company has survived some of the most harrowing periods of our country's turbulent history and will undoubtedly continue to play a key role in the changing public transport landscape of the City. The book succinctly tells the story of buses and bus transport in Cape Town and the institutional knowledge accumulated in the company over 150 years will be vital to realising the public transport vision of government in the future," the Premier noted.

The launch was attended by key stakeholders of Golden Arrow which included government officials, political office bearers, suppliers, organised business, passenger forums, ex-directors and senior employees. 



From left to right: Nic Cronjé (GABS), Helen Zille (Western Cape Premier) and Johnny Copelyn (HCI)

Cover photograph from left to right: Johnny Copelyn (HCI), Helen Zille (Western Cape Premier), Nic Cronjé (GABS) and Naziema Jappie (GABS)



From left to right: Hannes Mouton (Provincial Department of Transport), Johan Fourie (Provincial Department of Transport) & Robin Carlisle (MEC – Transport)



150 YEARS



From left to right: Hilton and Nerina Skuy (Skuy Communications) and Prof Mandla Tshabalala (HCI Foundation)



From left to right: Gretel Hornischer (Sibanye), Toto Ntsobi (Sibanye), Abe Booysen (Sibanye) & Yogita Desai (GABS)

Multimech makes way for first female engineering intern

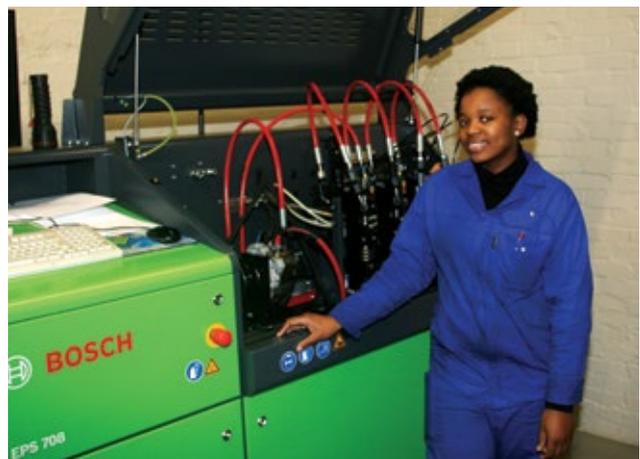
Increasing the number of women in the bus industry is high on the agenda at Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS). In 1994 GABS employed an estimated 10 female bus drivers whereas today that number has increased to 146 female drivers. The active intake of female drivers through learnership programmes has proved hugely successful at GABS and in January 2013 the company took another step in a positive direction through its employment of the first female intern in its engineering division.

Zimbini Makunga is a 23 year old Mechanical Engineering student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the first female engineering intern at the company's Multimech offices. Upon the completion of her internship this year she will look to graduate at the start of 2014 and believes that "GABS is the perfect place for internships as you are exposed to all aspects of the field of study and I'm enjoying putting into practice the theory I have picked up during my studies". Often asked why she chose this male-dominated career path Makunga explains that it was a natural choice. "My love of maths and science played a major part in my decision while I also wanted to do something different. I want to change society's views and prove that women are equally adept in this environment," she says.

She is very pleased with her experience at Mutlimech so far and has found the environment a change from

university but easy to adapt too as her colleagues have all proved more than willing to assist her.

In the future she would like to focus specifically on the manufacturing side of her career path and looks forward to what the future has in store. Makunga is very excited about the opportunity that GABS has given her and feels that the company provides an ideal training ground. "Thank you Golden Arrow for the internship, it is perfect as I get to actually apply what for so long I have only seen in textbooks. I would like to see more students get this opportunity as it is perfect due to the very broad exposure that you receive," she says. ☺



Zimbini Makunga: the first female engineering intern

First time DOTY entrant takes the crown

The 2012 Driver of the Year (DOTY) competition was held at Good Hope Suites at Grand West in Cape Town on April 6th this year. The competition was introduced in 1986 by Golden Arrow's CEO, Nic Cronjé, as a way to further instil a culture of customer care, reliability and driving excellence. In its 27th year, DOTY is one of the premier events on the Golden Arrow calendar and all the drivers involved put a lot of hard work in throughout the year to distinguish themselves amongst their colleagues.

This year's finalists have 128 years of combined service between them, with five of the finalists finding themselves in the top ten for the first time. Arrowgate driver, Adam Lehman, clinched the top spot - an extraordinary feat since this was his first DOTY competition. Lehman only joined the Company in June 2010, but has already established himself

as a safe and well-mannered driver. According to CEO Nic Cronjé, this win should really inspire each and every driver. "Not to take anything away from Adam Lehman's exceptional performance, but what this really shows is that you don't have to work for the company for ten years to win this competition, it's all about the effort that you make," says Cronjé.

In addition to the top ten, Rookie of the Year is awarded to a driver who has had less than one year's service at the time of the competition and this year the award went to Leslie-Carl Solomons from Philippi Depot. The Female Driver of the Year was awarded to Natashé Douglas for her exceptional people skills, driving record and practical driving ability. ☺



Adam Lehman (Driver of the Year winner) and Nic Cronjé



Atlantis winners - left to right - Jason Smith (6th), Gavin Johnson (Area Manager) and David Johannes (8th)



Arrowgate winners – Back row, left to right: Leon Dars (7th), Rafiek Lakay (Area Manager), Karl Fredericks (SBU Manager), James Swano (3rd), Anwar Ally (Operations Manager), Adam Lehman (winner), Roy Zimri (SBU Manager). Front row, left to right: Derick Meyer (Area Manager) and Johnny Diedericks (4th)



Phillipi winners – Back row, left to right: Adnaan Mobarra (SBU Manager), Mervyn Pharoah (SBU Manager), Bronwen Dyke (Public Relations Manager), Natashé Douglas (Female Driver of the Year), Ashiraaf Meyer (10th), Paul Julius (SBU Manager) and Erifaan Manan (SBU Manager) Front row, left to right: Joseph Daniels (9th), Carl Solomons (Rookie), Donovan Saayman (2nd) and Mario Gaffley (Area Manager)

Looking back on the strike: Was it really worth it?

When one considers the negative impact of the recent twenty-five day strike in the bus commuter industry, one cannot but wonder whether there is not a more constructive way in which to conclude wage agreements.

A snap survey conducted via in-person interviews, Facebook and electronic mail to determine the impact of the strike on passengers clearly showed the essential role that Golden Arrow's services play in people's lives. Without our buses, passengers were forced to spend extra, un-budgeted for money, extra hours travelling and face the uncertainty that comes with having to suddenly rely on a different means of transport which is not necessarily the most convenient or cost effective.

The results painted a disturbing picture. The majority of commuters were out of pocket up to R1 500 spent on alternative transport and travelling time was increased in most cases by up to three hours a day. Almost half of the survey participants faced disciplinary action of some sort as a result of the strike. Little wonder then that the majority felt that it was commuters who incurred the biggest losses as a result of the strike.

Strike action does not, however, only inconvenience passengers and reduce company revenues but also denies employees the means with which to provide for their families and meet their financial obligations. In fact, experience suggests that many employees find themselves in ongoing financial difficulties as a result of having had to resort to micro-loans to make ends meet while on strike.

One has to ask oneself "was it really worth it?" in light of the hardships suffered, the more so when a simple calculation shows that it will take about nine months for employees to recover lost wages.

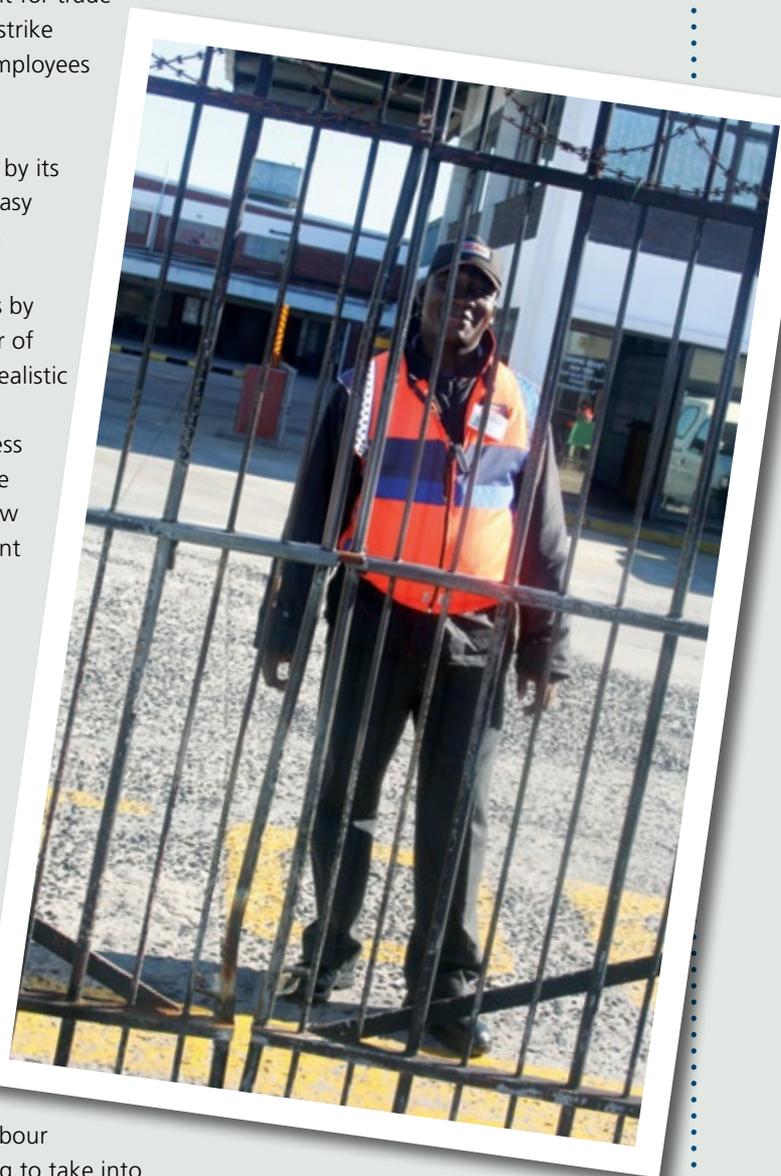
While there appears to have been many who were prepared to accept the wage proposal tabled by employers in the National Bargaining Forum, the absence of a legal requirement for trade unions to conduct a strike ballot denied such employees a meaningful voice.

Wage negotiation is, by its very nature, not an easy process but has been complicated over the past number of years by the excessive number of demands tabled, unrealistic expectations and the apparent unwillingness of negotiators to take cognisance of the new operating environment in which commuter bus operators find themselves.

There is no way, with the best will in the world, that any employer could give favourable consideration to this level of demand, yet Labour stubbornly maintained its position for many weeks of the negotiating process. Nor were Labour representatives willing to take into

account the fact that the South African commuter bus industry has seen average annual revenue increases of around 5% for the past few years.

Upon reflection it is therefore clear that very serious thought needs to be given to the far-reaching ramifications of prolonged strike action, particularly in light of the fact that it would seem that no real gains were won as a result. ☞



Locked out: A security guard cuts a lonely figure at the Epping complex during the strike

Zenzele empowers trainees to do it for themselves

Zenzele is a training and development organisation that provides vocational, business skills training and entrepreneurial development for historically disadvantaged people from its premises in Khayelitsha. The name Zenzele means “Do It for Yourself” as the organisation seeks to empower South Africans with technical skills that assist them in either starting up their own businesses or making them employable by existing organisations. Together with Golden Arrow Bus Services (GABS), Zenzele is turning their dream into a reality as the organisation has continually grown from strength to strength, increasing in both size and capacity. Through their six year partnership with GABS, the organisation has purchased welding equipment and materials as well as performing maintenance on older equipment. According to Young Ncgwase, the General Manager of Zenzele, the generous contribution made by GABS has seen numerous welding graduates either receive permanent employment or start up their own welding businesses. “We would like to thank GABS for their loyal support during this difficult economic climate and hope that many more individuals will be helped through this long standing relationship. Thank you Golden Arrow,” he says.

Funding by GABS, via the HCI Foundation, has had tangible and life-changing results for programme participants. One such success story is a gentleman who was able to capitalise on his newly learnt trade through the formation of his own business. This entrepreneurial spirit has made it possible for him to purchase a vehicle and to employ staff to assist him. In addition, a group of hardworking ladies, armed with knowledge from Zenzele’s sewing course has obtained a tender to produce grocery bags for a leading retail

outlet. Operating from a workshop provided by Zenzele, these women are making the most of their acquired skills and have successfully entered the business world.

The skills taught at Zenzele include welding, woodwork and sewing but the organisation also provides its learners with access to a business councillor who assists new business owners with everything from business plans to stock taking methods. The training lasts for a period of six months at which point the graduates are afforded a workshop in which to start their own business should this be their goal. Zenzele currently has 15 students in welding, 17 in sewing and 15 in woodwork. All three courses are open when it comes to gender and there is currently a contingent of female welding trainees. The students pay a small fee for the training but it is heavily subsidised by the organisation itself which is completely non-profit driven.

Looking to the near future Zenzele would like to see all its students successfully placed in positions of employment while the long term goal is for Zenzele to become independent and to move away from being wholly donor-reliant. ☞



Fatima van der Lilly (GABS), Young Ncgwase (Zenzele Training and Development)