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many
Page #8



Our union is our insurance policy

By Klaus Biemann
Political Education

Most of us have some form of investments. This may be in property such as a home or cottage, or in the form of contributions towards such things as RRSP's, bank accounts, mutual funds, stocks and bonds.

To protect our investments, we purchase insurance policies, such as home insurance, and life insurance. Similarly, with RRSP's and mutual funds, a



conservative portfolio means a lower rate of return, but at the same time also lowering the risk on those investments. A conservative approach to

investment funds is an insurance policy against loss and at the same time a hedge against inflation.

And so it is with our workplace. The jobs we do are an investment. We invest the time while it provides us with a weekly income, and also provides us with further income in the form of a pension when we retire.

Just as we need insurance to protect our other investments, we as a workforce, also need protection from actions directed, many times arbitrarily, against workers by corporations that care little about our welfare.

A strong union is an insurance policy that shields us from corporate decisions that often have only profit as their bottom line, no matter what the cost to it's workforce.

By actively supporting your union you continue to strengthen and to build up your union so that it may continue to work for you and remain a potent force. A strong union is an insurance policy that we all need, to protect our jobs, and to ensure that management continues treat us fairly.

A Slice of Paradise

By Klaus Biemann

This year Mother Nature provided an abundance of freshly fallen powdered snow one day before our ski-a-thon from heavy snow squalls off Georgian Bay. On the day of our trip to Blue Mountain, the squalls finally ended leaving behind a foot of fresh snow that shone brilliantly on the cross-country ski and snowshoe trails and encrusted trees, under an intensely blue sky and calm winds.

The 18 km of groomed trails wind their way through dense stands of maple and oak, and in a few places follow the contours of the rock faces that comprise the upper portion of the Niagara Escarpment.

Continuing on, another vista opens up in front of us. One of the trails leads us to a scenic look-out where, at a glance, you can see the escarpment meander off towards the distant southeast horizon. Towards the northern horizon the majestic beauty of

See Paradise: page 2

Paradise: Continued from page 1
Georgian Bay unfolds far below us.

The quiet serenity of the snow covered forest surrounding the aerial-like view of Georgian Bay was spectacular, providing endless opportunities for photo enthusiasts.

After 2 to 3 hours of gliding over some of the best powder anywhere, it was time to leave our slice of paradise and return to the Scenic Caves Nordic Centre, the lodge high atop Blue Mountain where we first began our tour. At the lodge, with a large fireplace and the pungent smell of burning logs, we replenished ourselves with free liquid refreshments.

At the end of the day of plentiful cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, we took the shuttle back to our bus at the base of the escarpment, where we continued on to Collingwood and Pizza Hut for several hours of door prizes and food.

Looking back to a carefree day that was packed with fun, under perfect snow conditions, we knew that we'd be back again next year.

This wonderful package is available to everyone. All you have to do is raise a minimum of \$50 in pledges for The Children's Wish Foundation, and with a determination to leave the working world behind you for one day for a day of fun, and with a little help from Mother Nature, a slice of paradise can be yours. So come on out next year and ENJOY!

(More ski coverage on page 8)

Revenue Agency discourages walk-in business

PSAC/CALM

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is planning to improve its client service by reducing the number of staff who provide the service.

CRA is focusing on moving away from walk-in service to service by appointment. Walk-in services are available to Canadians in cities with Tax Service Offices.

"CRA is carrying out some pilot projects to see how their plans for assisted self-service and by appointment service will work," says Betty Bannon, National President of PSAC's Union of Taxation Employees' component. "But before the pilots even started, they announced they're reducing the number of staff in client services by more than one-third. Over one hundred positions will be affected."

Bannon says that according to the CRA, the agency has been successful in converting Canadians to access their services on the internet and on the phone. "The Revenue Agency should be bending over backwards to provide Canadians with the information they need and to make tax payments as convenient as possible," says Bannon. "Any savings from reducing client services will likely be offset by the need to increase collection staff."

This edition published by John Mac Kay

FULL COLOUR

edition of

The Informer is

available

on-line.

caw4304.ca/informer

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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.

Telephone access

Recently, some of you may have noticed a slight change in policy when it comes to dispatch providing phone numbers of other drivers. This relatively new policy reflects changes that have been made to privacy legislation in Canada over the past few years and is simply keeping up with those legislative changes.

Yet what do you do if the number of your golf buddy is programmed in your cell phone and you forgot your cell phone at home? Not to worry, there still remains another practical option. If you need to get a hold of someone in a bind; it could be for a trade, a give away, or to make car arrangements, you can refer to our secure Union website that lists names, numbers, e-mail addresses and sometimes, even a picture.

However, we as members need to keep this list up-to-date in order for it to be effective. In the past it wasn't as important because we could always ask dispatch for the phone number of an individual. That option is no longer available to us, so if you're willing to post your number to your fellow union members (it is not available to the general public), then please e-mail your name, number, e-mail address and even a headshot of yourself to Wayne Bell at wbell@golden.net. The more up-to-date it is, the more of a practical tool it becomes.

By: David J. Driver



Photo: Edward (Eddy) Guenzler

The suits are possibly a Mr. Stewart and a Mr. Elliot (management) then in uniform: Ed Becker, Ross Stoner, Murray Allen, Vince Hartlieb and Manse Legge

Delivered to Mary's Place:

Thank you all for your contributions...

- 2 afghans
- 1 blanket
- 34 mitts/ gloves
- 10 hats
- 1 scarf
- 3 large bags of new toys
- 1 large bag used clothing
- 6 towels
- 3 pair slippers
- 1 pair pajamas
- 7 pair socks
- 23 pair underwear
- 45 razors
- 29 bars soap
- 12 deodorant sticks
- 11 bottles shampoo
- 12 toothbrushes
- 10 tubes toothpaste
- Candy
- Candle gift basket

They will be distributed on Dec.23 at their Christmas dinner . On going contributions of toiletries etc., are welcome anytime . I deliver a monthly donation the last week of each month. (Phyllis.)



Publication Dates

The Informer will be published 5 times per year; March, April, July, October and December. The submission deadline is two days after the union meeting.

Is the World against You, or Are You Against the World

By: David J. Driver

The human subconscious is simultaneously mystical and powerful. It has been proven time and time again that many of our best decisions are not those that we ponder over for weeks, but those that we make in split seconds. During these decisions, your mind is working a mile-a-minute without your conscious mind even being aware of the inner workings.

Have you ever noticed how it's very difficult to hide our emotions when we're in a bad mood? Whether it is a spouse, a customer, or a stranger on the street, people can read us, and surprisingly, they can read us accurately.

I came across a study that dealt with doctors and malpractice suits; which are exceedingly large in the U.S. The desire of the study was to try to figure out why some doctors got sued while others did not.

What would you think was the major contributor for the likelihood of a malpractice suit? Perhaps, lack of education, poor training, or perhaps less than stellar credentials? The resounding answer is none of the above. One could not predict the likelihood of a malpractice suit based on the obvious.

Actually, the opposite is true; the doctors with the greater credentials get sued more than those that make frequent

mistakes. While that may seem illogical, if we delve a bit deeper, the answer becomes clearer.

It can be presumed that those with the stellar education may have a tendency to be a tad egotistical. If you compare egoism to a more personable individual with any of your own dealings, you'll begin to see the



reality. And this is precisely what was shown in the study.

People don't sue doctors they like; regardless of negligence. The doctors that don't get sued spend more time with their patients (18.3 minutes versus 15 minutes), they will talk personally with their patients and they are more likely to engage in active listening.

Take a moment to close your eyes and think; are you the doctor that is sued or are you the one that avoids the legal complication? Do you fight with your customers, your family members, your subordinates, or do you always make it through the day with a smile on your face? These are difficult questions, but the solutions to

them are much less so.

People like to be treated with respect. Nobody likes to be spoken to in a condescending or contemptuous manner. As mentioned earlier, the doctors that were sued had better qualifications than those that avoided legal troubles; it all came down to human relation skills.

If we can be personable - whether you are a Director, Manager, Assistant Manager, Supervisor, Bus Operator or Customer - essentially you will avoid trouble and be much more respected. No matter what rung of the corporate ladder you may find yourself on, the fact remains that respect is earned. Trying to demand respect only attracts trouble, and this is true in any relationship.

People do not have the ability to turn off their subconscious mind and this is precisely why people can walk away from an encounter with either positive or negative feelings without being able to pinpoint the reasons why.

By focusing on listening, being thoughtful and attentive to others, we can ensure that we are the ultimate beneficiaries. The benefits could be increased sales, less customer complaints, the elimination of malpractice suits, or even a better love life. Applying the above principles takes minimal effort but can achieve maximum payouts.

Next time you have a day where everyone seems to be ganging up

See World: on page 5

South operations committee

World: Continued from page 4
on you, take a step back and assess the common denominator. Someone with a narcissistic personality is incapable of doing this, but for the rest of us, we can all benefit by looking at the source.

My aunt likes to say, "If one person calls you a jackass, you consider the source. If five people call you a jackass, you get a saddle." It's always important to be willing to find the common denominator and accept that the problem may be internal instead of external.

If doctors who spend only 3 and a half minutes with patients avoided being sued, think of how that extra effort can benefit you in your day to day life.

Please check out www.caw4304.ca/southops for all your Operations Items. North and South along with Mobility Plus minutes are included. Here is a breakdown of what is included on this site for fast reference.

Minutes: Minutes from all Meeting. Updated Monthly.

My Take: My view on the Monthly Meetings. Updated Monthly.

Items on the Go: Status of present items on agenda and Target Dates. Updated Monthly.

Suggestion Forms: Different ways of directing me to the issues that you would like

resolved.

The Main Page also has Latest News, Current News and Completed Items all at one easy glance. Updated as much as possible.

Although most of the issues relate directly to the South (Cambridge Service Area), many items are joint issues that affect North (K-W Service Area) also. So inform yourself about the Current Issues that your Operations Committee is looking after for you.

Your Voice,

Zeke

Working Hard to be Heard
SouthOps Rep.



Photo by Klaus Biemann

Mc Gill, Darlene Brown, Monica Menner, Jenny Pickett pose for camera on X country trail.

Health and Safety is Everybody's Responsibility

By Maurice Lévesque

Up till now every time I have written about health and safety it has been about legislation or management's role or actions to do with Health and Safety. This time I'd like to comment about the responsibility that each and every driver and worker and GRT has to help make the workplace safe.

Under the OH&S Act Section 28 (1)(c) A worker shall report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or any defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another worker. Section 28(2)(b) states: no worker shall, use or operate any equipment, machine, device or thing or work in a manner that may endanger himself or any other worker.

So in short not only do you have a duty to keep yourself safe while working; you have a duty to keep everyone else safe at work too. I bring this up because of some disturbing incidents brought to my attention by Tom Murray and Jim Grandy. In one incident the operator reported that "the bus is full of gas" Tom immediately asked that the bus be stopped and parked but had to debate with the operator for another three or four minutes to get them to stop.

In the other incident an operator reported to Jim that the bus had "no brakes" and again the

supervisor told to park it and await a trade off. Again the operator had to be talked into it. Both supervisors were upset that drivers wouldn't take the safe option and park the bus without a debate.....you know what it upsets me too! If there any doubt that a vehicle is no longer **safe** to drive...park it!! There isn't **any** management personnel that is going to fight you on this.

As part of my duties on the H&S committee I do monthly inspections of the buildings when the inspections are done I file a report and notices go out to the various facilities people responsible for fixing the problems found. So if you have a problem with one of the buildings

let me know union cell phone number is 497-7870, or let Sharen Robinson know she is assistant manager of terminals.

What neither of us finds acceptable is when buildings and facilities are defaced or damaged in protest of some problem. (See photos below) It sometimes embarrasses me when fellow driver behave like high school students instead of the proud professionals I know we all are.

**To See Our
Collective
Agreement, click on
caw4304.ca/contract**



Photo by Maurice Lévesque

Toilet in terminal pod.

Ski- a -thon 2006



Photo by Steve Heubner

Group Picture of participants at this years Ski-a-thon 2006. This years total came to **\$5900.00**



Photo by Paul Eckmier

Linda, Darlene, Jenny, Klaus, Cheryl, Gina, Monica, with Scenic Caves Nordic centre in background.

Good Skiing Conditions

By Steve Huebner

There is a price to pay for good skiing conditions: road closures, cold weather and snow. It was all worth it on Feb. 7! Twenty – five of us went to Collingwood to take a chance on some of those extreme conditions. Klaus drove some in his van but the rest of us were in the hands of Marlene and her school bus. With some fancy shifting and a sixth sense of where to go, Marlene led us to Blue Mountain Ski Resort. Six people enjoyed snowshoeing and cross country skiing while the rest ventured into the thirty-five downhill runs at Blue. The previous days' power outages were no longer a threat; our little bit of ski heaven included some sunny skies, fresh falling snow and ideal surface conditions. After a tough day of skiing, the local Pizza Hut was a great place to satisfy our appetites and share some of the prizes donated to our charity event. If you feel like you missed out on some of the clothing, household items, or a \$200.00 gift certificate given away, perhaps you should join the team next year. Thanks to Paul Eckmier and those who helped him organize another successful Ski-a-thon in support of the Children's Wish Foundation

Big Thanks To So Many!!

By Paul Eckmier

Our recent "Skiing for Dreams" Charity Ski-a-thon, held on Tuesday, Feb. 7 at Blue Mountain and Scenic Caves Nordic Center in Collingwood, was a big success thanks to many people who pitched in and helped. First, I want to thank all the drivers and other Transit staff who signed up, raised and collected all their sponsors' donations. Then, they eagerly accepted the challenge and excitement of skiing down steep slopes; or glided over beautiful x-c ski trails; or plodded over powdery snow trails and Ontario's longest foot suspension bridge high above a breath-taking ravine on snowshoes! Secondly, I want to thank Lori Miller and Deb Biemann who collected door prizes, looked after all the off-hill duties, and organized the distribution of door prizes at the après-ski party at Collingwood Pizza Hut. We also want to thank Jacky Eng for helping to get door prizes and doing all the after-event follow-up duties. Others who helped get door prizes were Bernie Schubert, Klaus Biemann, and myself. Thirdly, I want to express sincere thanks to Marlene McCracken who drove our bus, very capably and professionally, up to Collingwood and back, sometimes on very snowy roads. And her bag-piping skills were an added flair as she led us all into the

restaurant. Joe Fleck and Mike Hogue also provided great navigational knowledge to Marlene as we needed to take some detours going up due to some snow-drifted road closures! And many thanks to Klaus Biemann who shuttled x-c skiers and snowshoers to and from Blue to Scenic Caves Nordic Center in his van! Fourthly, a very huge "thanks" to Stock Transportation who provided us with a free bus ride to the hills! And Blue Mountain Resorts Limited again helped us with greatly reduced rates on lifts and rentals! Many thanks also to our own CAW4304 who provided funds for non-alcoholic refreshments at the lodge and for purchasing a major door prize for the top fundraisers' draw event! Fifthly, I want to thank Steve Huebner for arranging the group photo by the bus. We will send an enlargement copy of this in a frame to Stock Transportation! Finally, a big "thank you" to everyone who sponsored us with a donation. We raised approximately \$5,900.00 for our charity, THE CHILDREN'S WISH FOUNDATION. Once all the pledges are in, we will let you know the official total.

WELL DONE, EVERYONE!



Paul Eckmier



Ski photos online at
caw4304.ca/ski

Wal-Mart caught using child labour

*Maquila Solidarity Network/
CALM*

The French-language Radio Canada program Zone Libre has exposed Wal-Mart for using child labour at two factories in Bangladesh.

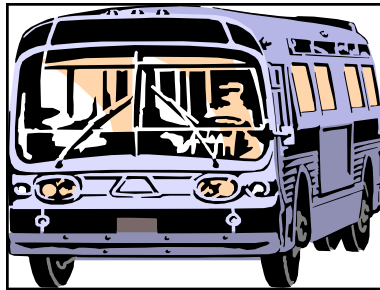
According to the one-hour program, children 10 to 14 years old were discovered working in the factories for less than \$50 a month, making "Simply Basic" and other Wal-Mart-brand products for export to Canada. A Wal-Mart spokesperson interviewed on the program claimed the factories were subcontract facilities and declared that his company was cutting off all future orders to the suppliers.

Cutting and running is the worst possible response to reports of child labour or other sweatshop abuses, since it discourages workers from telling the truth to factory auditors for fear of losing their jobs and encourages suppliers to hide abuses or subcontract work to other factories that will escape inspection.

Wal-Mart should not be allowed to place all the blame for the use of child labour on its Bangladeshi suppliers. The everyday low prices Wal-Mart pays to suppliers encourage the use of cheap labour, including child labour. As well, suppliers are often forced to subcontract parts of production to other factories to meet

unreasonable order deadlines. Instead of cutting and running from its responsibilities, Wal-Mart should work with its suppliers to eliminate future use of child labour and provide sufficient compensation to the current child labourers and their families to allow the children to receive a decent education. A just-released study carried out by MSN for the Ethical Trading Action Group (ETAG), the Transparency Report Card, gave Wal-Mart a failing mark of 30 at least partially because it does not have a staged approach to dealing with serious worker rights abuses.

The Report Card also criticizes Wal-Mart's code of conduct for undercutting internationally recognized minimum labour standards by setting 14 as the minimum working age and sanctioning a 72hour workweek.



Miscellaneous Ramblings

By Laszlo Bori

We just went through a difficult year. Cost of everything went through the roof. The oil giants were screaming that the tornados if the Gulf were destroying their ability to provide us with gas. Instability in the middle east forced prices to rise. Yet each and every Oil Company

made record profits. To the tune of \$100 Billion. There isn't a Government in the World that will dare to face the oil giants and tell them to lower the price of oil. Why??? Because they control Governments.

The cost of insurance is always on the rise. Insurers are always crying, yet their profits get larger every year. These greedy people invent new ways to, not pay claims. They go far as to say, that if they determine that any damage was caused by terrorist activity they will not pay. If you have a claim your rates go up, sometimes up so high that you have paid your own damages not the insurance company. Why do we have to put up with this??? Because the government forces us to buy insurance or we get fined or go to jail. (there is tax on insurance). So far this year the combined profits to insurers is up 134% over 2003. We are talking about Billions of Dollars.

Ah, Dalton the liar McGuinty signed a taxpayer protection pledge in 2003. Some taxes were included and some were omitted. Silly us, we did not know this. SOME OF THE LIES

\$9 billion health tax. Tobacco tax, 4 hikes since 2003, anything to do with Government services, drivers licence renewal, beer spirit ad wine tax, higher fees for civil court, small claims court, not rolling back the tolls on the 407, adding \$15 Billion to the Provincial debt, their debt, your new taxes, capping hydro costs, cost of hydro has risen and by April the cap will come off. So far the Liberals have broken 50 of their promises, and they continue to rule.

Excerpts from Driver's Manual

By John Mac Kay, Editor

The following paragraph is an excerpt from G. R. T. Bus Operators Manual.

5.16 Public Criticism: It is an employee right as a private citizen to comment on matters of public interest. In exercising this right, employees are not speaking as Regional employees and should not identify themselves as such.

In recent weeks one of our brothers wrote a letter to the Kitchener Record, at one point during the conversation was asked if he could be identified as an employee of the G.R.T. as to which the reply was I would prefer you do not do this. Well



you guest it, the story came out with this said person identified as a G. R. T. employee.

Now the letter was pro transit he showed it to our director of transit Eric Gillespie and ok. But Human recourses has sent this brother a letter of disciplined to be entered into his file. The union has grieved this and at this printing we cannot say any more as it might interfere with the grievance. I have asked one of our regular writers to follow up on this ,and you will get the full story as it unfolds.

services and exaggerated the consequences to a city from a bus route being allowed to operate on neighborhood streets. The urban planning decisions cited allegedly had caused an increase in automobile use and "an increase in incidences whereby private vehicles conflict with buses on our streets as they compete more aggressively for road space within this congested environment."

Several days after the article was published, Biemann was called to an investigation meeting that included managers from human resources and operations. He was accompanied by Harold Klooster.

Biemann was informed that region and city officials were upset by both the content of his criticisms and the fact that an employee had criticized publicly region officials and their decisions. Following the meeting, a letter was placed in his file warning of further disciplinary action in the event of a repeat occurrence.

Management stated that the region expects employees to act as ambassadors for the region and to support its policies, programs and decisions. More to the point, employees are to refrain from publicly criticizing the region or other levels of government.

Biemann argued in his defense that he had informed the editor of *The Record* of his employment only to support his claim to being an informed commentator on urban issues and had deliberately requested that he not be identified in print as a GRT operator. *The Record* - for whatever reason - did not consent to his request.

(Continued on page 11)

Freedom of speech

By Phil Whitehead

Can an employee of the region exercise their right to free speech without compromising their responsibilities to their employer? What precautions must an employee exercise before speaking publicly?

These questions were raised when operator Klaus Biemann

was faced disciplinary action following the publication of an article in *The Record* in which he criticized unnamed politicians for "'transit-bashing'" and failing to provide suitable urban planning. A note from the editor at the end of the article identified him as a GRT bus operator.

The writing of the article was motivated by his interest in countering the cumulative effects of a series of negative media reports about GRT and critical comments about transit by politicians.

The politicians cited supposedly had made erroneous statements about the relevance of GRT



(Continued from page 10)

This attempt at avoiding public identification did not alter management's conclusion that he had engaged in public criticism.

The disciplinary action was appealed as a stage one grievance. At the hearing, another fact was introduced in his defense: a draft of the article had been shown to the director of transit prior to being submitted to *The Record*. Because employees are advised to check with a supervisor if they have any questions, the employee decided to inform the highest ranking supervisor in GRT. (No permission was granted to identify himself as a GRT employee, however.)

The matter is now being appealed as a stage two grievance.

An issue of this kind may be more likely to occur with employees who were transferred from Kitchener Transit or Cambridge Transit than with those hired directly by the region. Operators hired by the region are required, as a condition of their employment, to sign a letter stating that they will not engage in conduct detrimental to the region or its objectives. Operators who were transferred automatically to the region on January 1, 2000 were not required to sign a similar letter.

Look for in next Informer stories on:

- When Customer Service becomes a Disservice
- Where are they now ?

Some Thoughts on the Federal Election

Klaus Biemann
Political Education

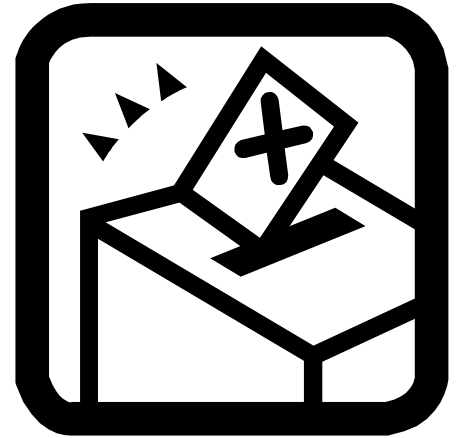
The handwriting was on the wall after the scandal-ridden Liberal government under Paul Martin was forced to call an election following a no-confidence vote in Parliament, bringing down the Liberal minority government.

Canadians who have grown tired of scandals and broken promises decided that perhaps this was time to “clean house” and begin anew with a fresh administration.

Geographically, Canada is the largest democracy in the world, embracing a wide range of socio-economic groups of people, from ethnically and socially diverse centers such as Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, to the many rural societies that have established themselves throughout this country over the past 150 or more years.

Each part of Canada voted according to it's own agenda. Atlantic Canada remained a bastion of Liberalism. Toronto voted heavily Liberal which reflected the views of a large blue collar ethnic and immigrant population. The province of Quebec retained the Bloc as an expression of it's own individualism and aspirations towards some form of sovereignty.

Much of rural Canada, including the large urban centers of the West, chose the Conservative Party since it best represented the values important to them – individualism, self-reliance with minimal government hand-outs, and with



minimum government interference in daily affairs.

The NDP increased its' representation in Parliament as a result of increasing number of Canadians expressing concern over the continued erosion of our social programs, from health care to day care.

Across Canada, only 67% of eligible voters bothered to go to the polls. Of those that took the time to vote, those Canadians as a whole voted wisely.

By denying an unknown leader and a re-designed Conservative party, quite different from the Conservative party of the past, an absolute majority in Parliament, Canadians are telling Steven Harper that we are prepared for change – but a little at a time. If the “new” Conservatives stay away from right-wing ideology, and follow through with their election promises, providing a leadership that is centrist, then I believe that perhaps in two or three- years time, Canadians will be willing and ready to elect a majority Conservative government.

In hindsight, this election result may have been very good

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

for Canada in a number of ways. First, with Conservatives making impressive showings in Quebec, the power of the Bloc Quebec has become muted or watered down, lessening the threat that Separatist passions once again become an issue in the form of another referendum.

Secondly, with the election of Steven Harper, a native Albertan is now Canada's helmsman. The West, with its' own separatist ambitions, namely from Alberta and British Columbia, can now redirect those ambitions into a more positive way through a strong presence, and a strong voice, in Ottawa. Western Canadians can feel that at long last they are a significant force in Canada, no longer marginalized by political forces from Ontario and Quebec, and no longer alienated from decision-making in Ottawa.

Thirdly, with the NDP emerging stronger from this election, it will be well placed to ensure that existing social structures and programs, a foundation that distinguishes Canada from our American friends, remain relatively intact. The NDP, along with a re-structured Liberal party, will be the watchdog in Parliament to ensure that the Conservative government continue to respect the social programs already in place within this nation, and to ensure that the Conservative government will continue to steer well clear of any right-wing tendencies that it may wish to embark upon.

Of the Canadians that did vote – well done.

Collision Review

GRT North

	October	November	December
Non preventable	14	13	18
Incidents	3	4	4
Preventable Inc.	1	0	2
Accidents	4	1	5

GRT South.

Non Preventable	1	3	5
Incidents	1	4	0
Preventable Incidents	1	1	0
Accidents	1	0	1

G.R.T. Mobility South

Non Preventable	0	1	0
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G.R.T. Mobility North.

Non Preventable	0	0	3
Preventable Incidents	0	0	1
Accidents	0	0	1

Fleet

Non Preventable	0	0	1
Accidents			4

We are starting a new year , so lets think safety first and schedules second. Remember it's wiser to loose a few minutes from your schedule playing it safe, than spending hours filling out forms and talking to the police because you are trying to stay on time.

Laszlo Bori

Out On a Limb – with Grey Owl

After the last issue of the Informer came out, operator Rick Breen (G.R.T. South) approached me with his concerns about vacation allotments during the summer months. His concern was that senior drivers would lose the right to have two weeks of vacation time during the summer. I explained to Rick that I was not advocating that senior drivers lose any vacation rights only that all drivers with sufficient seniority are guaranteed a minimum of two weeks summer vacation. I thank Rick for his feedback.

There is an ongoing problem that seems to never get solved. That is the uncomfortable seats and seat position, on many of the older Busses this is currently an ongoing problem in the south. Many of our older 500 series and 300 series busses have seats that are either too close to the steering wheel or do not sit high enough when adjusted to make driving them comfortable. I know that with my extra girth and long legs it is very uncomfortable for me to sit behind the wheel of these busses..

I was told of the following incident and it disturbs me greatly. It has to do with a south operator and a senior north driver. Here's the story and then I will tell you what disturbs me. The south operator was driving the I – Express north bound and entering the Charles St Terminal there was another I-Express bus in the stop since the busses are on a 15 minute and this bus should be leaving soon the driver pulled up behind this other bus. After a couple of minutes a north

bus pulled up but could not get around the two busses, the north operator immediately got out of and started to swear using some very foul language “ get that bus out of my f_ _ king way, who the f_ _ k do you think you are parking there. This unacceptable display of behavior was performed in front our passengers. Who now see this as a reflection of all G.R.T. operators' behavior? This was not acceptable behavior. This anal – orifice needs to be looking for a vocation he obviously has no business working for G.R.T. He's lucky that he's not explaining his actions for harassment to regional human resources, where there is a zero tolerance for this type of behavior. It really upsets me that we still have these dinosaurs working for us. No one should have to tolerate this abuse if it happens to you report it. I have no sympathy for

these jerks.

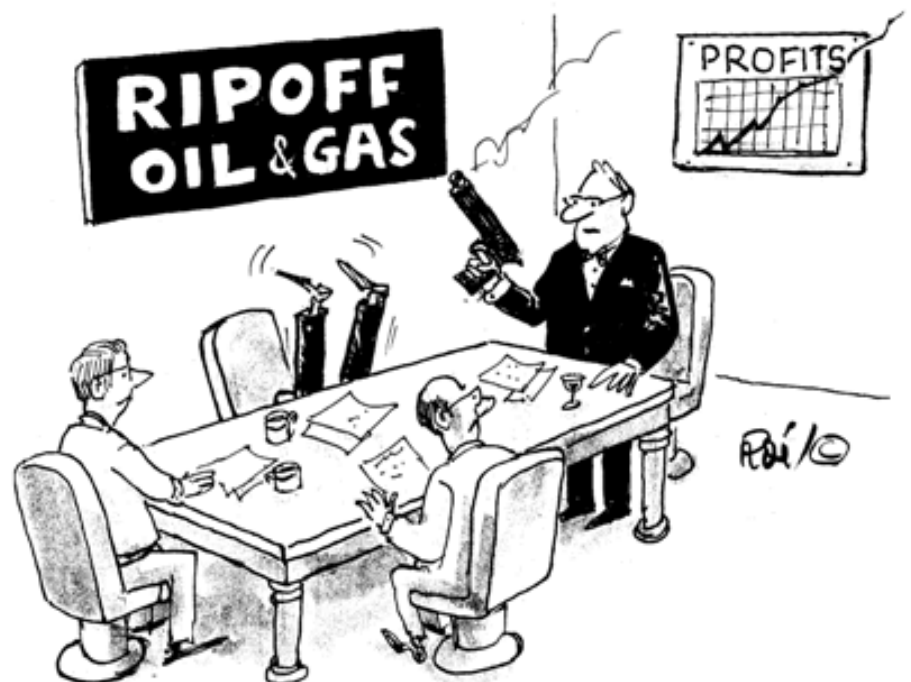
As a follow-up I wish to say I'm sorry for my comments about your nice couch. I now understand that you now have three small chairs. I did not expect them to take away yours I only hoped to spur them to get our new couch which we were promised. If it makes the north operators feel better we are still using our old torn couch.

Next Time “To “B” or not to “B” a School Bus”

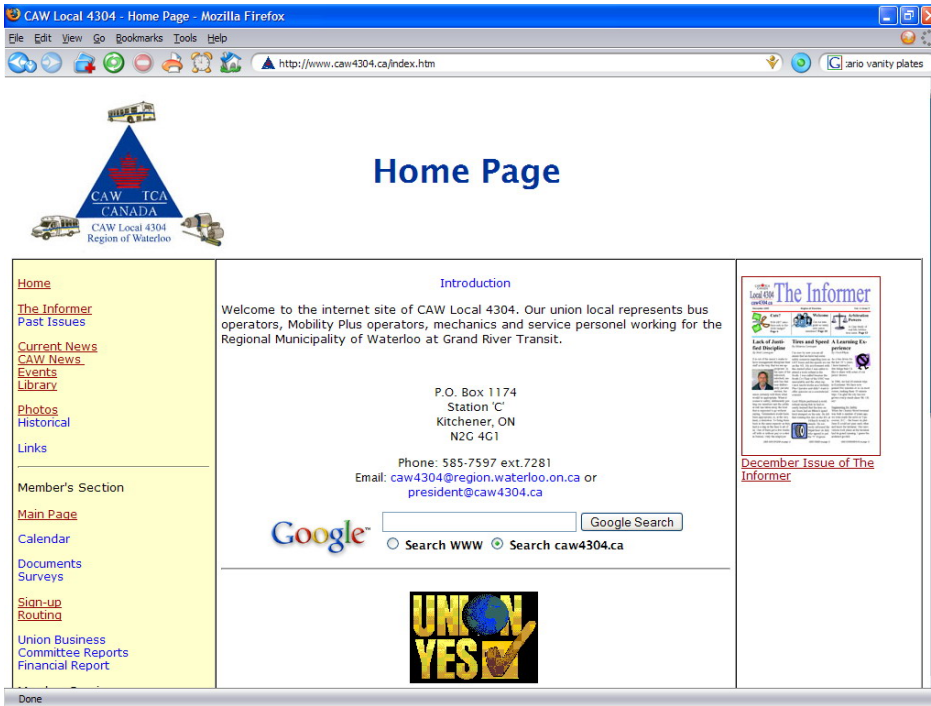
As always your comments are appreciated.
A thought to ponder “Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow”

Have a good day and be careful out there – Phil. Esterhaus

WILF. “Grey Owl”



“ANYONE ELSE FOR LOWERING PRICES?”



information and communication;
CAW Local 4304 at caw4304.ca.

Wayne Bell
Webmaster

Overtime could make you sick

CAW Health, Safety and Environment/CALM

Working overtime could make you sick. A new study shows long hours increase the risk of illness and injury, no matter what the job type.

When U.S. researchers at the University of Massachusetts analyzed information from 110,236 job records, they found 5,139 work-related injuries and illnesses. More than half of those injuries were among workers who worked long hours or overtime. Researchers say the risk has nothing to do with how hazardous the job may be. Overall, workers who worked overtime were 61 per cent more likely to have a work-related injury or illness than those who did not work overtime. Working at least 12 hours a day was linked to a 37 per cent increase, while working at least 60 hours a week was linked to a 23 per cent increased risk. The more hours worked, the greater the risk. Researchers looked at the responses from 11,000 workers from 1987 and 2000. They say the results back up the theory that working long hours indirectly causes workplace accidents by bringing on fatigue and stress.

Union web site has changed

A few months ago, I changed the layout and design of our local's web site. It now has a new and uncluttered look. Most of the information has been updated and all pages are accessible from a side bar menu on the left, whether it is public or members only.

Some of the pages are:

- Current News
- CAW News
- The Electronic Informer
- Events
- Library
- Photos
- Members Only Main
- Calendar
- Documents
- Sign-up
- Union Business
- Committees

South Operations
Executive and Member
Directories

Communication and education plays a big role on our union web site. You can contact your executive or committee members simply by logging onto the members' only area and then clicking on executive or committees. Many of the committees have an online form to make it even easier to communicate with them. That way, your concerns go directly to all members of a designated committee.

Many pages have information that is valuable to our members. There are news pages including *The Electronic Informer*. Union business with minutes of our meetings, plus financial and committee reports are also available in the password protected area.

So, the next time you're wondering what is happening with your union local, why not check out our source for

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

By Lazlo Bori

As you all know the entire Western World is desperate to clean up the environment. Billions of Dollars are spent each year. Government hype gets everyone excited and we all do our best to stop pollution. OR DO WE????? Canada signed the Kyoto accord without thinking. It is the people who will carry the burden of cleaning up the environment through taxation, not the large Corporations that created the pollution.

Out of 30 Countries Canada is rated 28th, as reported by the David Suzuki foundation. Canada has the worst record for volatile organic compound emissions, carbon monoxide emissions and nuclear waste. Canada emits three times more air and water pollutants than

any of the other 29 countries. While our energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions are double.

From 1995 to 2003 the U. S. has reduced its air pollution by 45%, while Canada reduced its pollution by 1.8%. Hearing this, our environment minister Stephanie Dion, jumped up and down, claimed that the report by the Commission for Environmental Co-operation under NAFTA, was a bunch of lies and untruths because we have reduced our pollution by 2%, a figure far greater than 1.8%.

Well you know what this means, we the workers, will have to bear the brunt of cleaning up the air that the dirty dozen Canadian companies pollute. Get ready for tax hikes. These companies will not be taxed because they provide jobs and have political clout. (have

politicians in their pockets).

- 1.....Inco Ltd
- 2.....Alcan Inc
- 3.....Ontario Power generation.
- 4.....Nova Scotia Power Incorporation.
- 5.....Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting.
- 6.....SaskPower.
- 7.....Syncrude Canada.
- 8.....Transalta Utilities Corp.
- 9.....New Brunswick Power.
- 10....Noranda Inc.
- 11....Aluminerie de Becancour Inc.
- 12....EnCana Corporation.

Another great idea by the Feds is to spend \$9 million to protect the Arctic ecosystem in the Mackenzie Valley. No mention as to how, what the money will be spent on, who is going to get the money, or what are they protecting the ecosystem from.



POWER TO THE PEOPLE.

Our New Editor

*By John A. McDonald,
South Editor*

This Informer has been published by our new editor, John Mac Kay. Mr. Mac Kay came on board in December of last year after Wayne Bell retired after 11 years as the editor of the Informer. Mr. Mac Kay and John A. McDonald will now alternate issues, with the next publication being done by John A. McDonald. This will give the Informer more balanced reporting from both our North and South divisions.

Mr. Mac Kay has been with GRT since 2001. Prior to this, he worked with Airways Transit from 1993 to 2001. At the same time he worked with Laidlaw Transportation in their school bus division. It was back in 1991 that John started driving for Waterloo Taxi, and he still holds his licence with them. Prior to his driving career, John managed bowling centres for about twelve years around Ontario.

While managing Avenue Bowling Lanes in Orangeville, Mr. Mac Kay was asked to write a column on bowling in the sports section of the Orangeville Banner. This carried on for about three years until he moved to Coldwater, to manage Coldwater Bowling Lanes. The column appeared weekly and was the start of John's writing career. From time to time John continued

submitting various articles to local newspapers, usually on the topic of bowling.

Presently, John lives in Kitchener, with his family of three boys and one girl, along with his wife, Johanne. Unfortunately, John is much too good of a parent, and his adult children will not leave home. His hobbies are fishing, helping Bob Simpson fix his cottage, gardening, and landscaping. His also raises Koi, which are fancy Gold fish. In his spare time, his delivers for Communimed, which is a pharmaceutical contractor. John updates the posters and other publications in local Shoppers Drug Marts, PharmaPlus and Doctors offices in the K-W, Guelph and Brantford area.

His winter hobby is vacationing in the Dominican Republic. The photo below was taken on Feb. 15th on his latest trip with his daughter, Jodie. This shot was taken just after he finished swimming with 14 foot tiger sharks and Mata Rays in a two acre pen off the coast. John's next trip will be on Feb. 26th to visit his sister near North Port, in the Fort Myers area, Florida with John's two boys, Brent and Andrew accompanying him.

John's philosophy about publishing is to keep an open mind, with an emphasis on articles that will make people think. It is not so much who writes the article, but what will stimulate the readers. His goal is

to create a page turner, and not just a space filler.

In preparation of this edition, John has upgraded his computer and has taken a course in Microsoft Publisher 2003 at Conestoga College, with the financial assistance of our union. Together with Wayne Bell and John A. McDonald, he has overcome the huge learning curve to get it to this point. Up until a year ago, he had no experience at all on computers. When he volunteered for this position, he was not fully aware of the time commitment involved. He is now!



John Mac Kay survives a swim with the sharks in the Dominican