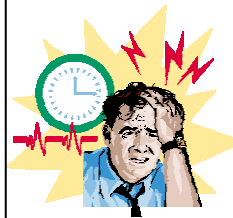




TRAINING

You're not obligated to attend on THEIR schedule

PAGE 4



STRESS

Avoiding workplace stress

PAGE 5

MUNICIPAL FOOLISHNESS



Traffic Calming or Causing?

PAGE 7



Lack of Support

By Rick Lonergan
President

Would you walk down a dark alley at night if you knew that you would not get any help if you came across a lunatic? Probably not. Recently members have had situations where little or no support was shown by the employer or by the police. The police are too busy to respond, and when they do, they are reluctant to lay charges, and talk the driver out of it. In one situation, a driver was almost pulled out of his seat by a gang of drunken students. This was after being told by a supervisor to call 911 because they were too busy to respond. When he finally arrived at the terminal, he was told by another supervisor that he should basically put up with it because it "comes with the territory."

Stay out of the alley. Avoid any situation that could cause a problem. **Use your discretion when it comes to transfers and fares until we are confident**

that our safety is a priority. Secondly, if we follow all the rules and policies that the employer expects us to, the job would never get done. Most of us are guilty of violating some rules and policies in order to make connections and make a system look good when it isn't. Some supervisors have nothing to do except find strategic spots to watch you breaking some policy or rule that you may not know exists. In reality, they don't know either until they look it up. If you have an accident or any incident, you will not be supported by the

(See Support: page 4)

Assault is Assault

By John Mac Kay
Alternate Editor

On Monday July 31, at 9:15 P.M. on route 20 (bus no 9422) inbound to the Charles Street Terminal (CST) from the Highland Hills Mall, a driver was assaulted. The bus was running late four minutes. Operator Bob Simpson picks up the only customer, a blond female, approximately 20 years of age. The customer enters the bus, from the platform, flashes a transfer while on her cell phone. Operator Simpson asks the customer to reproduce the transfer. The customer, enraged, engages in verbal abuse about the

(See Assault: page 3)

The Winds of Change

By Wayne Mastromatteo,
Chief Steward
(South)



As most of you readers are aware, I have tried to bring to Management's attention the fact

(See Winds of Change: page 12)

INSIDE THIS INFORMER

Assault is Assaultpg 1
 Lack of Supportpg 1
 Winds of Changepg 1
 Trainingpg 4
 Avoiding Workplace Stress pg 5
 Golf Tournament.....pg 6
 Municipal Foolishness.....pg 7
 caw4304.ca.....pg 8
 United Way.....pg 8
 Seat Survey.....pg 9
 Environmentpg 11
 Collision Review.....pg 11
 Roadeopg 15

Bereavements:

In Memory of:

- Cheryl White
- Chris Huras
- Colleen Leslie
- Dave Degouveia
- Derek Charbonneau
- Don Gauvin
- Ernie Harvey
- Frank Goertz
- Gary Hass (retiree)
- Harold Klooster
- Jeff Meincke
- Jim Sabourin
- Joe Kaczmarek
- Marcel Tanguay
- Mike Davis
- Monique Johnston
- Pat Kavanagh
- Pat Rousom
- Ross Milne
- Russ Davis
- Wendy Krysko

Contributors

Local 4304 members helping out with this issue were:

- David Driver
- Jackie Eng
- John A. McDonald
- John Mac Kay
- Klaus Biemann
- Lazlo Bori
- Paul Lalonde
- Rick Lonergan
- Ricki Germann
- Wayne Bell
- Wayne Mastromatteo

Full colour edition of *The Informer* is available on-line at caw4304.ca/informer

This edition published by John A. McDonald.

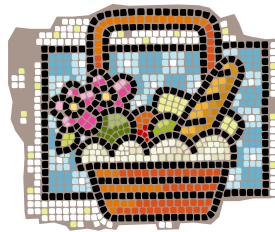
Comments to caw4304@rogers.com
 (cell 519-241-5623
 B4 8:00 am & after 6:00 pm please)

The December edition will be published by John Mac Kay:
informer@caw4304.ca
 (always send submissions here)

Next Submission Deadline is Nov. 17, 2006

Attend your Union meetings: Oct. 18 8:00 pm

(3rd Wed., monthly)



Fruit Baskets:

(Some donated to charity in lieu)

- Connie Cronkwright
- Eugene Park
- Gord Roth
- Graham Perry
- Gurpeet Kanwal
- John Kudlik
- Larry Beaulac
- Marcel Tanguay
- Mike Roy
- Morris Andrews
- Phil Gallipeau
- Sandy Henderson
- Steve Wilcox
- Suzanne Turner
- Tom Burns
- Wilf Flechtmann

The Informer

Publication Dates:

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Policy Statement

The Informer is a publication of CAW Local 4304 and is intended to educate and inform the members. The views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the CAW or Local 4304. The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to edit for clarity and fact. Material of a sexist, racist or defamatory nature will not be printed.

Assault is Assault:

(Continued from page 1)

bus being late, why she has to show transfer again, and adds derogatory personal remarks towards the operator. She then moves to back seat and continues to seemingly argue on the cell phone.

This sets the mood for the assault. She rings the bell around Hazelglen and Moorgate. The customer then becomes angered that Simpson missed her stop, runs to the front yelling at Simpson while he curbs the bus. She then hits him in the eye with cell phone and spits on him. As he jerks to fend off the assault, his knee accidentally hits door activation lever shutting front door. The customer, seeing this as an act of trying to detain her, hits Simpson again in eye with cell phone, spits on him, and runs to back of bus to exit. The operator calls supervisor Lynch, and police are summoned. Simpson drives the bus in service back to CST. The customer that hit Simpson calls the police and informs them that operator assaulted her.

Police visit her to get her story. Supervisor Lynch with Simpson takes the Statement of a Witness Report and, according to Simpson, seemed to follow all the procedures. All transit management were informed, and Harold Klooster, the Union chairperson, was called as well. Police finally show up at CST about ninety minutes later.

These are facts to consider:

There was a witness to this assault i.e. who was the customer talking to the time this assault occurred? She was on the cell all the time she was on the bus. Did the police follow up on this? At no time was she touched or received any injuries from our driver.

Operator Simpson had scratches on his hand and a blackened eye and facial damage. Aids and Hep C test were required later by his family doctor. Simpson had four days off which were approved under WSIB plus his normal weekend off. (See picture)

Result:

The police officer said to Bob Simpson that night that it's her word against yours. No witnesses.

Approximately two weeks later, this same female customer boards Simpson's bus while talking on her cell phone. She produces a transfer and goes to the back of the bus. The bus stops at Moorgate and the female walks to the front of bus, glaring at Simpson. She exits the bus, and her boyfriend is standing at front door, on the curb. He puts his arm around her, gestures to Simpson in a motion that he is cutting his throat with a knife and says, "You're a dead mother f—er", and shoots at him with same

finger. Simpson calls supervisor Cook, who then calls the police. Supervisor Lynch later calls police officer that was on duty that night and leaves a message for him. Operator Simpson was told that police officer will notify these two individuals and inform them that any further involvement would mean charges would be laid against them for



obstruction of justice. Lynch confirmed this later.

Interview with Bob Simpson

Conducted by John Mac Kay

John: "Bob, it's been a month; why no charges?"

Bob: "If you're going to be assaulted on one of GRT's buses, you had better have a witness. There were none, so it's her word against mine."

John: "What support have you had from our Union?"

Bob: "The Union has offered to hire legal counsel, if I personally press charges, and to assist me in any way I need. They also

(See Assault: page 4)

Assault

(Continued from page 3)

wanted her banned from transit.”

John: “Bob: Same question, what is management’s position or what are they willing to do?”

Bob: “I asked Jim Ioannou for legal help from the Region. After he checked, he left me a message that they (the Region) don’t do that sort of thing. I am on my own. Eric Gillespie later confirmed this too.”

John: “What else has happened?”

Bob: “I have had a meeting with Eric Gillespie and Ron Pearson from management, and Rick Lonergan and Harold Klooster from the Union. There was also a second meeting with corporate Health and Safety and Maurice Levesque, our Safety rep.”

John: “Can you add anything else?”

Bob: “Yes. Corporate Health and

Safety are putting a brochure together regarding driver assaults. I don’t know if it is before an assault occurs or after one occurs. Also at the time of this printing our Union wants us to start to collect data on all situations, both physical assaults and verbal abuses, that occur to us on the buses.”

John: “So everyone has done their job, and all the brothers and sisters of CAW 4304 are going to get a brochure.”

Lack of Support:

(Continued from page 1)

employer. You will be punished because you broke some policy that is there for their benefit and not yours. Supervisors get commended for “doing their job” while disciplining you for “doing your job.” If a passenger misses their connection, tell them to talk to a supervisor. The passenger certainly won’t be there to support you when you lose a day’s pay, and the employer certainly won’t say thanks for making that connection.



Training

By Rick Lonergan,
President

(From the Contract, pg 124)

Letter of Understanding #3

LETTER OF
UNDERSTANDING
between
THE REGIONAL
MUNICIPALITY OF
WATERLOO
and
CAW, LOCAL 4304

Re: Training

All employees shall participate in training programs required by the Employer **during normal working hours**. Employees shall be paid at regular rates for attendance during normal working hours. For purposes of clarity, hours spent in training will be deemed as hours worked.

The parties agree that due to scheduling concerns, it may be necessary for the Employer to **request** that employees attend training **outside of their regular schedule**. In such cases, both

parties agree to promote the value of training and to encourage employees to attend training outside of their regular schedule. **Such time will be paid at premium rates** for temporary and permanent employees.

~~~~~  
The above letter clearly indicates your obligation toward any training sessions. If training cannot be provided during your normal working hours, you are not obligated to attend unless you want to. If you do not want your day off switched or you simply don’t want your life altered at all, say that you will not attend. If the training is important enough, the employer will train you on your regular hours.

If you are told anything other than stated above by the employer, please call one of us to have the situation addressed.

Thank you

**Rick Lonergan**  
President: 519-574-9170  
Email: [president@caw4304.ca](mailto:president@caw4304.ca)  
**Harold Klooster**  
Local Chair: 519-574-9370

# The Avoidable Consequences of Workplace Stress

By: David J. Driver, C.I.M.

Stress. We all experience it, and it is certainly not always negative. In fact, many of us work best under stressful conditions.



However, sometimes stress can have some serious impacts that can lead to ever increasing amounts of employers being held accountable before the courts.

There are a couple of workplace stressors that I would like to discuss. The first is *Psychological stress* which tends to be highest in jobs where employees have high demands but little ability in making decisions. Indeed, studies have shown that work-stress scores were highest in blue-collar and service occupations and lowest among employees in professional and administrative positions.<sup>1</sup> In our situation, we can all recognize the stresses involved in working in “service occupations.” Essentially, bus operators have plenty of stresses to deal with.

Along with Psychological stress, another major contributor to workplace stress is *Poor*

*Supervision*. For example, the following stressful conditions are mostly created by poor supervision: an insecure workplace climate, lack of performance feedback, and inadequate authority to match one’s responsibilities. Employees in organizations across the globe frequently complain in private about “bad bosses.” Yet, there are valuable ideas being used in modern organizations. In a Financial Post article, printed in 2000, it discussed an Internet company that believes it has a solution to the problem: it provides an online service that allows employees to anonymously rate their supervisor. It reads as follows:

It takes a worker about 15 minutes to complete a 60-item questionnaire about the boss. Co-workers can also complete their own evaluations. When the results are compiled, the boss is sent an e-mail inviting him or her to review the evaluation at a password-protected site. A service is also available to enable managers to find out what their workers think about them.<sup>ii</sup>

The above example is from a progressive company that recognizes the importance of a 360° method of feedback. The concept is not adversarial and encourages both negative and positive feedback. It allows the managers to be informed about their strengths as well as their weaknesses. While it may be

brutally honest, it is indeed a catalyst for positive change. The concept would be just as useful at GRT as any other organization. The concept would provide encouragement to excellent supervisors and illuminate areas with supervisors that need improvement on modern managerial techniques.

Workplace stress is becoming so important that the economical factor can no longer be overlooked. Indeed, the Conference Board of Canada recently estimated the financial cost associated with stress in the Canadian workplace at more than \$12 billion a year. Also, and this is very important to note, employer immunity from lawsuits as a result of contributing to the workers’ compensation system is deteriorating as more courts allow employees to sue their employers for stress resulting from a poisoned work environment. Howard Levitt, a highly respected labour lawyer notes:

Courts are recognizing employees’ stress claims and winning suits against employers. And theoretically, there’s no limit to the award, unlike wrongful dismissal where there is a limit to the compensation. Most harassment occurs when a manager does not like the employee, when there is a personality conflict, or the employee is not doing a

*(See Stress: page 6)*

(Stress, from page 5)

good job. And these types of harassment are not covered by the human rights or workers' compensation legislation<sup>iii</sup>

What the above comment means is that since "when a manager does not like an employee" and creates a personality conflict; it is not covered by the WSIB legislation. Not falling into that category allows the employee to sue – something WSIB legislation does not permit – and can sue with no limit to compensation.

A stressful and poisoned work environment must not be tolerated by any organization. Does GRT take due diligence in doing what is necessary to avoid workplace stress? I will leave you to answer that question.

Whatever your answer, the fact remains that both Union and management must collectively work together to keep a healthy working environment. Workplace stress can cause unnecessary mental and physical harm to employees, and can cost copious amounts of money – from high absenteeism rates to lawsuits - if management allows internal stressors to permeate the working environment.

Many causes of stress can be avoidable if the involved parties take necessary steps to alleviate it. Doing so certainly pays off for everyone in the long-run.

I DECIDED TO PLUNGE RIGHT INTO THE RACE.  
CAN'T LET MY TALENTS GO TO WASTE, EH?



Footnotes:

<sup>i</sup> Statistics Canada, *Work Stress and Health*, 1999

<sup>ii</sup> Simon Avery, "On-line Service to Rate the Boss," *Financial Post*, May 18, 2000, p. C9.

<sup>iii</sup> Leslie Young, "Stressed Workers Are Suing Employers," *Canadian HR Reporter*, May 3, 1999, pp. 1, 6.



**Website shortcuts:**

Here are some easy to remember URL's for our Union website:

**Public Area:**

- [caw4304.ca/contract](http://caw4304.ca/contract)
- [caw4304.ca/informer](http://caw4304.ca/informer)
- [caw4304.ca/southops](http://caw4304.ca/southops)

**Members Only Area:**

- [caw4304.ca/safety](http://caw4304.ca/safety)
- [caw4304.ca/seatsurvey](http://caw4304.ca/seatsurvey)
- [caw4304.ca/signup](http://caw4304.ca/signup)

# GRT Golf Tournament 2006 Results



Four Guys from Cambridge Won!!!!

**John Scott  
Bob Marshall  
Gary Truax  
Andy Dillon**

All proceeds to the Children's Wish Foundation.

# Municipal Foolishness

By Klaus Biemann

Within our daily routine as bus operators, we often face challenges that test our professionalism and our patience. We are trained to deal with traffic that is becoming more aggressive, and we cope with passenger volume that increases each year, along with the proliferation of everything from larger baby buggies (Cadillacs) to motorized wheelchairs the size of trucks, where an operators' task becomes one of traffic cop inside his or her bus.

These are challenges that for the most part we can overcome while we struggle to stay on time. There are occasions where, through the actions of our municipalities, our daily challenges are made more daunting, where our municipalities embark on schemes that make no sense whatsoever.

Some examples jump into focus immediately: The recently completed stretch of King Street that runs from Sterling Avenue to Cedar Street. The view is pretty, it's clean, but it's useless as far as the enhancement of traffic flow is concerned. Once again, as has been the case in Uptown Waterloo, instead of widening King Street, the prevailing wisdom has it that narrowing the



street while significantly widening the sidewalk is better for us. Do we really need 20ft-wide sidewalks?

This narrowing of King Street will funnel traffic and ultimately slow it down, thereby contributing to increased traffic congestion.

A clinical analogy to this constriction of King Street would be the hardening of the arteries in your body. The build-up of plaque in the artery wall restricts the flow of blood, leading to ultimate organ failure. Similarly, the narrowing of King Street and widening of the sidewalks may be likened to plaque build-up – it restricts the efficient flow of traffic by slowing it down, causing congestion.

Into this environment we inject buses, while trying to maintain a schedule.

Then we have the increasing use of speed bumps. Together with the continuous addition of still more stop signs at every street corner, the neighbourhood through which many of our bus routes wind through are magically transformed into that politically correct phrase “traffic calmed neighbourhood.” The best example of this is on Mill Park Drive through Pioneer Park. Try going over those speed bumps at the posted speed and see how your back holds out, not to

mention the abuse your bus and your passengers put up with. And, oh yes, what about those strategically placed stop signs, such as the one on top of the hill on Mill Park Drive on the inbound. It makes for a great stop and start when the road is iced over in the winter.

The real gems are those rubberized obstacle courses so thoughtfully put up along the entire length of Greenbrook Drive in Kitchener. I wouldn't be too far off the mark by comparing this set-up to something a kindergarten child in Romper Room would come up with.

All these barriers have



achieved in doing so far is to only frustrate motorists even more than they already are. I've witnessed motorists vent those frustrations by gunning their vehicles between those rubberized wonders. Does this contribute to “traffic calming?” And, what about winter

(See Foolishness: page 8)

(**Foolishness**, from page 7) ploughing operations? Are they going to get snowploughs through those barriers?

But, a note towards the positive – those rubberized barriers serve as great practice runs for our buses as we prepare for future bus roadeos!

My favourite, and at the same time, most frustrating, example of municipal foolishness are the uncoordinated traffic lights that are found everywhere. Tight running times are bad enough. Uncoordinated traffic lights not only adds many minutes to our traveling times, but also raises everyone's frustration levels, as we stop and go, and stop, at every other intersection.

There are places out there, such as Toronto and Hamilton, where a motorist can have a near continuous run without having to stop at every other intersection.

The single most common question I get from visitors is: Why are your traffic lights so messed up? My answer – I don't know.

Taken all together, I believe the examples mentioned really do create problems for motorists, and also results in longer running times for our buses.

Our municipalities should be looking at ways of enhancing traffic flow, not stifling it. Enhancing traffic flow makes a municipality transit friendly, stifling it does not. This is the difference between municipal wisdom and municipal foolishness.

## Log onto [caw4304.ca](http://caw4304.ca)

By **Wayne Bell**  
*Webmaster*

Recently our server (Webserve Canada) has undergone some upgrading of their equipment and our Union site was affected by these changes. Because some of the protective spam software was not activated, we were getting a very large amount of spam. The problem has since been rectified. I apologize for this inconvenience.

Our Union site is constantly changing to meet the needs of our membership. Some of our committee representatives are helping out with the content of

the site with information regarding their meetings, etc. They are updating the information on a regular basis. An example of this is Zeke Baker and his **South Operations** pages. The pages are available at:

[caw4304.ca/southops](http://caw4304.ca/southops)

If you would like to know what is going on within the Union, check out the calendar page, which is maintained by Louie McPhail. Not only Union related events are there; dress down days, license renewal sessions and committee meeting dates are also listed.

So, the next time you're on the net and you want to get the latest scoop on what is happening in your Union, log onto: [caw4304.ca](http://caw4304.ca).

## United Way Pledges

By **Jackie Eng**  
*Charity Committee*



The United Way campaign commences on **Monday, October 16/06 starting at 5:00 a.m.**

The United Way pledge forms have been changed this year.

Therefore, everyone must sign or initial their pledge form. We can still donate to the charity of our choice and/or the United Way.

Also in order to be eligible for dress-down days, the minimum pledge donation has been **raised from \$1.00 per pay to \$1.25** (that comes to the equivalent of a coffee per week).

As usual, there will be coffee and donuts available. So don't go to Timmies that morning!

Looking forward to seeing everyone again this year.

(As usual, buttons will be forthcoming in 2007)

# Seat Survey: One Year Later From the ‘Other Half’

By Al Maine Steward (S), Co-Author: *Driver Seat Survey Report 2005*

(Email: [al7an29@rogers.com](mailto:al7an29@rogers.com);  
Personal Cell: 519-500-1647)

How time can fly. It seems like it all happened just yesterday. In fact, it was just over a year ago on September 15, 2005, Management agreed to meet with myself, Sue McIntyre, our Union President Rick Lonergan, and John Livingston, our Health and Safety rep, to discuss our Seat Survey Report. Even Management’s own ergonomic assessment done by AEC Inc. fell into line with our own conclusion over what to do with these difficult driver seats. AEC had put it this way: “Without the benefit of an operator survey, the most common driver complaints involve either the (seat’s) fore-aft travel or backrest angle.” AEC went on to recommend, as we did too, that the “driver seat condition and function” must now be considered under the GRT preventive maintenance program.

Success at last! I am now satisfied that my work in this project was completed. These awful driver seats will finally get changed. Today, one year later, nearly all of these difficult bus driver seats have now been replaced. Thanks is due to all the

Survey respondents, to some timely inputs from Wayne Mastramatteo, Chief Steward (S), John Livingston, Gord Whyte, and to our Union executive. The Seat Survey Report, all twenty-four pages of it, was a joint effort of myself and Sue McIntyre who compiled the results from a questionnaire that Sue and I had also put together earlier in the spring of 2005.

What I want to talk briefly about then, for the first time, was the actual putting together of both the questionnaire and of the Report itself. For those of you who have seen the Survey Report, it may come to you as a surprise that at first neither Sue nor I had a clue on how to put any of this stuff together. This lack of previous know-how threads its way throughout the entire story. Yet, from the moment Sue said to me that we should ask (everybody) about these difficult driver seats was the moment we both had unwittingly committed ourselves towards creating the questionnaire and then the Survey Report itself.

So, in the beginning, Sue and I wondered: How are we going to ask everybody? Do we ask each Operator verbally? Ask them by e-mail? Phone them all up as telemarketers would? How about a form of some kind to fill out?

Sue and I agreed that a written questionnaire form would be best. Now we must create something from scratch. OK, fine, but *what* questions would we ask and *how many*?



I wanted to ask questions that put the problem into some kind of overall perspective, to ask whether or not Operators were hurting after, before, and during driving and so on. Sue, already in pain from these seats, wanted to ask lots of different questions that focused on what different ways Operators were feeling what kinds of pains. We finally put both types of questions into the questionnaire.

Sue agreed with me that we must keep everything short and simple to do. OK, fine, but how to go about doing that? In the end, I chose my best questions to keep them all to a single page. Sue, for her part, reduced her number of questionnaire pages by creating a spreadsheet format that listed every vehicle in the Southern fleet, to the bus seat type, to a line that listed a particular physical complaint. This terrific idea also made tallying total numbers afterwards

(See Survey: page 10)

(Survey from page 9) much simpler to do. Sue's ability at making these charts would later become our cornerstone to presenting our work 'by the numbers' for the Survey Report.

I was not beyond receiving some critical advice myself. Sue's concern that my cover letter's large font and big paragraph style was proving "too much of an effort" to read through. Oh well, so be it. After correcting for that, we were at last ready to send the questionnaires off to our Southern membership. Ironing out the questionnaire forms had taken us from about mid-May to early June. Yikes! At last, though, we were ready to go.

Or were we ready? Now, how best to send out all these questionnaires? Mail them? Ask Management to attach them to our pay stubs?

Sue's solution: to simply hand out each questionnaire to each operator face to face one at a time. Sue's "special delivery" approach provided a personal touch that I believe encouraged enough operators to complete and return the forms to us. Without a clear majority of questionnaires returned, we could not have gone on to do any kind of survey report to any kind of conclusion. Allowing for summer holidays, Sue and I agreed to August 8 as the cut-off date to accept completed questionnaires back by.

Next came the truly gruelling part of the whole exercise: making a

report out of all the data we collected that would still be short and simple to read. Joy. I reasoned we should follow the questionnaire's layout, and to illustrate our data wherever possible with Sue's charts in order to reduce the report's total number of pages. Writing the required text material and putting everything into what order it would go in would be my job.

Throughout the rest of August, we relentlessly hammered out details upon details for hours on end. I would meet Sue at her house early each morning; we would work past noon until we both had to rush off to put in our eight hours worth of driving. Almost all our days off too, had become dawn-to-dusk sessions in order to grind out the report. I was writing and re-writing the text to make it as complete as possible. Sue poured over her charts again and again to further improve their clarity. I also helped Sue count and re-count all our numbers to ensure that they were absolutely accurate. Yet, we always kept asking ourselves, "Is this as clear as it should be? Can we fix that up better over there?" We constantly proofread each other's work to weed out each other's mistakes and to offer a second opinion. I reviewed my statistics to ensure all our math was presented correctly. I think Sue and I both came to realize that we were bus operators first, not pollsters.

Yet at last, we ironed everything out to meet our own Labour Day deadline. Sue got our Survey

Report printed, and distributed copies to our Union Executive, to Management and to the membership. The rest, as they say, is history, and some history it was. The comfort and safety of our workplace was set to improve for both the North and South Divisions.

I end this account only to say that the conclusion I wrote for the survey, after all our efforts, was the easiest thing to do. The verdict was in: Get these difficult driver seats changed. With the weight of all those voices in the Survey Report speaking out, my words just fell onto the paper. **Such is the power of a united Union to make things happen.**

---

## WSIB Claims

Should you ever file any type of WSIB claim, ALWAYS contact your WSIB representative. Your WSIB rep is **Paul Lalonde**. Paul is now fully qualified, having completed five WSIB courses. Contacting him a year later when you've been short changed by WSIB will not help. Please note that if you are already dealing with Paul Mennie, you should continue to do so.



**Paul Lalonde (WSIB rep)**  
Union Cell: 500-3553  
[paullalonde@rogers.com](mailto:paullalonde@rogers.com)

# Environmental Issues

By Lazlo Bori

This is just a list of things we breathe as we drive our buses down the street. No wonder so many in the transportation industry die of cancer. This is

something the government doesn't want to talk about or face because it would halt the transportation industry.



|                                            |                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Nitrogen Dioxide                           | Irritates lungs, can corrode metal.    |
| Carbon Monoxide                            | Replaces oxygen in bloodstream.        |
| Lead                                       | Vomiting, convulsions.                 |
| Animal Dander                              | Allergic reactions and asthma attacks. |
| Ozone                                      | Irritates respiratory tract and eyes.  |
| Sulphur Dioxide                            | Breathing, heart and lung problems.    |
| Formaldehyde                               | Carcinogenic hazard.                   |
| Fine particulate matter                    | Lung and Heart disease.                |
| Ammonia                                    | Irritates eyes, nose and throat.       |
| Radon                                      | Causes lung cancer.                    |
| Tobacco Smoke                              | Lung cancer, respiratory infections.   |
| Volatile Organic compounds, (Diesel fumes) | Known carcinogen.                      |

# Collision Review

By Laz

|                       | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|
| Non-Preventable       | 11    | 9     | 8   | 6    | 4    | 7      |
| Incident              | 2     | 2     | 1   | 3    | 1    | 4      |
| Preventable Incident  | 6     | 3     | 5   | 3    | 4    | 1      |
| Preventable Collision | 4     | 4     | 5   | 2    | 8    | 6      |

Since we are one big happy family, the results of the four divisions are combined into one. When filling out an Incident Report, take your time, think and re-read your report. If you made a mistake, you can always get another one. We all get upset

when a collision happens, and you might not be writing down what you are thinking. When writing your report, please **PRINT**. Some reports are very hard to read and hard to make sense of.

I can't stress **SAFETY** enough. Slow down and take your time. Schedules are only a guide, and not all of them can be met. It is far better to be a few minutes late than to spend several hours blocking traffic, filling out forms and talking to the police.



**The Transit Christmas party will be on Sat., Dec. 16, at 7:00 pm.**

## **Winds of Change:**

*(Continued from page 1)*

that Operators face numerous encounters with the public, sometimes dangerous or degrading, in the course of their day-to-day duties. There are times when criminal charges should be laid by the Operator, regardless what the Police say, in regard to the probability of successful criminal convictions.

During one of our monthly Union/Management meetings, I brought up a particular incident that happened to one of our female Operators by a passenger. This particular well-known passenger “brushed” by the Operator when boarding her bus. As she was outside the front doors of her bus, he touched her inappropriately with his hand while boarding. When Management at first gave this passenger a 90-day Trespass Ban, the Union wasn’t very pleased to say the least. However, we accepted this because there were no “prior” incidents on record involving this particular passenger. When this passenger was witnessed by me going into the Ainslie Street Terminal building, this writer IMMEDIATELY called the on-duty Supervisor and reported that this passenger was on Transit Property and was in violation of his Trespass Ban. I was advised by this former Supervisor, (whom has now gone on to greener pastures), that this banned passenger had scheduled a meeting with Sharen (with an ‘e’)

Robinson, Terminal Property Manager. Later, this ‘banned’ passenger waved a piece of paper in the face of another Operator. That Operator then told the assaulted Operator that this ‘pillar of society’ had his ‘ban’ reduced to 45 days. This was done without anyone in Management telling the Union, nor, most importantly, the ASSAULTED OPERATOR. Needless to say, the Operators and the Union were furious. It was an extremely insensitive and irresponsibly indifferent attitude shown by Management when they didn’t even let the assaulted Operator know that the ban was reduced to 45 days!

Since this incident, I pushed the need for some sort of Driver Safety Protocol. A committee was formed which originally included Jean Bourdon, Sharen (with an ‘e’) Robinson, Rick Lonergan and myself. Management calls it a ‘Trespass Protocol Committee’, although I prefer it to be known as an “Operator Protection, Protocol Committee.” Part of this Protocol involved having ANY Supervisor accept VOLUNTARY Incident Reports submitted by Operators that are subjected to verbal, sexual or physical assaults.

Prior to this, it was up to Supervisors to ask for Incident Reports. When incidents happened and the on-duty Supervisors had gone home before the Operators could write the reports, the relieving Supervisors would not accept the

reports, but suggested the Operators give them to the original Supervisors that were on duty. In some cases, these Operators would have to wait up to 6 days until those particular Supervisors came back to work. Because of the time lapse, these Incident Reports were never filed. Another scenario seemed to be that if Supervisors didn’t ask for an Incident Report, then the Operator was told that a report wasn’t needed.

In cases like these, the chance to establish files or “Paper Trails” on possible repeat offenders was lost. Because no prior Incident Reports were filed by Operators in the case of the passenger having his ban reduced, I was told by Management that they had absolutely no knowledge of this particular passenger’s prior behaviour towards some of our female Operators. Having spoken to a number of female Operators in the South, (sorry - Cambridge Division!), I realized that this ‘fine upstanding passenger’ had indeed harassed some of them in the past. Partly because of this, Management has agreed to have any Supervisor accept a VOLUNTARY Incident Report filed by an Operator. I suggest that Operators have the Supervisor initial that he or she has received it and also have them date it when they receive it. I encourage Operators to always make photocopies of these reports. If the incidents are of a criminal nature, including threats, verbal, sexual or physical assaults, I ask you to please contact me or have a copy of this

*(Continued on page 13)*

(Continued from page 12)  
report sent to me. All information gathered will be kept in strict confidence and used for statistical purposes only.

One of the major issues that I pushed for was to have the Union and Management sit down to discuss the lengths of bans for various offences, including ones involving repeat offenders. Collectively, we would decide on punishment for serious criminal offences which include physical, sexual and verbal assaults. Threats to Operators fall under this criteria. It would send a very strong message to our Operators that not only does our Union have a say, but that Management is taking responsibility to ensure a safe workplace, and is willing to work with the Union in this regard.

Since this Operator Protection Protocol Committee was formed, a Kitchener Operator, as well as a couple of our Operators, has been harassed by one particular individual. This individual, who fancies himself to be "In Training" to be a police officer by taking various courses, lets Operators know all about his police connections. This 'wannabe' almost cost an Operator his job. This 'wannabe' cop accused a Kitchener Operator of hitting him in the head with the passenger-side mirror of the moving bus. After a lengthy police investigation into this passenger's claim, the Operator was exonerated because the angle of the passenger's footprints in the snow showed that the

passenger was not walking AWAY from the bus as he claimed. In fact, the guy was trying to rip the mirror off of the side of the bus. If there was no snow on the ground, the Operator may have been fired!

This same 'fine individual' would threaten Operators in Cambridge by telling them they were violating the Highway Traffic Act by letting him on the bus after the bus pulled out from the curb or that the bus was illegally parked at the side of a particular road while the Operator was waiting to keep a scheduled time point.

In the case of this 'wannabe' cop, Supervisor Wayne Wilkie came down to the Cambridge terminal when he heard that this passenger was there. With Supervisor Brian Fuller and Security in attendance, Wayne Wilkie confronted this person and read him the riot act, telling him that he would be facing a two-year trespass ban if there were any more complaints from Operators. I personally witnessed this.

I know that if it were not for the fact that I gathered copies of Incident Reports from various Operators, a 'Paper Trail' wouldn't have been established on this person. In fact, I believe that it is safe to assume that Kitchener and Cambridge would not have been privy to each

other's dealings with this guy. During one of our Operator Protection Protocol meetings, I emphatically pointed out that there was not only a lack of communication and information sharing between Supervisors in the North and South, but the same could be said of Supervisors not sharing information with other Supervisors in their OWN divisions!



"We edited your report on corporate health and safety violations."

Recently, a female Operator was verbally threatened by another one of our 'finest upstanding citizens.' This passenger threatened to kill the Operator. The Operator wanted to lay criminal charges but was discouraged by a Waterloo Regional Police Officer from doing so because the Officer told the Operator that the probability of a Conviction was remote, partly because this 'known passenger' had mental health issues. I tried to obtain the passenger's name from both

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)  
Security and Management, but was denied that information. I was told that the matter was under investigation and the passenger was going to be served with a Trespass Ban. At the time of this writing, the passenger, who is transient with no fixed address, has yet to be served with the Trespass Ban notice!

This Incident accelerated the need for an Operator Protection Protocol. There were two specially called meetings to deal with this Operator's ordeal. The first meeting focused on getting some legal issues resolved. The Rights of Privacy, under the Freedom of Information Act prevented the Region from obtaining and distributing a photograph of this passenger because there was no arrest or conviction. From a Union standpoint, under Occupational Health & Safety, the Employer must ensure a safe workplace. The Region's lawyers (in Toronto), were trying to figure out if this passenger's Right to Privacy, under the Freedom of Information Act, (not having a photograph taken), superseded the protection afforded us under the Occupational Health & Safety Act. At issue is whether someone can be photographed if criminal charges and convictions have not been pursued.

The Operator and I attended the second meeting along with our Union President. Also in attendance were members of Management and a representative from Waterloo Regional Police

Service. This meeting established a few things. It showed Management that Operators can be vulnerable and be impacted by events. It demonstrated to the threatened Operator the fact that something was being done on her behalf. Lastly, the meeting showed Management the need for the Operator Protection Protocol, which for the last year I have been pushing! Upper-Level Management is now going to start up a Committee to establish a Protocol centring on issues concerning the safety of Operators in critical threatening situations.

As I pointed out at the meeting, if Operators are the eyes and ears of the Community, how can we identify violators without a picture or accurate description? How can we know who is banned if we cannot even obtain a name? How can Trespass Bans even be enforced when Management keeps the names of perpetrators involved in violent or potentially violent situations, secret from us, the Operators, who are the eyes and ears of the Community?

Even if we are Operators, we are Canadian Citizens first, and we have the RIGHT to press charges if we feel that we were assaulted or threatened in any way! If the Police do not wish to charge someone because the situation is categorized as a "He Said-She Said" or equivalent scenario, or because they feel that there is insufficient evidence to make an arrest, we can still press charges on our own by going to the

Justice of the Peace. The Justice of the Peace will review the facts and decide if criminal charges are warranted. I urge all Operators to contact the Police IMMEDIATELY, if they have been threatened or assaulted, when it is safe to do so.

At the time of this writing, another assault upon an Operator occurred. This particular case has raised the issue of financial responsibility for legal fees, should Operators have to legally defend themselves against bogus counter-assault charges filed by their assailants. The Union is seeking to have the Region pick up any legal expenses incurred by Operators. Operators shouldn't have to cover legal fees while pursuing justice after being assaulted during the course of performing their duties!

At present, I have been told that there is no precedent for establishing a Protocol to protect Public Service workers from assaults in the workplace. Perhaps it is time to lobby the powers-that-be to pass the necessary legislation that will make it easier for law enforcement agencies across the country to do their jobs which is "To Serve and Protect!" The legislation could be called "The Public Service Protection Act," which would allow Police Services across the Province and Country to have more leeway to press criminal charges in "He Said - She Said" situations or incidents without witnesses. After all, most assaults probably happen when there are no other

*(Continued on page 15)*

(Continued from page 14)  
passengers on our buses and therefore there are no witnesses to corroborate the Operators' statements. Without witnesses, does that mean there was no assault?

If Operators think being passive is the sole solution to avoid being assaulted, think again.

Numerous Operators had taken that approach and sat in their seats. Don't think for a moment that assaults will only happen to other people. Any one of us may be the next target and the damage may be permanent!

I welcome any input, critical or positive from you readers. I would also like to know the number of physical or sexual assaults and threats our Operators have been subjected to each year since the amalgamation of Kitchener and Cambridge Transit.

It is now time to stand together and demand a solution to the ever-increasing violence being committed on our buses. It is our RIGHT to perform our duties as Operators without the very real fear of being assaulted. It is also our Right to know that Justice will be served if we've been threatened or attacked. Somehow Trespass Bans alone are not enough. Criminal charges can and should be consistently laid in these types of cases. It would definitely send a very strong message to the cowardly punks that ride our buses!

On a final note, I have been told that in some cases where

Operators have been threatened or assaulted, the assailants were removed from the buses. However they were given rides in the Supervisors' vans to their destinations. I understand the value of de-escalating the situation by separating the Operator from the assailant. The practice of rewarding assailants by chauffeuring them has to stop! If Supervisors think they are defusing the situation by offering rides, they better give themselves a shake. They are only undermining the Operators and encouraging 'these people' to act out again. By offering rides, Supervisors are declaring "Open Season" on Operators!

You can email me at: [loiswayne@rogers.com](mailto:loiswayne@rogers.com) with your comments. You can also reply to this article through the Informer. All reports of assaults emailed to me will be kept in confidence and statistics will be compiled from this data to show the Region that violence is on the upswing and assaults are not just extremely isolated incidents, but are in fact becoming everyday occurrences.

**Thank you.**



## Roadeo 2006

*By John A. McDonald,  
Editor*

This year's Roadeo, held on Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, was one of the most successful in recent memory. We had 41 contestants, with everyone who wanted to compete being able to. We even had beautiful weather to enjoy it all. As usual, it was very well organized, with everything running on time. There were a total of 120 excellent supper meals provided.

As we have done for the past few years, the contest was held at the Regional Operations Centre on Maple Grove. The course was the same as last year except that the order of the last two events was changed. Steve Skinner once again showed us how it was to be done with a demonstration run at the beginning of the afternoon obstacle course contest (see photo below). Steve still hasn't lost his touch.

The day started at 8:30 with an orientation session presented by Ron Pearson. The rest of the morning was taken up by the defect course. Some of the

defects were rather hard to find. As last year, all the buses were from the 2400 series.

After a light lunch, it was outside for the real fun.

(See Roadeo: page 16)

**(Roadeo:** Continued from page 15) It seems they didn't award any bonus points for trapping a pylon or a ball in between the duals and taking it with you to the end of the course. In fact, there weren't even any prizes for sending the barrels near the end of the course flying more than 20 feet.

I did notice that the general attitude had lightened this year, so that most of us were not so intense about the competition. Rather, we just enjoyed the social aspect and collected the gifts at the end of the day. Nonetheless, there were some very good performances.

This year Ron allowed me to don a safety vest after my run and

take photos of our day. I also saw many others with their cameras clicking away, so that helped add to the casual atmosphere of the competition.

At 3:00 p.m., three of our Regional Councillors came and drove the course. Considering this was the first time they ever sat in the driver's seat, they did quite well. Mike Galloway from the City of Kitchener won the Chair's Challenge.

I would also like to thank all the volunteer judges who donated their day. Their professionalism really added to the event.

Also, the many members of the Roadeo committee deserve a big

thank you. It took a total of 35 Judges and Committee members to run the event. Your efforts behind the scenes were very evident in how smoothly it all ran.

Also, I'd like to thank Peter Zinck for the good job he did of being the announcer for all the drivers.

Next year's Roadeo will again be held in September, likely the Sunday after Labour Day, so drive safe, and we'll see you there.

(Online photos: <http://johnmcdonald.mp3bible.ca/roadeo2006/>)



## And the winners are...

- 1st Place - Tyler Whittier** - Trophy-Leather Jacket-\$100 Fairview gift certificate-3 days off with pay
- 2nd Place - Laszlo Bori** - Trophy-\$75.00 Fairview Mall gift certificate-2 days off with pay
- 3rd Place - Bill Reed** - Trophy-\$50.00 Fairview Mall gift certificate-1 day off with pay
- 4th Place - Janet Rothwell** - Trophy-\$50.00 Fairview Mall gift certificate-1 day off with pay

*All participants received a green windbreaker jacket and a ball cap, both with the Roadeo 2006 crest on it. We also each received a large black umbrella to take home.*