

OPEN HOUSE BICYCLE SYSTEM STUDY

The Town of Markham is currently conducting a study as part of the development of a town-wide bicycle system to serve both recreational and commuter needs. A preliminary bicycle network has been developed consisting of both on and off-road cycling routes. These proposed cycling routes will link residential areas to recreational and employment areas.

As part of the on-going work, the Town is now seeking public input to the concepts and features of the consultants proposals.

You are cordially invited to attend the open houses to review the proposals and provide your comments. For further information, contact Tom Kliem, Engineering Department, (905) 477-7000, extension 286.

Saturday, April 18, 1998
Fortinos Super Mall
1661 Denison Street
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

or
Thornhill Square
300 John Street
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sunday April 19, 1998
Markville Shopping Centre
5000 Highway 7 East
1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.



THE TRIBUNE Comment & Opinions

The Tribune is a member of the Ontario Press Council



Ice highway drivers are a special breed

Driving in winter is no great thrill for most Canadians. It's hard enough to dodge traffic jams and nutcake drivers in good weather. When you have to fret about black ice and white outs, a lot of us would like to hang up the car keys until say, late April.

That's not the way it is in Yellowknife. A lot of drivers up in the capital city of the Northwest Territories can't wait for the real cold weather. Professional drivers, I'm talking about. Long-distance truckers and heavy-load haulers. The dead of winter is their busiest season.

That's when, in a silence usually broken only by the croak of ravens and the howling of wolves, you hear the growl of 18-wheelers — whole convoys of them — snaking out across the land. Well, across the water, actually. They are taking advantage of ice roads to deliver thousands of tons of cargo deep into the Canadian hinterland.

The ice roads only last for about three months. The ice isn't thick enough before Christmas and it's too risky by early April. So the truckers get just 11 or 12 weeks to scout their cargoes from Yellowknife into remote fly-in mines and camps. Once the ice roads melt, all supplies have to come in by float plane and that's horrendously expensive.

Ice driver is a dangerous job. It's risky enough to drive through wilderness. When you have to do it in a lumbering vehicle on a layer of ice that as far as you know is at least three feet thick.

You begin to see why many drivers don't make it through even the short season. For those who do, the money is good, but the hours are incredibly long and the stress never goes away.

They have to watch for pressure ridges and canbou bumps — the frozen carcasses of dead caribou that freeze and weld themselves to the ice so thoroughly that they can snap the blade on a snowplow — or the axle on an 18-wheeler. Drivers also have to watch (and listen) for cracks in the ice they're driving on. Blue cracks are okay. If they show white, get the hell out of there — but slowly!



Basic Black

Arthur Black

Any trucker who tries to highball it back to safety is practically committing suicide. Heavy trucks created a huge undulating wave in the water under the ice. If a truck comes to shore too fast, the underwater wave it's pushing rebounds from the shore with enough force to explode the ice between the truck and dry land.

And down you go.

Despite precautions, trucks go through the ice with some regularity. That's why many drivers refuse to close their doors when they're on the ice. It's also why the companies forbid their drivers to wear seat belts. When you're in the cab of an 18-wheeler going through the ice, every second counts.

Marvin Robinson knows the feeling. He's the president of RTL Robinson Enterprises Limited. He knows what it's like to lose one through the ice. Robinson's hands are big and meaty like a hockey player and the tips of his fingers will never be confused with those of a Bay Street stockbroker. His fingernails are misshapen and gnarled. That would be from the time the truck he was driving along the Mackenzie River started to go down and Robinson jumped out — right into an open patch of fast-moving water.

Seconds away from being swept under the ice to his certain death, Robinson clawed and wriggled like a madman, somehow managing to break the rivers grip and haul his body up on the frozen ice.

Luckily, he had very little feeling left in his hands, which meant he couldn't feel the pain caused by the fact that he'd nipped almost all of his fingernails off. It's a tough business, but Robinson is still in it, even though he's gone through the ice at least a dozen more times. Why does he do it? It pays well, the challenge is undeniable, and he's providing an essential service.

SPRING SERVICE SPECIALS

<p>SPRING SERVICE CLINIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oil & filter change 52 point inspection Free engine shampoo Free washer fluid top-up <p>\$39.99*</p>	<p>SPRING TUNE-UP SPECIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace spark plugs • Check air filter • Check cap & rotor • Check PVC • Check & set base idle • Scan check computer (if applicable) <p>\$59.99*</p>	<p>BILSTEIN ENGINE OIL FLUSH SPECIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't just change your oil. Restore engine efficiency with The Bilstein Engine Flush System <p>\$79.99*</p>								
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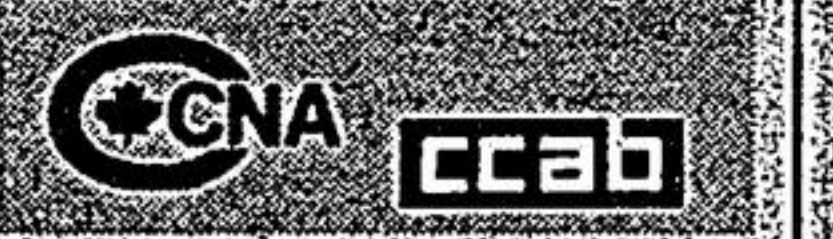
Vivian O'Neil
Business Manager

Pamela Nichols
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about us

News
(905) 640-2100
Retail sales
(905) 640-2100
Classifieds
(905) 640-2874
Distribution
(905) 640-2100
Fax
(905) 640-5477
E-Mail
thetrib@istar.ca
6244 Main St.,
Stouffville, Ont.
L4A 1E2

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