

# Texas Desert, Togetherness s 90-Mile Ride

## High Schoolers Make Longest Commute

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TERLINGUA, Tex.—The afternoon sun lights up Cathedral Mountain in a wash of pink and gold, but the students aboard the yellow bus have seen it all before. They just want to get home. But first they will have to ride together for nearly 90 miles, through the rugged terrain of far northwest Texas, past wild turkey and wild boar and beef cattle, on a road as the day slips away and the waning sun turns the sky into a celestial display. No other school bus commute in



PHOTO BY WALTER FRECK

School bus delivers 22 students to Terlingua, Tex., from high school in Alpine, on far side of distant mountains.

the nation is quite this long, not even in the most isolated reaches of Montana or Alaska, but the 22 teenagers aboard could well do without the distinction. Someday, they joke, they will be able to regale their children with tales of

riding four hours each day through the untamed desert mountains in their quest to earn a high school diploma.

"This year, I've got senioritis, tests and more tests and scholarships—and they all require that

essay, 'What does education mean to you?'" says Daphne Klingemann, 18, a veteran of four weary years on the bus and the agreed-upon valedictorian of the crowd. "And I want to go, 'Look, I rode See RIDERS, A22, Col. 1