



Construction

Jan./Feb. 2012
Vol. 4 No. 5

Newfoundland and Labrador's Construction Industry Magazine

In this Issue

**Labrador
Construction**

**Atlantic Green
Forum 2011**
The Green City

Tool Talk
digital multi-meters

**Irish
Workers**
job hunting in NL

**Healthy
Thoughts**
treating lower
back pain



Heavy Equipment training



Canadian training Institute

The open arms of education leave Heavy Equipment students feeling confident and secure. *By Chris Hodder*

It's noon and students at the Canadian Training Institute in Bay Roberts are sitting down for lunch. But, this is not a typical lunch break. On any given day they might grab a sandwich in one of the trucks or pieces of heavy equipment; if it's cold they might slip into the lunch shack at the pit to get a warm cup of tea; or if they're on class time, they might head down to a local takeout joint and grab lunch.

Today, they eat as one. Art Dominix, the owner and operator of the training institute, and the assistant director, Alice Smith, have pulled the students and instructors together for a Christmas lunch.

As everyone dives into their meal, like proud parents, Art and Alice start bringing in packages. Everyone draws a number out of a bag and the two start handing out gifts. Everyone gets a gift.

According to the students, this kind of social interaction is nothing out of the ordinary. "They (Art and Alice) are

extraordinary people. It's not like a typical school," says Melissa Organ, a 40-year-old student from Bay d'Espoir.

Melissa, a former automotive technician says that when she was deciding on a place to study for her

"...I'll tell a student the first day they walk through the door, 'when you leave in 24 weeks, you're not forgotten. If I know you're working, I'm fine. But if a job comes in and I know you're not working, I'm still going to call you.'"

heavy equipment operator's license she did extensive research and landing at the top of the pile was the Canadian Training Institute.

"I wanted to know that if I did the course, I wanted a good job at the end. This was the one that had the highest hiring at the end," she explains.

Despite her extensive experience working in non-traditional workplaces, Melissa says she was terrified when she first started the heavy equipment training program. "They were telling us all about the safety and what could happen. I just sat back and said I'm in the wrong thing. I did that for about three weeks, kept thinking to myself, I'm in the wrong thing."

The instructors recognized this and reassured her that if she follows the safety protocols, learned how to work every day in a safety-conscious state of mind. It eased her mind.

Art, a former teacher and principal, started the institute immediately after the cod moratorium. "We started out in the basement of my house with one truck, one trainer and \$10,000. And, it has been growing ever since."

Within four years he'd expanded into heavy equipment. In 2002, he moved from his basement into his own building and in 2007 he built on an extension.

Art attributes the growth and success to the foundation he operates upon – attitude, safety and skills. “Attitude being the most important, because if you don’t have a good attitude you’re not going to retain a job,” he says.

What the institute is trying to instill must be working because the employment rate for its graduates is over 90 per cent.



Above: Melissa Organ spends the last few moments of her 60-hour training time on the excavator learning how to neatly manicure the earth

Left: Editor of NL Construction magazine gets a first-hand look at how an excavator operates.

Alice says the personal touch they try to add to the Department of Education mandated program is something the students come to know and trust. “We’ve always kept it that way, because I’ll tell a student the first day they walk through the door, ‘when you leave in 24 weeks, you’re not forgotten. If I know you’re working, I’m fine. But if a job comes in and I know you’re not working, I’m still going to call you. It doesn’t matter that you graduated six months a year ago.’”

The program breaks down into about half class time and half practical time. Each student chooses three pieces of equipment – either loader, excavator,

ACT! DON'T REACT.

NLCSA's

2012 Construction Safety Conference

Thursday, February 9th
Sheraton Hotel, St. John's

Special presentation
by James Binkley,
Stunt Coordinator for
"The Republic of Doyle"

Conference Topics Include:

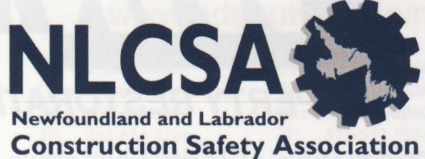
- Fall Protection Rescue Planning
- Safety Issues Related to the Skilled Labour Shortage
- Communicating in a Crisis

Opportunities still available to join our list of conference sponsors



To register, call the Newfoundland & Labrador
Construction Safety Association

1-888-681-SAFE (7233)





Above: (l-r) Arthur Dominix-, director; Alice Smith, assistant director; Jason Butler, Chesley Bursey, Blair Batten, Dylan Keats, Matthew Power, Dennis Jarvis, Paul Mercer, Cory Gosse, Jashua Hackett, David White, Rachel Dawe, Jonathan Haynes, Melissa Organ, Jason Arnold, Jeffery Fowler and instructors Brian Gallant, Keith Parsons, Gary Parsons.

backhoe or tandem dump truck – and then gets 60 hours of operating time on each piece. Students choosing tandem dump truck will get their Class 3 license along with their Class 8, Heavy Equipment, Class 9 and 9A.

Art says he believes that the institute and its leaders and instructors has a responsibility to help the students that come through it's doors, even to the point of adding things to the curriculum. "We talk about the role of women in the workplace; we talk about working with different ethnic groups; we just tell them what to expect and what to watch out for," Art points out. They even offer advice on managing finances if a student is looking for that.

But, like good parents, they also push the students to be better. For example,

even though the school has the capability of road testing and passing or failing the student drivers, they instead take them to the motor vehicle registration division to be road tested.

"It keeps our trainers on their toes, because they aren't the ones passing them," says Art. "In other words, if I send five people down (to motor vehicle) and four of them flunk, then what's going on? More importantly, no one is going to give you a truck or a piece of equipment, not knowing how well you can operate it. So, we want you to feel a bit uncomfortable with someone you don't know, because tomorrow or next week, when you leave the school, this is what's going to happen to you."

Jason Butler, a 31 year old student from

St. John's says, the balance of love and tough love is what seems to be working best for him and the other students. "This school is great. The instructors and the way they teach is great.

Jason comes to the course from an unlikely of backgrounds. He'd spent six years in the military as an infantry soldier. He's traveled the world and even outside the military has held a variety of labour jobs. But, through it all he says he could never escape his boyhood dream of someday becoming a heavy equipment operator.

"I sleep at night and dream of it and, getting up in the morning is going to be pleasurable for me, to do this," says Jason, who, consequently, has a perfect attendance record.

Even though he's willing to work anywhere, Jason hopes the reputation of the school, along with his own ability and persistence will amount to him breaking into an operating job in the St. John's region.

"I've called around to a lot of companies in town and asked if they would hire a student right out of school. Most said they would prefer someone with experience. But, I think that if I present myself properly, they'll give me a chance," he explains. "There's lots of work here, they say, so hopefully I can get a good-paying job and stay here. I'll work for free for two weeks just to show you how good I am."

New homes can't always be safe from flooding, which if left untreated can turn into bigger problems including mould and mildew. **WINMAR Property Restoration Specialists** have the tools and certified personnel needed to restore your new home to its original beauty after an unfortunate flood or other unforeseen incident.

WINMAR®

PROPERTY RESTORATION SPECIALISTS

62-64 Pippy Place, St. John's, NL • 709-754-9111

IT CAN HAPPEN HERE TOO



www.winmar.ca

Melissa says she already has a job waiting in Alberta. She graduates on February 22, 2012 and she says with any luck, she'll be on the plane the next day heading to Fort McMurray. She explains that the reason she would immediately head to Alberta is because the working atmosphere for a woman in a non-traditional trade is far more accepting than it is in Newfoundland and Labrador.

"In Newfoundland, I feel it's going to be scary. Working away, not a problem,"

Melissa remarks. "A lot of my friends work away and they don't deal with what you would in Newfoundland. Newfoundland is pretty much old school, that if a woman comes on to the ground, into a man's area, the woman is going to get the hard time."

She says she is thankful for the way gender issues were dealt with at the school. Melissa and her co-student Rachel Dawe were the only two women in the class. But from Day one they knew they would be treated as equals.

"Before the class started, Art made everyone clearly understand that there's no tolerance for any name-calling. Absolutely no tolerance and you'd be gone."

Melissa and Jason both agree that there's a mutual respect between the instructors and the students and within the student body.

"You think six months means nothing. It's only going to fly; they're only instructors; but, I'm going to miss them," Melissa remarks. ■

HOLDEN'S TRANSPORT Ltd.

Crane and Tractor Trailer Rentals

- 14-23 ton boom trucks
- Heavy equipment tow/recovery services
- Storage trailers and containers
- 30, 70, 80 and 135 ton cranes
- Tractor trailer combinations
- Oversized loads and heavy hauling

255 Brookfield Road
St. John's, NL

Tel. 709-368-3539

Fax. 709-747-9890

www.holdenstransport.com



Rent-Lease-Purchase

Atlas Copco



reddot design award



Model XAS 185
PORTABLE
COMPRESSOR



Contact Newfoundland's Exclusive Dealer Today!

www.rideouttool.com

RIDEOUT
TOOL & MACHINE INC.

222 Kenmount Rd.
St. John's, NL A1B 3R2
Ph.: 709-754-2240
TF: 877-898-5360
Fax: 709-739-9514

115 Humber Road
Corner Brook, NL A2H 1G1
Ph.: 709-634-3294
TF: 866-634-3294
Fax: 709-634-5346

170 Akerley Blvd., Unit 1
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1Z5
Ph.: 902-468-2060
TF: 877-577-9943
Fax: 902-468-3065