

REMEMBER last spring, when I wrote about finally busting out of the hospital after being quarantined for three weeks and my lodge mate John and I went on an adventure and I revealed some of the interesting things that happened along the way?

Luke Soup

by Luke Anderson



Well, this article also involves John and an interesting situation that we got ourselves into. After an appointment at the Lodge, I bumped into John who was also finishing up an appointment. We got caught up on the latest happenings and decided to wheel down to the bus stop together.

John let me in on a different bus route that is more direct and doesn't involve transfers so I let him lead the way. After a five-minute wheel we crossed a busy street and waited for the bus, which was one of the newer style accessible buses.

Older buses have crazy lifts that creak and groan as they raise you four and a half feet in the air. Once you reach the top, a narrow walkway must be negotiated before you park in the accessible seating area. The newer ones are much lower and "kneel" before a ramp folds down and out like a red carpet. Manoeuvring around on them is much easier. However on this particular day it wasn't the bus that was giving us a hard time, it was a passenger.

The bus arrived, the doors swung open and the driver greeted us with a friendly smile. John boarded first and I followed. The wheelchair area is located at the front, with seats on either side which fold up to make room and the driver usually comes back to make sure everything is OK and ask whether or not we want to be strapped in.

The tricky part is that in order to face the front we have to do a 180 degree turn and then parallel park into the wheelchair area. Sometimes the procedure can be difficult if there are a lot of passengers, since the turning radius, on my wheelchair at least, is quite big. Remember the article about my run-in with, or more appropriately my run-over with, the shiny black leather shoe?... enough said.

Some people were sitting on the fold up seats in the wheelchair area and were politely asked to move to the back of the bus, which they did willingly. John completed his turn and began parallel parking, but didn't have quite enough room as he lightly backed into a man's leather bag. He tried to park one more time, assuming the man would move himself or at least his bag for the second attempt, but instead he

bumped into the bag again. John turned back to face the man and patiently asked him to make room by either moving the bag or standing up and stepping aside while John parked his chair. I expected the man to apologize for his daydreaming and willingly do as John had asked but

my jaw hit the ground as the man replied, "No, I don't want to move... I don't have to".

Everyone reacted as I had; except John, who was instantly outraged at this man's response and rightly so. He again asked the man to move, this time addressing him in very colourful language. By this time all eyes were focused on the situation and a female passenger joined John in the yelling match.

But no matter what was said, the man wasn't going to move. The driver didn't waste much time coming to the scene, possibly for fear that things could have turned violent. He began asking what the big deal was, saying "Just get up for a few seconds and let the guy park his chair".

"I don't have to move, I don't need to... he can get in without me having to move," was the man's response. Shaking his head and turning red in the face, the bus driver then asked the man to get off the bus. He refused to budge.

Slowly letting out his breath, the driver headed back to his seat and made a call. I'd be surprised if the person on the other end of the line heard anything because the bus sounded like the audience on an episode of *The Price is Right* when a contestant turns to the crowd for answers!

Within 10 minutes, four officers arrived and forcibly escorted the man with the bag off the bus while the passengers erupted with loud cheers and applause. The bus had been stopped for nearly 25 minutes and some people had gotten off, but most had stayed to watch.

The driver filled out a report with one of the officers while everyone on the bus waited and talked about what had happened. I spent the rest of the trip trying to figure out why the man with the leather bag acted the way he did.

How could someone be so inconsiderate? Was he tripping out on some drug? Maybe he wasn't mentally stable. Whatever the case may be I would like that man to spend a day in a chair like mine. Maybe then he would lose his ignorant and inconsiderate attitude.

Red Hats hen party

Members of Stouffville's Whistle Stop chapter of the Red Hat Society are not chicken when it comes to helping others.

"Despite our mandate to just have fun, we took a moment to discuss how we could best spread our goodwill at this festive time of the year," explained Queenie, aka Thelma McDonald, the founder of this group of nattily attired ladies. "One of the girls had the World Vision Christmas catalogue and she thought it would be neat if we each chipped in some money to buy chickens."

They invested in some appropriately named Road Island Reds, which will be given to a family in one of the communities served by World Vision. According to the catalogue, "The gift of two hens and a rooster can start a whole brood of chicks that will provide eggs, meat and a source of steady income for years to come. This group of breeding chickens can help a struggling orphan family become healthy and self-reliant."



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