

Abducted

Nobody asked but ...

I frequently tell my students that a human-made system should have a user's goal, otherwise it is just an inaccessible artifact. But I was kidnapped today by a functionary of the largest, and most lucrative, parking operation in the commonwealth of Kentucky — a functionary who obviously was a bit dim on the purpose of his function. The functionary was a shuttlebus driver. The University of Kentucky has enough revenue-producing parking area to have its own zip code, and the spaces are so far-flung that the operational jurisdiction is called Parking and Transportation. This implies two user's goals — finding a place to park (often to hell and gone) and a way to get where you want to go after you have relinquished control of your own vehicle. But my bus driver had a different design concept than I did. He believed his function was to deliver me forcibly where he was going and to refuse to stop and open the door as we passed where I was going. When we got where he wanted to go, he offered to let me ride back to the farflung parking hinterlands, not to my destination, which he would pass on his return leg. I was, by this time, experiencing something like being trapped in an elevator between floors. I got the hell off of the bus. Postscript — the weather was beautiful and the walk was under ten minutes, but what will I do when the polar vortices come back this winter?

Kilgore