

Meet the people who are bringing energy, tech smarts and, fresh ideas to the trucking industry.

20 UNDER 40

By Melanie Hamel

I am on assignment. I have been entrusted with putting together the introduction for this year's **20 under 40**. I was given a sneak peek at a handful of the articles you are about to read. These young people from across Canada are dynamic, driven, and have a passion for the trucking industry.

There are a few points from this year's profiles that resonate with me. I agree with Brian Easson from Kentville, NS about the gratification that comes with meeting other young people at association events. I just completed the final module of the Ontario Trucking Association's (OTA) Next Generation Leadership program where I had the opportunity to learn valuable leadership skills alongside a passionate group of individuals.

At last year's OTA Convention, I met many of my fellow 20 Under 40's and it was refreshing to speak to other young people who are in this same business. Like Geoffrey Joseph (fellow Next Gen class of 2015) who was dropping off his kids at swimming lessons while being interviewed for his profile — they too are juggling their careers and young families.

It is an exciting time in the trucking industry. Our generation is learning so much about this business from the previous generation, but they too are learning from us. You will read about young people who have the energy, technology-smarts and fresh ideas to change the way we do business.

Bob Hancik's story was the profile that reminded me most of my family's business. Hancik started out as a one-truck operation and today, his three sons are involved in all areas. I can relate as my father, Bob Gauthier, started Seaway Express with a single truck and I have been part of the team since my first summer in University — 10 years ago.

In June, we celebrated our 25th anniversary so it is fair to say the trucking business has been a big part of our family. I cannot vouch for the Hancik boys, but our family has had many dinner table "shop talks" and has spent the odd Saturday mornings at the warehouse. Whether this year's group of 20 has grown up in the trucking business or not, the common values of integrity and hard work can be found in these profiles.

After reading this year's 20 under 40, you will be assured that the future of our industry is in good hands. Something tells me that trucking may already be in my one-year-old son's blood. When I ask him to back up so I can put his shoes on — he moves backwards while saying "Beep ... beep ... beep." Should he choose to join this business and be a part of *Today's Trucking's* 20 under 40 in year 2039, I could not be more proud.

Melanie Hamel who graduated from Carleton University with a degree in Journalism, is General Manager at *Seaway Express* of Cornwall, ON. Profiles, unless otherwise indicated were produced by **Today's Trucking Staff**.

Melanie Rioux-Desjardin



It's About People

On **Melanie Rioux-Desjardin's** fb page, there's a poster of two silhouetted people leaping off a high cliff, surrounded by spectacular clouds. It reads "The jump is so frightening between where I am and where I want to be, because of all I may become, I will close my eyes and leap."

When she was a girl growing up in the shadow of her Grand-Falls, N.B.-based family trucking company **Gilbert M.**

Rioux et fils Ltee., she thought there'd be no place in it for her. "I thought business was just about numbers, and I am not a numbers person at all."

Indeed, after finishing high school, Rioux-Desjardins earned a journalism degree and started working at the local newspaper, the Cataract. But then, just like the poster said, she jumped.

Into the family business. And found it's not just about numbers at all.

"This business is about people," the 39-year-old Vice President of Operations says, "and communication and relationships." Rioux-Desjardin started at the bottom, doing admin jobs that were being ignored and earning the trust of her colleagues. "You have to help them realize we're there to work with them and just because I'm the boss's daughter I didn't get special privileges. It's something you have to work at."

In May of this year, Rioux-Desjardins was accepted into the prestigious Entrepreneurial Leaders Program of the Wallace McCain Institute at the University of New Brunswick.

Comments Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association President Donnie Fillmore, himself an alumnus of the program: "Anyone I've ever met involved in the Wallace McCain Institute is serious about making a long-term contribution to business in the Greater Atlantic Area so she's the kind of person the industry needs to keep moving forward."

Dan Duckering



To hear **Dan Duckering** talk trucking, you would never know that his first love — and career — was horses. But whether he's running a horse-training facility or operating one of the leading transportation providers in Alberta, Duckering has acquired a reputation in business as someone who knows how to read the field and call the plays.

And indeed, it was his track record in business that spurred the call from his brother Dave, father Ken and uncles Gord and Vic to bring him in to join the family-owned-and-operated business.

"Duckering's needed a succession plan and the family decided I should be part of that."

Duckering's, with about 60 trucks and 160 trailers, is almost an Alberta institution. Founded in Red Deer in 1971 by Duckering's grandfather Clarence, Dan now jokes that a fourth generation is waiting in the wings. (He has five children.)

And, as is often the case in this industry, leadership has a lot to do with

Bound To Alberta

being proactive about safety and participating in trucking associations, in this case the Alberta Motor Truck Association (AMTA).

Dan was appointed to the AMTA board in 2005.

"At Duckering's," he says, "we promote a culture of safety, and I know other operators committed to the values of AMTA do as well. By working together to make new, best-practice resources available to the industry at large everyone wins; Duckering's wins, other fleets win — and most importantly, our clients and the people of Alberta win."

Duckering feels his philosophy, which appears to be getting it done for Duckering's, can also work for the industry as a whole. And while "don't cut corners" can mean a lot of things, to Dan Duckering it seems to mean one thing more than all others: "be a part of moving things forward." — *By Rebecca Freels*

Justin Cheverie



B.C.'s Safest Catch

For 10 years, **Justin Cheverie** was a commercial fisherman off the British Columbia coast.

"You mean like the Deadliest Catch guys?" our reporter asked.

"No," Cheverie, now the General Manager of Highway Operations at **Triton Transport**, replied. "Our job was way more dangerous. Those guys just went out a week at a time. We'd be gone for weeks."

What's more, Cheverie says, some of what he witnessed on the water turned him into a fanatical safety advocate and it's part of the reason he is such a success at heavy hauling on some of the toughest lanes in the world and so active on the Trucking Safety Council of British Columbia. Cheverie also sits on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Association of Fleet Supervisors.

"On fishing boats, I saw quite a few incidents; one fatality and a couple of amputations. That's where you learn there's no compromising when it comes to safety."

After 10 years and one month at sea, Cheverie got on dry land and with the money he made fishing, bought a brand new Western Star and flatbed. "I had no idea what to do. I wanted to make my own destiny so I started doing long haul." He parlayed that into a small fleet called Northside Transportation Services, which ran until 2008. He drove for Petro Can during the run-up to the 2010 Olympics then joined Amix Recycling, which was purchased by Schnitzer Steel, where he learned about dealing with government and regulatory agencies.

Mostly, though, Cheverie credits his father for his safety ethic. "My father taught me to take integrity to the job and work hard. And that's why I'm working late into the night and back at the office at seven. I personally take a lot of ownership in making sure we don't cut corners."

Brian Easson



"And that," **Brian Easson** says with a laugh, "is why the thing is called 'Freeway.' Pretty clever eh? I have to give our HR manager credit for that."

Easson, 31, is the Controller for the company that his grandfather Bill and great uncle Phil Easson started in 1945. He's also the oldest son of the current president, Paul. The Freeway program he's referring to is a brand-new driver-recruitment initiative the company launched this year with the local commercial safety college.

Essentially, Easson explained, the college will be opening up a division on Eassons premises. "We'll supply the space, we'll supply the truck, the tractor, the fuel, the satellite system, and they'll provide the curriculum, the accreditation and teacher."

Eassons will cover the cost of class-one

training if the qualifying applicant agrees to sign on with Eassons for two years. It's a great—and free—way for a qualified driver to get a licence and job with one of the most respected and growing trucking companies in Canada.

Most recently, the Eassons purchased a Belleville, ON-based company called Clieo, whose 125 power units run under the banners Choice Reefer Systems and David Brown United.

Easson, a CA by profession who spent four years at KPMG in Western Canada after graduating from Acadia University in Nova Scotia, says Eassons will remain on the lookout for prospective fleets. He also intends to get more involved with truck associations though he admits "it's a bit daunting when your dad is so well connected. I recently met a few of the folks from your earlier 20 Under 40 project and it was gratifying to go talk to somebody your own age and say 'I'm just as terrified as you are.' It's strangely reassuring."

Easson is married to Jill and father to Morgan, three and James, eight months.

Valérie and Nicolas Bourret



Valérie Bourret, 25, and her brother **Nicolas**, 23, represent the fourth generation at **Transport Bourret**, based in Drummondville, QC. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Consumer Sciences from Laval University in April, 2014. Since 2013, she has been in charge of marketing, working alongside in sales, in the company founded by her great-grand-father.

Nicolas graduated from CDI College in Finance in 2012 and has worked as rate analyst since 2013. Literally the morning after she graduated, Valérie started a 620-hour program to get her CDL. "It was important for me to be able to drive a truck. I wanted to earn the respect and know the core of my business," she says. Nicolas did likewise.

Both admit that nobody forced them into the family company. They just got their passion from their father Francois, for whom they have an obvious admiration.

Valérie looks after branding and promotion at Bourret; aiming to enhance the company's branding and visibility, in addition to sales. Eventually, she wants to obtain a Master's Degree in Agro-economics and Consumption.

As far as he can remember, a typical Saturday morning for Nicolas was loading and unloading trailers with his father. He also worked long hours in the mechanics garage mastering all about the basics. And during peak periods, he drives a truck several times a week.

Both are accomplished athletes; Valérie is running the Boston Marathon in 2016 as Nicolas is training for his first full Ironman in less than a year. "It's part of the company's values: to promote exercise and healthy habits," they say. Their dad and CEO is also an accomplished runner.

Every year, Bourret Transport presents a running event called "Deschênes-Toi Bourret," that brings together no less than 9,000 runners in Drummondville.

Mike Bissell



Mike Bissell is 39 and division manager at **Langley Freight Lines Ltd**, a division of the DCT Chambers Group. And while he excels at the job, it's not something he grew up hoping to do. After finishing high school, he attended British Columbia Institute of Technology and studied Production and Inventory Control.

He took that knowledge to the wood-product giant Canfor, where he stayed for 11 years until he was lured away by one of the carriers that served Canfor; namely, Langley.

He started as a junior traffic controller and has since risen to his senior level. And now as Division Manager he oversees about 44 trucks and 48 drivers. He attributes his success to two main propellants:

First, he says, "because I spent so many time on the other side, I understand the deep challenges faced by shippers. I can bring that awareness to the carrier side. I know what pressures they feel when they talk about just-in-time trucking."

Taking Inventory

Second: "I know where I come from and I know my successes have been a result of the diversity of people and skills of the folks I work with. The company is instilled with the values of Art Chambers, who believed in a strong work ethic and customer service.

"I like to think I can help introduce a sustainable over-the-road transportation industry. Our generation is highly motivated to reduce our carbon footprint."

"Good inventory management is an ideal way to reduce waste," he says. Brian Skinner is General Manager of DCT Chambers. He was the one who reached out to Bissell at Canfor. "Mike turned out to be a great hire," Skinner says. "He thinks things through, he can make decisions quickly and effectively and move on. He's a great member of our team."

Sam, Sterling and AJ Hancik



Here's Bob Hancik—trucker, farm boy, founder and now President of Lacombe, AB-based **BAMSS Contracting Inc.**, talking about his and his wife Chiko's three sons, **Sam**, 27, **Sterling**, 29 and **AJ**, 30.

"I'm just so proud of what they've done I get teary eyed just thinking about it."

No wonder other business people approach him and tell him "Bob, you're livin' the dream."

My Three Sons BAMSS specializes in the bulk transportation of propane, butane, and NGL in Western Canada and runs 15 trucks

around the West. Hancik started with one propane truck in 1984.

In 2010, Sterling joined as a dispatcher. He grew to be lead dispatcher and now takes care of customer service as well as sales and marketing.

The youngest, Sam, went full time in 2011 as an additional dispatcher and quickly transferred to ops manager overseeing the day-to-day aspects of the business.

After finishing a bachelor of commerce degree, Arrakis (AJ) came aboard in 2012 as health and safety coordinator. His responsibilities include all transportation safety matters, insurance and regulatory dealings, and special projects.

Speaking from his position in the middle, Sterling says it's a well-balanced team. "My older brother thinks things through very thoroughly; my younger brother is more of a gut-feeling kind of person and I take a more neutral look. It's an interesting dynamic."

Adds Bob: "The company has grown to a size that I never would have dreamed it would be. A few years ago I realized it had snowballed so quickly that I had to either change the way I was running it or get out. So we had a meeting and I talked to the boys about getting involved and now here we are.

"But it would have been impossible without their help. Their energy is totally what makes the company grow now."

Andy Skelton



Trucking in the Bigs

Get a load of what **Andy Skelton**, Director of Logistics/Operations at **Skelton Truck Lines**, told his local paper after he was named to Canada's Senior Men's Softball team that he would later help win gold at the Pan Am Games in Toronto this summer.

"Although this is not my first time with the national team, every opportunity to wear Canada across your chest has a special place at the top of my fastball career."

He's been playing fastball since he was four, and he's proud to tell you about how the sport has taken him abroad, including across the U.S.A. and as far south as Argentina. But this summer, he had some of his proudest moments as a pitcher and first base for the team, because, in the audience for every game, sat his wife Meghan and their couple-of-months-old son Carter.

Andy is a third-generation trucker; his grandfather Larry launched the company in 1962 and the family has gone on to develop a North America-wide reputation for its unique and outstanding service, especially to the pharmaceutical or biomedical industries. Any of Skelton's 70 trucks or approximately 110 trailers could be carrying life-saving drugs, plasma products or, perhaps, very fragile vaccines.

"We're really part of the health-care system," Andy, 28, says. "People's lives depend on us."

He's been with the company full time nine years now but still finds time to play the sport he excelled in since he was four. "I might be at a tournament but I still have my phone and email," he says. Plus the tournaments take him away only about a dozen days at a time, a few times a year.

Elijah Pitawanakwat



"He could get a job wherever he wants. That's the kind of guy Eli is."

The speaker: Bruce Tait Jr., of the 47-year-old Sudbury-based **Bruce Tait Construction**. He's talking about driver Eli Pitawanakwat, who's been piloting a Tait truck for three years.

"This is a guy who eats, sleeps and breathes trucks," says Tait. "And he's smart smart smart."

Elijah Pitawanakwat was born on the Wikewemikong Reserve in Northern Ontario to a family of farmers and loggers.

Smart Smart Smart

"I started driving at, I think, eight or nine," he laughs.

"Around the farm you could drive a tractor

or a pick up and if you were tall enough to see over the steering wheel, you were good to go."

He earned his truck license in his late teens, after having learned on a family logging truck, and only left the reserve to learn heavy-equipment operation in nearby Sault Ste. Marie. Then it was back to Wikewemikong—or as locals call it, "Wiky"—until the bottom fell out of the logging business.

In Sudbury, he says he thrives working for the family-run Tait company. "They treat everybody who works for them with respect, the atmosphere around the place is friendly and everybody supports everybody else. There's no jealousy and they don't treat you like a number like bigger outfits." Plus they don't mind if he has his Basset Hound Fred ride shotgun.

Adds Tait: "When you have somebody like Eli who will come in on the weekends to polish his truck, you've got to respect that. Anybody who takes that much pride in his work is a role model for other guys."

Justin Wright



Steering Right

Today's Trucking: *How did Lowridin Carriers get its start?*

Justin Wright, 37: In July 2005, I hauled for Sysco for nine months then was able to secure a contract hauling fuel for Federated Co-op Ltd., starting with one truck. I have five now.

TT: *Where did you learn about this business?*

J.W.: I started hauling fuel for an owner/operator in 1999. In those years, I absorbed as much knowledge as I could, from being behind the wheel to on-the-job experiences as well as what it's like to put in unpaid hours at the shop. I've always taken the initiative to learn new things and I've always thrived on knowledge. I have no post-secondary education for the business. Experience alone has helped me get to where I am today.

TT: *What can trucking do to attract more young people?*

J.W.: I think that it's steered in the proper direction as far as making sure that a driver's time is accounted and paid for; a lot more than in the past. We used to only be paid when the wheels were turning. I think the industry has recognized that everyone's time is worth something, and rates are reflective of the times.

TT: *What do you like best about driving?*

J.W.: I get paid to be a tourist, I get to see something new every day!

TT: *Ever want to pack it in?*

J.W.: I've never wanted to quit. However, I do want to expand my horizons. In 2010, I was determined to explore the gravel business. I kept Lowridin running both the fuel and gravel operations successfully until a time came when I felt overwhelmed and discouraged. It became clear that Federated Co-op Ltd. was the only company worth fighting for and I sold the gravel operations. I'm looking forward to the next 10 years!

Ben Rouillard



To 39-year-old **Ben Rouillard**, President of Calgary-based **Bess Tank Lines**, last year's oil-patch slump was unsettling to be sure but no reason to panic. After all, he'd had a dress rehearsal a dozen years earlier in the form of the mad-cow crisis.

"We were hauling a lot of cattle feed," he says, "and when mad cow hit it just shut us right down in a matter of a month."

Get Out There And Start Kicking

"We had to reinvent our service map because we had three-quarters of the fleet parked. We pulled Lafarge trailers just to survive for a few months. Now 80 percent of our business is chemicals."

"When something like that happens, you jump into survival mode; it's like an adrenaline rush. You don't just sit and think about it, you just get out there and start kicking."

He comes by his trucking intuition honestly.

Bess Tank Lines is part of B&B Group of Companies, which was started by Rouillard's parents Jean and Georget in Sherbrooke, QC, in 1975. Rouillard is VP Operations of the parent company and consults daily with his brother Rene, 45, who remains in Quebec.

"I was 18 when I first got my truck licence," he says laughing, "but I'd driven for two years before that with my brother's license."

Rouillard left home in '96 for Red Deer where his first job was as a pit technician with the local Mr. Lube. Three years later, he moved to Calgary and opened Bess TL. They now have terminals in Calgary, High River, Nisku, AB., and Brandon.

"I have a vision of making Bess TL a leading Canadian specialized tank carrier not by volume but by the quality of our services."

Adam Fane



Here's what the President of St.-John's-based **East Can Transport Services** Gerry Dowden says about his 27-year-old car-delivery driver **Adam Fane**:

"Adam has received at least three commendations from customers that he has delivered to. Their comments came to us unsolicited."

"Each customer took the extra effort to contact us and comment on Adam's performance, professionalism and manners."

"He keeps his truck in excellent condition. It is a company-owned truck but he keeps it sparkling clean inside and out and ensures that the maintenance is on schedule."

"He is also a coach to new drivers that we hire. In this role he teaches new drivers the proper procedures for inspecting and loading automobiles."

"He has received safe driving awards, and several 'claims free' awards for handling vehicles without causing any damage."

"He is an inspiration to other younger drivers in our company and has been very

The Rock's Roll Model

helpful with recruiting some drivers. Several applicants have called me seeking work and stating that Adam Fane suggested that they call me."

Dowden started East Can in 1991 and now runs about 60 trucks and trailers with a stepdeck/flatbed service as well as auto hauling. Driver Fane spends most of his time with the cars driving between Halifax and St. John's.

His father was an East Can driver, and when Fane was younger he became a heavy-duty mechanic before getting behind the wheel. He takes impeccable care of the vehicles in his charge and when he's not at work, he says he likes to keep busy working on engine projects.

And where we asked him, does he see himself five years down the road?

"Like my dad, I want to be an owner-operator and I'd like to be driving for East Can."

Stephen Jones



Home is Where The Truck Is

Chris Howlett runs **Akita Equipment** (named for the dog breed) out of Mount Pearl NF., and he thinks his driver **Stephen Jones** should be recognized as one of the under-40 truckers to keep your eye on.

"Stephen is a great hand and very hard worker. He takes pride in his work and takes greater pride in doing a good job. I'm glad to have him back home in Newfoundland again."

Three guesses where the 37-year-old recently single Jones worked for the past seven years. And last year, in the oil patch he made about \$200,000."

"But it's no life. Living in the bunkhouse, lining up for your meals with your plate in your hand makes a fellow feel like he's in jail."

"Now things are good here and it feels great to be home, always running into people you know."

Now, he's closer to his son Brady, who, Jones said, reminds him of himself as a kid.

When Jones first told his dad he was going to the Alberta to truck, Jones Sr. dissuaded him. "They'll spoil you for anything else," he warned him.

The older Jones, now retired from truck driving, also discouraged Steven from getting behind the wheel professionally. "Dad said no!" he recalls.

And now? As Jones pilots his Akita truck around the Island, Brady, 10 sometimes rides shotgun.

"And I'm looking at him thinking, 'he sure does like these trucks.'"

Amritpal Grewar



Amritpal Grewar arrived in Canada from India in 2003 and his first job, in Mississauga, was in a wheelchair assembly plant. And for the entire year he spent putting the chairs together, his mind was on wheels of a different nature. He attended truck-driving school, earned his

A Life in Wheels commercial licence and moved to Vancouver because,

he says, "the weather's so much better here" and started as a company driver, driving the Vancouver-California-Toronto triangle.

Fast forward to 2015, you'll find him, aged 35, in Langley, running a fleet of six Volvos under the banner **Sarabha Transport** and he's gaining a reputation in the trucking industry as a self-made hard-working entrepreneur who promises to be one of the big wheels in the industry himself one day.

"Amritpal has taken his passion and expertise and done what so many entrepreneurs strive to do," comments Vikram Sarna, a Western Canada Account Manager with TransCore Link Logistics. "At a very young age he's built a fleet and he is a humble and hard-working professional."

A Smartway carrier, Grewar says he believes that it is incumbent upon fleets to operate only well-maintained and contemporary equipment, especially if they run, as he does, into California. "They sure don't like old equipment there so we drive only brand new trucks and trailers."

At the moment, he says, his oldest vehicle is a 2014 Volvo and all his trucks have I-Shift transmissions.

And yes, they are on the lookout for new drivers. But, Grewar warns, he chooses his drivers as carefully as he selects his trucks. Recruits need only apply if they have two years' experience, five years of clean abstracts and no criminal convictions. He also says he intends to become more active in the British Columbia Trucking Association.

Sean Rice



Sean Rice started at **Molson Coors** in 2001 washing and fueling beer trucks. Now, at 33, his title is Senior Customer Logistics Specialist. Over the years, not only has he ensured his product has been safely and efficiently delivered to where it had to be, Rice stepped beyond his office to help the private-motor carrier community as a whole.

Mike Millian is the President of the Private Motor Truck Council (PMTC). Says Millian: "Sean was one of the original founding members of the PMTC young leaders group and was instrumental in getting it off the ground. He's the type of young leader we need in this industry, and with people like Sean in the ranks of the

Rice-Powered Beer private fleet sector, our future is in good hands."

Meantime, back at the office, Scott Finucan is the Director, Distribution Ontario/Western Canada for Molson Coors in Toronto. He is also Rice's supervisor.

"I think," Finucan says, "what sets Sean apart is his true thirst for knowledge and relentless approach to solving complex issues. He's able to logically work through a situation step by step with an operational mindset and has the ability to translate that into our systems ultimately eliminating waste." Since starting at Molson Coors, Rice has moved through various departments, an experience that gave him insight into how each job is done.

The learning doesn't stop when he leaves the office at the end of a day.

Indeed, when Rice talks about attracting new people to trucking he says he learns from watching his family grow up. "For one thing, drivers don't have to be by themselves in the truck all the time. The younger generation has grown up with the internet and social media platforms their entire life, and this has changed the definition of being alone. Embracing this technology closes the gap between the solidarity of driving and a healthy social life."

Édith Desmarais



What I Believe In

J.M.F. Transport was founded in 1967 then bought by André Desmarais and Nicol Jeanson in 1992. Less than 15 years later, Desmarais' daughter **Édith** became co-owner as well as Human-Resources Director and Ops Manager.

At school Desmarais studied fashion marketing and wanted to become a buyer. She knew almost nothing about trucking but her father asked her to fill in for a maternity leave and, as she says, "I was quickly won over by this unconventional and unpredictable business."

In 2005 she was already working closely with management, getting ready to take over in anticipation of her dad's retirement. However, the company was sold in 2006. One year after the deal, one of the shareholders left and Desmarais was offered a partnership with the new owner.

"I didn't hesitate to invest in what I believed in", she says. "I think that's one of Warren Buffet's tips: 'Invest in what you believe in.'"

Desmarais, 38, says the key is to be surrounded by passionate people, because "attitude prevails over training in this industry."

"In order to pass on your passion and vision, you must first set an example and never hesitate to help out others, although sometimes it is not part of your job description", she adds. "Your team must know that everyone works for the entire organization."

Last year, the 60-plus carrier based in Valcourt, QC., was sold to the Kriska Transportation Group (KTG).

"This transaction will allow us to face the very strong competition and ensure the sustainability of the company in the Eastern Townships," says Desmarais. "It may sound cliché, but what matters the most to me is contributing to the work of people in my area."

The Kriska Group, seeking to continue its growth and visibility in Quebec, may acquire additional companies in the short or medium term.

Dylan Omeniuk



"He's upstairs putting freight in the trucks and I'm downstairs making sure the equipment's ready and safe.

"If I fail, he fails, and vice versa."

Dylan Omeniuk, at 21, is the Director of Maintenance and in charge of operations of the construction division of his family company, **Trapper's Transport**, in Winnipeg. His older brother **Dustin**, 23, is Director of Sales and Marketing for North America.

Their father Dan founded the company in 1985 and now, as Dustin puts it "we're responsible for feeding about 500 mouths every day." (Trapper's has about 10 maintenance staff, 25 admin people and approximately 100 drivers.)

Trapper's (named for their father's childhood nickname, Trapper Dan) operates state-of-the-art gear in all departments. Their main line is food-grade freight ("Our yellow trucks bring Manitoba

its yellow bananas," notes Dustin.) Trapper's also does pharmaceutical work and gravel hauling, and the Omeniuks report the firm is definitely in growth mode. Dustin says that they've recently taken delivery of five new 6x2 Peterbilts that he calls the Walmart edition. They only run Peterbilts and they regularly conduct tests for the truck maker. On his side, Dylan describes Trapper's shop as peerless and spotless. "It's tidy, it's clean, it's state of the art, not like those other shops out there. There's no oil on the floors; and if you could see our 150-ft pit you'd see that it has everything built in. Very high tech."

The question arises. When more than half your staff is over 50 and you're in your early 20s, how do you win them over? Here's Dylan's assessment: "Sometimes it's difficult but you have to earn their respect; you have to prove that you understand the value they bring to the table and that you're listening."

Jeannie Arnold



Getting What You Signed On For

No wonder the Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) likes to have **Jeannie Arnold** along at their recruiting fairs. The 26-year-old granddaughter of **Arnold Bros. Transport** co-founder Frank Arnold is a fountain of fresh and innovative pro-trucking propaganda.

"If we want to get more young people involved with the industry, it's a matter of education. For one thing," she says, "most don't know how vital trucking is. That's one of the things I love sharing with people, is that trucking is all about getting stuff to people who need it."

Also, she says, "while you don't need a university degree, you have to be smart to be a trucker. It's demanding work and you have to be strong and independent."

Arnold finds one of the most compelling reasons driver are attracted to her company is because the company is completely up front and transparent when it comes to telling recruits exactly what conditions are going to be like.

"Honesty. That's what they're looking for. And we are honest. I've never met a driver who doesn't want to work but there are lots of people out there who complain when they find out the job doesn't meet their expectations. For instance, we do a lot of pin-to-pin but sometimes there's LTL involved. If a guy wants only truckload, we tell him, it's not possible. It's better he finds out right off the bat."

"We never want to hear our people say 'this is not what I signed on for.'"

Comments the Executive Director of the Manitoba Trucking Association Terry Shaw. "I have encountered Jeannie at a handful of events and watched her engage people on behalf of our industry. Her personality and enthusiasm make for an excellent introduction to the trucking industry for many so we appreciate her efforts."

Geoffrey Joseph



Not long ago, a prospective buyer approached **Geoffrey Joseph**, President and COO of his family business **Joseph Haulage**.

"I have to say I gave it serious consideration," Joseph, 37 and son of the founder Joseph K. Joseph, who started the construction-materials haulage business in 1975 with one truck in Stony Creek, ON.

No Ordinary Joseph

Since '75, Joseph has grown exponentially, branching out into different and unique areas of expertise to the point where they have more than 300 power units, several divisions including a flatbed division, a waste division and a U.S. dump division.

Joseph Jr. is also an entrepreneur extraordinaire, with interests in environmental consulting (Joseph & Ross Environmental), car rental (Ultimate Exotics) and even oilfield activity (Core Industries Inc.). The list keeps lengthening.

"During one of our initial meetings years ago," recalls Tony Jelcic of Transcourt Inc., "I'll never forget Geoff's answer to my question about why he's tackling multiple fronts and opening up so many different divisions within his organization. He explained how his vision was to replicate the Walt Disney company; i.e., creating synergy through vertical integration which would lead to organic growth from within, which is exactly what he's doing."

And what was Joseph's response to the person who wanted to buy him out?

"I seriously considered getting out but I enjoy what I do and because we're just on our way up, I told my father to give me five more years and I will quadruple the size of the business."

Not incidentally, Joseph juggled this interview with *Today's Trucking* at the same time as he was dropping his two kids, six-year-old Jacob and four-year-old Julia, off at swimming lessons.

Kyle and Katie Erb



Polar Opposites

Katie Erb, 27, has visited 32 countries and she'd love to tell you about racing her snow machine up and down the mountains near Revelstoke B.C. "I love snowmobiling with the guys; and yeah, I go pretty fast."

Older brother by one year, **Kyle**, meanwhile, has yet to travel off the continent but he has just returned from Florida with his bride Anne.

He admits he and Katie have yin-and-yang personalities. "She's got lots of energy that's for sure. We're always joking that she must be adopted because she's not like anybody else in the family."

In this case, the family is the Erb clan, and both Katie and Kyle are making their way up the ladder in the **Erb Group of Companies**, which their paternal grandfather Vernon Erb founded in 1959 and which has grown to employ more than 1,300. Their dad Wendell is President.

Kyle and Katie both started working for the reefer company as kids and after college came on full time, at the bottom. Says Kyle: "Working your way up like that is not something they can teach you in school, but for me, it was a great way to make contacts in all parts of the industry plus learn about every job in the company."

At the moment, Kyle sells for the Erb Group's K-DAC division and Katie is in inside sales with the parent company.

"At this point," Kyle says, "we're at the lower end of management. But as we go into the future, I think her adventuresome side will lead us to take a few more risks where I like to be more cautious. The best thing for the company is that we will be able to meet somewhere in the middle and go from there."