

Fragility

EDITORIAL

The tragic bus-transit crash in Ottawa last week?killing three and injuring 23, many seriously?is just another example of the fragility of life hitting a little too close to home.

These were ordinary people. These were folks who had worked all day and were taking public transit to get home.

When they boarded that bus?which was apparently crammed to the rafters with afternoon rush-hour commuters?the last thing on their minds was the entrusting of their lives to a city bus driver because getting on that bus was just a normal part of their everyday lives.

They were thinking about what they were going to make their kids for supper, or the work colleague who had hassled them, or getting their pay cheque deposited, or having to sign up their child for dance class.

But they were not thinking of dying.

According to witnesses, the bus appeared to slide on the icy transitway?it was 15-below and the roads were slippery?hit a curb, and then crash into the transit shelter in the city's west end, the overhang tearing through the roof of the double-decker bus.

The scene was utter chaos.

As ordinary people ourselves, we can relate to this. Many of us commute to work. Some of us take whatever urban transit exists. Some of us carpool.

It is the time in our day when the stress is apparently off. We are going home. Or stopping to buy groceries.

We would not be thinking of being rushed to hospital by ambulance with life-threatening injuries or being transported to the morgue in a body bag.

This is why such tragedies play upon us all.

Taking a bus home from work, or from a day of shopping, is such an every-day part of so many of our lives that such tragedies never enter our minds.

It is just part of what we have to do.

No doubt this accident will have many of us thinking about the fragility of life, and how a few seconds in time can so undeservedly snatch it away from us.

But, in time, ordinary life will take over, and we will forget.

Until the next time reminds us, again, to count our blessings and take absolutely nothing for granted.

Life is not only fragile; it's short.