

# The Rock Solid News

LITTLE ROCK FARM *Trucking*

## YOU'RE INVITED



### SEE INSIDE

#### Random Thoughts with Ray Pennington

To Lose friends, just tell them something for their own good... Someone who keeps repeating a promise probably intends to break it... The roughest detours often have the fewest billboards... Marriage is an expensive way to get free advice... Almost being caught makes fish bigger... Mules and men make least headway when they're kicking... Middle age is when many of the numbers in your little black book are for doctors... Nothing is longer gone than one minute ago... Girls sometimes use old flames to fire up new boyfriends... Every husband has two sides, the one he knows his wife knows, and the one he doesn't know she knows.

Thanks, Ray, For Sharing!

## Marks Message - Who cares?

Most of those reading this have heard it, and some of you have said it..."who cares, it's not my problem"!

When you hear those words what kind of thoughts come to your mind?

Here's a test! Read the next two examples. After each example think about how the statement of **"who cares its not my problem"** affects you.

#### Example #1

For example, if you're truck'n down the road with another Little Rock Driver and you notice the other truck has a slack tire. Sure you can run on slack tires, but you know its going to wear the tire prematurely if is not addressed quick. You inform the driver about the slack tire and his comeback is, "Who cares its not my problem! The shop can look at it when I get back."

#### Example #2

You're coming out from the

mall, as you near your car you observe the driver of a car next to yours open their door smacking your car a good one! You hear somebody from the passenger side, "Look what you did!" You hear the driver say, "Who cares, its not my problem"!

Hmm... Now how do you think?

My point is this...we all have to care. Not just for monies sake (although that is part of it) but for the sake of moral decency.

Some of today world problems are nobody cares about anybody or anything else, nor will they tolerate mistakes. It's a "gimnee gimnee" society we live in and it stinks!

Here's another example... we had a driver who screwed up and damaged the side of our trailer. It was totally that persons fault. We dealt with the

consequences of that drivers actions for two days making alternate arrangements and paying big money to rectify the problem. Hey, we all make mistakes right? So management here didn't do anything as far as reprimanding or discipline, we just wrote is off as a mistake.

Four weeks later, that same driver calls late in the day disgruntled because their dispatcher forgot to put paperwork in their slot. Yep, the dispatcher did make a mistake...but isn't it weird how when the shoe is on the other foot there is no tolerance for mistakes!

I want this company and its management to be compassionate, caring and tolerant people associated with Little Rock, but it has to work both ways!

**Most people desire to work for a reputable company. Most people don't understand...they are the company.**

## FUEL UP IN ONTARIO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Fuel here, fuel there, seems like just yesterday we are asking drivers not to fuel in Ontario. That has changed yet again. **WHY?**

The EXCHANGE RATE has everything to do with the fuel purchases. With the Canadian Dollar tumbling down into the 80 cent area. Ontario fuel is 3rd cheapest in all of North America. **NEW YORK IS THE HIGHEST!**

Top up the tanks here in Ontario. Fuel

prices are a controlled expense and we rely on drivers to choose the cheapest locations for fuel.

A memo was circulated with this information.



## Negativity Is Infectious

It's so hard to be positive in this current time. With the economy on a balance beam, it's easy to fall into the trap of feeling negative, down, discouraged, or upset with the evidence that surrounds us.



TV Talk Shows, News Media, and Newspapers are painting a bleak future. They say that a recession is caused by negativity and doubt. If too many people decide to think one way, the economy turns to the same direction in which everyone is thinking.

I, too, am having doubts and questioning routine decisions as a result of being surrounded by negativity. I know nothing in life is secure or even guaranteed. Anything I have achieved in my life is a result of wanting it bad enough to change up my life to go down the right road towards my goals.

Little Rock has restructured twice since my arrival into the office. The last restructuring came without notice. Realistically though, internally we see numbers and evidence of an economic crunch. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that changes need to happen in order to be financially responsible to best reflect the current times.

Drivers see changes too, runs are not consistent. In the long haul, re-loads harder to locate. Live Haul was affected by national processed meat scare. No one is safe from the changes that are occurring. **GEEZ... now I feel depressed that I just wrote out what I was thinking!**

It's so easy to be sucked into the negative thinking and gossip that surrounds us. Sometimes we just need a hero to stand up and point out the obvious. That hero is you. You can make or break your day. You can get up in the morning in a crusty mood determined to share it with the rest of the world only to receive the

negativity back instantly. Or you can get up thinking it's a brand new day and try to be upbeat, even if you fake it at first. You are deciding your day with your own actions.

You may think this is strange, but the act of smiling changes your day because the muscles used releases some energy within you. Ever noticed that someone that smiles tends to be more well liked? In fact, I practice this on the way into work... there I am on Highway 4 with my dance music bee bopping away intentionally over smiling to change my mood and the day ahead of me. I am more prone to laugh easier and enjoy my day.

Have you ever noticed that when you don't want something to occur and you keep thinking of what you don't want... that it actually comes to you anyway... ever think that is because your negative thinking causes it to appear?

Ask for what you want and instead of what you don't want. It's not as easy as you might think. When you start to think a negative thought, try to think of the opposite keeping the thought positive in nature. Keeping it positive changes your attitude and/or mindset.

Many people believe that everything happens for a reason. There are life lessons in virtually every decision. In this troubled time, maybe there is a positive to all this negativity. What the lesson might be at this time is cloudy but one day in the future we will look back and see the exact reasons and what we learned from it.

Until then, hope for the best and focus on the things that at going right and be grateful for it.

## Zero Tolerance

Sandy would like us to know about the ZERO TOLERANCE at the Windsor and Sarnia Scales. You know these scales... they are super complexes geared to look at everything.

The inspection stations are showing a zero tolerance for virtually everything. All drivers should be making sure that their T's are crossed and I's are dotted before approaching these scales. It would be wise on your own pocket book and our finances if stopping to do a walk around before coming up to these scales.

The state of Michigan is having ZERO TOLERANCE for speeding truckers. Yes we do know that Michigan is

known for going over board when it comes to speed. Be sure to drive the speed limit in Michigan. The upside is that Michigan raised



its minimum up last year. It's too late to regret the decision to speed once one of those blue vehicles with the cherry on top is shining like a disco ball in your side mirror.

Our current rate of driver violations are at 70%. If we could cut our our

violations in Michigan, our rate would fall below 50%. The lesser the rate, the



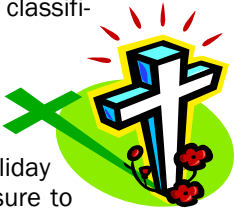
lesser the chance for random checking or chances of Little Rock being red flagged at the scales.

## Remembrance Day

According to the Federal Labour Code we follow, Remembrance Day is a legal statutory holiday for all employees of Little Rock.

Most companies we service don't observe this as a holiday and we are still open for business. What this means is that those drivers who are asked to work will receive their trip pay (if they are on a run) and will also receive 8 Hours Paid for the day. We are a 24-7 operation and employees who work on holidays are entitled to a maximum of 8 hours of pay. Time and a half or double time doesn't exist in our labour code classification.

It's Tuesday November 11th. Like any holiday we have, be sure to speak up in advance if you require this day off.



## London LRFT

It's been no secret that the automotive sector of LRFT has dwindled down. Mostly due to cost of the runs and the rising fuel prices not aligning properly to match today's current trends.

It's better to let go than to maintain customers that are causing the books to break even and in some cases costing us more money than we are receiving for a run.

Some companies we serviced have closed down as a result of the automotive sector restructuring itself. In some cases cheap freight trucking companies have taken over.

With this decision, it is with regret that the London Office will be closed. Offices cost money with rental space, trucking parking spaces, maintenance, overhead and the list goes on.

## Christmas????

**SAY WHAT???** Christmas is 6 weeks away?

Like summer holidays, first come first serve. Some have already stated their intentions for their shifts for Christmas. Christmas is a Thursday and



Friday this year.

Shipping does slow down and companies do shut down. In some cases drivers do work. Keeping in mind we are a 24-7 Operation and at the customer's request have to continue to provide service.

If you are booking holidays... it's best to speak up right away. Allow us to plan and if you wait too long, you may be disappointed.

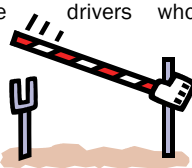
## New Truckfix Gate

Truckfix has now been more secure with a security card entrance that records access in and out of the yard.

Some drivers who use Truckfix constantly have been given a card that identifies who they are and records the times when swiped.

For those drivers who don't use Truckfix often enough to warrant a card, during business hours someone at Truckfix can open the security gate for you.

Drivers who don't have cards and are trying to enter or leave after hours must have a pin code access number to get in.



## Temperature Readings

In October we started really examining paperwork from the chicken haulers. More specifically, looking at the temperature readings taken by a driver.

During audits from CFIA, they examine why DOA counts are the way they are. They look at all aspects of driver responsibility and recordings on the paperwork to tell the story of what happened.

Each month our driver receives a chart stating their statistical data pertaining to each of their loads. A driver is only seeing a portion of that information. There is more data that is maintained but more for CFIA and internal use. With this Data we are able to show the statistics instantly separated by driver stating everything he/she has shipped within a two year period.

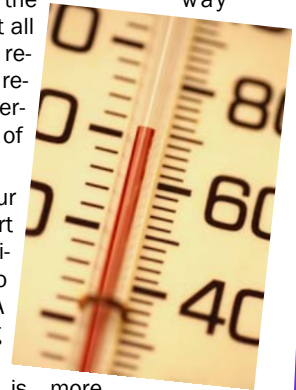
**Temperature has become a hot topic around here trying to determine if we know it will be -10 when a driver picks up, are we expecting a minimum DOA Count?** Temperature is responsible for higher DOA's. More intensively, we are looking to see if when the temperatures are -5, what is the DOA count, if it's -10 what is the DOA count and so on.

All temperature readings have now been recorded for the first month. We are able to see in a quick snap shot drivers who don't record their temperatures beyond the pick up at the farm. Most drivers are not recording their arrival temperatures at the processing plant. That information can only be done by a driver as you were there at that moment of time. It's for your own protection during questioning.

We can clearly see when drivers are just guessing temperatures randomly because their information doesn't make sense in comparison to the others that were at the farm at the same time.

We are held accountable with the humane treatment of these birds while on board our trucks. Missing data such as temperature readings open a doorway to questions. Even though you may have done the job right, missing data raises eyebrows of doubt.

By protecting yourself, you protect all of us at the same time.



## Element of Surprise

Scale houses serve many purposes and are something some truckers fear. Scale houses enforce the legal rules of the road with weights, truck conditions and legal driving limits for the driver.

Truckers who don't like to comply with the rules or the legal limits fear these scales the most. We probably all know truckers who pray before crossing a scale because their log book is not current.

Scales weren't put there to locate



the good drivers, they are there to catch the ones who take risks. **When is the last time you got a McDonald's Coupon for breakfast for doing everything right at a weigh scale?** Simply doesn't happen.

Unfortunately, if a company is caught enough times with drivers not conforming to the rules, the entire fleet is flagged as being a road risk carrier. Even if you do your job right, you might be randomly checked more frequently than you hope for. It's a team effort with all of us. Each of us stepping up and ensure we are filling out our paperwork properly and doing our safety checks reduces the amount of the random checks.

## Moving Empty Trailers Back To The Rock

Some drivers including most of the chicken haulers are asked to bring home empty trailers with them from Maple Lodge. For those outside of the chicken haul area, we do this so that the driver may leave from Walkerton and go straight to Sarnia instead of heading to Mississauga first and then over to Sarnia at the start of their work week. . It saves over 2 hours of driving time for the start of a week for a driver.

Most drivers know this and message in requesting a trailer to bring back with them. Sometimes we notify drivers and tell them to grab any available 596 crate trailer to bring with them.

There are a few drivers bringing equipment back

from Maple Lodge without contacting dispatch or receiving the order to just grab empty trailers.

With Maple Lodge not operating on a full schedule, Maple Lodge may be done with the trailer but we have the

other processing plants still operating regularly. With that, drivers have to be sure to check first because some trailers are being moved back to Walkerton prior to the chicken week being done. Thus, trailers are missing for drivers who are dispatched to use them.



## Internal Operations Downsized Two Employees

Little Rock downsized in October with letting Ann (Dispatcher of Milton) and Katherine (Night Admin, Dispatcher) go.

Ann was brought in as a pilot project to separate the Live Poultry Haul into two positions. She took on the challenges of maintaining one processing plant and the local element of the other major plant for Little Rock. It was a challenging transition to move a large portion of dispatching responsibilities to Milton.

Ann was instrumental on and off duty. Many of us know that she was just a phone call away in order to see us through our dilemmas. She could problem solve well and even found the humour in the worst of situations. She was a breathe of fresh air for Little Rock and it has been a pleasure to work with her.

Due to the economic crunch, Pat's office was closed and Pat will slide over to Milton. Pat will have new

challenges ahead of learning chicken dispatching skills.

Katherine has been with us for over a year as our Night Administration and Dispatcher. You knew you could count on her friendly voice at night to guide you along. Like all after hours dispatchers, she had other responsibilities in the office of maintaining driver compliancy and fuel reconciliation. With the shipment counts down, the job simplified itself with the lack of routines to perform. Katherine had a lot of zest and we appreciate all she did for us.

Little Rock wants to continue the after hours admin and dispatch position but adding new responsibilities such as IT Tech to modernize our computer systems. Someone who can reconcile receipts but also knows how to network computers and all the functions that come with that.

We are sorry to see you both go. We all wish you well and thank you for your services.

## Don't Know How? Please Ask Your Dispatcher

Mark says it best when he uses the word "Diversity" in reference to Little Rock. Not only has the internal operations changed up tasks with switching them here and there, the drivers, too, are switching dispatchers frequently too.

We want all our drivers to be knowledgeable in what they do. With so many drivers that have their own skills, it's sometimes difficult to realize a driver hasn't received training for something they are required to do or use while working with a particular

dispatcher.

For example, say Steve M needs you to haul a reefer, we want you to know how it works and what do if something is going wrong. You don't need to be an expert, just experienced enough to realize there's a problem and being able to identify as much of it as you can while on the road.

The chicken haul has it's own specialties as far as procedures. For example, a driver cannot



just stop and not worry about the birds on board their truck. Drivers need to know the signs of distress and what the birds can handle.

Automotive has tight time restraints that use Macros on the Satellite system for check in with the customers that MUST be recorded at the time of it happening. Failure to check in results in penalties or fines. Drivers need to know how to operate a satellite system and use the macros accordingly.

Realistically though, our drivers have been great about switching up their routines. In this economic crunch, we could all refuse to switch our tasks, but a person is more valuable if they are diverse and can bounce from one board to another.

If you are unsure about the job you are about to perform, please ask your dispatcher for advice. Other drivers can be very helpful too.

Even simple advice will make your journey easier to manage.

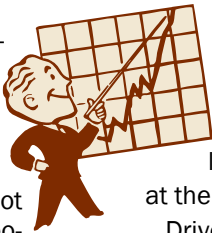
## Now That's A Response — With Thanks

I placed an information memo out about temperature recordings on the live haul paperwork for MLF.

I can't express enough how amazed that almost all drivers filled out the paperwork completely. It went from three drivers

filling out paperwork to virtually everyone within one week.

Memos are not fun to write, people read more into the memo than what is intended. Drivers have



been asking excellent questions and understanding why we are looking so carefully

at them.

Drivers realized it's not about finding drivers who are not complying, they just realized that

it's part of the job and for their own protection in case a CFIA audit were ever to take place.

Thanks so much for your positive attitude and you will see your results in the October Chicken Stats!

## Christmas Banquet and You're Invited To Come!

Friday November 28, 2008 is our Annual Christmas Feast for all Little Rock Employees.

This is an adult social gathering so please invite your spouse or one guest to join us.

We are having it at the Knox Presbyterian Church at 208 Cayley Street in Walkerton.

Social gathering starts at 6:30pm with punch and hors d'oeuvres.

Dinner will be served at 7:30pm.

Dress code is semi formal.

Please RSVP on or before Friday November 14th at noon by emailing Liz Reuber at: [kressreuber@hotmail.com](mailto:kressreuber@hotmail.com)

You can RSVP with your dispatcher as well.

Social and Dinner has been provided by Little Rock Farm Trucking and like any event we have, it's a non-alcoholic gathering.

Hope to see you there!



## FREE PHOTOGRAPHS AT Christmas Banquet!

Free Christmas Photos with your guest, group, or just yourself will be available at the Christmas Banquet. Michael will be taking the photos. Completely optional. Capture this season with your guest with a free photograph.



## Decisions — Non-Linear Thinker — Michael's Blog



I'm the kind of character where adapting to change was never easy. I would have trouble accepting a managerial change in previous jobs and would have made it hard for myself because I would believe the gossip mill instead of staying objective and forming my very own opinions.

I've come to the conclusion that everything in my life is meant to happen for a reason and that a life lesson is there to teach me something. .... But that life lesson is so hard to see when buried under a mile of paperwork or having someone breathing down your neck with no down time to reflect and think objectively.

I know I don't have all the answers and I have lived in my own skin to realize that fact. It's not cowardly, more courageous to admit that I'm not a super hero. I think it could be me in getting older where I need to sit back and let the cards fall where they may to get a better glimpse of the reality.

I had to make a decision on a Saturday after hours urgent call that came in. What I love about LRFT is that I have the power to make a decision even if the decision is perceived as wrong afterwards. It's easier to recover from a bad decision than an indecisive decision.

Let me explain further... I was sitting with a friend at their house when this urgent call came in. The driver was upset and needing a change. Knowing that there was no other solutions to choose, I told the person to leave it with me to figure out and I will get back to them shortly. In most cases, I will have the decision at the end of my finger tips and make it immediately.

My friend says, **"If you have to go and get it fixed up, then go!"**

I told him (as I sipped my tea) **"I just don't know the answer and if I overreact then it will cause more issues... I have to make a decision but I have to mull it over on the possibilities of anything that could go wrong, keep talking and a decision will come to me!"**

Within 10 minutes, the situation had resolved itself without me interfering. The person was back on track. He was happy, I was relieved and we both



got on with our lives... (well for me it's wait for the next after hours call).

My friend questioned me on how I knew that the issue would resolve itself. Fact is, I didn't. I just knew that if I overreacted, nothing would be solved and I would have gone to great lengths to resolve an issue.

My point being is that when decisions need to be made, it's so easy to get caught up in seeing a narrow point of view.



I often hear Dave, Pat, Ann and Steve talk about their dispatching skills and over hear the open dispatch discussions about ideas. **"Thinking outside The box"**, Dave

often says. However, I really honed on this while working closely with Teri. I called her a **"Non Linear Thinker!"** To see Teri think was absolutely phenomenal. She often said you can't help me because you are not inside my head to think. I agreed.

I was worried about Dave coming on board but within a week you could see he was a **"Non Linear Thinker"** too. I knew our internal change would still go through bumps and bruises but over all, he will succeed.



Dave and I spoke a few months after sitting beside him about my theory of being a **"Non-Linear Thinker"**. He's never heard of it and frankly I haven't either. I think it could be my own word to be frank. Derived from a star trek idea I have in my own head.

In Star Trek they define that space is non-linear stating there are possibilities that time or ideas don't have to be consecutive to be in order.

We age from 1–80 years of age which is a line. We travel from point A to point B in a line. Dispatchers don't follow the lines... they think like puzzle solvers... they undo some pieces that worked well together to see what happens when pieces that don't go well together are thrown into the mix. They think how it would affect the rest of what they want to achieve. Most of us would never undo a partially made puzzle because they can't find the next piece... dispatchers do that constantly.

Dispatching is a tough job with decision after decision throughout the day. One decision affecting another. Even one decision snow balling the rest of the decisions is quite common. We dislike when that happens but it comes with the job.

Michael