Richard Saltz

An important lesson learned on the bus

Conventional wisdom has it that MBTA bus drivers are rude and incompetent, and that the buses themselves have all the ambience and character of a hospital emergency room. Not surprisingly, conventional wisdom has it wrong.

Since I live off-campus and am often at The Tech until late at night, I’ve become a regular rider of the I-Oftm Number 64 Oak Square bus. There are seven regulars who take the bus all the time, although you occasionally find one or two randoms sitting in the back. It’s a close knit little community in some ways. Everyone seems to know everyone else. Before pulling out, the driver will look around to see if all the regulars are on board—somehow almost always knows if one of the group is just late or won’t be coming at all.

The bus is slow. I’d get lost, flash my pass, and take the last seat on the left just in front of the rear door. This put me at the perimeter of the group. I didn’t want to sit nestled in the back and I didn’t really feel comfortable sitting with everyone else as I felt as if I wasn’t a part of the small group which was already in progress. I’d get used to the driver and take the first seat on the right.

Every one in a while, as I walk home from the bus stop, I feel as if I’m living in a column written by a local writer. I’ve become a regular reader of the I-Oftm Number 64 Oak Square bus.

Mary is a strange old bird. I often see her waiting for the bus huddled in the corner of the bus standing in a whole Gino’s pizza. I’m not sure if she does anything besides ride buses at night. She knew there was no Willy I was talking about. Before pulling out, the driver will look around to see if all the regulars are on board—somehow almost always knows if one of the group is just late or won’t be coming at all.

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