

Two Wheel Express”... Building With Success!!

By Paul Eckmire

Editor's Note: Tyson Wagler, (Paul's nephew) will be competing as a junior member of Team Canada at the World Mountain Bike Championships in Italy, June 17th to the 22th, 2008.



Paul Wagler racing in Ontario Cup at Mansfield Picture Paul Eckmire

“Two Wheel Express”?!... What’s that,...some kind of motorcycle transit? No, it’s the name of an increasingly successful mountain bike racing team, co-founded and managed by GRT bus operator, Paul Wagler.

Back in 2002, Paul and his brother Duane, with

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To Straddle, or Not to Straddle

By Phil Whitehead

That is the transit question.
Whether ‘tis nobler to splay betwixt the lanes
Or to stay wholly within one’s own.”

Hamlet
Carriage Driver #178
Avon River Transit

If Hamlet had had access to the same level of brain trust at ART that operators have at GRT – both in management and the union – then he could have received counsel to his perplexing question. The photos below illustrate the infor-



Proper Lane Position. Picture by Phil Whitehead.

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Policy Statement

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The Informer

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various family members, began recreational cycling together, riding in the Multiple Sclerosis bike tours and raising money for this charity. Soon, they acquired mountain bikes with suspension systems and entered some novice-level mountain bike races. What a great way for a bus driver to get in shape, enjoy the excitement of competition, and develop a wonderful family pursuit!

What started small and casual has developed into a “sport”, “expert”, and “elite” mountain bike racing team. Consisting of 14 members, “Two Wheel Express” is now a team to watch for, as some of their riders are getting podium finishes and winning races at the Ontario Cup Series of Mountain Bike Races held throughout Ontario. The “Wagler” name is becoming well known in the Ontario mountain bike racing scene!

Besides co-managing the team, which is comprised of their sons, daughter, nephews and friends racing in various age and ranking categories, both Paul and Duane participate as determined competitors too! Thanks to some excellent race results last year, and Paul’s nephew, Tyson, who was invited to be on Team Ontario, their team was successful in landing some major sponsorship money this year from Dairy Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Ontario, Devinci Bicycles, and East Side Cycle. Along with other sponsors, they were able to get their new cycling trailer custom wrapped with various logos including “Milk”, “Two Wheel Express”, and “Get Cracking”; and acquire new team jerseys, shorts, gloves and socks.

While Paul is steadily improving, finishing as high as 11th in the male 40 to 44 age “sport” division, his daughter, Samantha, is also getting closer to podium finishes in her category. Nephew Tyson finished 2nd and 1st respectively in the “junior expert” division at Mansfield and Albion Hills, the first 2 races of the Ontario Cup Series this year. Another nephew, Preston, finished 2nd in both races in his “cadet expert” division. Paul’s son, Jamie, and nephew, Simon, have advanced this year from “expert” to the “elite” division and will work hard to try to improve and

move up thru the rankings.

The team is certainly building with success. Because of their excellent results earlier this season, both Tyson and Preston Wagler were invited to race for Team Ontario at two Canada Cup races in Quebec at Bromont and Mont Tremblant in May. At Bromont, Tyson and Preston both finished 4th in their respective categories, and Tyson repeated with a 4th at Tremblant. In both races, Tyson was the best Team Ontario rider!

Besides racing in the Ontario Cup Series, and other provincial events, “Two Wheel Express” enters the Thursday night races held throughout the summer at Chicopee Ski Hill. This event provides an opportunity for spectators to see them in action locally. If you have ever participated in, or observed, a mountain bike race, it is truly a thrilling and colorful spectacle with all the competitors decked out in their bright racing jerseys and cheered on by fans and fellow team members. At most races, Paul and Duane’s wives and non-riding family members attend to cheer and support their team’s cyclists. Racing and encouraging together is one of the ways the Waglers build family unity, spirited fun, and common purpose.

Congratulations to Paul and Duane as they participate with, encourage, motivate, and manage their team. The effort and investment in time that they give to their family members and friends that comprise “Two Wheel Express” is commendable and worth all the sweat, spills cuts, and bruises!...May they achieve more success as the racing season progresses!

**Pictures of Wagler
racing team
pages 12 & 13**

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**Straddle not Suggested
Pic. By Phil Whitehead.**

mation gained from discussions with these individuals.

Narrow Lanes

An operator has two objectives when straddling lanes: to avoid conflicts with parked vehicles on the right and to avoid creating opportunities for moving vehicles to pass on the left.

In the scenario pictured above – on King St. in Uptown Waterloo - the operator fulfills the first objective, but not the second. As a result, the aggressive driver following the GRT bus in the compact VW Golf could get become impatient and attempt to pass to the left of the bus. He could notice that the bus appears to be leaving sufficient room for passing, and then decide to make a run for it. If a collision occurred under these circumstances, two questions inevitably would arise: (1) Would the GRT operator be charged under the *Highway Traffic Act*? and, (2) Would GRT management deem the collision to

have been preventable?

The answers to these questions would depend upon two more questions: (1) Was a sufficient width of lane available to the car driver to pass when he commenced the passing maneuvers? and, (2) Was the bus straddling the lanes continuously (i.e., not making a lane change)?

If a sufficient width of lane was available for the car to pass, and a collision then occurred, the possibility would exist for the operator to be charged with making an unsafe lane change. Whether or not a court would register a conviction would be another matter. Also, the collision could be deemed “preventable”, especially if the bus was



**Straddle Suggested
Pic. By Phil Whitehead.**

not travelling straight, but changing lanes. The collision review committee would read the WRPS report before making a decision.

When an operator straddles the lane markings so as to block both lanes, and leaves no room for passing on the left, then the aforementioned impatient car driver has no option except to wait. Even so, if the driver attempts to pass, and a collision occurs, the possibility could still exist for the bus operator to be charged. But it would be

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more the case that the actions of the car driver likely would be charged. While the bus would be out of a lane for reasons of necessity, the car would be out of a lane for reasons of convenience, inexperience or impatience.

To minimize the potential for a collision, the recommendation is to place the approximate middle of the bus over the lane marking, and thereby to occupy partially both lanes equally. An operator should be prepared to explain to WRPS why the bus could not be kept safely within one lane.

When a bus was hit recently by a car entering King St., at almost the location pictured, the WRPS officer asked the operator if the bus had been changing lanes. The operator replied that the bus had been straddling the lanes continuously prior to the collision. The operator explained also that other GRT operators do the same for “reasons of safety”. The car driver was then charged, and later, the collision was ruled to have been “non-preventable.”

How this Problem Got Started

When King St. was being reconfigured in the late 80s, the union for Kitchener Transit warned – but to no avail - that the proposed lanes would be too narrow and that collisions would be inevitable. As a result, and during the ensuing twenty years, plenty of buses were scraped and mirrors shattered, as predicted. To compensate for the narrow lanes, bus operators initiated the practice of straddling the lanes. Eventually, management came to concur with the practice, but on the condition that both lanes be blocked.

The legality of this maneuver has always been subject to question. To reduce the possibility of a bus operator being charged, GRT management has explained to WRPS that straddling is the preferred option because a bus measures 10’2” mirror tip to mirror tip, while the lanes are 10’0” at points.

Changing Lanes



**Westmount Road reduced to one and a half lanes due to snow bank encroaching roadway
Pic . Phil Whitehead.**

The deteriorating frequency of snow removal from roads throughout the region has made lane-straddling mandatory in some circumstances. In the instance pictured above, on Westmount Rd., the operator (whose identity is not known) made the same mistake that this author makes all too often on the same stretch of road, by allowing the bus to drift across the lane marking without signaling left.

Instead, a deliberate decision must be made to commence the straddling of the lanes in a manner that fulfills all of the requisites to a safe lane change. This includes: (1) checking for traffic in the left lane, (2) checking for vehicles coming out of adjoining roadways or driveways, and, (3) signaling, and then straddling both lanes equally.

Roundabouts

The *Highway Traffic Act* currently says nothing about roundabouts. Revision to the *HTA* has

(Continued on page 6)

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 been proposed to permit large vehicles to straddle the lanes within a two lane roundabout.

If an operator is concerned that a bus cannot be kept entirely within its lane throughout its travel



**One of our many roundabouts
 Pic. by Phil Whitehead.**

in a roundabout, then an operator can consider straddling both lanes before entering (as pictured), and to continue straddling both lanes throughout the maneuver.

Crossing Centre Lines

The law requires that a vehicle be “driven as may be practicable entirely within a single lane” (*HTA*, 154.1a). It is not known with certainty how this law applies, first, to encroaching upon the centre line of narrow St. Gregorys St., and, second, to crossing of the centre line of busy St. Andrews St.

But it is known with some reliability that the width of the vehicle, width of the lanes, nature of the driving and the configuration of the road are



**Bus must straddle oncoming lanes to turn at St Gregorys street.
 Pic. by Phil whitehead.**

taken into account when interpreting this law.

Also, it is known by precedent that the questions of legality and necessity are addressed almost exclusively within the context of the investigation of a collision.

Therefore, in order to avoid learning exactly what the police, courts and collision review committee think about these specific lane-crossing maneuvers, operators of the 62 St. Andrews sometimes wait more than five minutes before determining that appropriate traffic conditions exist for making a right turn.

By doing so, they sacrifice adherence to the schedule and the timely transportation of customers – two important objectives around here - and leave Hamlet’s perennial question without a definitive answer for yet another day.

Lighten up

By Susan McIntyre (SueZQ)

Recently there's been a lot talk (or shall I say heated discussions?) about interpersonal conduct or misconduct in the workplace. And thus I've been wondering, what the heck? All of this squabbling amongst ourselves is rather disturbing. I know that it sounds crazy to say, "Why can't we all just get along?" There has been much discussion about why this is, and what can be done about it. I have several different thoughts about this, and from what I can see, it all boils down to stress. Our different levels of stress, our different tolerances of stress, and all the things that stress us out all contribute to the problem. I am no stranger to stress, and have been known to get *stressed out!* I'd like to take a moment to share with you some of my thoughts.

We all have normal stuff rattling around in our brains regarding our everyday life as we do our best to carry out our jobs. We all have things like:

"I must remember to pay that bill."
 "Hope I have enough money to pay that bill."
 "Remember to take little Sally to dance and Johnny to hockey"
 "Oh rats! I forgot about hockey!" "Who can I get to take Johnny to hockey?"
 "Did I remember to take the garbage out?"
 "What am I going to make for supper?"
 "Oh dang it! I need to get groceries before I make supper!" and so on....

All of our everyday stuff gets jammed up with our workday stuff, and before we know it, we suddenly lose the self-control that we need to be levelheaded, professional people.

You know it's getting bad when you find yourself nattering away to the windshield of your bus as you drive

down the road! I'm sure many of us do this. It is a way to work out things bothering us, or to just blow off steam. This practice may be OK in general, but I tell you, we need to be very careful when and where we do this. You could find yourself in my shoes!

One day I was driving along, and didn't even realize that I was mumbling to myself about some darn thing I was preoccupied with. Heaven only knows what I was thinking about. Could have been any number of things, any one of the kids had something on the go or had me worried, Christmas was coming, it was snowing AGAIN, it was insanely busy, I was running late, and I was in desperate need of a washroom break, a smoke, and/or a coffee! Pick one, two or a few. You get the idea. I don't even know what I actually said or even how loud I was. But here I was, talking away to myself *out loud*, and the darn bell goes off! I was so startled! I thought I was alone! How embarrassing! Now I'm silently cursing myself, hoping the person didn't hear me. But I tell you, my face burned three shades of red when this sweet old lady came up to the front door to exit the bus, smiled at me as she reached over to pat my hands, and said, "Having a rough day, sweetie? I'll say a little prayer for you. Hope your day gets better." Tongue-tied and flabbergasted, all I could do was reply quietly, "Thank you." Those of you who are laughing right now, you understand.



Summer Sign up/Lieu Day

Rick Lonergan

President CAW 4304

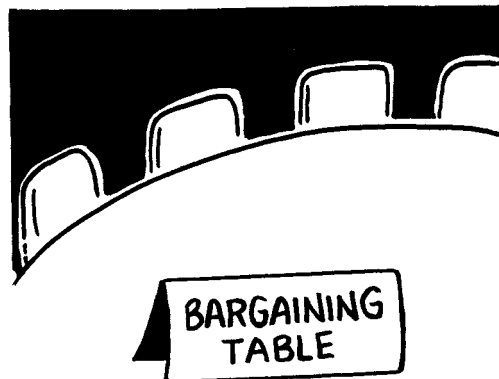
A union basically has three rights: The right to negotiate, the right to withdraw services if an agreement can't be reached, and the right to uphold the collective agreement once an agreement is reached. Both parties agree to the terms of the collective agreement once it has been signed. In 2007 this local processed over 70 grievances and are on pace to have the same amount this year. Grievances arise from interpretation and administration of the contract that was negotiated. You approved this contract by a vote (ratification) and agreed to have it determine your working conditions for its term. Given the sheer volume of grievances, it would appear that the only party expected to abide by this contract is you, as grievances are caused by the employer's non compliance.

There was confusion regarding lieu days being given for the Civic Holiday in August. Cambridge and Mobility Plus members received a lieu day if their day off fell on the holiday Monday. Instructions came from management to have members choose the pay or a lieu day for these departments. When we asked why Kitchener was not receiving the same, the response was that it's not a stat holiday. Our response was that our contract states that a lieu day or extra pay will be given for all of the holidays. Obviously some members of management felt the same.

The union waited for a definite response from Tuesday until noon on Wednesday. When we still had not heard from the employer, we told them that there was no point in continuing the sign up until this was resolved. Members sign specific

rotations to receive this lieu day, and it is easier to redo half of a sign up than the whole sign up. At this point, the Assistant Director got involved and offered the solution to take the lieu days away from Cambridge and Mobility to make everything equal. Obviously this was still a violation of our contract, and we could then submit a grievance. Our solution was to give everyone the same lieu day as the contract states and we could grieve and arbitrate later if he wanted. This would have achieved the same result, without creating chaos for our members.

Unfortunately, the Assistant Director did not agree. After listening to more of his rhetoric, we told him that we would not continue with the sign up until this issue was resolved appropriately. His response was that management would continue the sign up without the union. This created another contract violation and another grievance. Instead of being accountable and correcting their mistake, they chose to create inequity and bedlam in our workplace.



© P. H. R. E. S.

Dealing with an employer that simply does what they want, causes a union to react with the only means they have: The grievance procedure, and some sort of action. **Management forced you to sign without representation** and management caused this situation to escalate into a mountain that should never have developed.

With the notion that the union left them "high and dry", some members went out of their way to make it easy for management to conduct the sign up by filling in holiday spares for the sign up committee. This action was detrimental to the whole membership, and damaged our attempts to force a resolution. All this did was to assist the employer in a violation of your contract. The executive had decided not to assist the employer to violate your contract. Members should not fill in for an elected position without permission from this executive, as we have our own

constitution to live by.

You have an employer that blames injured workers for their injuries and treats most of them heartlessly because they got hurt working here. They try to have their claims overturned after they have been approved by WSIB. They take away your overtime by utilizing part time in ways other than stated in the contract. They target certain workers for exercising their health and safety rights. They fuel poisonous work environments in every area of the workplace. They have Human Rights complaints against them and there will be more to follow.

Think about what goes on around you. The employer doesn't follow the contract because they feel they don't have to, and that they don't have to be accountable like you are. **It's our job to make management manage.** If you want to take a giant step backward, simply give management the opportunity to act without opposition.



Informer Facts

By *John Mac Kay*

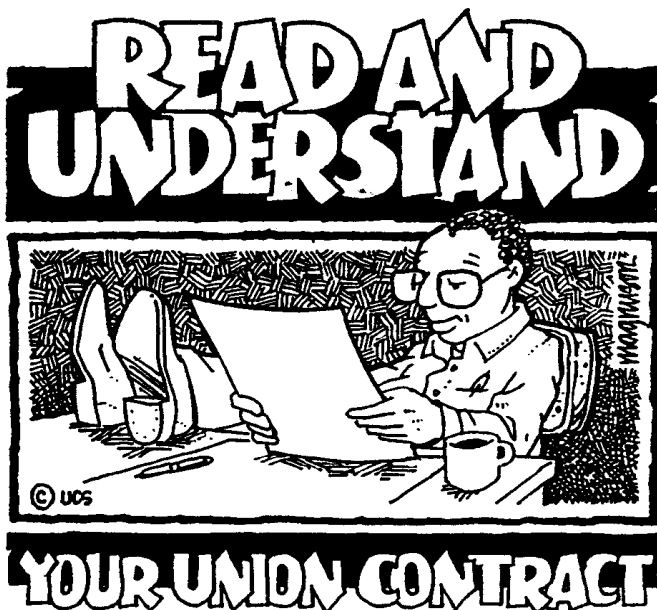
We print 400 copies of the Informer every edition, 370 go out the CAW4304 members, 30 copies are sent to our retirees breakfast club this keeps them in the news. Our costs per paper are approximately 55 cents per paper. We ask you if you are reading the paper and are finished do not through it out please recycle it to another driver by placing it back on the counters either in Cambridge or Kitchener. We sometimes run out of copies and find that papers are thrown in the garbage. We are looking for racks to place the papers on so as you put them back or pick them up. Please help in this way you can always know where to go and get a copy.

Thank You

Thank You

Thank you for voting me onto the operations committee. I believe that any of the candidates would have been a great choice for this position. There has been two meetings already, and some inquiries from drivers have been solved. I am available 24 hours a day, either by cell phone (519)591-7389, or by e-mail at r.gd.2@hotmail.com. I will be checking e-mails every daily. Any questions, concerns, or comments are welcomed. I will take every concern back to the committee for answers. Laz (north operations) and Zeke (south operations) have been helpful in showing me how things really work. Thanks to both of you. Transit is finally starting to make some improvements that have made this job a little less complicated. We need to continue this trend into our negotiations at the end of this year. Thank you for the support and I am looking forward to working for you

Russ Davis Operator #189



Every Stress

By Susan Mc Intyre (SueZQ)

Worse than that, ever find yourself tapping your fingers impatiently while waiting for a passenger to hurry up in some fashion? You find yourself silently telling them off with things running through your head like, “Will YOU sit down!?” “The ticket would go in if you took your darn MITTENS OFF!” “Oh, come on!! Must you shuffle all the way to the back of the bus? Don’t you realize that the FRONT seats are for seniors?” “Will you find the darn thing?!” “Good grief! If you’d move that stroller out of the way, people could get past!” To top it all off, someone just told me off because I am late in a snowstorm and some kid has been screaming at the top of his/her lungs all the way around the route! I’m pretty sure that we’ve all had days like this!

You know it’s getting bad when you catch yourself gripping the steering wheel so hard that you might just pull the wretched thing out of the column!

Ever catch yourself yelling in your head or right out loud at that “STUPID DRIVER!?” “What are YOU doing!?” “Are you NEW to the driving thing?” “Will you GET out of MY way!” “Can’t you see the BUS!?” “Where is a police officer when I need one?” Even as I type this, I am laughing out loud at my own self, knowing that, as wrong as it is, I have done this. For those of you who are laughing right now, you know exactly what I’m talking about, and probably have a few of your own stories, too.

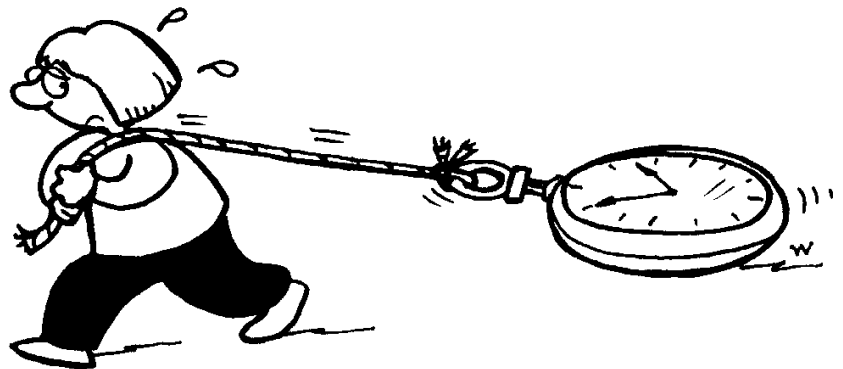
Most of the time we are able to handle the day-to-day frustrations and pressures that “come with the job.” Sometimes, though, we get so wrapped up in our

own problems and stresses that we forget we are in the public eye and ear. We sometimes forget ourselves and forget who is watching and listening to us. We forget that we are supposed to be professionals. The next thing we know, we are snapping at every little thing, including each other. Little normal things become large and intolerable.

We need to try to take time and think before we react. Picking up that radio and saying the first snarky thing that enters our heads about that last comment we just heard isn’t necessarily the best way to handle the situation. That kind of stuff is disrespectful and unprofessional. All we are doing is stressing some one else out because we are stressed. It’s not going to fix anything. In fact, all it really does is add more fuel to the fire and gives us something else to natter to the windshields about. And we all know where that can lead! We need to realize that we all have STRESSED OUT days.

Kind hearted joking around is something we are all capable of and it is a wonderful way to ease up tensions. But try and remember that it’s not funny if someone gets hurt and/or offended in the process. For me, laughter has always been an outlet for stress release. I decided to share some of my stresses with you, in hopes that you may relate, laugh, and learn to lighten up. We are all out here suffering some of the same kinds of everyday stress, and we really should be helping . . . not hurting . . . each other.

Pass on smiles, for they are free and contagious.



Services and the Right to Strike

By Klaus Biemann

The recent labour action by TTC and the subsequent reactions by Queen's Park legislating transit workers back to their jobs under threat of severe personal penalty, has revived once again the contentious issue of what services should be declared an **essential service**, which if implemented, would remove employees right to strike.

The media has been rife with speculation – will the Ontario Government (Queen's Park) enact blanket legislation declaring **all** transit organizations within the province an essential service, or will it apply only to TTC? And if the McQuinty government goes ahead with such legislation and applies it to TTC, will this embolden other regional governments and municipalities to take similar actions against its' transit workers?

TTC's huge size, and with it, the very large number of people that daily rely on it's services, alone shouldn't be reason to hold it hostage to such threats. Similarly, other transit organizations in Ontario should not be threatened with the imposition of essential service by **any** level of government, be it municipal, regional (GRT), or provincial. Politics must be kept out of the workplace.

We all understand that any transit strike would create serious problems for those that solely rely on it. But to remove a transit employee's right to strike, indeed that of any unionized employee's right to strike, would jeopardize the rights of the workplace to a fair, negotiated collective agreement and would ultimately undermine workplace democracy.

As Buzz Hargrove, national president of CAW, stated in a recent editorial: "Workplace democracy and the right to negotiate a fair collective agreement are two fundamental principles that guide industrial relations in Canada – principles that our union, and most Canadians, stand by proudly. These principles have been enshrined in Canadian labour law and very much exemplify core Canadian values of fairness, respect and

solidarity."

Workplace exceptions to this would be organizations that are charged with the protection of human life and the enforcement of law and order within our communities. Two primary examples would be the fire department and police. Our municipalities and regional governments have therefore rendered these as essential services. In return, if contract negotiations reach an impasse, an arbitrator is called in to rule on any part of a contract in which there is disagreement between the parties. In almost all cases where a job is declared an essential service, the arbitrator rules in favour of the employee, often resulting in a favourable contract.

Another exception would be the use of services under unusual circumstances such as the utilization of transit to assist in disaster relief, be it natural or manmade. Under such cases transit vehicles would be essential for mass transport of displaced people, and to serve as a temporary safe haven. Transit services could therefore be deemed an essential service.

In summary, government should never interfere in a workplace's right to negotiate a fair collective agreement by imposing the spectre of essential service, with the exception of organizations that are responsible for public safety and the maintenance of law and order, or in times of national or regional emergency.



Two Wheel Express Building With Success



*Brothers Paul & Duane Wagler, co-managers of Two Wheel Express in front of their trailer at Mansfield Ont.
By Paul Eckmier.*

Racers lining up to starting gate for next heat.

Pic. By Paul Eckmire



Picture Essay of Mansfield Races April 27 2008



Rosa Heibein, Roger Bowman, Ruth Ann Bownam, John Heibein Taking in the action and supporting the Wagler team at Mansfield. Pic. By Paul Eckmire.



Paul Wagler at Mansfield

April 27/08



Osteoporosis

By Cheryl White

Osteoporosis it is a silent bone-depleting disease. According to current estimates approximately 1.4 million Canadians are affected by this disease. With 2 million more at risk. Approximately 1 in 4 women and 1 in 8 men by the age of 50 are affected by this condition.

In its early stages, osteoporosis tends to be a silent condition it has symptoms. However, because it greatly increases a person's risk of painful fractures, especially in the hip, spine, and wrist, osteoporosis can have a devastating effect on peoples lives.

Building strong bones during childhood and adolescence can help to prevent this disease later in life.

Osteoporosis is a result of an imbalance between bone resorption and bone formation

Your bones are living growing tissue. They are constantly remodelling themselves, this process occurs in two stages.

The first stage is called bone resorption. Cells called osteoclasts become active on the bone surface and dissolve bone tissue, creating a cavity. The second stage is bone formation. Other cells called osteoblasts, fill the cavity with new bone.

Here are five steps, which together can optimize bone health and prevent osteoporosis.

1. Get the daily recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

Use Canada's Guidelines for healthy eating Choose lower fat dairy products, leaner meats and foods prepared with little or no fat.

2. Regular weight – bearing and muscle- strengthening exercises.

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight by enjoying physical activity and healthy eating. Any activity where the weight of the body is supported by the legs.

Having strong muscles is beneficial for bone density, posture and balance.

3. Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol

Smoking can result in poor nutrition and a thinner body type which plays a role in calcium absorption

Have less then 3 caffeinated beverages each day
Drink calcium rich beverages such a milk more often.

Keep your daily alcohol consumption to no more than one drink per day.

4. Talk to your Health care provider about bone Health

5. Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate

Specialized tests called Bone Mineral Density (BMD) tests can measure bone density in various sites of the body .

A BMD test can tell if a person has low bone density before a fracture occurs, and if a persons bones are losing bone density or staying the same when the test is repeated. It will help a person and their health care provider decide what or if treatment is needed.

Certain People are more likely to develop osteoporosis than others depending on the risk factors. These factors include

Being Female
Older age
Family history of osteoporosis
Certain ethnicities are more at risk than others
Low estrogen levels in women
Low levels of testosterone and estrogen in men



Women can lose up to 20% of their bone mass in the first five to seven years after menopause, making them fore susceptible to osteoporosis. While osteoporosis is often thought as an older persons disease it can happen at any age.

(Continued on page 15)

Few people realize that they have the disease, until their bone health is affected to the point that bones maybe at a risk for breaking more easily. Understanding the risk factors for developing osteoporosis, talking to your Health care provider, and making some important lifestyle changes, may help individuals maintain good bone health and avoid potential injuries to the bones in the future.

Crockett Update

By Warren Barlow

Editors note. Back in the April 2007 edition we ran a story about Crockett & Warren. It was about the work involved in training a dog for the National Service Dogs. It was Crockett's Story, this is the update on that story.



Hi,
I thought some of you might be interested in Crockett's progress, and some good news/bad news.

Crockett was so close! He was to graduate and be paired with a family in two weeks time, but after the final evaluation yesterday, it was determined that Crockett and one other dog, are still a little too easily distracted around

balls, and Frisbees, etc. to continue to be a service dog for children with autism. I make the sports analogy that it's like being the final cut on the all-star team. Crockett started in the advanced training program with a group of 14 dogs, of which only 6 dogs will now make it as Service Dogs. We brought him home from National Service Dogs last night. He looked a little sheepish on the drive home, almost as if he knew.....

My wife, Joyce, and I are still a little shocked that he didn't make it through, as we had already been invited to his graduation ceremony, where we would meet his new family. At the same time, we are also delighted to have our friend home with us, as our pet. Unfortunately, for National Service Dogs, it means one family with a child with autism that had expected to meet Crockett in two weeks time and who have been on the waiting list for 2 years already, will have to wait another six months for their service dog.

Joyce and I will still be involved with National Service Dogs, but with two dogs at home now, we don't plan to be puppy-raisers again for the foreseeable future. We will likely still be involved in weekend sitting the advanced dogs, and vacation relief/emergency sitting, so you may still see me with a dog at work occasionally.

So, now that Crockett is our pet, you'll have to stop by in Cambridge to see him. We are also taking up any offers, for looking after him when we are on vacation! May 23-26 anyone???

Thanks to all of you for your help with Crockett, and your interest in how he's doing.

Investing in Yourself

Continuing Education

John A. McDonald, South Editor

What would you say to a Union brother/sister who paid for their prescriptions or eye glasses out of their own pocket, without submitting a claim to Sunlife? You would likely tell them, in a rather urgent tone, that these things are covered by our benefits. In fact, they are part of our pay package! And yet many of our members still don't take advantage of the **Educational Benefit Package** that is freely available to each and every one of us. Regional Policy, Sec. II, Policy No. 5, states: "The Region supports employees in their professional and career development through financial assistance in the form of tuition refund for job and career-related courses."

To start with, the Region funds "**job-related**" courses. There are two types of job-related courses. First, there are the "**Learning Opportunities**" courses offered directly by the Region. The sheer scope and variety of the courses that our Region offers its employees sets the standard for other municipal governments. **These courses are completely paid for**, including tuition, mileage, parking and text books, as well as your shift being covered. If the course is mandatory and only offered on your day off, you will be paid time-and-a-half (see Letter of Understanding No. 3). Regional courses are usually taught at Regional headquarters at 150 Frederick Street, Kitchener. Often they bring in professional instructors from the private sector to deliver these courses. **Register early**, as there is usually stiff competition for spots in these courses and they often fill quickly.

Conventional Transit can send six (6) north operators and two (2) south operators per day to these types of courses. To register for any of the Learning Opportunities courses, please contact the appropriate Assistant Manager in



your area:

Jim Ioannou, Assistant Manager

Serge Ianni, Assistant Manager

Jean Bourdon, Assistant Manager

Randy Steckly, Manager, Transit Fleet

Dave Andrews, Assistant Manager, Specialized Services



See the course list is at the end of this article.

Then there is the **Tuition Refund Job-Related** type of courses. Tuition, registration, administration fees and examination fees for these courses **are refunded 100% on a first-come-first-serve basis**, up to your department's budget limits. Text books, time off and travel expenses are not covered. However, management will often try to assist you in arranging time off if needed, and if possible. The idea here is to help you help yourself. These courses can be from any Community College or University, in-class or online, providing it is specifically related to your job. During my term as Acting Assistant Supervisor, I took seven of these types of courses in the Ontario Management Development Program (OMDP).

For the Tuition Refund courses, you will need pre-approval, which you apply for by submitting an HR20, called the "Application for Regional Sponsorship of an Educational Course." All of these forms can be downloaded from the Union website at caw4304.ca/hr or from the Regional portal. You then hand it in to your Assistant Manager. If approved, it will be passed on to HR. Personally; I much prefer the in-class studies as you can get a lot of feedback from your instructor. Most classes run from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm.

My suggestion is that, if you are really interested in taking a particular course, just go ahead and register at the college and hope that the Region will come through with the refund. If not, you pay for it out of your own pocket, and still come away with a better education. The prevailing sen-

timent at the Region is that any education, regardless of the subject matter, is of benefit to the Region, as education yields more capable and happier employees.

One other benefit, that not many people have discovered, is that anyone with a student card can get 50% or more off the price of almost any software. There are many people who will take a week-end course for \$80 or so and buy a bunch of software at the same time, and **save hundreds of dollars**. If you don't find what you want in the College bookstore, then check out studica.com. As long as you are not using it commercially, educational software is the way to go. Your Union has purchased much of its software this way.

Next, there is the **Career-Related Course** category. The Region defines this as "Courses not directly related to the existing job but are part of the employee's anticipated career plan within the Corporation." Specifically, "Tuition fees, including registration, administration, and examination fees are **subsidized at the rate of 50%**, up to a maximum of \$400 per course, following proof of successful course completion. Other expenses such as travel, course materials, books and other supplies are not covered. **This fund will be accessed on a first-come-first-serve basis** throughout the year until the fund has been depleted." The Region has a \$24,000 budget for these refunds, and they are encouraged to spend all of this money to the greatest effect. Our Region understands that this money yields huge returns to the Region. They do everything in their power to get all employees to **invest in themselves**.

So why am I telling you about all of these educational opportunities in the first place?

It is my hope that better education for our membership will lead to improved interpersonal skills between Union members. Ask any of our Union stewards and they will tell you that half of their job is resolving interpersonal conflicts between Union members. **The better we get to**



know ourselves, the better we get along with others.

Of the several Learning Opportunities courses



Cindy Weiler with John A. at the Dealing with Challenging Customers Course

I've taken, I'd personally recommend the **Working with Others (Myers-Briggs)** course, which is offered next on **Oct. 15**. This course is taught by Cindy Weiler. As demand has been huge, there will likely be a second course date announced soon. This course allows you to discover your own personality type. Myers-Briggs specifies 16 different categories, and it nailed me right on. I turned out to be an ENFP personality type. I was amazed at how it explained so many things about me that I had never fully understood before.

It is my hope that over the next few years, the majority of us will take at least the Myers-Briggs course and then share what we learn at work. During my current OMDP course at Conestoga College in Teambuilding and Leadership, I listened to a presentation by a manager of Marks Supply, Mr. Chris Faulds (cfaulds@markssupply.net), on the subject of personality studies. He said that his company, Marks Supply, uses a personality profiling system similar to Myers-Briggs to improve interpersonal skills within their company. Once an employee completes the testing, their results are put on a small plaque that sits on their desk to let everyone who enters their office know what type of personality they are dealing with. Along with this, they are each given a binder with a Personality Analy-

sis page for each employee. It sets out how best to communicate and work with each individual. As more people take the course, the binder is updated.

So before they head down the hall to meet with a particular person, they can check out that person's personality style in the binder, and then adjust their approach accordingly. Perhaps they are meeting with a sales manager and should emphasize the big picture, avoiding the small details. Or perhaps they are heading to Purchasing and that person's profile says that they need to have every single step fully explained when making a request. Can you imagine what an improvement this type of training would make around here? For the sake of you and your Union, let's sign up for these courses and learn how to work better together.

AFTER ALL, WHAT WOULD YOU RATHER DO, DRIVE A BUS ALL YEAR, OR GET PAID TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW?

Learning Opportunities 2008 at the Region:

Working with Others (Myers-Briggs) - October 15

Project Management - November 3

Communication and Conflict* - November 19

How to Apply for a Job at the Region - Sept. 17 (12 - 1) AHQ, Oct. 29 (2 - 3) OPS, Dec. 4 (12 - 1) PHSS

Learning to Lead (3-day program) - Oct. 21, 28 & Nov. 4

Taking Control of Your Career (2 half days) - October 16 & 29 (8:30 - 12)

Presentation Skills (2-day program) - September 17 & 18

Freedom of Information & Privacy Training Awareness and Orientation - October 15 (9 - 10:30)

Writing Basics - September 25

Making A Difference – Abilities Awareness - August 14, October 7, December 9

(9 - 1) PHSS

Making A Difference – Customer Service Basics - September 16, December 3

(9 - 1) AHQ

Making A Difference Dealing With Challenging Customers* – September 30, December 17 (9 - 1)

Enhance Your Leadership Effectiveness Through EQ! - September 11

Pull Conversations - October 21

Developing Your Resilience to Change - October 29

(Wellness Program) The Balancing Act - October 23

(Health & Safety) Emergency First Aid - September 19, November 18, December 10

(Health & Safety) Standard First Aid - October 6/7

Computer Skills

Word - Intermediate - October 30

Word - Advanced - November 5

Access - Introduction - July 23

Access - Intermediate - June 11

Excel - Introduction - October 8

Excel - Intermediate - August 21

Excel - Advanced - November 19

PowerPoint - June 19, November 13

PowerPoint - Advanced - August 20

* This course has a prerequisite. Please see course description for full details.

Conestoga College Continuing Education:

<http://www.conestogac.on.ca/ce/>

University of Waterloo Continuing Education

<http://ce.uwaterloo.ca/>

What is Domestic Violence doing in the Workplace?

By Dot Halley
Women's Advocate



Supporters rally for employees of Anselma House and Haven House after management locks them out .

Pic. By Dot Halley

Domestic violence in the workplace is a broad concept that encompasses behaviour that occurs both on and off the work-site. Domestic violence in the workplace includes all the behaviour that interferes with an individual's capability to safely and securely perform their duties at work. It includes all kinds of conduct, ranging from harassing or repeated telephone calls or faxes at work to unarmed and armed "Show-ups" to homicide. Domestic violence in the workplace also includes conduct which occurs outside the workplace, such as sleep deprivation and physical injuries (breaking fingers etc.) that has an impact on an individual's ability to perform their job. A batterer's interference in the workplace or work success of his target is one of the many means by which the batterer displays and exercises his attempts to exert power and control. Domestic violence in the workplace policies are another essential part of the workplace anti-violence strategy. Heightened awareness in the workplace can tear down perceived barriers between employers and employees and bring them together to deal with the issue. Victims take a risk when they seek assistance, but the risks only multiply, especially in the workplace when victims don't have the option to seek assistance.

Domestic violence in the workplace is a broad concept that encompasses behaviour that occurs both on and off the work-site. Domestic violence in the workplace includes all the behaviour that interferes with an individual's capability to safely and securely perform their duties at work. It includes all kinds of conduct, ranging from harassing or repeated telephone calls or faxes at work to unarmed and armed "Show-ups" to

Environmental Issues

By Laszlo Bori

A quick question. Who are the dumbest and stupidest people???? Answer, the environmentalists and the idiots in the Government. Environmental groups around the World have taken aim at the incandescent light bulb. Truly a great invention; far better than, whale oil, kerosene, animal fat, wood, pine tar, coal, natural gas and the wax candle, that humans have used for light.

Now, with the invention of the compact fluorescent light bulb (C.F.L.) and its imagined benefits, incandescent bulbs will no longer be legal in our homes.

On April 25, 2007 the Canadian Government (alias idiots), announced that the incandescent light bulbs will be phased out by 2012. Australia will phase out the bulbs by 2010, the U.S. by 2016, and Europe by 2020.

Why the sudden rush to force everyone in the World to use compact fluorescent bulbs???, because according to the Environmentalists and the



report by the Earth Policy Institute, we will cut down on carbon emissions and more than 270 coal fired power plants would be closed.

This movement was started in America by the, Natural Resources Defense Council, The Save Energy Alliance, The American Coalition for an Energy Efficient Economy, the Earth Day Net-

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work and Philips Lighting. Greenpeace urged the Government of India to ban incandescent light bulbs because the 250 million bulbs sold annually used too much electricity.

WHY? Because, of Money, greed, profit and a total disregard for human safety. An incandescent bulb sells for 50 cents, while a new C.F.L. sells for \$2 to \$4, yet it is cheaper to manufacture the Fluorescent bulb; because it only has to be filled with gas and **MERCURY**. No wires, no springs, no filaments. Each bulb has a warning on it; this bulb contains **MERCURY** and must be disposed of in a method approved by State and Federal environmental laws. When you are forcing people to buy about 10 billion light bulbs World wide; can you imagine the profit? or the impact to health when we are forced to use them???

Mercury will contaminate the soil because people will not bother to dispose of these bulbs properly. If a bulb is broken in your house it could cost up to \$2,000 to decontaminate the room. Worse, if you vacuum up the mess the Mercury could contaminate your whole house and the cost of clean up could go over \$10,000. Your house hold insurance does not cover decontamination of your house. These bulbs can't be used in all applications, and if used wrongly, the heat from the bulb could burn down your house. The really bad side to this is that the Government will not inform the public about the health hazard of these bulbs and people will treat them like regular bulbs, not understanding why they are sick or dying of contaminates. How much will this cost our already failing health care system???

I urge you to phone, or write to your local politicians and tell them that Canada is supposed to be a democratic Country, and we, the people should have a choice.



grtunion.com

Have you ever forgotten the web address of your Union website? You have just accepted some overtime, and are in a panic to get the itinerary printed out. Why are those numbers so hard to remember? Is it 4403 or 4304?

We now have an alternative website:

grtunion.com

When you type this into your address bar, you will be **connected to the existing website** at caw4304.ca.

Isn't that simpler?

John A. McDonald
Webmaster

New Look

By John Mac Kay

We have changed the format of the Informer. From three columns to two makes it easier for the reader to concentrate on the story; are just a few of the things. Graphics, pictures and more cartoons to break up reader boredom. We hope you like the new look. Send us your comments.

Video reporter wanted :The one of many ideals that John and I picked up at the Calm conference was the number of other unions across Canada that where using video reports on their web sites.

Short 30 or 60 second video shots of news items concerning the various labour issues that the union wanted to get out to the rank and file immediately. A message from the president of the union regarding a labour issue such as the recent problem with the summer sign up as an example.

If you are interested, give John A. McDonald or me a call.

CALM Conference 2008 Report

The Informer is about to get an upgrade! Your co-editors have just returned from a two-day conference and seminar conducted by the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) May 23 and 24 at the Delta Chelsea Hotel in downtown Toronto. John MacKay and John A. McDonald attended four workshops each, as well as the CALM Awards Banquet. We were able to have The Informer critiqued by various professional editors, and would like to share with you the valuable insights gained:

One suggestion was that our front page was too “busy.” By using more “white space,” the reader is drawn to the writing on the page. We also had some input from operator Clive O’Neal who suggested that we go to a two-column layout rather than the current one of three columns. This was borne out at the conference. Clive also redesigned the Informer logo. Please congratulate Clive for this.

The first workshop I attended was entitled “Writing to Convince.” I learned some steps on how to present an argument that follows the logical thinking process of the average reader, and



helps draw them to your position.

Mr. MacKay took the courses, News letter make-over.

We noticed that two-thirds of the attendees were Union officers whose daily, full-time job was preparing communications for the CAW. They compile their newsletters over a one-to-two-month period. Most of their writing in the newsletter was based on interviews and rough copy sent to them by the Union executive.

In the interest of quality, we have decided to produce The Informer over a 10-day period. This will enable us to have it proof read by several different people before it goes to print. The hard copy should appear in the lunchrooms roughly two weeks after the submission deadline.

The afternoon class was entitled “Web Design Do’s and Don’ts.” I was able to pick up several tips on how to make a web site more searchable. Watch for changes to the web site’s navigation. Our instructor was the full-time webmaster for CUPE National.

Mr. MacKay took the Getting your story covered course.

One of the most eye-opening experiences was the evening Awards Banquet. The presenters were professional journalists who commented on why they were given the various awards. Some of these Union newsletters were very professional! One trend we noticed was the increased use of audio and video clips on the web site in order to help spread the Union message. We hope to soon include video interviews on our website. Unfortunately, due to deadline restrictions, the Informer was not submitted this year to be considered for an award.

My first class Saturday morning was Writing for the Web. Our instructor made a passionate argument for having up-to-the-minute information published first on the web and then in print. Traditionally, print is adapted to the web, and information flow is delayed substantially. While the media industry has traditionally used print, over the past 10 years the Internet has evolved to the point where, by rights, it should be the first mode of publication.

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We also studied in detail how to condense our writing so that the typical Internet viewer, who only scans a page for 10 seconds, can find what they need in a hurry.

Mr. MacKay took the Do it yourself graphics course.

The last session in the afternoon was entitled "Edit Without Losing Friends." Both of us attended this course, which was presented by the long-time CUPE publisher. She had just been elected as the new CALM president. This course was mainly a lecture in the proper use of English. We learned how to rewrite press releases that were too lengthy. (This was Mr. Mac Kay's favourite.)

In conclusion, I would like to sincerely **thank the membership** of CAW Local 4304 for sending your newsletter editors to this amazing conference. We hope that you will see a great return on your investment in the form of a much improved newsletter during the coming year.

Fraternally yours,

John A. McDonald and John MacKay
Co-Editors of The Informer



New Drivers Committee

By Dan Pope

Since February 2006 up to this printing 2008 we have added 104 new drivers. What's my point, well I have several but Ill put them out as friendly reminders.

- Use of Radios
- For transit use only
- Traffic jams
- Break downs
- 911 calls

If we refrain from planning trips ,we have internet, phone, and maps.

We should not hold another bus that's the schedulers job, not the drivers.

Some days its embarrassing listening to the radio, I understand why we have some drivers that have their radios off. But it is for our safety to keep them on.

- Remember GRT channel is for driver
- C1 Cambridge supervisors
- K1 KW supervisors
- D1 dispatch& express

To ask for information on GRT information please then ask your question do not hesitate.

- Asking for the time; on GRT ask for time check.
- Remember what you say or do out reflects on all; GRT drivers.
- most of all have fun .

Good Driving Habits

- be courteous to other driver& operators.
- tight turns or blind corners stay back from the corner and wait for the lights e g: Charles and Ont.
- when approaching another bus trying to make a left turn hold back let the bus make its turn, this may allow the operator to make their connection.
- when coming to a set of lights on a four lane road and are going straight and a bus is turning right keep to the left so the bus can make its turn.
- when there is a bus stop past the intersection or lights and another bus is behind you pull up past

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the bus stop, so the other bus can get through the lights.

- these things will help you make connections .
- we are all doing the same thing, trying to get the passenger to point A to point B quickly and safety.
- be on time for your shift and be prepared.
- remember, what you say or reflects on all GRT drivers, don't make us look bad.
- most of all again have some fun , it is what you make of it.

New Drivers List

2006 Feb.

Erica Beck KW	Wendy Dundas Camb.
Corina Godson KW	
Monique Johnston KW	Brian Schaefer KW
Amy Strauss Camb.	Clay Blakey KW
Lema Callender KW	Martin Bootsman KW
Dianne Mc Donald KW	Michael Capa KW
Josh Smith KW	Patrick Barker Camb.
Solomon H- Michael Camb.	Heidi Dawson KW
Susan Keels KW	Peter Perry KW
John Wilson	
Lonny Simon KW	

KW	Susan Stengel KW
Lauren Derbyshire KW	Susan Purchase Canb.
Janet St. Laurent Camb.	John Armitage KW
Barbara Buti KW	Thomas Henderson KW
Arend Kortzen KW	Natalie Oosterhuis KW
Ron Penner KW	Sandeep Sharma KW

2007

Eugene Bello	Richard Fondacaro
Petra Hanzelkova	Tim Jewell
Kevin Pawletzki	Brian Stewart
Danny Vieira	Ricky Sandhu
Ron Griffin	Dave Weaver
Geraldo Little	Norma Switzer
Carey Stone	Kristopher Lederman
Lindsay Blanchard	Moirra Ainsworth
Catherane Dittrich	Bernard Breton
Dennis Gray	Peter Hill
Johannes Vander Westhuren	

Millicent Davis

Paul Rogalsky

Sandy Doughty
David Lachance
Belinda Riggan
Basri Lamallari
Mica Beatty
Brenda Cole
Lydia Sigmund

Karen Gouch
Karen Phelan
Valentin Lesenciuc
Mark Gaisor
Richard Kaufman
Kevin Wood

2008

Johannes Bartlett	
Tesfaye Bekele	Brian Edwards
Rod Gregson	Holly Koellner
Heather Larsen	Tiffany Leffler
Lisa Main	Andrew Hainsworth
Ian Clark	Nicholas Tomlin
William Chisholm	Warren Schnurr
David Fournier	Jeanette Bottineau
Martinella Nauman	Michel Keller
Nandor Kosza	Erica Arpa
Jason Beck	Shari- Ann Becking
Catherine Brodie	Jim Brubacher

I apologize if any of your names are misspelled it was a long list.



Union Works



By Monica Menner

- The Human Rights Commission is asking all transit systems to announce all bus stops and is expecting us to comply by the end of this year. As our INT system will not be in place until 2010, management is looking at implementing a 'manual system'. Although our Executive supports accommodation of all people with special needs, they feel that calling all stops is unnecessary and will produce additional stress upon our overburdened drivers. Our executive will be aggressively voicing their concerns to the Human Rights Commission as well as our Employer.
- Kitchener and Cambridge will be conducting a scheduling survey in order to better represent the membership. Surveys are included in this copy of the Informer. We are asking the membership to fill these surveys out and deposit them in the ballot box located in the Driver's room at the Kitchener and/or Cambridge garage. Ballot boxes will be available for depositing surveys until June 18th. If you have any questions contact a scheduling committee member.
- Darlene Wilson is our new Health and Safety representative. Congratulations Darlene! If you have any health and safety concerns make sure you see Darlene or fill out a Health and Safety Concern Form. They are located in a binder on top of the itinerary shelf at the garage and next to the computer at the downtown terminal.
- Our employers' WSIB claims coordinator and return to work coordinator are callously working

at having all WSIB claims overturned, including those that have already been approved. It is imperative that those members initiating a claim contact Paul Mennie (519)744-5659 or Rick Lonergan (519)574-9170 to ensure proper processing. Don't attempt this alone!

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

Based on reported incidents, Management feels that violence in our workplace is relatively small. It cannot be stressed enough: **If you are a victim of a verbal or physical assault** (this includes being spit at) **make sure you fill out an incident report.** We need these reports to portray a more accurate picture.

Picked up in Passing

By John Mac Kay

I would like to thank operations committee member Russ Davis for his efforts to reinstate the "Go Rangers Go" message back on the fleet in time for the Memorial Cup. Also Cheryl Mc Gill for her help in handling all the @ mails back and forth.

Why it took so long to get the obvious answer will remain a mystery.

Hello, and welcome back to Jennet Aubin. We're glad to see her back, at work, in the evenings, say hello when you come in at the end of your shift.

Stories for the fall Informer, "Init"(GPS) what happened? Scheduling; Where's the Buck Stop? Unsafe bus stops still, And more.

Rumour mill has it that the managers at Highland Hills mall are considering opening the transit lane to the public. it seems pressure from people who cannot leave the mall fast enough want to use the transit exit.

Conestoga Mall management and regional staff have agreed to go ahead and build washroom and lunchroom facilities for GRT drivers. Details to follow.