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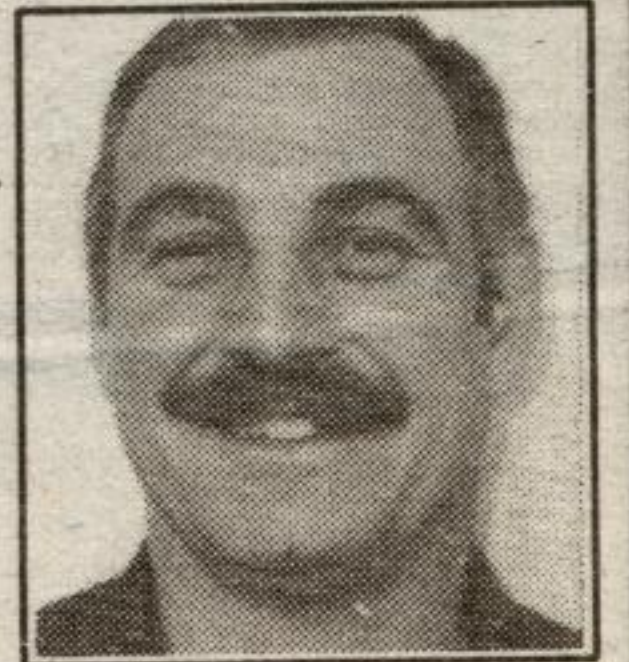


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STEVE

# N.Y. thief nabs Acton buses

BY PAUL NOLAN  
 The Acton Tanner

Unbelievable, but it's true. An Acton tour company had its customized bus stolen on a recent sightseeing trip to New York. Denny's Bus Lines then sent down another bus and driver to transport its 45 tourists around the Big Apple. Sure enough, that bus also vanished.

"It's really an amazing story," said Sue Burt yesterday (Tuesday). Burt is the dispatcher at Denny's, located on Hwy. 24, north of Acton.

A group from Sacred Heart church in Guelph chartered the bus for a seven-day trip which left for New York City on July 17.

The first coach was stolen overnight from the parking lot at the Quality Inn in Lyndhurst, New Jersey. Driver Doris Swackhamer didn't know the vehicle had been taken until the morning of July 18, when she walked out of the motel with her would-be passengers.

"They had a tour scheduled on the 18th, so we rented a Blue Bird bus for them down there," explained Burt.

"The another local bus driver, Wendy Ellis, drove down another one of our buses; she left for New York immediately."

After she arrived, Wendy evidently put on her super-sleuth cap

and went to work.

"We recovered the first bus on July 23, only because Wendy was in a restaurant, talking to another bus driver," explained Burt. "He said his bus was recently stolen from a Holiday Inn."

Wendy followed up a hunch and phoned that Holiday Inn. When hotel staff checked outside, they found the Denny's bus sitting in the parking lot, stripped of its VCR, stereo and CB radio.

"People had left personal belongings on the bus, but none of that was taken," said Burt.

That's not the end of the story. "My pager went off at 6 am on July 20, the last day of the trip. I called Doris in New Jersey and she said that bus number 2 was gone!" recalled Burt.

"We immediately hired another bus to get the people home, and they actually arrived back here right on schedule."

The second bus finally turned up on Friday.

"A guy phoned me from an upholstery shop in Rutherford, New Jersey. Someone had stolen a bus he was working on and left our bus in his lot.

"We flew Wendy back down right away. She brought the bus — stripped of its VCR and radios — back home for good."

And yes, Denny's will be sending bus tours to the Big Apple in the future.

"We just sent another group down this weekend," said Burt. "But so far, so good!"



## NICE LEGS, GUYS!

A dozen "in-drag" contestants competed in the Smallwood Acres Camp Tramp pageant on Sunday afternoon. The campground, located on the west side of Fairy Lake, has staged the popular event for the past five years and this summer's queen is "Rosie" (middle, left photo). "It was a great crowd; three-quarters of the campers were there to watch," explained Muriel White, co-owner of the park. "And everybody had cameras!" (Lori Frechette photos)



## Phone scam

Police are warning Acton residents to beware of a "telephone scam" being conducted by an operation calling themselves Unity Premiere House of Montreal.

According to police, "seniors and others," have been phoned and told that they have won a prize. They are asked to forward money to cover taxes on the prize.

Further details are in Const. Bill Riddle's column on Page 8.

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Parent with up to 3 juniors 16 & under all play for 1/2 price.