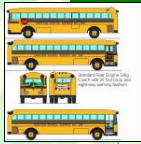


Daily Dispatch

The Gillig School Bus Story

Some of the older drivers around the shop reminisce about driving an old bus made by Gillig, during this time of year it is nice to reflect on years past.



The Beginning

It all began in 1896, as a man named Jacob Gillig came to San Francisco, California from New York City. His mission was to start a horse-drawn carriage repair business building, repairing, and detailing horse-drawn carriages. Soon afterwards, he built a reputation as being the best in the business.

Nearly ten years had passed, and his shop was now San Francisco's most popular carriage business. In 1906 that all changed, as San Francisco had experienced the largest earthquake in modern history. In 1914, more than six years after the original shop had burned down, Jacob's son Leo Gillig opened a new shop on Larkin Street in San Francisco, and named it "Leo Gillig Automotive Works." Following in his father's footsteps, he soon had a booming business, and had obtained nearly as much success as his father did in the carriage business. He soon became so successful that he hired his brother, Chester Gillig to work as partner. Following that, Leo Gillig Automotive Works then became known as "Gillig Bros. Custom-Built Coach Bodies"

Gillig Bros. – The Early Years

At first, the company strictly built automobiles, hearses, and additionally supplied factory-built modifications to heavy duty trucks such as tow-crane lifts, and even semi-truck trailers. One of the first products offered by the new "Gillig Bros." was a patented "California Top," invented and patented by Chester. This California-Top design consisted of a vehicle with a hard metal

roof with drop-sliding windows. Within the next few years, hundreds of the new California-Top vehicles were sold, and soon became a mainstay of the Gillig lineup. In 1928, Gillig began designing and building heavy duty trucks, similar to the trucks offered by Kenworth at the time, and in 1929, they built their very first bus. Three years later, a swift change at Gillig took place, as their very first school bus was built; a conventional built on a White truck chassis. After their first bus was built, Gillig had seen a sharp drop in sales for their other products, so they converted their manufacturing plant over to handle the construction of the school bus line, which almost immediately became Gillig's number one business. In 1937, the San Francisco plant became obsolete, and the decision was made to move the plant across the bay to the sprawling city of Hayward. After the move, a new, state-of-the-art construction facility was built, and shortly after, Gillig had built their very first "transit-style" school bus. The next year, Gillig bought out the firm of Patchett and Carstensens, based in Newman, California. By 1940, Gillig began experimenting with engine locations, and their very first midship engine transit-style bus was born. It was powered by Hall Scott gasoline engines, and was unusual at the time because the engines were placed on their sides, instead of vertically. Fabco provided the chassis for these new buses, with Gillig doing all of the body work.

Gillig Bros. – The War, and becoming an industry leader

With the onset of the U.S. participation in

World War II, Gillig became a war casualty, and all of the school bus manufacturing was put on hiatus. The war forced Gillig to go back to making heavy duty trucks, and troop transports, and ambulance vehicles – which were typical Gillig school bus bodies with ambulance fittings.

After the war ended in 1945, Gillig had returned to commercial manufacturing, and the first thing to come back into production were the Hall Scott mid-engine transit style school buses. The production at this time was 70 transit style, and 100 conventional bus bodies per year. In 1953, Leo Gillig had passed away, and soon after, Chester had retired from business. Stanley Marx, who started as a salesman, was named as new CEO of a newly formed, yet at the time unofficial "corporation."

Four years had passed with no noticeable change except for a few slight refinements in exterior design, and in 1957, Gillig purchased all of the assets of the now-defunct Pacific Bus line from Kenworth Truck Company, based in Seattle, Washington. In 1958, some of the designs and manufacturing methods used by Kenworth and their Pacific Bus lineup were introduced into the Gillig Bros. lineup of school buses. The most noticeable change to the Gillig Transit style bus was the incorporation of the general design and shape of the Pacific school bus body. Another notable change was an increased size in the driver's windshield, which was enlarged from 78"x30" to 86"x30", effectively making it the largest windshield on any school bus at that time.

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December 2009

Issue 3

Special points of interest:

Memories of the "Gillig" Innovators in School Bus Design.

Winterizing your vehicle is a smart thing to do!

Bob Nelson – 50% Canadian, 50% American, 100% Great School Bus Driver.

How About a "Cup of Joe"



Christmas Past

Fort Apache, Erector Set, Hoola Hoop, Slinky, Etch-a-Sketch, Lincoln Logs, Mr. Potato Head, View Master, Paddle Ball, Silly Putty, Tinker Toys, Chatty Cathy, Matchbox Cars, Betsy Wetsy, Clue, Life, Battleship, Monopoly, Operation, Chutes & Ladders, Candy Cane Lane, Old Maid, Ant Farm, Play Doh, Barbie, Ken, Skipper, Thumbelina, G.I. Joe, Tonka Truck, Easy Bake Oven, Frisbee.....

Christmas Present

Nintendo Wii, Zhu Zhu Pets, Legos Bionicles, Transformers, Guitar Hero 5, Apple iPods, Sony Play Station 3, Nintendo DSi, Microsoft Xbox 360, Kindle Wireless Reading Device, Monopoly Disney Edition, Matel D-Rex 2.0 Interactive Dinosaur, Nanovar Nanoscope, Nerf Raider Rapid Fire CS-35 Dart Blaster, Liv Girl, Tamagotchi Music Star, Live Butterfly Garden, Tonka Chuck My Talking Truck ...



Christmas Yet To Come

Single passenger moon gliders, Rondo time travel pack, self administered instant educational v-chip (complete with degree and job contract), gourmet food dispenser, android bedroom cleaning device, life-like baby child with all the similarities of a living baby, (without the dirty diapers), wardrobe design device, instant language trainer.....



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I'm Glad I Had A Chance To Meet Mr. Potato Head

The C-180 marked the first time any school bus builder had attempted a rear-engine transit-style school bus powered by a diesel engine.

By 1965, Gillig had become a well-established school bus manufacturer, with over 70% of all school bus sales in Northern California and Washington State being Gilligs. Now, production was up to 175 transits. School districts faced with increasing size requirements, and as more and more school districts were consolidating into larger ones, began ordering Gilligs with an increased ceiling height and overall size. These larger size requirements also led Gillig to introduce the largest school bus ever built in terms of passenger capacity. These buses were set up on a tandem axle chassis, and had a passenger capacity rating of 97 when fully loaded.

1968 saw two changes to Gillig Bros. One of the changes were in involved with management of the company. Stan Marx left, leaving after 41 years with the company leaving as Vice President. The next change was in ownership of Gillig Bros. itself. Herrick-Pacific Steel, a large steel manufacturing company located in Hayward, purchased the company. "Bros." was

dropped and replaced with "Corp." The plant by now is now at the capacity of producing one complete bus per day. At the unveiling of the 1973-'74 lineup, an all-new dashboard design was revealed. Instead of an all-metal dashboard, a fiberglass molded dashboard was in place and it signaled a change in driver ergonomics. For instance, the old switch panels used to be to the left of the steering column, underneath the steering wheel. The new design placed all of the switches on one panel under the driver's side window and all of the gauges were placed so that the driver could easily see them. The dashboard was given a color option.

Gillig Bros. – Changes, Introducing the Phantom, and the Transit Coach lineup downfall.

The year 1974 marked the last year for a gasoline-powered bus option, as the last left the factory that summer. Additionally, newer California emissions regulations effectively rendered the NHH220 Cummins mid-engine diesel obsolete. There also was a change to the exterior lighting. As various states passed new transportation laws, the need for a more advanced warning system became apparent. So, to achieve this, Gillig introduced the first coach

on the west coast with the eight-flasher system. This meant that the driver could push a button activating a set of amber warning lights placed just inside of the red stop lights. This allowed drivers to also warn following and approaching motorists that the bus was about to stop for pickup or drop-off of students. The first few states to require this kind of lighting were Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Then, in 1977, the government passed new legislation mandating that all school buses be built safer and with more modern designs. Seats with very little back padding that the baby boom generation grew up with were redesigned into a high-backed, heavily padded seat. This new seating design, called compartmentalization, was part of the new design regulations and soon, the rest of the bus manufacturing community followed suit. Another change in the interior design was the omission of the steel column rails at the front of the bus. Instead, a single, curved stainless steel tube positioned back of the entrance step well served as the handrail when entering the bus. Neoplan entered into a partnership with Gillig in 1977 as well, but ended in 1979 after having built only a
(Continued on page 3)

Winterize is Wise

1. Get the right kind of oil change.

The oil used should have the right viscosity, or thickness, for your vehicle at this time of year. Oil tends to thicken as it gets colder, and if it's too thick it won't do the best job of keeping your engine lubricated.

2. Make sure you can see.

When's the last time you replaced your windshield wiper blades?

3. Give your battery a little TLC.

This is an ideal time of year to make sure your battery's posts and connections are corrosion-free and that your battery has all the water it needs.

4. Examine your belts and hoses.

Cold weather can do a number on belts and hoses, so they deserve attention.

5. Check your tire pressure.

Your tires must be properly inflated to ensure you'll have the best possible traction as you drive along — and traction is often severely jeopardized in wet, snowy or icy conditions. The air pressure in your tires has likely dropped as the weather has gotten colder, so it's important to see where things stand now. (You can generally expect that you'll lose 1 pound per square inch whenever the temperature drops by 10 degrees Fahrenheit.)

6. Think about switching to snow tires.

Do you live in a hilly place that gets its fair share of snow? Then you might want to improve traction even more by investing in winter tires and using them over the next few months instead of your usual all-season tires.

7. Do you have four-wheel drive?

If so, it's important to check the status of your four-wheel-drive system and be sure it's working correctly.

8. Get the antifreeze mixture just right.

Aim for having a 50-50 mix of anti-freeze (coolant) and water inside your radiator.

9. Prepare an emergency kit.

- A blanket
- Extra boots and gloves
- Extra set of warm clothes
- Extra water and food
- Ice scraper
- A small shovel
- A flashlight
- Windshield wiper fluid
- Kitty litter for traction

- Flares
- Tool kit and 1st aid kit
- Paper towels
- Keep gas tank as full as you can to prevent running out.

10. Know what to do if you get stranded.

Don't wander away from your car unless you're completely sure about where you are and how far away help is. Light two flares and situate them at each end of your vehicle to call attention to your plight. Put on the extra clothes and use the blanket to stay warm. If you have enough gas in the tank, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes for each hour you're waiting for help. Leave at least one window open a little bit so that snow and ice don't seal the car shut. Suck on a hard candy to prevent your mouth from getting too dry.



Industry News (Gillig Cont.)

handful of buses. When the Neoplan partnership failed, Gillig began designing a new prototype transit bus under the "Phantom" name in partnership with AVIS Rent-a-Car. By this time however, Gillig's sales of school buses were in a sharp recession, led in part by a rather large fleet of pre-existing 30-years-old or older Gilligs still in active service (with those buses being service or rebuilt rather than replaced), and quality control issues which plagued nearly half of the 1980-1981 models that were built. As a result, in 1979 and into early 1980, Gillig began phasing out school bus production. 1982 marked the last year that the classic "Gillig Transit Coach" was manufactured. By the time the last classic-style school bus left the factory, Gillig had already geared itself for mass production of the Phantom, which by now was making its industry debut in the transit industry. A few years following the meteoric overnight success of the Phantom, and a rise in the market conditions for school bus builders in general, Gillig went back to school bus manufacturing. In 1985, Gillig had produced a prototype of a new Phantom school bus, and the following year their very first

Phantom-style school bus, which essentially was a heavily modified Phantom transit bus, made its debut. Initially, the Phantom School bus sold quite well and was thought to have been a similar success story to the original Phantom, but in 1991, sales started to slide again. In 1993, the last Phantom school bus rolled off the Hayward assembly line, and marked the last year that Gillig made school buses altogether.

to walk up the steps, as there aren't any steps to walk on. The floor is level with most street side curbs, thus making accessibility second to none in the industry. The Low Floor is now a strong seller itself, and has even spun off two other models. The BRT, a futuristic looking variant of the Low Floor, and the Gillig Trolley, a bus built to resemble an old streetcar, are both based off of the Low Floor platform.

The future is bright for Gillig Corp. and an online effort is persuading them to return to school bus manufacturing.

Gillig Corporation – Now

Gillig now makes transit buses for urban applications. The unchanged-since-1982 Phantom line is still the most popular transit style urban transit on the road and is the bread-and-butter crop for Gillig. In 2000, Gillig unveiled the Low Floor (formerly called "Advantage"). The Low Floor was a prototype/joint effort between Hertz Rent-A-Car and Gillig to produce a new bus for airport shuttle use, and featured many "advantages" over the competition. For instance, one boarding the bus needs not



Humor:

Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humor to console him for what he is. - Francis Bacon (1561– 1628)

A Christmas story

On Christmas Eve, Kevin thought it would be nice to buy his wife a little gift for Christmas. Always short of money, he thought long and hard about what to buy. Unable to decide, Kevin entered Macy's and in the cosmetics section he asked the saleslady, "Can you show me some perfume?" She showed him a bottle costing \$ 150. "Too expensive," Kevin muttered. The saleslady returned with a smaller bottle for \$ 50. "Oh my," Kevin said, "Still far too much." Growing rather annoyed at Kevin, the saleslady brought out a tiny \$ 10 bottle and showed it to him. Kevin became really frustrated, "What I mean he whined is I'd like to see something really cheap!"

So the saleslady handed him a mirror.

Birthdays and Special Days

Happy Birthday Wishes To:

Job Anniversary Dates:

Terry Graham December 1
DeAnn Roames December 8

Linda Clow 20 Years on December 11th



CONGRATULATIONS



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Every Student is a "Guest of Honor"

Employee Profile



Bob Nelson



There is definitely **one** big advantage to having dual-citizenship rights, as our Kendall driver Bob Nelson knows for certain.

"When it's time for me to retire and collect social security here in the United States of America I will also be eligible for social security in Canada at the same time."

Bob is Canadian by birth, but is also an American citizen as well, he moved south of the border when he was in his 30's.

He moved to the Deming area to take care of his mother after his father had passed away.

Bob is the oldest of the four Nelson boys and being the old school person that he claims to be, stated that, "It was my duty to step in and take care of mom, after dad passed away."

When I asked Bob what his fondest Christmas memory was as a youngster. He replied, " My mom always made every Christmas special, she is a super mom, she would bake all kinds of cookies and treats, she would take great care when wrapping our Christmas presents so that the present itself was very special, no matter what was on the inside."

"One thing that all my brothers and I got a

kick out of was that mom would leave all the price tags on the gifts."

"We still laugh about that."

Bob stated that he is 50% Norwegian, and the remainder of his ancestry is part English and Gila River Blackfoot Indian.

Bob was a journeyman printer in Canada and worked for printing firms that did a great deal of security type printing, such as checks, lottery tickets, and some negotiables. Bob stated that the funniest order he ever processed was from a recently divorced man that wanted the picture of himself and his new wife on the face of the check that he used to make his monthly alimony payment to his ex-wife.

Bob went to Bellingham Vo-tech and paid \$750.00 to be trained to become a school bus driver.

His first interview was with Mt. Baker and was offered a job.

"I'm not real sure why they hired me," he said.

"I had a full beard, a six inch pony tail, and a diamond earring, but I'm glad they

did, because I love my job"

When Bob is not driving bus, he enjoys working in the garden, doing home improvement projects, and target shooting. " I am an avid gun collector", he stated.

When I asked for one thing that people would be surprised to know about Bob Nelson, he was very quick with a response.

" I used to teach ballroom dancing."

"My dad used to own a number of Arthur Murray dance studios and I became well skilled in the waltz, fox-trot, and many other dance styles.

Nice story eh!

