

Opinion

By Hilary Jocelyn

Valley Voices

Reflections from Transcollines bus 921

I really enjoy going to work. I leave the house eagerly, while the stars are still bright in the sky, and I walk to the car in the gleam of the snow. I clutch my early morning cup of tea as I set off along the dark laneway. Fifteen minutes later, I arrive in the parking lot of the Wakefield Community Centre. In the dark, I see people gather as they shuffle out of their warm cars into the cold morning. There is a low murmur of voices as, half awake, we greet each other, sleepily. Suddenly comes the moment we have been waiting for – the no. 921 Transcollines Bus arrives. It is 7:06 a.m.

We all pile on. I pay my modest fare – about the same as the price of a Chai Latte at Molos. We sit randomly beside each other and settle in. Slowly the magic happens. Quietly and unceremoniously, we become a community of bus travellers. People start to talk to each other. Connections are made, laughter is heard, and knitting ideas are shared.

We meet old friends, neighbours, people we may have seen

around somewhere else, and we get to know them better. We meet new people. We put names to faces. We learn things about our fellow passengers. We are “Bus Buddies”, and so we celebrate joys, mourn sadnesses, and have interesting adventures together.

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Talking of joys, one of the bus travelers was retiring, and so on her last day we had a goodbye party for her on the bus on the way to work. Finger food and liquid refreshments were served. Can you imagine such a thing ever happening on a city bus? At other times, we have reached out to one another or sent cards of condolences when there is loss, ill health or injury, and offered a supportive listening ear when needed.

And of course, any of you

who have seen the picture for the month of July in the wonderful Wakefield Nude Calendar will know what I mean when I say adventures. How many people get to parade naked around the Wakefield Community Centre parking lot?

Here’s five good reasons for taking the bus: 1. You have no cares about bad weather, car issues, road rage or traffic stresses; 2. You get to give the sunrise the awe it deserves without thinking about distracted driving; 3. You are contributing to a greener society by embracing the concept of public transport; 4. You are almost always in good time for work because the bus is reliable and feels secure as it speeds along at a good clip; 5. (This is surely the icing on the cake) You are surrounded by a community of amazing people who really help to make going to work enjoyable.

Come and join us. I promise you, you don’t have to get naked.

Hilary Jocelyn is from Lascelles and rides the 921 bus.

A locally owned weekly newspaper without political affiliation serving the Gatineau Hills since 1973.

THE Low Down

TO HULL & BACK NEWS

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Advertising Deadlines:

Display ads: Noon Friday, Classifieds: Noon Monday



Funded by the
Government
of Canada

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