

The Last AAS?



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“Pinky Meyers”



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Union Works

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The Results of Unity

*Rick Lonergan
President*

As a result of the membership’s support during the latest round of bargaining, your committee was able to



achieve an acceptable Collective Agreement. We still have a lot to do in order to reach our common goals.

Many of you were new to the process, and were not sure as to what the strike vote and subsequent ratification vote meant. Make no mistake about it. Had the strike vote not been a high percentage, you likely would have had a strike!

Having said that, another group played a vital role. The Strike

(See Unity on page 3)

You Made It Happen

*Klaus Biemann
Political Education*

During the negotiations that ended in a 12th hour agreement with The Region, I give credit to the absolute determination of our Negotiating



Committee, and the continuing resolve of our membership, even if that meant strike action with its associated hardships, to ensure that our new contract would be a good one.

To our membership that supported the Union, **your** continued strong support made the difference between failure and a good contract. All of you deserve a pat on the back and a big **thank you!**

(See Thank you on page 3)

March 26th By-Election

Polling Stations:

Kitchener garage:

5:00 am to 5:00 pm

Cambridge garage

(Women only):

5:00 am to 7:30 am

& 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm

Women’s Advocate:

1. **Jackie McKie** (See pg. 4)
2. **Dot Halley** (See pg. 5)
3. **Lori Miller**
4. **Jasmin Dyke**
5. **Sjean Vandincten**
6. **Valencia Thompson**

Health & Safety:

1. **Monica Menner** (see Pg. 6)
2. **Bob Simpson** (Homer)(Pg. 6)
3. **Darlene Wilson** (See Pg. 7)

Operations Committee:

1. **Russ Davis** (See Pg. 8)
2. **Perry Beck** (See Pg. 9)
3. **Howard Parry** (See Pg. 9)
4. **Darren Mahon**

Scheduling Committee (North Conventional):

1. **Rick Lonergan**
2. **Dan Pope**
3. **Jenny Pickett**

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Bereavements:

Barry Phillips
 Bob Simpson
 Dave Meyer
 Eileen Mannarelli
 Eugene Park
 Fezal Ally
 Marlene McCracken
 Paul Clemens
 Peter Hofmeister
 Ricky Sandhu
 Susan Stengel
 Teresa Robertson
 Thomas Henderson

Fruit Baskets:

(Some donated to charity in lieu)

Bob Marshall
 Cheryl Park
 David Driver
 Deb Flynn
 Gerry Nagle
 Joyce Stirling
 Kathy Clegg
 Mike Eedy
 Miroslav Rakanovic
 Peter Hewitt
 Peter Hofmeister
 Wayne Johnson

Contributors

Local 4304 members helping out with this issue were:

Bob Simpson
 Clive O'Neill
 Darlene Wilson
 Dot Halley
 Howard Parry
 Jacky McKie
 John A. McDonald
 Kerry McGrath
 Klaus Biemann
 Laszlo Bori
 Maurice Levesque
 Monica Menner
 Nicole Poirier
 Perry Beck
 Rick Lonergan
 Ricki Germann
 Russ Davis

**This edition published
 by John A. McDonald**

**Comments to
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**The June edition will
 again be published by
 John A. McDonald**

**Submissions to:
informer@caw4304.ca
 (always send submissions here)**

**Next Submission
 Deadline is
 May 30, 2008
 (1 wk later than normal)**

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caw4304.ca/informer

The Informer

Publication Dates:

The Informer will be published 5 times per year: February, April, June, October and December. The submission deadline is two days after the Union meeting.

**Attend your
 Union meetings:
 April 16, 2007
 2 meetings:
 (11:00 am &
 7:30 pm)
 (3rd Wed., monthly)**

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.



2008 Negotiation Team:

Back Row, L to R: Zeke Baker, Phil Mayberry, Harold Klooset, Franz Peters
 Front, L to R: Rick Lonergan, Bill Gibson, Ted Dewsbury

(Unity from page 1)
 Preparedness Committee, consisting of Klaus Biemann, Wayne Mastromatteo, Maurice Levesque, and Monica Menner, along with the captains, spent countless hours, beginning last fall, to ensure that if a strike did occur, everyone would know their responsibilities and functions.

These two factors were as important as the bargaining committee itself. The employer was aware that they had the entire membership there, not just the committee. We were able to avoid a strike, but we get to do this all over again at the end of 2008. The same solidarity will be needed once more in order to be

successful.

On behalf of the Negotiation Committee and myself, I want to thank all of you for helping to make our job easier, and to encourage you to act as a unified force every day, which shows the strength in this membership needed to improve our workplace.



(Thank you from page 1)
 As your Political Education representative, and on behalf of our membership, I would like to thank our Negotiating Committee for a job well done. **You** were on the front lines, fully determined to get the best package possible for us in the face of Regional negotiators who were determined to give us as little as possible.

I would like to express my appreciation for the work that was done by our Strike Committee. The many hours that Wayne Mastromatteo, our Cambridge Strike Chief, put in to produce the Strike Protocol, which essentially set strike guidelines, is to be commended.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

The tireless efforts of Monica Menner, our Kitchener Strike Chief, cannot be over emphasized. Monica put together our entire Picket Duty List, and provided updates and vital information to our membership in an ongoing manner. Monica was the motivational force that ensured a smooth transition from a work place environment to a strike environment, had the need arisen.

On the eve of the strike deadline, at her behest, Monica, along with myself and Maurice Levesque, approached CKCO TV at the garage and invited them to take many film clips of our strike preparations, such as the unloading of skids to be used as firewood. We believe that the airing of our efforts on TV may have had an impact on The Region's attitude toward us in further negotiations with our Committee. To Monica, I say a big **Thank You!** for all the work you put into this.

To our other Strike Committee person, Maurice Levesque, my heartfelt thanks for helping me secure the burn barrels from Ledco, and the use of your trailer in transporting the barrels and skids to where they needed to be. Your input was very effective.

I would like to thank our Strike Captains:

In the North: David Driver, John Mackay, Krista Gebhardt, Hubert

Kump, Suzanne Turner, Peter Jantzi (Mobility Plus).

In the South: John A. McDonald, Al Maine, Dan MacEwen, Elizabeth Allan, Greg Sturt-Smith, Janice Schultz, Carol Jacob-Carreiro (Mobility Plus, Cambridge), and James Devine (Dept.2, Cambridge), for volunteering their time to be there for all of us in the event of a strike. **THANK YOU!**

Over these past few months, we demonstrated to The Region, and also to ourselves, that with firm resolve, determination, and hard work, and a strong belief that what we were doing was right, we, as a workforce and bargaining unit, could indeed achieve much.

As we look beyond this summer and begin to focus on the follow-up to this one-year contract, you can be assured that our Union executive will continue its determined efforts to expand upon the significant gains realized in this contract for our next Collective Agreement.

Our Strike Committee is still in place. We are eager to prepare the groundwork for any future labour actions, should the need arise.

In my opinion, our Local has the best executive ever. To our membership, and to our executive, I would like to state that we, as the Strike Committee, stand ready to provide our services, should that need arise in the future.

To Rick and his team – you did us proud!



Jacky for Women's Advocate

I wish to run for the position of Women's Advocate because I believe that I can be of service to the women in our local.

I have been involved in this Union since 1995, first as Recording Secretary, and presently as the Financial Secretary. I have also been your Charity Chair since 1996.

I believe that my record shows that I have an invested interest in the well-being of our local, and that I am able to carry out an obligation once given that responsibility.

I also believe that my personal background as a single parent and a divorcee, because of abuse within the home, gives me a personal reason to want to help others.

Credentials and Courses:

- CISM – Critical Incident Stress Management -1997
- Bereavement counselling from 2001
- Negotiating in the Workplace from 2001
- Member of the Region's EAP Board since 2003

On Wednesday, March 26th **vote for Jacky** as your Women's Advocate.

Night Steward:
Dan Pope (Acclaimed)
(Effective March 21)

VOTE FOR DOT HALLEY FOR WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

well as *Women's Committee* and *Gym Committee*. I have also been trained in the *CISM*.

During the past year, as a Union Steward, I have been involved with several situations regarding the safe and fair treatment of our Sisters of Local 4304. My skill and persistence in these matters has resulted in

satisfactory outcomes for the women involved.

On a daily basis, I strive to prevent racism, sexism, or any other form of harassment that may corrode our work environment. I am always striving to be inclusive, and promote diversity in our workplace.

When elected, I promise to fulfill the duties of Women's Advocate, utilizing excellent listening skills, attention to detail, and care in dealing with privacy and confidentiality issues. I want to deal with workplace problems quickly and effectively, and design prevention methods as well.

Thank you in advance for your vote!



WOMEN OF GRAND RIVER TRANSIT ... MAKE ME YOUR REPRESENTATIVE!

I offer you 21 years of experience with Grand River Transit (18 with Conventional and 3 with Mobility Plus). My experience comes from different Union positions: voted in as *Local Chair, Financial Secretary, Health & Safety, Accident Review, Uniform Committee*, and currently I hold the positions of *Operations for Mobility Plus*, as

History of International Women's Day March 8, 2008

Dot Halley
Women's Committee

In 1977, The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace. Following the United Nations' lead, Canada chose March 8th as International Women's Day.

Every year since 1977, Canadians have marked International Women's Day by celebrating progress toward women's full participation, reflecting on the challenges and barriers that remain, and considering future steps to achieving equality for *all* women, in all aspects of their lives. International Women's Day provides an opportunity to celebrate the collective power of women – past, present, and future.

Over time, International Women's Day has grown into a week-long series of commemorative events and activities across the country. This year, IWD was held from Sunday, March 2, and continued until Saturday, March 8. International Women's Day is always March 8, so next year it will again be on March 8, 2009. The celebration would then start on March 2, 2009.

Canada's theme for IWD for 2008 was, "**Strong Women, Strong World.**"

Monica Menner for Health & Safety

Our workplace has potential hazards, ranging from driver assaults to ergonomically unfriendly work stations. Many of us have received injuries during the course of our job duties due to faulty air suspension, negligence in snow



removal, mould in the air conditioning system, and poor ventilation in the garage.

In the course of my duties as Union Steward, I have come across numerous Health and Safety issues affecting our membership. I have contributed to the development of protocol for management to follow in the event of driver assaults. I have investigated, documented and photographed unsafe working conditions, and I have suggested corrective measures while representing members' rights.

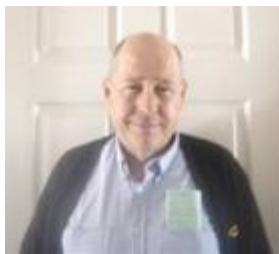
We all have a right to a safe workplace, a right to participate, and a right to refuse unsafe work. As your Health and Safety representative, I will strive to promote a safe and healthy workplace environment for all of our members. Health and Safety is an attitude. Along with the Health and Safety Act and

Legislation, I will do my best to ensure that all workers go home in the same condition that they came to work in.

Please vote for Monica Menner as your Health and Safety Representative on Election Day.

Bob Simpson (Homer) for H & S

I'm the guy in the uniform, the operator you want for Joint Health and Safety (H&S) Conventional in the North! I'm good to go, and fully trained with certification in Occupational H&S. I took these courses on my



own. **I come cheap.** I believe your job should not injure or hurt you. I have been

involved with the Union since September 19, 2000, when I attended my first Union meeting.

Education

- Occupational H & S Admin.
- Intro to Occupational Hygiene
- Ergonomics
- Industrial Processes
- H & S Legislation
- Sampling and Analysis
- Hazard Identification

- Fire Safety and Emergency Planning
- Union/Mgmt Relations
- Labour Economics
- Learning Strategies for Adults

Advantage

Certified in H& S with a certificate from Conestoga College. No cost to the Union membership. Ready to go, except for the refresher program the Union sends us on.

H & S Experience

I have four years H&S experience as a committee member at Conestoga College, and I set up an H & S program as an owner/ manager at my Tim Horton's for 48 employees.





Darlene Wilson for Health and Safety Committee

As a member of our Health and Safety Committee, I will be fully committed to the knowledge of my Health and Safety responsibilities, and to *confronting them*. You will have the assurance that I will not only meet head-on all health and safety concerns that are presented, but I will take leadership in identifying possible hazards. I believe strongly in

accountability, and see it as an important key to ensuring, developing, and implementing Health and Safety practices.

QUALIFICATIONS

Certified in Health and Safety Training- from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Business Management Certificate- enrolled in certificate program at Conestoga College, completed 5/6 required courses

Labour Relations Course- Conestoga College

Thank you for a Great Seven Years

Maurice Levesque

I have spent the last seven years on the Health and Safety Committee, the last five as Co-chair. The time has come for me to step down, and I have done so, effective the end of February. It has been my great honour and privilege to serve the interests of safety at GRT.



There are a lot of people I would like to thank: Ted Dewsbury, who appointed me Co-chair after the departure of the previous chair. I am sure neither he nor I was sure I could do the job at the time, but he gave me the chance. I would also like to thank the rest of the CAW #4304 executive as well. The job was made that much easier with their staunch support.

I would also like to thank Rick Lonergan (who takes over the chair position). He is as fiercely determined as I was and am to safeguard workers at GRT. He constantly argued with me and challenged me on many, many issues. Although I found this irritating much of the time, it served me well, making me stronger and more determined when discussing issues with

(See Seven Years on page 8)

(Seven Years from page 7) management.

I would also like to thank the many workers who refused to do unsafe work, and performed work refusals. When workers exercise this fundamental right, the workplace becomes safer, usually at a faster pace than would otherwise be the case. Some of these workers are Jim Charters, Jose Fonte, Derek Charboneau, Phil Mayberry, Colleen Caines, Jeanette Aubin, Scott Desjarin, Monica Menner, and Gord Whyte.

I would also like to thank the membership in general for supporting my education in Health and Safety. By my estimates, I have spent more than 500 hours in training of one kind or another, paid for by this membership.

I would also like to thank Ron Pearson. As the management co-chair of the committee, he often challenged my concerns, and found holes in my arguments. This made me better at documenting and researching my arguments and considering the *big picture* when I wanted changes made.

One of the things that was always important to me during my time on the committee was to make sure that the things accomplished did not disappear over time. By the design of workplaces, we can only have a thirty-five year or so memory.

Two of the things that I am

proudest to leave behind for the future are the GRT Testing Manual, and the Terms of Reference of the JHSC. In cooperation with Corporate Health and Safety, a Testing Manual was created, containing the history of testing at this property.

Air Quality Sampling, Ergonomic Testing, Steering Force Testing, and Noise Testing are among some of the studies that this manual contains. Some of the testing goes back to 1990!! We will have this as a legacy for the future, and all current members of the JHSC will soon have a copy of this manual.

The Terms of Reference is a document that describes how the JHSC will operate, and who its members are. One of the important items in this document is a formula that will allow increases in the number of labour members on the committee, based on growing worker numbers.

Finally, I would like to say that I don't leave the committee in anger or conflict with anyone. I will still serve the interests of safety whenever and wherever I can. **I will always be a "safety guy" at heart, and will still share my knowledge and opinions freely with any who ask.**

Russ Davis for Operations Committee

My Brothers & Sisters:

My name is Russ Davis, and I have been with Transit since August 1995. I am running for a position in the Operations Committee.

We are moving in a new direction at Transit, and I believe that there are a number of issues that need to be looked at. With my past experiences at Transit, I have learned not to give up, but to stand firm in my beliefs. Those of you who know me, realize that I will hold firm to my convictions. I will do this job to the best of my ability, and support those who require it.

I have argued about the 2300-series vehicles being unsafe. As well, the conditions of certain roads this winter in regards to not being wide enough to drive safely on.

I will continue to fight for these concerns and more. I hope that I can count on your support for this position.

Thank you!

Russ Davis,
Operator
189



Perry Beck for Operations Committee

Please let me introduce myself. My name is Perry Beck, aka operator 373. I have worked for Grand River Transit since December 2005. I have spent all of that time sitting on the sidelines and observing how things work, not being an active participant in Union matters. I am now ready to learn more, and to be an active member of our Union.

I can't tell a lie. I have never done this before! Besides having a desire to learn and to help my fellow co-workers, I don't have much experience in Union matters. But with your vote, that could change!

What I do have is an opportunity to learn from a very strong executive, and to keep our local strong in the many years that I hope to have at GRT.

So, I ask, when you are deciding who you think would be the best



choice for Operations Committee, think about the *future* of Grand River Transit, and know that I hope to be driving down that road with you in the years to come.

We will need good, experienced people in the years ahead to take care of business. Why not give a new guy a chance to learn from a group of people who have such a wealth of knowledge, and bring their experiences with me into the future?

Thank you so much for your consideration in this nomination.

Howard Parry For Operations Committee



With over 40 years in the workforce as a worker, a Union steward, supervisor and manager, this background has equipped me with the experience needed in this position. Please vote for me!

Sincerely
Howard A. Parry

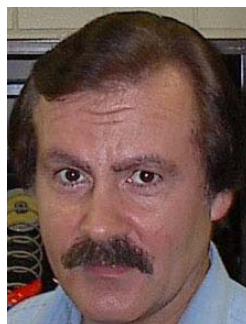
Accident Review

January 2008

Laszlo Bori

Accident Review Committee

The Region, in its infinite wisdom, has pulled another boner. They relied on one of



their own to change the Collision Review

Process that we have had for years.

The old system had

some bad points and some good points. With proper Union

representation and the \$500 Forgivable Clause, it worked quite well.

In other words, if you knocked off a mirror, or did less than \$500 worth of damage to the bus, you were forgiven, provided it didn't happen on a regular basis. You did not lose your Safe Driving Award. A point system was used, and each incident had a

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)
point value. The committee did not know the name of the driver, and based their decision on the reports from the driver, the Supervisor, and the police.

Without consulting the Union, and breaking our Collective Agreement, the Region decided to use the system set up by the TRANSPORTATION HEALTH & SAFETY ASSOCIATION of ONTARIO. This Association goes to properties to help them set up a committee to determine the preventability of accidents. **Their motto is, "All accidents are preventable," and if you have an accident, you are at fault.**

The Region has changed the paperwork to Accidents Only, and erased Incidents. If you make a mistake and scuff a mirror, you are guilty, and you will lose your Safe Driving Award. The Region's way of making better drivers is to find them guilty. Then their names and previous driving history are used to determine guilt and punishment. You could have a Supervisor ride with you and give you pointers, you could be sent for retraining, sent for counselling, or, if all else fails, you could even be fired!

Your Union does not like this, or agree with this ideology. Therefore, the Union has decided to boycott all Accident Committee meetings, and grieve every case where the driver is found guilty. **Your Union is in negotiations with the Region to have this committee returned to sanity.** Until then, just drive to the road and weather conditions, do not speed, **do not take any chances, and be safe.**

The Last AAS?

John A. McDonald
Editor

Am I the last of my breed? Will I be the last Acting Assistant Supervisor to complete their two-year term? April 17, 2008, marks the completion of my two-year term in the role of a part-time supervisor.

If our Union gets its way during the next round of negotiations at the end of this year, this position will be eliminated from our Collective Agreement. Our negotiating team made a concerted effort during this past round of negotiations to eliminate Acting Assistant Supervisors, but it ended up falling off the table, and I was able to finish my term. But am I the last Union member to enjoy this great privilege?

One of the privileges we experience as Union members is that we belong to a democratic Union. This means that from the membership-level up, we are a member-driven Union. We are not controlled by a dictator-style executive. Rather, our negotiating team takes its direction from the membership. This, in turn, obligates the membership to be actively involved in Union affairs, and to openly debate important issues.

I feel it is time this membership opened the debate about whether or not it is in our best interest to hold onto the position of Acting Assistant Supervisor as it currently stands in our contract.



When I applied for the Acting Assistant role back in the winter of 2006, I had three goals in mind:

I wanted to position

myself to be able to become a full-time supervisor at some point in the future.

I wanted to demonstrate to our brothers and sisters that this is a Union position like any other, and it did not conflict with my other Union roles.

I wanted to experience the employee empowerment that comes from the many educational opportunities that are involved in this new role. In particular, it was the soft skills known as the *human relations* field that I wanted to develop.

Since I've not yet been successful in becoming a full-time supervisor, I've had to accept the possibility that I may never be able to earn the white shirt. In fact, I now caution anyone looking to take on this role that there is only about a 20% or less chance that they will end up being promoted permanently. If you take on this role with no other goal than to become a full-

(See AAS on page 11)

(AAS from page 10)

time supervisor, you may well become a bitter person if this is not realized.

For myself, I greatly enjoy my driving job, and would be quite happy to stay where I am. But don't get me wrong. I'll continue to apply for the full-time position.

I feel I've been successful in my second goal of making the role of Acting Assistant more attractive to my brothers and sisters. Many now see it as an opportunity to protect their fellow drivers and the Union in general. They become *the friendly face in the little white van!*

During my two years, there have been many times when someone has come in a few minutes late for work, and because I was on duty, there was no consequence.

I've been able to talk to people with difficulties instead of getting into a confrontational situation. I continue to identify with my brothers and sisters by parking in the same parking lot, and eating in the same lunch room. I've consciously monitored my attitude to avoid getting the "big head." You'd be surprised how hard it is not to react when some of your colleagues start giving you a hard time just because you're supervising that day.

The bottom line here is that every Acting Assistant will go back to driving within two years, as the contract stipulates. **This is the main safeguard our Union has**

put into place which prevents Acting Assistants from developing an attitude. They know that if they start power tripping on their fellow drivers, it won't be long before they are back to driving themselves.

I've never considered myself anything other than a driver who just happens to be driving a *shorter bus* once in a while! It is a myth that we cross the line into management while we are in this role. In fact, we never change our Union affiliation at any time, but remain Union members throughout the two-year term.

At the same time, we should acknowledge that there has been the odd Acting Assistant who has developed an attitude in the past. However, this is the beauty of the two-year trial period. It can bring to light those individuals who would be completely unsuitable in a full-time role, as they have let the power go to their head. In these situations, the solution is simple: deal with the individual situations as they come up.

Further, our contract has clear protection in that it does not allow Acting Assistants to become engaged in any disciplinary matters.

My third goal was personal growth. In general, throughout the history of our local, it has been shown that Acting Assistant Supervisors have been a great asset to this Union. During the last contract negotiations in 2005, Brad Quirk, who was an Acting Assistant at the time, assisted in

negotiations to great effect. Another example is Doug Staines, who served in several Union roles. Doug is now highly effective in management. David Driver has also served us very well as Chief Steward, while at the same time being an Acting Assistant Supervisor.

The education and insight into how the other side works has, in my opinion, been invaluable to this local.

Personally, I've used my education to:

- Assist this local with the development of the newsletter you are now reading.

- I've also developed our membership list to a greater degree of accuracy than has ever been achieved previously. I've been able to access payroll records on our Union membership directly through the Intranet.

- I've also used my newly acquired leadership skills to recruit many new writers for the Informer.

- Have recruited many new committee members for this local;

- Served as a strike captain and posted all information on our website;
- and have generally assisted our executive.

If you look around, you will notice that the same people who are involved as Acting Assistant Supervisors tend to be more involved in Union matters than

(AAS Continued on page 12)

(AAS Continued from page 11) the general membership.

Let's not forget the financial benefits to our membership of having Acting Assistant Supervisors in our Collective Agreement. First of all, the Acting Assistant Supervisors receive 7.5% extra pay while on duty. Secondly, someone has to cover their shift, which creates more work for our membership.

The alternative is to force management to hire several spare full-time supervisors, which would take that work away from us. They would end up working all the overtime without the operators getting a shot at it. Thirdly, the company pays all of our tuition during these two years for any management course we wish to take. I have personally collected well over \$1000 in tuition refunds. Plus, there are the numerous Regional courses which I have been sent to, all on company time. The knowledge acquired is now mine, and can never be taken away.

So let's encourage a healthy debate amongst our membership. **Let's encourage our leadership to keep the role of Acting Assistant Supervisors within the Collective Agreement.** We'd be cutting off our nose to spite our face if we lost this position.

I'm here to tell you from personal experience that everyone should try this role at some point during their career. **For me, it's been a tremendous period of personal growth, which I hope will benefit me for a lifetime.**

City's Lack of Caring in Cambridge Is Disturbing

Clive O'Neill

This winter, as in previous winters, we have been experiencing a serious ongoing



problem with the lack of snow removal from our bus stops and peripheral terminals

in Cambridge. The City of Cambridge Public Works Department is responsible for clearing snow from these areas, but they have not been doing their job at all. Particularly bad problem areas include the main bus stop at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, all of the stops along Franklin Blvd., and all of the stops at the Hespeler Terminal.

Despite repeated calls from our supervisors to Public Works, absolutely nothing at all was done about these problems. We were completely ignored by the City. These bus stops were hopelessly buried in deep snow, which, since it had been left untouched for so long, had crusted over with thick ice, thus making it extremely slippery, and extremely dangerous. This was especially true for senior citizens, disabled people, and young

mothers with strollers.

We knew that GRT management had done everything they could do to try to get the City to do their job and clear the stops. I personally watched many people slip and lose their footing, only to slide down the giant snow banks, and nearly wind up under the bus. This was totally unacceptable. Nobody should ever be placed in that kind of danger because of the City of Cambridge's lack of caring.

Our bus stops had not been cleared of snow by the City in nearly three months. Three months!! I had had enough, and knew that the time had come to take action on this completely unacceptable situation. I took some photos of the snow at the Hespeler Terminal and emailed them, along with a message, to The Record, asking them to publish an article in their paper. They responded immediately with a reply message the same day, and a phone call from a reporter the following day. I explained to the reporter, Brent Davis, the whole situation, and he said that he would definitely be doing a story on it for the following day's paper. Sure enough, there it was in the next day's paper (Friday, March 14).

On Thursday, the previous day, City Public Works employees showed up at the Hespeler Terminal with snow-clearing machines, and proceeded to clear all of the snow out of the bus stop areas in the entire terminal. They did a superb job of it, too,

(See Snow on page 13)

(**Snow** from page 12)
something they don't usually do. I can only think that someone got wind of what I was doing with The Record and tipped them off at the City, saying that they'd better get over to the Hespeler Terminal quickly and get it cleaned up. Luckily, our intrepid reporter managed to photograph them in action, proving that they were only getting around to it then, nearly three months after the first major snowfall!

In the newspaper article, our not-so-esteemed mayor, Doug Craig, is quoted as saying, "It's not as if it has gone unnoticed." Well, if that is true, then how is it that almost every bus stop in the city went untouched for nearly three months?

Also in the article, Mayor Craig revealed that bus stops and peripheral terminals are at the bottom of the City's priority list.

Why is this? Don't they realize the crucial importance of keeping bus stops and peripheral terminals clear of snow? Has it never occurred to them that they will be slapped with lawsuits if someone gets injured or, heaven forbid, killed? Do they not care at all? Obviously not.

It's time we got together with the City and had some serious dialogue with them about this situation before something very serious happens. We need to get them to **commit** to much better winter maintenance of

our bus stops and peripheral terminals. Sure, they are Transit's property, but we are not in the snow-clearing business. We have no equipment for such things. The City does, and it is their responsibility.

If more of us speak up about this, if the Union members throw their support behind it, and I know we will, then we will have a very strong voice, one the City will have to listen to and heed.

I would like to go on record here and say some things that need to be said. It has come to my attention that our management was somewhat displeased about the newspaper article. They feel that my doing that was a statement against them and their efforts at getting the City to clear the snow. They also likely see it as an embarrassment because

they have tried and tried for months to get the City to clear the snow, without success, and yet I got the City to do it in one day.

I want them to know, in no uncertain terms, that my sole objective with the newspaper article was to get the snow cleared from our stops, and my sole concern was the safety and well-being of our customers. It was absolutely NOT intended as a statement against management, and it was absolutely NOT intended to embarrass management. I simply wanted the City to fulfill their responsibility and clear the snow from the bus stops and peripheral terminals. Our frustration was directed at The Corporation of the City of Cambridge, NOT at Grand River Transit management.

(Snow Continued on page 14)



A huge snow bank and a hopelessly snowed-in bench at the Hespeler Terminal in Cambridge.

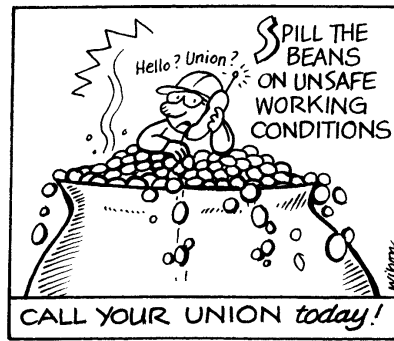
Photo taken on Wed., March 12, 2008.

(Snow Continued from page 13)
Our management team, including our supervisors, has done an exemplary job in their many attempts at getting some action out of the City. Every time we have spoken to a supervisor about the situation, they have been very understanding, and have placed immediate phone calls to the City in attempts at getting the problem solved. They have tried and tried and tried. They really have. I know upper management have been working hard at it, too, and this includes people like Jean Bourdon, Ron Pearson, and Eric Gillespie. I thank you for your tremendous efforts to get this problem resolved, and I apologize profusely if my actions caused you any undue concern or embarrassment. I was not trying to embarrass you; I was only trying to get our stops cleared out and protect the safety of our customers. I was only trying to help you, that is all.

When I asked our Union Local Chairperson, Harold Klooster, how he felt about the situation, he said that the City of Cambridge is "...guilty of dereliction of duty. They're being totally irresponsible about it."

I then asked him how he felt about the newspaper article, and he responded with, "It was definitely needed. You did the right thing."

I mentioned to him that I was quoted in the article as saying, "We are not blaming our management for it." He immediately said, "No, definitely not. It's not their fault."



Harold, I thank you for your support. It is hugely appreciated.

I also spoke with our Vice-President, Ted Dewsbury, on Friday, March 21, and he said, "I think it's great. It was definitely needed. Somebody had to do something to get the City to do their jobs."

When I mentioned to him about my saying that we are not blaming management, he said, "No, we're not, not at all. It's the City's fault, not management's." He also reminded me that it is policy at GRT and The Region that employees are not allowed to publicly criticize their employer. Then he added, "But you didn't do that. You were criticizing the City of Cambridge, not GRT or The Region."

Thank you, Ted, for your support. It is tremendous of you, and I truly appreciate it.

Let's all work together as a team, Union and management together, with a common goal: getting the City to do what they are responsible for doing – clear out our bus stops and peripheral terminals in a timely and thorough manner, and protect our customers' safety and well-being.

Together we can make a difference.

T G I ... SD

Steve Huebner

Coordinator of the Ski-a-thon

Thank God It's a Snow Day!

February 26th turned out to be a great day for skiing at Blue Mountain Ski Resort. It may have been the last snow day we appreciated, but without snow, you can't have a Ski-a-thon. As a matter of fact, without skiers, we could not have a charity Ski-a-thon. **Thank you** to all 24 people who came out. It was a pleasure seeing some new faces and making some new friends.

A special thanks to all of the sponsors who generously supported our Skiing For Dreams to raise money for the Children's Wish Foundation. The count so far is **\$4,690.28**. This can be added to the amounts raised by the Fall Golf Tournament and the Custom Framed Photo Auction. Together we are making a difference!

There were three major prizes offered for all who came to Collingwood. Congratulations to Alex Schubert (Bernie's son) who won the \$200 Best Buy gift certificate, Dave Scheifele who won the Sport Check \$100 gift certificate, and Sharon Robinson who won the his/hers wrist watches.

Now would be a good time to thank the Ski-a-thon committee as well. Thanks to Klaus Biemann, Jacky Eng, Marlene McCracken, and Lori Miller. Special thanks to those who also

(See Snow Day on page 15)



(**Snow Day** from page 14) helped collect prizes: Paul Eckmier, Dave Meyer, and Bernie Schubert.

I have to correct my last report which stated we would travel in a donated school bus. Instead, we had several people drive their own vehicles to transport the skiers up north. I think friendships grow with a personal touch like that.

Next year, you may want to join us!

Pink on White

Story submitted by Kerry McGrath

Well, once again, the GRT “Skiing for Dreams” Ski-a-thon has come and gone. I sure had a lot of fun. Oh, not in the way you’re thinking with taking part in the trip, going up to Collingwood, or the actual skiing itself, but in doing a little fundraising at the expense of one of our favourite drivers, Dave Meyers.

You see, back in January, a little, bright pink, and I mean BRIGHT PINK hat was found in the CST lunchroom. I’m sure comments

were made, but every time Dave was there, someone would say he should wear it at the Ski-a-thon. He said he would wear it if he got \$100 in a donation.

I thought about it, and determined, “I’m going to hold him to that!”

I took it upon myself to raise the money and make him eat those words. With some help, and a lot of fun, I managed to get the donation. On the day before the trip up to Blue Mountain Ski Resort, I handed Dave “Pinky” Meyers, a donation of \$111. He was presented with the hat the following day by Jacky, who had modified it just a little bit to make it more personal for him. She put on the hat, “Pinky Meyer” and “Hot Dog.” I know it went over with a bang! We couldn’t have picked a finer person to do this to. Dave was a great sport, and it went to a great cause.

I talked with Dave a couple of days later, and he told me the hat made more money. At the ski resort, people were still giving him donations. He even chipped in, and to top it off, he told everyone he would wear the hat during supper at Pizza Hut if he got \$50. Apparently there was no hesitation to fill that order. He got it. In

total, Dave said he collected about \$224 and change. Not a bad haul for a little pink hat!

I’d like to thank all the drivers (and the odd outsiders, namely spouses), supervisors, and security at CST for taking part and giving a little towards this “quest” as I called it. It made the goal of what the Children’s Wish Foundation needs to achieve that much easier to attain. And, especially, a big *thank you* to Dave for letting us do this to him, even at the cost of his own dignity.



Dave Meyers

Just a footnote: I checked on Google Earth mid-Tuesday morning, and zoomed in on Blue Mountain. Guess what? I found a PINK SPECK going down what looked like the beginners’ slope! I know that was our Dave “hot-dogging” and showing off!

Now, if I can only get my hands on a pair of pink mittens with a string attaching them and boot laces with pink fuzzy balls at the end, I’ll be ready for next year!

Union Works

Monica Menner

The importance of planning and organizing goes a long way in achieving solidarity. I'd like to thank our negotiating team: Rick Lonergan, Ted Dewsbury, Harold Klooster, Franz Peters, Phil Mayberry, Zeke Baker, and our national representative, Bill Gibson. It's not an easy job determining the wants and needs of over 500 members. They spent endless hours researching facts and figures, preparing strategies and arguments, calculating increases, and narrowing issues. It's a fine line they walk to make sure our interests and well-being are looked after at contract time. To this end, they were successful. Thank you!

Keep your eyes on your paystubs. Retroactive pay should be received by this pay or the next. I can't stress enough the importance of keeping track of your hours. Make sure you submit a time sheet for any extra hours worked. Not only do you deserve to be paid for extra work, but this will allow Scheduling to see how tight our run times really are. With the new spring sign-up coming, check your itineraries, and make sure that your start and finish times match up with any notes at the bottom of the itinerary. There have been instances of pay discrepancies of up to 30 minutes per shift. Also, we will be receiving an additional 50-cent pay increase as of April 1, 2008.

There have been numerous issues

with suspension in the seats of the 2700-series buses. Work refusals have been initiated, and members have been injured. There is a red button on the left-hand bottom side of the seat that allows an Operator to stiffen or loosen the suspension. When Operators set the height of the seat at its highest position, movement is restricted, so leave a cushion. In the meantime, until this issue is resolved, don't be afraid to change off a 2700-series bus if it is causing discomfort.

Paul Lalonde is no longer our WSIB representative. Please call Rick Lonergan for direction on any WSIB issues (519) 574-9170. If you are injured at work, it is important for you to speak with a Union representative before going through the process of a compensation claim. Members have been denied claims due to paperwork being filled out improperly, and missing Defect Sheets. If you are injured due to a defective bus, it is imperative that you fill out a Defect Sheet and document the bus number.

Collision reports: Should you have an incident, please cross out Accident/Collision at the top of the form, and write in Incident. If you are approached by a Supervisor requesting you fill out a report based on a claim by a third party, and you have no knowledge of the incident, contact your Union representative. If you are a victim of a verbal or physical assault (this includes being spit at) make sure you fill out an Incident Report. Don't forget to submit your time sheet.

Whispered Down the Lane

Nicole J. Poirier

Have you ever sat around a campfire and played "Whispered down the lane"? What starts as one statement quickly becomes misconstrued as the statement is whispered to another. By the end, it's a completely different statement. And that's how rumours start!



It is extremely difficult to prevent rumours, because even if they aren't true, there is no way to stop someone from forming an *opinion*.

Here's an example. You're having a coffee with a co-worker of the opposite sex. *You are automatically sleeping with them!* Or, you are seen with the supervisor, and *automatically you're getting a warning!* Such is the perception of others, based on past experience, or their own opinion. They perceive the immediate situation, form an opinion, and quickly go tell their friends. Hence rumour has begun!

I believe that the only sure-fire method to end workplace rumours is to discourage all employees from gossiping. This is quite difficult, since everyone loves to hear a good story about someone they know, and the juicier the better. Unless rumours are told to someone who can stop this "Whisper down the lane" trend, it continues to spread.

Let it start with you! **END THE RUMOURS!** They are a pain we can all do without.

Remember... "United we stand, divided we fall." Support your Union.