

It's all about the journey

Linda Jones joined Women In Trucking in April. She is from Duenweg, MO. Here is her story...written by Sue Dickens.

Linda's story begins many years ago as a divorced mom with three young children to raise. "I had to make some decent money and I'd been working three jobs when somebody told me if I got a job trucking, I could make enough that I could probably spend my weekends at home with my kids. As it turned out the first job I got I was home every weekend," she says with a grin.

For Linda it was the beginning of a long and happy career behind the wheel of a big rig.

Even though trucking has its challenges for women, something Linda knows all about from her years of driving alone, she has never regretted her decision to join the industry.

"I have seen a lot of changes. Proving myself to other male drivers was challenging ... they would not accept me at all and would often have me in tears. Now it seems some of the drivers don't really care about one another no matter what their gender ... it is something we need to change," she says with conviction.

This coming from a woman who was the first female trucker in Nebraska to get a key to the pipeline so she could load her own truck with anhydrous ammonia - Linda has been making her own inroads into the industry ever since.

Linda knows joining Women In Trucking was a good decision. She believes in what the group is doing and has made a lot of friends through its network.

"Once I started driving and meet-

ing people through the USA and Canada I found that what was lacking in my life was a relationship with other women. After a while you get to feel isolated so I was thrilled to see as the years went by more and more women coming out here, some with their husbands and some on their own," she says.



Linda Jones with Truckin' Bozo

"The women I meet are very interesting. I think they are drawn to the lifestyle because of the freedom. It is one of few industries where you don't have to punch a time clock and you still have a little bit of freedom left to make choices."

Trucking is a way of life for Linda and it doesn't end when she gets home. There are always fellow truckers stopping by to visit. "We have barbecues and parties," she explains.

In fact, their patio was the setting for the wedding of a couple that had been trucking together for 15 years. "The people in the trucking industry are all like family to me," says Linda.

Speaking of family, two of Linda's sons are in the industry. Her eldest son Ray is a driver and Craig

works as a load planner. Her daughter Tammy is busy raising her own four children. Her third son Mack is in building supply sales and her stepson Zachary works at a local building supply store.

Linda has come a long way from the early days when she would put a block of ice in a dishpan under the driver's seat to try to stay cool because her rig had no air conditioning.

"I still remember the bunk houses - they used to have before they had sleepers on trucks, in Kansas and western Nebraska where I used to haul grain to cattle farms," she says reminiscing.

"I remember walking through a bunkhouse and there were a couple of men sleeping and I could hear them snoring as I tippy toed to the back to take a shower," she says laughing. "I'm sure glad those days are long gone."

This is one trucker that can be an inspiration to other women.



Membership Count
November 30, 2007



Happy Holidays,

As December comes to a close, we can look back on 2007 as the year Women in Trucking was "born." Since its inception in March, our ranks have expanded to include nearly 1,000 members who have chosen to support our mission. Although we are only at the "toddler" stage and taking baby steps into the coming year, we are already leaving footprints behind.

In order to be in step with those we represent, the board of directors recently spent two days devoted to developing our strategic plan. We reviewed our mission statement and explored ways to encourage women to look at the trucking industry as a career while removing any obstacles that might be in their way, and to celebrate the accomplishments of our peers.

As an association, we represent our members and our mission is to serve each one of you. We look forward to the coming year as one that will bring more opportunities for women, while making the industry better for all of us. Please stay in touch and help us make your career in trucking a successful one.

Have a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!

Ellen Voie
Chairwoman of the Board

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Safety precautions in and around your truck

Although Patty is nearing her eleven hours of on duty time, she has one more stop to make after she fuels her truck. She leaves Flying J and heads for the Pilot down the road, where she will pull in and spend the night without getting out of her truck.

Patty doesn't want anyone to notice that she's a solo female driver, so after she pulls into an empty slot in the parking lot, she checks the locks in her doors and calls it a night.

Why should a professional driver be concerned about her safety just because she is a woman? The sad reality is that her concerns are justified, as the areas around truck stops are often unsafe. Patty has an added reason to worry, as she is an attractive blonde who is often mistaken for one of the prostitutes who earn their living in these same parking areas.

"The issue of safety for women in the trucking industry is going to be one of the top priorities for our association," said Ellen Voie, Chairwoman of Women In Trucking. We want to educate our members and help the truck stop industry find ways to accommodate women who are finding their place as professional drivers.

David Brown is a former detective with the Ontario Provincial Police, and he is working with WIT to

keep women, as well as their male peers, safe. "On the road you are alone, vulnerable and a target for any would be criminal to make you his victim," he warns, "a simple step that you could take to prevent becoming a victim is to not act like a victim."



Cargo theft is especially prevalent these days, and a thief targets areas such as truck stops. The FBI found that cargo crime, which is difficult to measure due to the lack of a unified reporting system, is the fastest growing crime problem in the US.

Brown suggests that all drivers should learn to expect the unexpected when they get out of their truck. He offers the following tips for keeping safe on the road.

1) Every time you leave your truck, take whatever you need with you to survive and to get home. Ask yourself what you would need if you returned to find that your truck was gone. Keep some cash, your identification, phone numbers and critical medication with you when you shut the driver's door of your rig.



2) Mind your own business, Brown warns. Don't talk about your expensive cargo or brag about the electronics you have in your truck.

3) Spread your personal items out in your pockets. Don't keep all of your cash in your wallet. Tuck a credit card and an ID in a separate pocket. Some people keep an old wallet with expired credentials and a few dollars within reach in case you are confronted by a thief.

4) Have a contact person who you stay in touch with and keep them apprised of your destination and your estimated time of delivery. Agree on a time to talk each day, even if it is just a test message that you are on schedule and doing fine.

Safety is important for every one of us who travels, whether it's in an eighteen wheeler or an automobile, but it is especially a priority for single women on the road.

David Brown is a recruiter for The Rosedale Group, a part-time instructor at Crossroads Truck Training Academy, and a writer. Additional articles can be found on the WIT website. Visit his website (www.carrierscoach.com) or email David (carrierscoach@sympatico.ca).

Listen up...

- Listen to board member Marge Bailey, Marge@Large, on Sirius radio channel 147 Wednesdays at noon (CST).
- Listen to chairwoman Ellen Voie on Sirius radio every other Thursday morning at 7:30 (CST) on the Mark Willis show channel 147.
- Ellen will participate in an audio conference, Good Drivers - Love 'em or Lose 'em, on Dec. 13 at 4 pm (EST) with Annette Estes who hosts seminars as a part of her carrier retention services. For more information, visit www.hiresafedrivers.com/telemretention.htm.
- Kevin Rutherford has asked Ellen to be a part of his show on XM radio channel 171 on Friday, Dec. 7, at 11 pm (CST).
- *The Driver* audio magazine will be adding a Women In Trucking segment to their monthly CD. Future CDs will have segments about issues affecting women on the road.

Good stuff.



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ATA chairman encourages support for Women In Trucking

WIT welcomed American Trucking Associations, Inc. (ATA) Chairman, Ray Kuntz at a reception held in Orlando, Florida during the Management Conference and Exhibition. Kuntz, who is President and CEO of Watkins Shepherd Motor Lines in Helena, Montana, addressed the standing room only audience.



As the newly appointed chairman, Kuntz has already shown his passion to attract more drivers into the industry from nontraditional groups. "We can't keep expecting to take drivers from other companies," Kuntz said, "we need to look at ways to make this industry more female

friendly and the Women In Trucking Association is working toward that goal."

Ellen Voie thanked the carrier executives for their support and announced that the newly formed organization had already grown to over 700 members. She told the group, "We are excited to be able to turn this traditionally male dominated industry's focus to attracting and retaining women, both in the cab, under the hood and behind the desk."

The reception was sponsored by the American Trucking Associations, Con-Way, Inc., Internet Truckstop, LaunchIt Public Relations, Roady's Truck Stops, Strategic Programs, Inc., and TransportFitness.com.

In addition to hosting a reception at the ATA Management Conference and Exhibition, WIT representatives visited with attendees during the exhibit and were pleased to add 80 new members at the event.

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- Truck Show Latino
- Walcott Truckers' Jamboree
- Waupun Truck-N-Show

Shop for the holidays at the WIT store

Support Women In Trucking by shopping for the holidays at the WIT store on our website. In addition to a variety of shirts and jackets, great gift suggestions include bathrobe (white, pink, navy), scarf, hat, gloves, hot/cold tumbler, 6-pack cooler, blanket, brief case, totes, and beach towel.



WIT Shows & Events

Jan. 9-10, Northeast Wisconsin Truck Expo, Green Bay, WI www.pmishows.com

Jan. 30-31, 7th Annual Recruitment & Retention Conference, Nashville, TN www.truckload.org/events/index.shtml

Feb. 8-9, Mid-West Truck Show, Peoria, IL www.mid-westtruckers.com/truckshow.html

Meet your Board Members - Lenora Hardee

Dr. H. Lenora Hardee, International Truck and Engine Corporation's manager of Human Factors and Ergonomics, is involved with Women in Trucking for several reasons. As the group's treasurer and one of 12 directors, she helps prime the industry for more women to get involved.

"Traditionally, trucking has been male dominated, with men comprising more than 9 out of 10 truckers, but we also realize that a huge group of male drivers will be retiring in the near future and we need to recruit more women to replace some of them," says Dr. Hardee, who helps design International truck cabs to be more ergonomically correct for women. "Women in Trucking can help promote the industry to women."

For example, Dr. Hardee led an effort at the recent Mid-America Trucking Show to measure female truck drivers so their measurements can be taken into consider-

ation when designing truck cabs and interior features. The new International® ProStar™, the company's flagship aerodynamic class 8 tractor, incorporates several design features that assist women and other drivers, including a closer dash board and lower shelving in the bunk.

Nearly 100 women were measured at the show, adding to Dr. Hardee's database of more than 2,000 drivers she has measured over the past few years. For participating in the measurement study, the women were given a free one-year membership to Women in Trucking. Dr. Hardee's efforts not only further the advancement of women in the trucking industry, it's also helping them get more involved in this organization.

"We need the data to continue to improve our tractor design for women and smaller drivers, and we also can help grow membership in Women in Trucking," says Dr. Hardee.



WIT Board Member
Lenora Hardee



Message Forum

Our Message Forum has almost 100 registered users and hundreds of guests reading the posts. If you haven't seen it, please visit. Here are a few recent comments:

"Hi! I am YellowRose's husband and would like to say THANKS to all the ladies in this forum. We are waiting to attend training as a team with SNI. I have spent weeks researching the industry. Reading trucker forums and asking questions. I have to say that I have absorbed more useful information from you ladies than I have from all the other sites I visited. You talk about important, pertinent, useful issues. I have learned a great deal and you have given me answers to questions that I had not been able to get from others. It seems that some of the other sites are more a forum for complaining and running your mouth. It's been a pleasure!"

"I hope all the ladies on this site will continue to provide answers to all of us 'newbies or almost newbies' that have tons of questions."



Thanks to Brian Thomforde, TruckDriver.com and Peter Charboneau, Over The Road-Canada, for providing a new website for WIT! The photo was donated by Kim Reiersen from her book *Eighteen, a Look at the Culture that Moves Us* (www.KimReiersen.com).