

# The Communicator

## Plant Chairperson's Report

Revised edition of the plant Chairperson's report from the October 22, 2006, Unit Meeting.

### Down Weeks

There have been a number of questions lately as to whether there will be additional down weeks this year? Currently we have one more down week in the schedule for the week of November 20, 2006. The market continues to remain soft for our products with orders coming in at a very slow pace. Could there be more down weeks before the end of the year? The Company states there are no plans currently, but anything is possible. Anybody that has been in this business for an extended period of time will tell you that things can change on a moments notice. In the past we have been told in the morning that there were no layoffs and reported such to the floor, only to be told several hours later that the schedule has changed and we will be facing layoffs. The same applies to down weeks being changed. We were originally scheduled for two down weeks in October. They were changed to November and then split to one week in October and one week in November. Do not make arrangements around potential down weeks, as they can change on a moments notice. The Plant does not have much control over what weeks will be down weeks. They may offer suggestions but the final decision is made in Detroit. If there are changes we will notify the Membership.

### Saturdays

There were lots of questions as to why we were working a Saturday with the following week being a layoff week? We posed the same question to Plant Management based on the fact that sales are slow and the number of cars in the field is high. Their response was we are scheduled to build 1,367 cars per day. The Plant budget is based on us making our build. If we lose production then it has to be made up before the end of the month. In the past lost production had to be made up before the end of the quarter, this has changed now to monthly. With the Plant returning to work on October 30, there were

no more Saturdays left in the month to make up the lost production. The same question was also posed to the folks in Detroit who also said we have to make up lost production and let the sales department take care of selling them. We were asked as to why would we, as a Union allow the Company to schedule the Saturday before a down week. The Company is well within their contractual rights. It may not be the right thing to do to schedule a Saturday before a layoff week but as a Union we cannot stop the Company from building cars.

### Packages

**The numbers of retirement packages that we are entitled to is now finalized at twenty-four. There will be a deadline of December 31, 2006 as the retirement date for those accepting the package. As I have mentioned in previous reports these packages are created as a result of job loss due to automation. We will be scheduling information sessions for those entitled. More information will follow as details are finalized.**

Another issue that has come up with the limited amount of packages is: are the packages offered based on Plant Seniority or Corporate Seniority? In the past we have had the luxury of having more packages than we have had takers, no issue, this time around we may see a shortage as we have 107 members who meet the thirty and out criteria. We have consulted with the National Union and have been told that the way it has been handled through the rest of the Big Three is Plant Seniority as per the language in the P&M agreement. **Since writing this report and having further discussions with the National Union the ruling is that packages will be awarded by Plant Seniority as per Contractual Language. The Etobicoke Casting Plant is currently going through the same process with the packages being awarded by Plant Seniority. This is also true for the packages they offered in 2005. Windsor Assembly has followed the same procedure with past packages**

**they offered, and with the current packages they have negotiated to offset the job loss with their new paint shop. GM and Ford who we pattern bargain with also follow the same language.**

### **Layoffs**

Currently we have 143 junior members on layoff. The question has been asked if there could be more layoffs. This is all based on plant numbers, currently we are running to roll. The number of people in the Plant changes with members coming and going on a regular basis. Plant numbers rise or fall daily. Several years ago the Plant had an allowance for over roll conditions. This is no longer true, given the cuts we are facing today. We are looking at completing round two of **Union Awareness** in the next couple of months and could potentially see some layoffs as a result. Round three of Union Awareness will not be ready to run until well into 2007. We still have over 240 members who have refused to attend. The Company has been scheduling members who have refused and locking out their access cards which saw attendance rise. **A reminder to those that are refusing to attend: You are taking away work from junior members who could use the extra four weeks work (based on 60 participants per week) with Christmas coming up.** Union Awareness is an excellent program, I have sat through it myself; those that have been skeptical in the past and sat though the course have come away with a new perspective.

### **Leadership Training**

There have been a number of concerns raised recently by members that Union Leadership were taking advantage of the down weeks to attend training programs in Port Elgin rather than taking the layoff. The courses that are being taught during the layoff week were posted in June of this past year well before the layoff weeks were announced. The majority of programs that are taught in Port Elgin are developed mainly for Union Leadership and Union Activists as an education tool. Leadership is given first opportunity for the vast majority of all courses. Some of the courses that are being taught for the fall session are Stress- The Workplace Hazard, Environment - Workplace, Building Activism, Grievance Handling, Collective Bargaining, Health and Safety, Time Study-General, Several WCB courses etc. There are a number of these courses scheduled for the next down week in November and we will have Union Leadership in these classes also. One thing that we

have experienced in the past couple of years is a huge problem with getting Union LOA's approved. With the Plant experiencing down weeks we have the opportunity to send more Leadership to Port Elgin and we will take full advantage of the opportunity. With more down weeks in the schedule we will also have members from the shop floor attending courses during down weeks. What we have also experienced in the past was that once someone's waiting period was served they were more reluctant to attend the programs during a down week, as they would get EI and SUB for the week. The more people we send to Port Elgin during down weeks the less money that is coming out of our Sub Fund, as wages are drawn from the PEL or Health & Safety Fund.

### **Auto Council**

I recently attended Auto Council in Toronto with delegates coming from the top Union Leadership within the Big Three and chaired by our National President. Updates were provided on the Canadian Auto Sector of our Union with not a lot of good news to report.

The recent restructuring announcement from Ford indicated that they will be closing an Engine Plant in Windsor. Along with cuts previously announced, they will see a loss of 2,000 jobs from their Canadian operations. Oakville fared well with the launch of the all new Ford Edge and MKX. St. Thomas will also add the Lincoln Town car to its line up but are still only operating on one shift. Ford announced a third quarter loss of \$5.8 billion and may see a greater loss for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

General Motors is still proceeding ahead with the \$740 million dollar investment at their Oshawa facility. They will launch the Camaro in 2008 along with other products to be announced. Meanwhile there is no new product for the GM Windsor and St Catherine's facilities. They are currently lobbying for the next generation of transmissions. Their Cami Plant in Ingersoll is doing relatively well with the Chevrolet Equinox and Pontiac Torrent and will launch an SUV for Suzuki. GM announced a 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter loss of 115 million dollars as a result of special charges primarily associated with the reorganization of bankrupt Delphi Corp, its largest parts supplier. Excluding the charge, GM had adjusted net income of \$529 million for the quarter.

DaimlerChrysler, not to be outdone, had to take 140,000 units out of the build for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter to offset declining sales and rising dealer inventory

with more reductions to come in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. Windsor Assembly is gearing up for the launch of the next generation of Mini Vans in 2007 and is expected to see substantial job loss with the launch. Etobicoke is still facing the threat of being phased out of the casting business as a result of not being able to compete in a global market. Then there is Brampton Assembly which saw sales decline drastically, dealer inventory on the rise and down weeks being the growing trend. Industry analysts suggest that if the trend continues long term, the third shift at our Plant may be in jeopardy. We have not had any discussions with the Corporation regarding the 3<sup>rd</sup> shift being in jeopardy. With the rumours being circulated we have asked the question, only to be told that there are no plans currently to eliminate the third shift. We are still waiting on the announcement that we will be building the Dodge Challenger. We are in need of some good news.

DaimlerChrysler showed a profit of \$686 million with strong sales from the Mercedes-Benz division, while the Chrysler division had a \$1.48 billion loss. With the loss announcement, Chrysler Group President and Chief Executive Officer Tom LaSorda projects that there will be tough cuts to come. Stay tuned.

### Sub Fund

With the down weeks that we are experiencing at our Plant, at Windsor (six layoff weeks so far this year) and Etobicoke, questions have been raised regarding the condition of the Sub Fund. Currently the Sub Fund is broke. We do have several other funds that we draw from including the Advanced Credit Account. This account still has approximately \$35 million in it. Given the current state of the Fund, with the layoffs that are scheduled in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2007 the projections are that there will be no Sub for those with less than 5 years corporate service. For members with 5 years corporate service or more the Sub payments are guaranteed with the rate of cancellation of credit units being one for each week of benefits collected. **We will be having ongoing discussions with the Company to try and come up with other monies to offset the Sub Fund shortage.** We will keep you informed.

**In Solidarity  
Leon Rideout**

## LX Enthusiasts Meet



It might have been cold outside, but that was not going to keep the more than 20 LX enthusiasts away from a meet & greet on Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. The first stop was at a local coffee shop here in Brampton so everyone had the opportunity to get a drink, chat about modifications, take pictures, and brag. After an hour we headed to the Brampton Assembly Plant for a group shot of the owners and their vehicles. These folks are more than just customers in my eyes. I've never had so much fun with a group of people before and made a lot of new lasting friendships. Several were very interested in the production process, asked me which job I performed on the line, and got sentimental about being at the "birth" place for their LX. I heard, on more than one occasion, numerous people say that they appreciate what we do here, think that we build one of the best damn vehicles around, and have one of the strongest followings. Keep doing what you're doing BAP! We've got a winner here.

If you are interested in getting involved with this enthusiastic group let me know at extension 2982 or email me at [daytonalx@cogeco.ca](mailto:daytonalx@cogeco.ca) or logon to <http://www.lxforums.com>.

**In Solidarity,  
Lindsay Winfield  
Proud owner of Top Banana #11**

### **IMPORTANT E.I. CLAIM FILING INFORMATION**

**Anyone who had opened a claim within the last 51 weeks prior to the layoff and went online to file a claim for the layoff week should have filed the claim as an existing claim and not a new claim. If you filed the claim as a new claim then you must contact the E.I. Office at 1-800-206-7218 and inform E.I. that you already have an existing claim. This has to be done within 30 days of filing or your claim will not be processed.**

## Report Job Related Injuries

- If you hurt yourself as a result of your job, or if you have an accident in the workplace, make sure you report it immediately to both your supervisor and the plant medical centre.
- If you have a gradual onset injury, that is, an injury which takes place over time, provide the names, (both first **and last**, and phone numbers) of your co-workers who are aware of your injury. This is especially important where your pain has come on slowly, and has progressively gotten worse.
- All too often, injured workers do not report their pain immediately (as you **need** to do). Many people say they thought the pain would go away, especially when they're on a new job, and believe the job takes some "getting used to."
- When the pain does not go away, and, in fact, may be getting worse, you decide to finally report it. However, the employer and the WSIB may not believe the injury happened and is related to your job, since you've waited so long to report the injury.
- However, you may have complained to your co-workers, who would be aware of your ongoing problems from what you've told them, or from what they have observed. Get a written statement from them to help prove your injury to the WSIB (Workplace Safety & Insurance Board).
- Ask your co-workers to document your complaints, when and how often you complained, and the nature of the injury (sore right shoulder, pain in your left elbow, etc. There have been a number of legitimate claims which have been denied, because the WSIB states that proof of accident has not been established.

Questions? Claim denied by the Board? You can appeal, and we can help. Contact the C.A.W. Worker's Compensation office at (905) 458 – 2878, or toll free at 1-800-463-3558, ext. 2878 – we're here to help. For the midnight shift sisters and brothers, there is someone in this office on Mondays at 5:30 am. For other arrangements, please call.

**In solidarity,  
Annelle Leblanc & Rab McLarnon  
CAW Area WSIB Representatives**

## Some Quick Facts

- The next Brampton Assembly Plant Unit Meeting will be held on Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am at the Union Hall, 23 Regan Road.
- The Local 1285 Children's Christmas Party will be held at the Pearson Convention Centre: 2683 Steeles Ave. East on Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm.
- The Local 1285 Web site is [www.cawlocal.ca/1285](http://www.cawlocal.ca/1285). Click on "labour links" to link to the CAW Auto Insurance Site, or EI Filing instructions, or In-Plant Job Postings.
- The Social Club Christmas Dance will be held on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>.

## Take Your Kids to Work Day



On Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, at 6:30 in the morning, eighty-two, bleary-eyed grade nine students reported to the "**Take Your Kids to Work Day**" program at the Brampton DaimlerChrysler Plant. When we asked "*are you awake?*" Moans, groans and yawns were the answer.



The thirty-four students who arrived for the afternoon session were definitely more awake. But as the evening progressed, we could see that they were feeling the effects of the late hour.

The Plant Manager, Alberto Gonzales, and Union Chairpersons, Leon Rideout, Danielle Billo and John Breslin (Duane Reay) took time out of their

busy schedule to welcome and share a few words of wisdom with our visitors.



During their day, the students learned about the importance of safety (wherever they might work), staying in school, equity and youth in an organization. They were introduced to DaimlerChrysler's products and "***We build awesome cars!***" The "plant tour", "mock assembly line" and "hands on testing" were some of the highlights of the program. After their visit, they had a better understanding of the Brampton Assembly Plant and "Assembly Line work".



For some the best part of the day was making new friends and the e-mail addresses they took home.



This year's visitors were enthusiastic and exceptionally well behaved. I hope they had fun while they learned about what their parents do at work.



The following people are to be thanked for their participation and for helping to make the program a success:

Phil Allison, Steve McGitchie, Laurie Fellows  
John Fallis, James Winfield, Dave Worthmann  
Janice Black, Linda Thompson, Ron Oswald  
Mike Allen, Ken Healey, Chris Linger  
Reg Barrett, Trevor Solowoniuk, Mark Stoehr  
Karen Evely, Tom Bauer, Sandra Kirby  
Phyllis Foster, Kol Sodhi, Joe Coyle  
Louis Battista, Wally Skrzydlewski, Bill Craig  
Local 1285 - gifts for students

Dupont - token for students

Thank you to ***Thomas and the Cafeteria Staff*** for the meals and snacks.

***Lance Alexander, Bill Turner, Ardis Snow*** and ***Terry Browne*** deserve "***a special thank-you***" for their extra assistance with the preparation as well as their participation in the program.

**In Solidarity,  
Cammie Peirce**



## Remembrance

By Bradley McIlwain

The sky was black,  
Of smoke and sorrow –  
A cloud that seemed to hover,  
And surrounded every man;

Their heads half massed,  
For their fallen brother,  
Who'd fought with courage,  
Honour and respect –

Their eyes searching  
For the simple reason, why?  
Trapped and alone, each  
Suffering inside, wounded  
In their own right –

But they pressed on, hard as ever  
Into the darkened night –  
The guns exploding filled the air,  
Smell of gunpowder and pulsing fear

But they did not give,  
And they did not bend –  
They'd found among them,  
That reason why,

When that moment of truth  
Had shone before them  
In the light of our flag –  
Radiating into the hearts of all

The path to freedom, kept each alive –  
Our friends, our family, our brothers  
And our fathers they were –  
Proud and strong, without cause to yield;

Our heroes lie, in Flanders Fields,  
But alive and alight within our hearts;  
At this hour of remembrance,  
We remember forever,

Those who stood on guard for thee.

## Cigar Insurance

A Charlotte, NC, man having purchased a case of very rare, very expensive cigars insured them against fire among other things. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of cigars and without having made even his first premium payment on the policy, the man filed a claim against the insurance company.

In his claim, the man stated the cigars were lost "in a series of small fires". The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason that the man had consumed the cigars in the normal fashion. The man sued.... and won.

In delivering the ruling the judge agreeing that the claim was frivolous, stated nevertheless that the man held a policy from the company in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable and also guaranteed that it would insure against fire, without defining what it considered to be "unacceptable fire", and was obligated to pay the claim.

Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process the insurance company accepted the ruling and paid the man \$15,000 for the rare cigars he lost in "the fires". After the man cashed the check, however, the insurance company had him arrested on 24 counts of arson. With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used against him, the man was convicted of intentionally burning his insured property and sentenced to 24 months in jail and a \$24,000 fine.

**Have a question, issue or concern that you want addressed? Have an announcement to be made? Not sure if there's any truth to the Rumour of the Day?**

Write it down and put it in a suggestion box, located on top of the blue kiosks/news stands or you can contact

Bill Turner, or John Fallis, CAW  
Communications at:

In-Plant extension 2759  
Out of Plant (905) 458 - 2759  
E-mail

**[wt14@daimlerchrysler.com](mailto:wt14@daimlerchrysler.com)**