

## Trust Your Instincts



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## Rumours



Pg. 8



## Olympic Adventure

Pg. 20

## If You Believe It

By Gino Chirila

The ancient Greeks had a remarkable level of civilization a thousand years B.C. They brought us a huge step ahead in the evolution of civilized societies. They invented politics as a science, namely, The First Superior School of Politics, which was founded by Plato. They produced the first model of democracy (500 B.C.). They gave us the science of mathematics (Pythagoras, Euclid). They gave us the science of physics (Archimedes), and they gave us astrology, history, medicine. The ancient Greeks gave us a lot of culture. They gave us the Olympic Games, too (City of Olympia 776 B.C.). They gave us the “Art of War” also.



The ancient Greeks had more than one god. They had sixteen gods. They believed their gods lived in a “house of gods” on Mount Olympus in Greece. The Greeks were known as being the religious people of the ancient world. They had religious customs, and made sacrifices to earn the love of their gods.

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## Unity – It’s Not Just a Word

By Monica Menner, Chief Steward North

“In 1879, ten sausage factories operated in Cincinnati, Ohio. Average working hours per day were from 3 a.m. to 9 p.m., and 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays



to allow married men time with their families. No extra pay was given for Sunday, and if the men worked less than 18 hours per day, or did not work on Sunday, lost time was deducted from their pay. As there were no hourly wages, men were paid by the following weekly rate: Foremen - \$12/week; Others - \$6 to \$9/week; and some - less than \$6. Occasionally they would be forced to work 22 hours without breaks or extra pay, except for a glass of beer or cider.

As a result of these conditions, the Butchers’ Benevolent Association organized a protective union. Their goal was to regulate work hours and eliminate Sunday work. Their resolution was to have 12-hour workdays with 15 minutes for breakfast, for lunch and for supper, plus extra pay for all time over 12 hours, and any necessary work performed on Sundays. This resolution was presented to the employers with a threat to stop

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**Comments to**  
[caw4304@rogers.com](mailto:caw4304@rogers.com)  
(cell 519-241-5623)

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# Bereavements

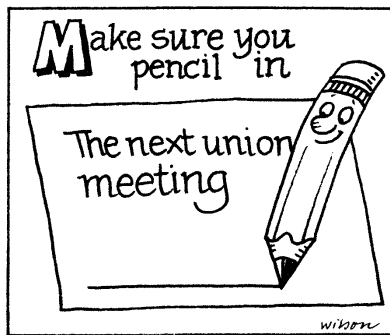
- Fezal, Ally
- Nagle, Gerald
- Parkes, Sarah
- Sharma, Sandeep
- Widmeyer, Allan
- Woods, Jessica
- Young, Beverley



# Fruit Baskets

*(Some donations to charity in lieu)*

- Barker, Patrick
- Bori, Laszlo
- Cooper, Wayne
- Ethridge, Joann
- Gray, Dennis
- Isolehto, Maarit
- Meyer, David
- Pawletski, Kevin
- Sharma, Sandeep
- Wilcox, Stephen



**Wed. Apr. 21, 2010  
11 a.m. & 8 p.m.**

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# Contributors

- Biemann, Klaus
- Chirila, Gino
- Eckmier, Paul
- Germann, Ricki
- Hayes, Carl
- Hogue, Mike
- Jewell, Tim
- McDonald, John A.
- McIntyre, Sue
- Menner, Monica
- Mennie, Paul
- Pope, Dan
- Vandincten, Sjean

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**Policy Statement**

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

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We, the GRT people, are from all over the world. We are so different, and everyone has their own beliefs. We are not talking about our religion here. That is a private matter. However, all GRT drivers have their “work gods.” They live in a “house of gods” somewhere in downtown Kitchener. We even avoid talking about them. “It is *bad luck* to do so.”

Somebody told me once, very seriously:

*Gino, don't even think about writing about them. The gods, they make you disappear. No, they will not kill you, but they will make you disappear from the GRT world forever. And it doesn't matter where you go after that, they will follow you.*

Ok, I got it! They are “our gods,” and we don't say anything about them.

Once in a while, every two or three years, we send an executive team to the “house of gods” to obtain a contract for the next year (or two, or three), and we are waiting for them at *Stress-burg Garage*. Everything that is good in this job comes from the “house of gods.” It is beautiful. We really love and respect our “gods.” Everything that is bad in our job comes from the streets, and from our Mother GRT. Actually, we get something good from our Mother GRT--the weekly pay stub! Sorry, Mother!

The idea for this article came to my mind on January 2010 in the lunchroom at *Stress-burg*

*Garage*. It is very interesting what you see and what you hear there. At that time, we were talking about how nicely the funeral of John Klein was conducted, and how Mother GRT completed all the matters with John's family. John Klein was our brother, and an exceptional person. He never said anything wrong about another driver. We should follow his example. *As long as we can do that, his spirit will be forever with us.*

On that day, I asked a Union representative a question:

*Q. Did John Klein take his vacation for 2009?*

*A. Yes, Gino, yes (I was told). They gave the money to his wife. Everything is OK.*

The Union rep did not understand the meaning of my question. It was, in fact, a rhetorical question. I knew the answer to it. However, I repeated the question:

*Q. Did John Klein get his vacation for 2009?*

*A. He was working until his last day of being alive in December.*

*Q. No, he just signed up to take his vacation the next year, I concluded.*

*A. Gino, this was set up a long time ago. We cannot change it.*

*Q. Why?*

*A. Gino, don't even think about it. It's impossible.*

*Q. Why? I've never seen anywhere else in Canada or elsewhere in the world people working full-time but getting a vacation delayed by a whole year, each year.*

*A. Gino, they like to give you the last vacation when you go into retirement.*

*Q. I've never been on retirement before, but as far as I know, the retirement is a permanent vacation. I have been working since 1976, and my “mortgage says” I have to work another 21 years. That is good. I like what I do, but if I have to be competitive in this job for the next 21 years, then I should be qualified for the Guinness Book!! But just in case, you know, I am not enthusiastic about leaving my last vacation to my family. Vacation is for the people who are working, when they are working. How much*

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*“time” you can buy in “this world” with a decent rest on a vacation, nobody knows! We cannot speculate on this, but what we know for sure is that it does ‘buy’ us some “time.”*

Let’s see how we got into this situation in the first place.

On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, two different companies, Kitchener Transit and Cambridge Transit, became unified under the “umbrella” of the Region of Waterloo, and thus GRT was born. And all this was accomplished without stopping the traffic for a single day. Wow! I can imagine how many problems they had to resolve, and how many unexpected problems have come up over time on top of that. This is indeed a process that has taken months and years to complete. And as far as “I can smell,” it is not completed yet. Perhaps the reason is because all these years they have been continually running out of drivers!! It was *easy* to keep the “old system” that was implemented at Kitchener Transit during the last century with the one-year delay on the vacation.

### **But what about now?**

As far as I can see (and trust me, I can see very well far away; I only need prescription glasses for reading), it may be the right time and the right place to return to normality.

We are in a recession. The entire economy is slowing down. They have to hire new drivers. Also, there are a lot of drivers who will be going into retirement within the next few years. By the time this whole process is over, we are going to be OK with the number of drivers. It cannot be done in months or in a year. It will take at least three or more years to be completed.

If “our gods” will agree with a tentative contract that includes “normality regarding the vacation issue,” we cannot start this program with the senior drivers. A senior driver who is two or three years away from retirement may not need or not want this program.



My recommendation is that we should start the process with the *new* drivers. It will be easier with them, and as more drivers are hired, the process can continue with the senior drivers.

The new drivers are the most vulnerable. Some of them are in temp for more than one year. When they are taking full-time drivers, they have to wait again. I remember how I started full-time on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June, and I got my first two weeks of vacation after 24 months. That is true! I had four days of vacation the year before. But, what does four days of vacation mean? A super-long weekend, not a vacation.

At the same meeting, another Union representative, talking about new drivers, told me:

*We give them two weeks of vacation,  
Gino! Two weeks, you know. Before they  
didn't have it!*

You must be kidding me, brother. Every employer in the world is looking to give the minimum vacation time possible to his employees. We didn't *give* the new drivers anything! Two weeks of vacation is the *minimum* that the drivers can get in Ontario for a full-time position. All employers offer to their full-time employees two weeks of vacation per year. These employees don't need a union to get two weeks of vacation. The biggest *difference* is that they get the vacation in the same year, not a year later.

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Another Union rep on my left side told me at the same meeting:

*Gino, don't think about that. It's a lot of money. They will never agree to that.*

It was the first time that I had heard something like that. If management needs more money, all they have to do is to ask for help! (We may have ideas that could save big money, if that is the issue.)

It is the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We have a really difficult job to perform. It happens to all the transit systems in Canada: drivers come and go. There is a high level of turnover. Some come back later on. If I look around, and try to remember, the same problems happen everywhere in the world in public transportation.

However, only here in Canada, we have three more issues on top of all that which make our job more difficult. Maybe I will come back to those in another article.

And something else, which I do not understand, is that we, the GRT drivers (and the mechanics) are the only people in the Region who are *punished* by having our vacation delayed by a year. Does somebody hate us? No. Impossible! Who could hate such hardworking people? Somebody must have been too busy during the last few years, and they just *forgot* about us. How about the guys at Mobility Plus?

They have the same uniforms.  
The same hourly wages as us.  
They have the same benefits as us.



They drive vans, transporting less people in an entire year than we do in a single busy day.

They are not verbally abused in public like we are.

They are not assaulted like we are.

They don't have our problems.

**And yet Mobility Plus take their vacations in the same year!**

*Is that fair?*

Are you sure we are in the same Union??

Even if our executive members want to include the vacation issue on the next contract, they cannot do it. They will not have unanimity. The Mobility Plus executive member will say there's "nothing in it" for them.

*My question to you, brothers, here and now is:*

Do you believe it is our right to ask in the new contract for a reasonable "program to go back to normality" with our vacations?

If you do, let your executive member know in time. We have ways of communicating with "our gods." And we have to give them time to think about it. Maybe they don't even want to listen.

But what if they do want to? We are not asking them for a favour.

**We are asking for our rights.**

*May the gods love you, brothers! You deserve it every single working day!*

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work if the employers refused to sign an agreement. Within three days, all employers had signed.



The effects of the change were immediate, and wages increased as a result of working over 12 hours. The men were warned about working longer than 12 hours in a day, but because of the extra pay, they continued to do so. The custom of working beyond 12 hours grew so much that the extra pay was refused by the employers. A few “struck,” but the rest continued working, and the extra pay disappeared.

Although many of the employers renounced the agreement they had signed, the workers made excuses: It’s not as bad as before. Machinery makes the work easier. Only one of the machines is dangerous. Conditions are a sign of the times. The economy makes it difficult, etc. As a result, only four factories were left working under the agreement<sup>1</sup>.”

**You may be asking yourself, “How does this affect our workplace?”**

Daily. On many levels.

For example: If Jane Doe skips a washroom break and speeds to make connections because she doesn’t want to inconvenience her passengers or be subjected to verbal abuse or customer complaints, then schedulers have no reason to improve time allowances or schedule for washroom breaks. John Doe will then have to skip the washroom or speed to make connections so he isn’t subjected to verbal abuse or inconveniencing his passengers.

If some twilight or night spare board operators continue to ask for or accept early day shifts, then all spare board operators will be expected to work at all

hours of the day regardless of what they signed or what’s in our contract.

If some employees agree with management staff that people changing off buses because of seats or arm rests, etc., are just ‘whiners,’ then the employer has no reason to ergonomically improve our work stations. More workers will be subjected to injury and forced to participate in the return-to-work process, or discouraged from changing off a bus when they are in pain.

**When we don’t demonstrate member unity, we inadvertently sabotage ourselves in the long run.** Here we are in 2010, and the importance of unity is no different than it was in 1879. We all get it – so let’s demonstrate it!

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*“No Strength without union – an illustrated history of Ohio workers 1803-1980” by Raymond Boryczka, Lorin Lee Cary, 1982 Ohio Historical Society p.62-63*

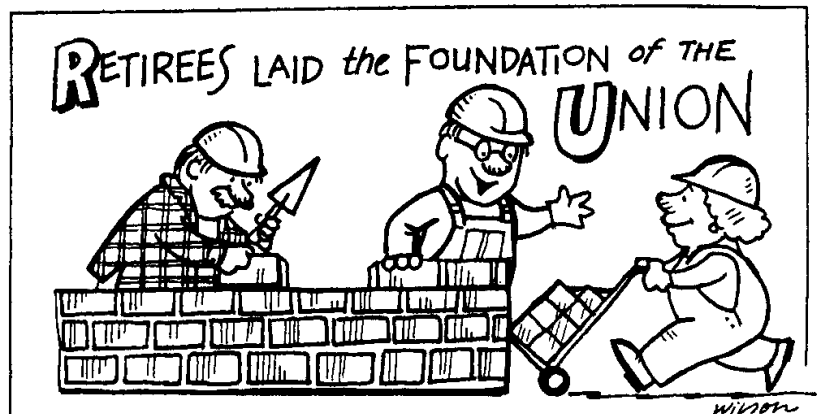
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## Retirees’ Breakfast

The next Retirees’ Breakfast is **Monday April 26<sup>th</sup>**. Join us at Country Boy at 8:00ish a.m.

The new Retirees webpage is at [caw4304.ca/retirees](http://caw4304.ca/retirees) .

You will also find all the breakfast dates on the Union calendar at [caw4304.ca/calendar.htm](http://caw4304.ca/calendar.htm) .



# Trust Your Instincts

By Klaus Biemann  
Political Education

The membership will vote for their new executive on May 19<sup>th</sup>. We all have our preferences and reasons for whom we choose to vote for. However, before placing trust in a candidate, it is essential to understand as much as possible about the person(s) running for high office. An executive position within any Local entails an enormous amount of responsibility and dedication to the welfare of the membership. Local 4304 is no different.



An executive position should never be used as a lever for self-gain or a "power trip." The membership entrusts its executive to fully represent the interests of those members, and not to be self-serving. Therefore it is absolutely imperative for you, the membership, to familiarize yourselves with the candidate of your choice. The prime requirement in **any** executive member of a Local is his/her unwavering dedication to the members, not management.

Recently, management has decided to go on the offensive. To date, numerous operators, as well as some of our members in Department 2, have been attacked by management, a tactic that is, I believe, designed to intimidate the membership. We are being hauled in and written up for "occurrences" that in most cases amount to the **ludicrous**. Management is zealously handing out suspensions based in large measure on "evidence" that would be inadmissible even in a kangaroo court! The treatment of our members by management solely on the strength of public "written" complaints is dubious at best. For management to state that they wish to work *with us* and to "take back" the workplace is hypocritical. Intimidation, and attempts at "Union busting" will ultimately fail.

It will fail because we, the membership, will work together and stick together as never before. We must. This is a contract year. They will attempt to "gut" our next contract. We must demonstrate to management, and to ourselves, that we will not be intimidated, that we will stand up for our rights in the workplace, and we will fight hard to obtain a decent contract early next year.

For us to succeed, we must work together as a team. I say to the naysayers who still believe in accommodation with management that management's action toward the membership surely speaks for itself.

When the vote comes up in May, **be informed** and vote sensibly. The current executive has a proven track record of accomplishments over the past few years. Consider the first-class contracts that the current executive has obtained for its members. I believe these are the individuals we need to represent us again in this contract year. With the years of experience of our current executive, and with a strong and united stand by our membership, we will prevail, and we will do well.

Always remember - in a house divided, we fail. Working together as a team with our executive, we succeed. The choice is ultimately **YOURS**.



# Rumours

By Tim Jewell

*Definition: A story or statement in general circulation without confirmation or certainty as to facts.*



It is puzzling and confusing, but a person can be discredited when untruths and lies are attached mistakenly. The effect is that no one can distinguish the truth from a lie, and it may break down any trust you have in that individual.

## **Rumour #1: Management will have me in their back pocket.**

Fact: Not true.

I have worked with the new Assistant Manager of Operations before at Guelph Transit, but it is false that his working here has anything to do with me running for an elected position. As I know Steve, our current elected executive knows our Assistant Manager, Jim, in the same manner. I have been expressing my intent to run for well over a year now, and the new Assistant Manager has been only here a month, so one has nothing to do with the other.

## **Rumour #2: I sent a fruit basket to the new Assistant Manager of Operations.**

Fact: Not True.

I did not and would not send anything to anyone. If I did, I would own up to it without provocation.

## **Rumour #3: I threw out the INFORMER magazines.**

Fact: Not True:

I would never do such a thing, and my position has been corroborated.

## **Rumour #4: I want to decertify this Union.**

Fact: Not True.

Over a year ago the idea was being considered to decertify this union and go with ATU. At the time, I was truly in favour of changing unions. However, the idea was then put on hold. I agreed, and it was never brought up again.

Why? Because over this past year, I was witness to the great job this local Union does along with CAW. I do not want to decertify. and I am disappointed with the innuendos and untruths that are perpetuating fear amongst our membership. The perception is that I am the catalyst behind destroying this Union all on my own. If I honestly believed that I was going to bring harm to this Union, I would gladly step aside.

Fabrication, suggestions, gossip, and hearsay are tools that can really destroy a person's credibility. I am the type of person who believes in the truth, and that is what I am telling. My suggestion to those who believe these stories about what can happen if we decertify is simply this: Ask one of your executives if we are decertifying.

Clearly I am not in favour of decertification. Anyone running for an elected position and wanting to decertify would be in "conflict of interest" with the Constitution of the National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW)  
**Article 11 –: Officers and Elections: Section 5**

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**states:** “No member is eligible for any position in the Union if she/he is trying to decertify the National Union or any subordinate body, or is helping a group or union that wants to replace CAW-Canada as the recognized collective bargaining agent.” Once again, as I stated, there would be a conflict.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone who is running a heartfelt “Good Luck.” **Please remember that we are all on the same side.** CAW is our Union, and we should all be striving to make it better. A strong united Union is basically, well, impenetrable. **Let’s stop the rumours. If anyone wants to come and ask me anything, please feel free to do so.** Remember, we live in a democracy, and we are very lucky to have the right to cast a vote. I just want to run my campaign without hearsay and accusations. You have the right to vote for whomever you want. This is the great thing about elections. We can vote the way we want, not because people are trying to coerce people into voting a certain way. Get the facts, find the truth, and, last but not least, **VOTE!!!!!!!!!!!!**

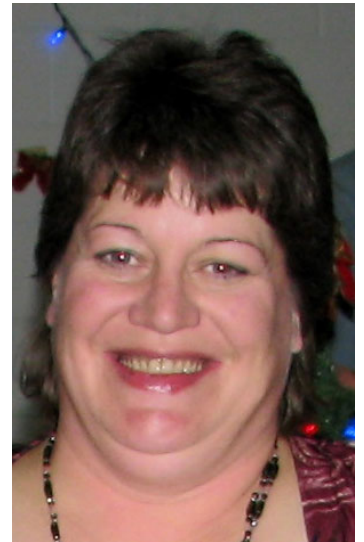
Yours in Brotherhood  
Tim Jewell



## We Forget Ourselves!

*Susan McIntyre*  
(SueZQ)

As of late, I find myself in complete and utter shock at our lack of professionalism. I cannot believe the level to which some of us have descended to. How did we get to this place of complete ignorance?



What the heck am I going on about? Well, let me ask you this.

When on earth did we forget who is **always watching and listening to us?** We are in the public eyes and ears at all times! We have been in the line of fire for the last few years or so, and things just keeping getting worse.

I urge you to remember that the radios are OPEN AIR! Everybody and anybody (possibly hundreds at any given time) are listening to us.

So tell me, if you were in a very crowded public place would you:

- Holler out your full name, phone number and address across the room? or
- Start a verbal assault on a loved one or a family member or friend? or
- Pick a fight with/or insult someone who you don't even know?

OF COURSE NOT!!! So why on earth anybody would give out personal information, be snarky or rude with fellow brothers or sisters, and/or say bad things about customers on the GRT radio is beyond my understanding?! We are our own worst enemies! These kinds of things put us at a higher risk with “Joe Public.” This just gives them even more ammunition to fling at us, and

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the last thing we need is more animosity/trouble between them and us.

Now here's one more for you. Recently I have been HORRIFIED to hear that in an attempt to "help" some passengers find their way, some of my brothers and sisters have been giving out exact locations, complete with which bus(es) to take and how to get right to the front doors of women's shelters in our cities, OVER THE OPEN AIR!!

Some Shelters which help people like "Bridges" and "Out of the Cold Programs" are public information, and its OK to give that information over the open air. In fact, please do.

I understand the need to HELP our customer, especially someone in trouble, but I cannot stress it strongly enough to all of you that the locations of some of these shelters is "**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.**"

I need to remind all of my brothers and sisters that these places are confidential in order to help keep people safe, usually women, sometimes with children, who have fled an abusive relationship. Giving out this information could put innocent lives in serious danger. The chance

that someone is sitting on one of our buses, looking for someone hiding, or knows someone looking is higher than you think.

I wonder how you would feel if, hiding in one of those shelters was your mother, sister, cousin, friend, child, grandchildren and maybe even yourself, and that information came over the radio!?!? Cold fear runs down my spine at such thoughts! If you personally haven't had the need to use such places, I'm sure you probably know someone or have heard of someone who has.

Why is it so easy for us to forget who may be listening and watching us?

When did we stop using our common sense and speak or act without thinking first?

I encourage all of us to **please be more mindful of where we are**, what we are doing, and how our actions have a positive or negative affect on those around us.

As a better way to help these customers in need, I would strongly suggest that we start directing these issues to our Supervisors and/or Security Officers. Also, we advertise "Women in Crisis Services" phone numbers on our buses. Please feel free to give out *those numbers* instead.

Thank you, and do take the best care of yourself and each other.



## 3 Pitch Signup

Anyone interested in playing three pitch this summer for transit, contact **Ed Tonic** or **Mike Hogue**.

More information will be posted later.



# Darwin's Laws

By Gino Chirila

The world is changing, and it is changing fast. Nothing is the way it used to be.

Many years ago, a driver needed to use a pay phone to inform the garage that his bus had broken down somewhere in the city.

A few days ago, a bus driver, waiting at the traffic lights for green, had no idea that some customer in his bus was complaining to the management, using a cell phone. Twenty minutes later, at Highland Hills Mall, a supervisor is waiting in order to ask questions about the incident that the driver wasn't even aware had occurred! But all this is history already.

Today, you are driving a bus somewhere in Waterloo without knowing that behind you there is an Internet-hunter; an individual with a digital camcorder who hunts for some sensational images. He wants to become famous, and he is watching you, the driver. You sneeze in a funny way while you are driving, perhaps because you have a cold. You are not comfortable with that? There is nothing you can do. You clean your nose and continue your trip.

At Highland Hills Mall, you go on your lunch break without knowing that somebody has uploaded the images of your "funny sneeze" onto the Internet on YouTube. A few hours later you go home, but meanwhile, on YouTube, you already have 50,000 users who are laughing about your funny sneezing. The next day you come back to work, having no idea that you are



already an "Internet Star" because overnight, millions of people all over the world have heard of and been laughing about your funny sneezing!

Do you think this is a joke? Think again!

Imagine that you didn't sneeze on the bus. Instead, imagine that you just lost your patience in a dispute with a troublemaking customer, and you did or you said something you should not have. Behind you, another customer, an Internet-hunter, is recording the incident, and uploads it onto the Internet on YouTube. In the morning, my brother, by the time you go to work, you may not only be on YouTube, but on the news as well! The management won't let you take over the bus. Instead, they take you upstairs for the final interview, which is the procedure before termination.

It is pretty sad. It is not fair, but it may happen at any time to anyone. We have no privacy at all in



*Sound of Music at GRT.*

*Tracy MacDonnell loves to play his flute at a time point*

this job. We never did have. But today, with this exponentially growing IT revolution, things are changing fast, every day. Public transportation

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has become a field where some misinterpreted freedom of customers turns into a hunt against us, the bus drivers. Some customers do not treat us like public servants. They treat us more like slaves. We have to adapt to these new potential dangers. We will survive this. We are, according to Darwin's law, the individuals of the species that adapt to new life and work conditions.

We, the GRT drivers, know that silence is golden. Sometimes the best answer to a troublemaker is our silence. Our silence keeps us safe. Whenever there is a complaint against us, the management asks:

“What did you say to the customer?”

“I said nothing. I did not want the customer to use my words against me!”

My point of view about this issue is: I have a long to-do list in this job, but I am not paid to socialize with the troublemakers. Every week, I check my paystub, and I get nothing, not even \$5 for socializing with customers. So, I don't do it. We, as bus drivers, keep our eyes on the road and our minds on the job every single moment of our work shift.

We know that paying attention to the traffic is the only way to secure our job for a long period of time.

*How can you keep your eyes on the road when an agitated customer invades your space without any notice?*

*How can you keep your mind on the job, when they abuse you verbally?*

If you engage yourself in a dispute with an agitated customer, it is a lose-lose situation. There are a lot of things we can do to return our activity to normality.

One more time, I would like to underline that I do not speak to a problematic customer if I don't have to. When I get involved in unnecessary comments with the customers, I become

vulnerable. It has happened to me so many times before.

*(Late in the night I'm driving my bus on Route 10 College. Traffic is quiet. My bus is not. Just beside me there is a customer. I don't know him. He may be a regular customer, but I don't remember him. I'm doing my job. I'm driving the bus. He's telling me a story, a life-time story. I'm quiet. I'm driving. I'm not sure, but I assume he is talking to me. There is nobody else around. I don't need to listen to all the frustrations in his story. I'm driving. I don't want to listen to him. He's over my shoulder. I'm strong enough. I'm quiet. I'm driving. He is talking. Is anybody paying this guy to ruin my night? I don't think so.)*

*”Can you hear me now? - ...? (I'm driving...)*

*“I am talking to you, driver!” - ...? (I'm still driving....)*

*“Are you not talking to me? Ok, I'm going to call your manager and let him know you smoked a cigarette at Fairview Mall and made us late by one whole minute and thirty seconds on our way to work!”*

No comment. Silence is golden.

# Special ELECTION Edition of The Informer

By John A. McDonald, Editor



Nominations for Union Officers is coming up on April 21<sup>st</sup>. As usual, we encourage an **informed vote**. As we did three years ago, there will be a Special Election Edition of The Informer coming out one week before the Elections. **The deadline for submissions will be**

**Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>**. I will be producing this issue as well.

In addition to the Election Edition, the Election web page will feature up-to-the-minute postings from all candidates. See [caw4304.ca/elections](http://caw4304.ca/elections). It is my hope that the candidates will publish responses to the hot-button topics that arise after The Informer comes out. Updates will be posted up to the day before the Election. The Officer Elections will be held on Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Video posts** will also be encouraged from our candidates. This is something that John Mac Kay and I learned at the last CALM conference, and something that I used on the Olympic Blog. The process is not that hard to produce, and is the single most effective way of communicating with our large membership. All you need is a digital camera, the free Windows Movie Maker, and a high-speed Internet connection. I'll be available for technical assistance, should you need that, or just ask your kids to help! Video spots can be anywhere from 30 seconds to 5 minutes in length. They can be made public, or available to members only.

Keep in mind that the video format is still new for all of us, so I'm open to suggestions. If the message isn't private, YouTube is an option. If you have considerable experience in online video



production, please share that with the rest of us. The end goal is *informed voting* through effective communications. Video just happens to be the most effective tool towards that end.

Submission guidelines are the same as usual, except that **photos are mandatory**.

I found during a recent by-election, that when our members consulted the table where all the election platforms were posted, the most common comment was, "So that is what he/she looks like." Our Union has grown to such a size that people need to see your picture to make the mental connection of who you are.

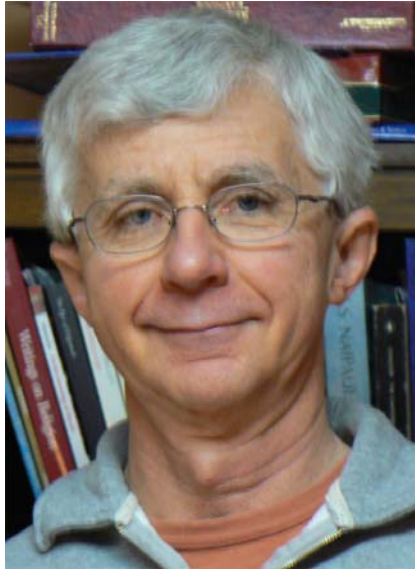
Send all written submissions by email attachment to [informer@caw4304.ca](mailto:informer@caw4304.ca), with a high resolution photo included. Video submissions should be under 20 MB in size, and preferably in WMV format.

Finally, keep in mind that anyone on the Education and Newsletter Committee can help you edit your material before it is sent out. We need **the candidates to share their heart** for where this Union should go over the next three years.

## Emails and AC/DC

By Carl Hayes

What about those emails, the 'tricks' where they talk about 'hiding the decline' in temperatures? It shows that I was right all along. Those emails prove that global warming is nothing but a conspiracy to enslave us and take our money. I know this for a fact, because I get all my information only from the most unbiased, articulate and enlightened sources: Fox News and Sarah Palin. You betchya, cowboy!



Yesiree, Bob. I'm right! The world is flat and riding on the back of a giant snail, and global warming is a hoax! They won't be telling me anymore that I'm either crazy, or nothing but a gun-toting, Hummer-driving, beer-drinking, chain-smoking redneck.

Never mind that some tree-hugging science geek is going to tell you that these emails are only from one small area of the science, some raw temperature data from thermometers, satellites, and some tree ring data. The 'trick' to hide the decline was supposedly just scientific jargon for removing irrelevant data, and that it was in no way an attempt to hide global cooling. Don't believe it!

Plus, forget about the fact that none of the emails negate the 200-year old science behind the greenhouse effect. Carbon dioxide is accumulating in the

atmosphere because of human carbon emissions from burning oil, coal, and so on.

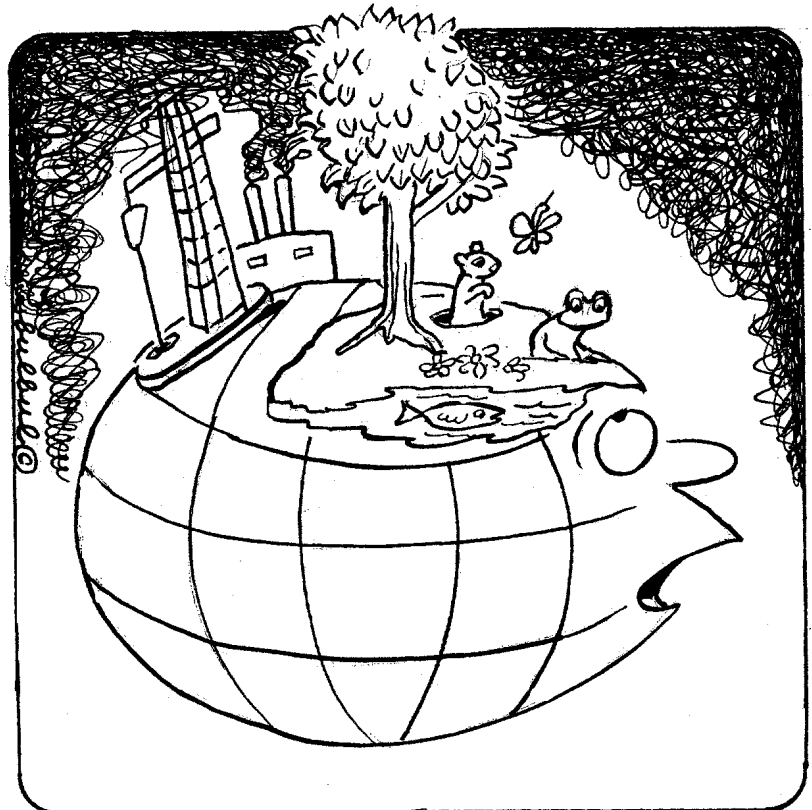
We don't need to pay any attention to the evidence of satellite readings, used since 1979, or weather balloons, since 1958. They are both showing rising temperatures.

Please ignore all those geophysicists who've measured the movement of heat through the earth's surface, and have found that the 20th century has been the warmest in the last half millennium.

Those crackpot palaeontologists studying fossilized plants and animals - tree rings, corals, sediment cores, pollens, ice cores, cave stalactites - have declared that the 19th and 20th centuries show a definite warming. They also claim that there is no natural explanation. Phewey!

Meteorologists (weathermen, ha!) who have been using ground-based weather stations and sea-

*(Continued on page 15)*



**"I regret to inform you that due to the human species careless delusional leadership mired in greed and deep denial you are going extinct."**

(Continued from page 14)

surface readings from thousands of thermometers from all over the world for over a hundred years have confirmed that land and sea temperatures are rising.

These nerds will also say that it is not cherry-picking data when you can point to the majority of the world's glaciers being in retreat, or the Arctic sea-ice disappearing, or the sea levels rising, or the melting permafrost, or the trees moving up hillsides because of the changing climate.

They'll also try to tell you that the hoopla about these emails is based on sound bites taken out of context by professional skeptics and their blogs, and used by others for political gain. Yeah, like Fox News or Sarah Palin would do something like that!

Now I hear that the U.S. is thinking about refusing any oil that comes from the Alberta tar sands because it is so carbon dirty. Sure, the tar sands look, smell, and sound like someone blew up all the port-a-potties at an AC/DC concert while they were in the middle of 'Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap,' but so what? I say, thank Goodness the Chinese are buying in and want the tar sand oil. If they want a highway to hell (or pipeline to hell), I say, let's give it to them.

Not only that, the head of the United Nations' panel on climate change, the IPCC, Dr. Rajendra Pauchari, is a Bush appointee. After lobbying by Exxon-Mobil and Saudi Arabia, the previous chair was removed because he was too aggressive about global warming. This is on record. The man Bush chose to replace him, this Dr. Rajendra Pauchari, has long claimed global warming is real and dangerous. Whose side is this guy on?

None of this matters, because there was only one thing I needed to do.

**I went green.**

Yup, all of my electricity now comes from non-carbon producing renewable energy: solar, wind, and low-impact hydro sources. **Bullfrog Power is my electrical supplier.** I usually pay about \$15 to \$20 a month more than I would with my local utility. But, with a few of those squirrely light bulbs, some caulking, cold-water laundry washing, and a few other tweaks here and there, I don't pay much more than I did before. On top of that, the agreement with Bullfrog stipulates that I can discontinue the agreement at any time without a penalty. Eight thousand people and hundreds of businesses have already signed up with them (like Steam Whistle Brewery, Weall and Cullen Nurseries, and Margaret Atwood).



Why did I do it?

Nobody calls me a gun-toting, Hummer-driving, beer-drinking, chain-smoking redneck and gets away with it. I've never smoked, and I can't afford a Hummer on my wages. General Motors tried and couldn't even sell the Hummer division to the Chinese! Why do they think I'd want one?

The point is, I had to show that bunch of tax-sponging, bleeding-heart, hybrid-driving, tree-hugging, tofu-eating, pretend hippies that I'M NOT ONLY JUST AS GOOD AS THEY ARE, BUT I'M EVEN BETTER!!

Hey, hold on. If the scientists want to close down all the oil wells, and Al-Qaeda wants to blow them up, and China wants to take over the Alberta tar sands, then global warming is not just a hoax, it's a SCIENTIST-AL-QAEDA-CHINESE PLOT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD!

So long folks. I'm movin' to Alaska!

# On Track with Ski-A-Thon 2010

By Klaus Biemann



*Klaus Biemann hits the trail*



Those infamous snowbelt snowsqualls that Georgian Bay is known for didn't happen, as was the case last year also. To have two years in a row without road closures is quite amazing. As in the preceding ten years, this year was no exception in the fun we all had.

To all of you, please join us next year. The enjoyment of the slopes or the cross-country/snowshoeing trails is exhilarating. And the fun is topped off by an evening of dining and door prizes. Recounting our day at Collingwood in The Informer doesn't really tell the whole story. The real magic is the experience of being there!

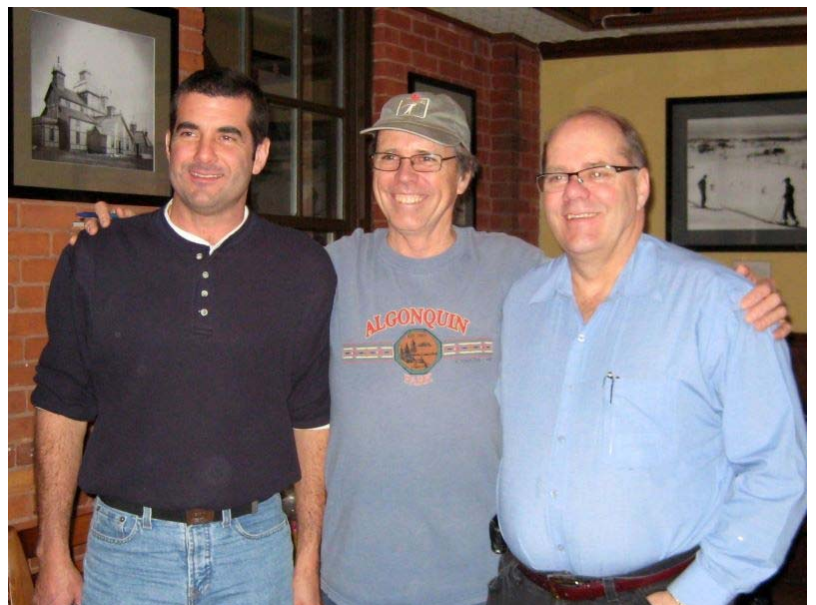
So remember the date - the third Tuesday next February. See you there!

Photo album here: [picasaweb.google.ca/caw4304](http://picasaweb.google.ca/caw4304)

On behalf of the Ski-a-thon Committee, I would like to thank our participants in this noble endeavour. To all of the sponsors who donated money and door prizes, a heart-felt **thank you!** Through your generosity, we managed to raise just over \$5000 that will go in its entirety to our less fortunate children within The Region of Waterloo. You deserve a pat on the back. You are the heroes.

Although some of our regular participants were unable to join us in Collingwood this year, there will always be next year, and I'm sure you will be there with us.

Once again we lucked in with the weather.



### **3 Top Fund Raisers:**

*Dave Meyer, Paul Eckmier, and Rock St. Laurent.*

# “Thank You!!”... To So Many!!

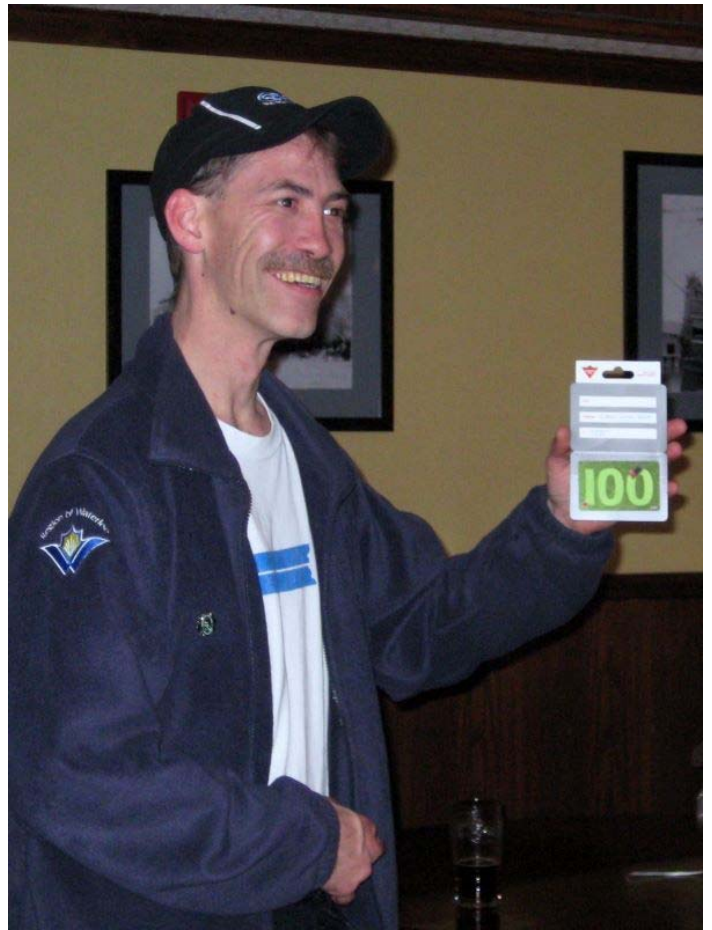
By Paul Eckmier

This year's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual “Skiing for Dreams” Charity Ski-a-thon raised **\$5,070** for the Kitchener and Area Sub-chapter of the CHILDREN'S WISH FOUNDATION. I can't thank Klaus Biemann and Jackie McKie enough who served with me on this year's Ski-a-thon Committee. And thanks to Steve Huebner for hosting our planning meeting, even though he was going to the Whistler Olympics when our Ski-a-thon was scheduled. I trust he will be skiing with us again next year.

Our event was held on Tuesday, Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> in Collingwood. By raising a minimum of \$50 in donations, each downhiller got a reduced lift ticket at \$25 (regular \$57 + GST) to ski Ontario's largest alpine ski resort, Blue Mountain, with its 36 runs and 720-foot vertical drop. We thank Blue Mountain Resorts Ltd. for their continual support over the years. The cross-country skiers and snowshoers enjoyed the trails at the nearby Scenic Caves Nordic Centre. Each participant enjoyed free non-alcoholic liquid refreshments at certain base lodges, thanks to our CAW Local 4304.



*Daren Mahon hopes he's not the turkey in the Turkey Shoot*



*Bill Reed gets a \$100 gift card from Canadian Tire*

Our après-ski dinner was held at Kelsey's in Collingwood. Each participant received a door prize, thanks in part to the following businesses: Diversco Supply, Toromont Energy Services, Giant Tiger (Greenbrook Plaza), Starbucks of Uptown Waterloo, Crabby Joes (Fairway Rd.), Fireside Restaurant, Alpine Hyundai, Weiland Ford Sales Ltd., Ski & Cycle Hut, Kitchener City Hall, Waterloo City Centre, and Colonial Cookies. Sincere thanks to the Region of Waterloo for donating \$200 to purchase door prizes.

It was so encouraging to see many of our fellow workers and friends donate hand-made items, showcasing their talents, or gifts. Special thanks to

*(Continued on page 18)*

(Continued from page 17)

Heather Larsen-Defoe, Eileen Mannarelli, Sarah Eckert, Jason Beck's wife, Jenna, Sue Stengel, Kelly Hearty, Bernie & Karen Schubert, Joyce Fekete, Ed and Pam Tonic, Bruce Williams, Dave Lachance, Ricki Germann, Dan Hall from Mobility Plus, Rhonda Guenther, and to Tony Brooks, who besides donating door prizes, also raised cash donations for Children's Wish thru his coffee sales efforts.

To all these co-workers, I want you to know that your time, effort, and generosity are greatly appreciated. I apologize if I missed anyone or any business.

Thanks to the drivers who went "knocking on doors" to get door prizes: Klaus Biemann, Tony Brooks, Bernie Schubert, Paul Beach, Dave Meyer, and Jackie McKie. We did so well with door prize donations that we can pass along the surplus to our upcoming Golf Tournament in September! THANK YOU!!

To encourage our skiers to raise more than the minimum, we hold draws for a chance to win a major prize. For every \$100 that a skier raises in



donations, he or she gets one ticket for the draws. (So, e.g., if you raised \$300, you would get three tickets.) This year we selected five major prizes: three \$100 gift certificates (Best Buy, Canadian Tire, and Select Sports), thanks to our CAW Local 4304; a large luggage bag on wheels, thanks to Select Sports; and a certificate to purchase a pair of snowshoes, thanks to Adventure Guide of Waterloo.

Many thanks to the skier participants for committing to the cause and collecting the donations: Paul Beach and son, Jake; Klaus Biemann, who, besides fundraising, did so much work serving on our committee and helping in so many areas; retiree, Neil Bricker; Johnnie Friesen; Petra Hanzelkova-Lam and her entire family, Tri, Jessica, and Julian; Mike Hogue, who skied passionately in spite of his physical challenges; John Knechtel, one of our mechanics in the North (great to have you join us, John); Darren Mahon; Monica Menner (thanks to Darren and Monica who helped set up the door prizes at Kelsey's); Bob Marshall (sorry you were sick, Bob); Dave Meyer, who was our 3<sup>rd</sup> highest fundraiser at \$645, and sorry you injured your thumb, Dave; friends, John



*John Knechtel gets a Best Buy Gift Certificate*

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(Continued from page 18)  
and daughter, Jackie Neufeld; Linda Paluveer; Sarah Parkes (our condolences to you, Sarah, in the loss of your Mom); Bill Reed; Dave Scheifele and friend, Willy Rush; friend and fellow *New Hampshire ski-clubber*, Bernie Schubert; and friend, Rock St. Laurent (Janet's husband), who was our 2<sup>nd</sup> highest fundraiser at \$1,042, almost matching my effort of \$1,095. Rock, who is in



*Mike Hogue and his wife, Kathleen*

to driver Iracema Bralha in the South for getting some donations there. Thanks, ladies!

I hope next year we can get more sports-minded drivers from the South to sign up at the Ski-a-thon displays and join Janet St. Laurent. This would see more skier canvassers collecting more donations from their co-workers in the South, thus increasing our total amount raised. How about giving it a try next year? We welcome new Ski-a-thon rookies! Choose downhill, or x-c skiing, or snowshoeing! It's a day of great fun and excitement as we purpose together in a positive activity to help kids in our community battling life-threatening illnesses.

Finally, we sincerely thank all the many folks, and those of our fellow drivers, supervisors, mechanics, and other GRT personnel, who sponsored our skiers with their donations. Together, we are contributing to bring some joy into the lives of unfortunate children, who bravely face the challenges of coping with serious cancers and other health issues on a daily basis.

sales, got most of his sponsorship from local business contacts and friends in his home province of Quebec. Thanks, Mr. St. Laurent. You are making us inter-provincial, and you "rock!"

I also want to thank Mike Hogue's wife, Kathleen, for coming along and helping me receive the donations at the South Base Lodge, distributing lift tickets and buttons, and numbering the draw tickets. And sincere thanks



*Monica Menner shows off her cross-country skis*

# My Adventure in Whistler BC at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

By Dan Pope

From the first day to the last day, it was very exciting and busy, and an experience of a lifetime! I will admit it was a little stressful trying to familiarize myself with the area and the routes during the first three days of training. Half of our training was done in the daylight, and the other half was at night. I said to some drivers that we are professional drivers, and we do know how to drive buses, and they did give us maps with rights and lefts, so the only thing that we should be worrying about is getting to know the area.

I have commented to other drivers from GRT that this is a reality check for them. Now they know how the new drivers feel when they start to drive.

Once we got going and driving our routes, it got a lot easier. When we did miss our turns, the local people were willing to help us out, and were very supportive. In fact, it was a good icebreaker to start a conversation with them. They always wanted to know where we were from, and said it must be a great opportunity for us. And when we had a question from tourists, the locals were willing to help us out and answer it for us. At the terminals, the supervisors and management were there to answer any questions

that we had. If you ask me,



*The Peak 2 Peak Gondola*

Canadians as a whole work well together.

I had an opportunity to drive from Squamish to Whistler and Whistler to Pemberton. It was basically up and down the mountain, which was a real experience getting to know the roads, because I've never driven in the mountains, or even been out in the Vancouver area. It was almost like driving blind because there were no street lights to see the road other than the headlights on your bus. It was hard at first, but I



*Dan Pope and Bob Arseneault climbed to the top of Big Chief mountain in Squamish, BC*

got used to it, and appreciated the fact that there was no glare on your windshield, and my eyes did not have to keep adjusting to the lights. My schedule started from six and eight o'clock at night to 5:30 in the morning.

I worked four days and had three days off in a row, which made it nice. I could plan to do things on my days off. I went to Vancouver, took in a skeleton event, and did a lot of hiking and sightseeing around, and participated in the celebrations at Whistler Village.

I met drivers from across Canada, and learned how other transits operate, and along the way made some lifetime friendships. **I am glad I had this opportunity to go to BC and be part of the 2010 Winter Olympics!**

## Take-home

By John A. McDonald, Editor

A speaker I often listen to always ends his presentations with a "take-home." These are the life lessons you take with you and integrate into your life, the nuggets of truth you latch onto, without which the entire experience would have been a waste. So what are some of the things that I picked up at the 2010 Winter Olympics?

First, let me digress and say right up front that **I had a wonderful Olympic experience!** I realized when I got home that there had been a few reports of some difficulties out West which seem to have been exaggerated. Sure, there were some unexpected situations, but I expected that. And sure, the working conditions at Whistler Transit were not perfect or exactly on a par with our experience at Grand River Transit. But, after all, this was the Olympics. Sometimes you just have to suck it up and carry on. I determined before leaving home to have a great time, and in the end, that is exactly how it turned out for me.

One thing I learned out West was to appreciate



*I attended the Women's Combined Alpine Ski Event. Here a competitor nears the finish line.*



*The Olympic Flame in down town Vancouver.*

our local Union here at GRT. I've always said that the success of a union is determined by the individual contributions of the members within that Local. At Whistler Transit, they didn't even have monthly union meetings. The result was that a couple of guys tried to represent the 90 or so local drivers, and it just didn't work. For example:

If you reported to the garage halfway through the day, your report time was actually your leave time.

There wasn't any scheduled time to do a circle check, as it might possibly have been done in the morning. Half the time, you would discover that the circle check had not been done, and then you ended up leaving 15 minutes late and missing your first trip. While I did address this with management, they simply ran out the clock, and didn't do anything to correct it. Our union would never have tolerated this.

Unpaid travel time was another irritant. I made the decision not to push the issue. After all, I was on vacation.

The take-away for me was to never take your Union for granted. Many other transit operators across the country do not enjoy the same working conditions as we do.

*(Continued on page 22)*

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On the other hand, there were other very refreshing differences in Whistler Transit:



*President Manuel Achadinha is the driving force behind BC Transit. He was at the Gondola Transit Exchange daily.*

One of the most intriguing was the company's drive to innovate. The very fact that Whistler Transit operates the world's largest fleet of hydrogen buses is a prime example. We had the privilege of driving 20 state-of-the-art fuel cell buses that cost \$2.2 million each. BC Transit, the owners of Whistler Transit, along with the BC government and Ballard, are attempting to become world leaders in this technology of the future. When the oil reserves eventually dry up, hydrogen will likely be the alternative. But they have had to endure a fair amount of criticism for sinking so much money into this new technology. For me, it demonstrates just how much can be done with economies of scale. BC Transit operates all the transit properties in British Columbia except for Vancouver.

Another example of their willingness to innovate was their interest in my cell phone-based GPS. I got approval on the first day to use my hands-free GPS device to help me navigate around the unfamiliar routes.

I then demonstrated the advantages of having

GPS on the buses to the president of BC Transit, Manuel Achadinha. He, in turn, set me up with the office staff, and together we ran a test of the **Google Latitude system** I use. They were able to track me as I drove around the various routes in Whistler, and are considering using this on all of their buses.

The take-away for me was that in this day and age, we can't afford to always be politically correct and shun new technologies. At GRT, this type of technology wouldn't even have been looked at because it is attached to a cell phone! But why try to reinvent the wheel when existing cell phone technology works much better than the INIT system we have here in Waterloo Region?

Destination sign codes were another refreshing difference. In BC, the sign codes were much more logical, and simply matched the route number. For example, for the inbound *No. 3 Emerald Estates*, we simply pressed the number 3 and ENTER on the keypad. For the outbound trip, it was 3 and the letter A and ENTER. And so, in KW, rather than the 82 as the code for



*Driving the Double Decker buses, from England, was a real treat.*

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*Route 22 Forest Glen*, it could be 22A. *22 Highland Hills* could be 22B. *Inbound to Downtown* could be just 22. It was so nice to have sign codes that actually made sense.

Another huge difference was the accessibility of upper management. Out there, the President, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Engineering Officer, and others, all spent their afternoons on the platforms assisting the tourists to find their buses. Having the chance to casually chat with the people who make the decisions greatly improved overall communications. The way the president put it, they are all required to be out of the office a certain amount of time, or they have to find another job! He set the example by being on the road each and every afternoon. Wouldn't it be nice if our managers spent time on the platforms here at GRT?

Another advantage of having management nearby was that some problems could be solved overnight (unless they affected the budget!) For example, when the drivers complained that there was no shelter at the Gondola Transit Exchange, a tent with a propane heater was brought in for the last two weeks of the games. I thought it was a nice gesture. And the Human Resources office was separated from the driver's room only by a partition. While I'm sure it got a bit hectic at times for the HR ladies, concerns could be addressed immediately. In general, you got the sense that we were all on the same team, and that some were not better than the rest. At GRT, it sure would be nice if management could eat their lunches in the lunchroom with the rest of us.

Of all the experiences I had, it will likely be the people that I got to know that I'll remember the longest. The 17 drivers and mechanics from GRT all formed a special bond while we were out there. Working together while so far away from home tends to draw you closer together as a group.

The take-away for me was that, as our Union



*Des Fitzgerald and mechanic Leo McAleney*

grows, we need to invest more time and resources into “community building” within our Local. Playing golf together, or skiing, are all ways to get to know our brothers and sisters much better. After all, how can we be expected to hold a picket line if we don't even know each other?

When a dozen of us shared a meal together at the hotel on the last week, it was a wonderful experience. Thanks Krys and Debbie for organizing that. Perhaps we need to start doing things like having a barbecue before the Union meetings--anything to help improve interpersonal relations.

I was able to return to Ontario after five weeks with no regrets. I had used my time off to tour Vancouver Island, the ski hills, a mining museum, the City of Vancouver, Squamish and Whistler, and even ride a zip line. I'd driven double-decker buses, highway coaches, and, of course, my favourite, the hydrogen buses. I'd also been able to write lengthy blogs while I was out there, including lots of pictures. (You can see the blog at [blog.caw4304.ca](http://blog.caw4304.ca).) My photo albums here: [picasaweb.google.ca/SirJohnAMcDonald](http://picasaweb.google.ca/SirJohnAMcDonald)



I hope that I was able to make you proud as I represented GRT at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games! Suffice it to say, **given the chance, I'd do it all over again!**

# At the Top of the Civilized World!

By Gino Chirila

The term “developed country” is used to describe countries that have high levels of development according to some economic criteria. We, the Canadians, are at the top of the developed countries. Not only that, but we are “the good guys.” Wherever in the world there are tsunamis, earthquakes, pandemics or other disasters, we are there with help.

We, the bus drivers at GRT, between the job, the house, shopping and paying the bills, we don't have time to see much of the world. Our *GRT world* starts somewhere in Elmira, proceeds through Waterloo, around Kitchener, through Cambridge, and finishes somewhere between Christopher and Langlaw Drive.

But still, it is too big for us. We work together in the same company, we can hear each other, but there is no time to meet one another. What makes us brothers is the Union CAW Local 4304, as well as the job which makes us *double brothers*. We all have the same problems and issues to resolve.

We do charity every week. We give our Canadian dollars to help kids all over the world. It is true, we help Third World kids go to school, have a better meal and a better life. It is amazing how generous we are with kids who live some ten thousand miles away in the world!



But I have a question: “*If we are such good guys, helping kids whom we will never see growing up and talking and walking around, what are we doing here - in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge, in our little world - regarding our very own Canadian kids?*”

These ‘noisy teenagers’ who are going to school, little individuals who try to cheat on us with short transfers and limited student passes, they know those are not valid on Saturday and Sunday. Where are they even going on the weekends? And why don't they pay the cash fare like everybody else?



My opinion: We don't do that much for them. I'm not going to tell you a “late night story” about how innocent these kids are. We all know them, and we all have problems with them every day.

We, the GRT drivers, some of us parents, some of us who are grandparents already, all of us were teenagers once. Do you remember how it was? I don't know about you, but I wasn't a bad guy. I do, however, remember that I always used to have a big, loud, mouth when I was accompanied by my friends.

On my way to school, I used public transportation. I never jumped onto the first trolley bus. I used to wait for a really crowded one, and ride on the exterior steps with the doors open so I didn't have to use a ticket. During my whole school life, I never saw a bus driver asking a kid to leave his bus because he didn't have the proper fare.

How can I refuse a ride to a teen, when at one time I wasn't any different myself?

As a driver at GRT, I had a lot of problems with the kids for a long period of time. I did not have too many choices. I had to make a decision, and I made it. I had to learn to look at them from

(Continued on page 25)

another point of view.

**They are not my enemies. They are just my youngest customers.**

**These kids have no income. Most of them are high school students.**

**In this financial depression, most of them have one parent or both parents unemployed.**

**Sometimes I may “buy” a quiet trip by showing more tolerance in reading transfers and bus passes.**

**The kids are full of energy, but I do not play their games. I save my energy for what is more important for me: the job.**

Now let me ask you a few legitimate questions:

**1. Why should I put my mind through this unnecessary stress and hard work? Anyway, I am busy enough facing the traffic, road conditions, and scheduling.**

**2. Who am I working for when I check each person’s transfer, bus pass, or cash payment? There is no reward for me when I catch someone. In case I catch someone, I only get into trouble, never mind a reward!**

**3. Why should I do something which nobody wants me to do?**

**4. Who am I fighting with when I catch somebody with a short transfer and he/she wants a ride? I think I am fighting with myself, with my own personality, someone that I don’t want to be. I hit my “left foot” with my “right foot,” and I get angry when I fall down on the ice, thinking I’m doing my job.**

Let’s be clear. As a driver in your bus, you are responsible for what you are doing. You are in control or in charge. You do what you have to do, in the way you decide, according to each situation. But do not forget, we are the best drivers this Region has. We are talented people with special skills. We are powerful

people who decide sometimes to ignore a GRT regulation when it is not specific enough, and we are responsible for what we are doing out there. But before all of this, we are human beings.

**What am I supposed to do with a child? Ask him to leave my bus?**

It is -15 degrees Celsius out there. Should I call the Humane Society? They come only for animals!

We live in Canada, at the top of the civilized world. We are the good guys, we have the Humane Society for animals, and we have the GRT for transporting our kids safely home even when they are a little short on their fare . . . but we are still working on that.

Can you hear me now?

Thank you, brother!

**DON'T JUST STAND BY  
AND WATCH, GET  
INVOLVED!!**



## Paul Mennie Compensation Consulting

Licensed P1 Law Society of Upper Canada

Email: [paulmennie@sympatico.ca](mailto:paulmennie@sympatico.ca)

Phone: 519-744-5659

Fax: 519-744-5254



I retired from bus driving at Grand River Transit in December 2002. I worked nights for the last two years in order to set up a business as an injured worker's advocate. During 2007, the Government passed a law that representatives who assist injured workers must be licensed. That included me. I was representing persons at Appeals and Tribunals, the Human Rights Tribunal, and Canada Pension Review Tribunals. That was what I planned to do in my retirement. I passed the exam at the Law Society of Upper Canada and paid my insurance premium as required by law. I also pay my yearly fee to The Law Society of Upper Canada of which I remain a member.

I have assisted members of Local 4304 CAW with their issues over the years, and hopefully will continue to do so. I work out of my fully equipped home office. I cover an area of Ontario from

Windsor to Ottawa, and have done Appeals as far as Thunder Bay. When representing unionized workers, the Union pays the fees to me. On occasion, a unionized worker has come to me for assistance as the injured workers' union has not or will not take their case to an appeal hearing for various reasons. I therefore welcome the challenge of being of assistance. We do not always win at an appeal hearing, but my success rate is very high.

Please feel free to contact your Union Executive if you need assistance with issues that you may have. If you know of someone in the community who needs my assistance, please contact my office at 519-744-5659 and leave a message if I am on the phone.

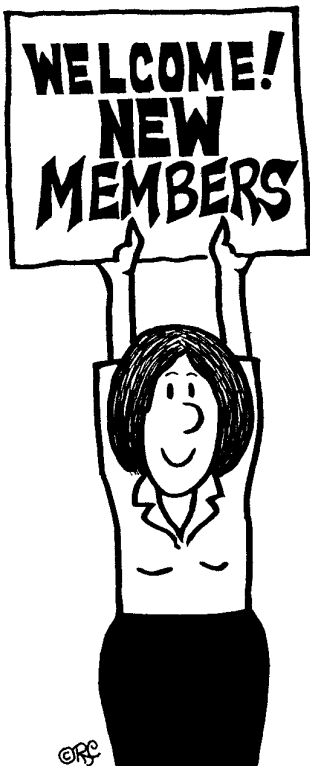


Photo by  
Dan Pope

### Class of February 2010

First row: Tammy Schell, Mark Wightman, Irene Bradshaw  
Second row: Jessica Woods, Carlos Ferreira, Jackson Faulkner, Paul Doughty

# Steve Wilcox Retires



*President Rick Lonergan hands Steve Wilcox the gold watch*



*Above, L to R : Joyce, Darren, Carole, Steve, Harold, Tom and Rick.*



*Left: Lema gives Steve a going-away hug.*

# Union Works

*By Monica Menner*

**Customer Issues/Complaints:** Many of us are being called into meetings for ridiculous customer complaints, such as using the washroom, following the Highway Traffic Act, or asking a customer for a fare when they board our bus after we've left the doors closed to go and use the washroom. Supervisors are being directed to take phoned in complaints to the door of the complainants for signatures. The word from above is: 'The Customer is always right, even if the driver is right – the driver is wrong'. The first question EVERYONE needs to ask when being approached is: **Could this lead to discipline?** If the answer is yes, ask for a union rep. If the answer is no, get it in writing! If you can't get it in writing, call your union rep.

*Taken from an Arbitration Ruling (Ontario Liquor Boards Employees' Union v. Ontario (Liquor Control Board of Ontario), 2002: "First the employee must be made aware, in advance, of the purpose of the meeting. Second, the employee must be made aware, in advance, of his/her right to union representation at the meeting. Third, the employee is entitled to have a union representative at such meeting provided that does not result in undue delay."*

Our contract under [article 12.1a](#)) states:

**Where a union representative is requested, a union representative will be present.**

**D2:** Members in this department are being subject to reprisals when they stand up for unsafe or impractical work procedures. This form of bullying is unacceptable. Please inform the union executive within five [5] days of all incidences of this type of behaviour occurring.

**A motion was passed** at the March Union Meeting to restructure our committees in

*(See Union Works on page 28)*

(Union Works from page 27)

accordance with the National Constitution. [This motion](#) includes committee terms of reference to be posted for the general membership during elections and a copy to be kept in our local's library. Those who would like to run for a committee position in our upcoming elections are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the duties and responsibilities of the committee they wish to run for.

**Scheduling Facts:** We have gained 159 new members from 2007-2009 as a result of increased service. The majority of service increases (additional buses on the road) have taken place to meet demands during peak periods, this is why we are seeing so many splits, longer spread times and later finishes. The changes to the bid lists are a result of management 'cost-cutting'. **In the spring** sign-up, the colleges and universities are finished at the end of April. Our sign-up continues until June. Management cuts the runs to save money and provide the least disruption of schedules as a result of the reduced service. **In the summer** the bid lists are changed again as a result of reduced service. **In the fall** we see changes because service has picked up again as a result of the universities and colleges. **In the winter** the bid lists change as a result of service adjustments made based on the ability of the fall schedule to meet the service demand. There is no such thing as "My Group". **Groups change every sign-up as a result of service changes and cost cutting measures.** When members take their scheduling issues directly to management, the scheduling committee is not made aware of your problems. **The proper protocol is to take your scheduling issues to your scheduling committee.** If the scheduling committee is not made aware of the issues, they cannot function effectively or present the issues to our executive to suggest negotiation items. *Scheduling Terms of Reference are posted*



*on the [committees page](#) of our website for those who would like to know what the duties of this committee are.*

**Communication:** Many of the problems that occur in an organization are the direct result of people failing to communicate. Faulty communication causes the most problems. It leads to confusion and can cause a good plan to fail. As a local with more than 500 members, communication is paramount to our successes and failures particularly when it comes to enforcing our contract. [Article 10.1 of our contract](#), under Step 1 of the grievance procedure states: **Such grievance shall be discussed with the Assistant Manager or nominee, within five (5) days after the circumstances giving rise to the complaint having occurred.** In other words, we only have five days to raise the issue of a contract violation. *Notify your union representatives within 5 days of a contract violation occurring. Notify your union representatives within 5 days if you're not sure a contract violation has occurred. Any time a work conversation takes place with any member of management, notify a union representative.* **YOU ARE THE UNION.** Read your contract, it is a legally binding agreement. Those are your rights – protect them!

**Questions to Ponder:** Considering that our contract expires at the end of this year, how important is public support to us? How likely do you think we are to get public support, in light of the unprofessionalism on the transit radio?