

A photographer's journal of Nicaragua



Richard J. Brown, photographer for the Portland Observer, spent seven weeks in Nicaragua learning about and meeting its people. His photographs will appear here as a weekly feature.

Houses at Ernesto Acuna consist of a large room and an open-roofed kitchen. The kitchen will have utensils for cooking, a grinder for corn, and a large concrete stove. The stove burns corn husks and wood. On most stoves you will just about always find a pot of beans and a pot of rice. Occasionally beans and rice are eaten with tortillas, fried potatoes, eggs or cheese. The kitchen is sometimes a gathering place for youngsters, or briefly, by an uninvited chicken.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

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Tri-Met Operator of the Month

Curley Clark's youthful look belies his 48 years. Tri-Met's October Operator of the Month credits fishing trips to eastern Oregon and Washington for his ability to relax from what may appear to be an easy job, "but really is a rough one."

"I like my work, though," the northeast Portland resident claimed in a recent interview. "my attendance record is proof of that!" Clark has near-perfect attendance.

Clark lives in his N.E. 14th Ave. home with his wife, Francynia, and three of their five children. He's worked at Tri-Met for the past 15 years and, before that, for the Portland Traction Company. When asked why he applied for work as an operator, he said, "... for better pay, and to work inside."

"Another bus driver and I, Irving Brown, both came over from Portland Traction together. We'd been furloughed, and they even wanted us to come back to work. There was no way we were going back outdoors!"

Clark said Brown was a frequent fishing partner in their quest for sturgeon and pan fish. "I'm going to take a trip to Boardman this coming weekend," Clark announced. "I do it, not only because of what you get to eat, but because it's a good way to

relax." Taking a low-profile, laid-back attitude is something Clark said he inherited from his parents. "They still live in Cotton Plant, Arkansas where I grew up. They were sharecroppers, but that type of farm life is disappearing with the corporate owners."

Clark was one of four boys and three girls in his family. He moved to Oregon in 1959.

When asked about his philosophy as a bus operator, Clark said he says "Hello" to passengers readily but doesn't start conversations. "That keeps us all out of trouble. When someone says something uncalled for on the bus, I usually don't answer. That generally ends it right there!"

Clark observed that passengers are usually more frazzled in the afternoon than they are in the morning. Usually, they are cheery or quiet in the morning, but the afternoon is a time when something may have happened at work that sometimes gets to them, he pointed out.

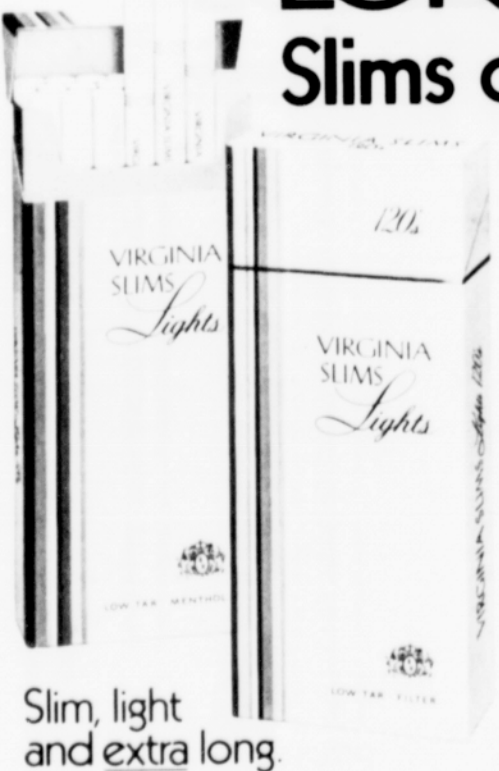
It's obvious that Clark's philosophy of being happy at what he does and doing what he does well affects his relationship with his riders. "In all my 15 years of driving," Clark noted, "I've never had a cross word or an argument with a passenger."

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