

## THE CARPOOL.

BY JAMES COLLINS.

Working in her defense plant in the 1960s was intense. Long hours, tight schedules, mandates to meet profit margins, and to come up with new ideas on regular basis was the normal routine. The engineering department was under intense pressures and was significantly understaffed. The senior manager, Lou, used to like to schedule meetings at 4:45PM, which was quitting time. These meetings would typically run to seven o'clock at night and would generate requirements on you personally that made you come in at 5 AM the following morning. Luckily, he had a lovely wife who was very sensitive to the personal lives of his subordinates. None of us knew this, but she told him that he could not interfere with those who had little kids, if they had a carpool. One of the senior managers lives of three or four blocks from me; had an accident with a car and was missing transportation to work. He asked me if I would consider a carpool with him for a couple of weeks to help him get to work. I agreed and this started on a Monday morning. That afternoon a pickup meeting was scheduled and I knew I would be there until 7 PM. I went to the manager and explained that I now had a carpool with one of his subordinate managers and I had to get him home. Because I had a carpool, Lou excused me from the meetings, and the other members of the impromptu meetings learned of the change. I then made the carpool permanent and escaped many a long night in the factory. Times were good.

About three years later, Shelley W. was having a going away party for the new job he obtained at a competitor. When it became Shelley's turn to speak, he turned to the audience and said I really want to thank big Jim for helping me with my social life. I had no idea what he was about to say. He then explained that he had acquired a girlfriend and liked to go out with her on a regular basis during the week. Lou's late meetings put a crimp in this budding romance. Shelley continued, "Once I saw that Jim was able to get out of the meetings because of his carpool. I set up a carpool. When I informed Lou of the carpool, Lou also offered me the same courtesy and because of the carpool, I did not have to attend the meetings. Now that I am leaving, I am pleased to announce that my carpool consisted of one person – just me. My wife and I are eternally grateful to one and all who helped us dodge the meetings."

THE END