



Heads Up

Vol . 8
Newsletter of the W.F.A.
Date: February 29, 2008

Dear WFA member,

Here's the first newsletter for 2008!!! Same as prior years, we'll start with a re-cap of The Board and AGM meetings which took place in Nanaimo on February 15th & 16th, 2008. Between that and Faller news, we've got a lot of ground to cover. Here we go....

Though early into the season, we've already had 2 Faller fatalities in BC as of this writing. They are Ron Waterfield, a WFA member from Comox and Frank Sinclair, a WFP Faller from Gold River. Each were certified, qualified, good men. They will be missed by their families and friends, as well as the falling community. Services were held for Frank in Gold River. A memorial to celebrate Ron's life will be held on his birthday, July 28th, we are told. Fallen but not Forgotten... Rest in Peace..

From the Boardroom: Wendy Gaskill (our Recording Secretary), Dave Parkins and Tony Lalonde have finished up with the WFA. Their resignations were tendered and acknowledged with the WFA Board. We must openly thank them, particularly Wendy and Dave for their time, effort and resources to help keep our organization up, running and moving forward. Wendy's full transition away from the WFA will take a short amount of time as we've been running a large segment of the WFA out of her house in Nanaimo.

As a member of the Western Fallers, please be notified; the head office for your association has moved up north to Terrace, where it originated 7 years ago. This is Mike and Pats' home. All business (except finances, which Mack has always done in Smithers), will take place out of the Terrace office. The phone number is **(250)638-8729**; the address is **2301 Cramer St., Terrace, BC V8G 2K6**. As always, any members (or Fallers for that matter) passing through Terrace, are more than welcome to drop in and see us! (We are a couple of blocks off Hwy.16) Since this decision was made, we are well under way with the transition. As a member, please direct any inquiries to the above phone number or address, we'll look after the rest. We are expanding the joblink to capture the gas and oil sector, as well as mining and exploration. This is a great feature of your membership! As we restructure the head office, please note; Wendy (for a brief period) will continue the joblink. It too will eventually be run from Terrace.

Because of the resignations, our representation on Vancouver Island has diminished. We are recruiting another Director. There are 2 prospects who stepped forward to fill this position. When both prospects and the Board have had time to mull everything over, we'll let you know what has taken place. Both prospects are of the utmost integrity and would do nothing but strengthen our presence on Vancouver Island.

One other item which must be announced, the WFA may have found a co-chair. This concept is in the very early stages. Though his name has come to us, we haven't had the chance to actually talk it over

with him one on one. All we can say now is this Faller would definitely fit the bill. This position isn't quite as encompassing for us to fill as it is for a Director. The biggest hindrance (as a lot of you are aware being around Mike) is the willingness, to put a target on your back, for other members of the Forest Industry to take pot shots at!! We will let you know what transpires out of this...

AGM Highlights: We got things underway @ 9:15am, February 16th at the Dorchester in Nanaimo with approximately 60 members in attendance. As always, the entire day was informative and fairly uplifting. We finally shut things down @ 4:45pm that afternoon.

The 'members only' portion, in the beginning of the day, flew by accordingly. The minutes were reviewed and adopted with a pause to go over the few questions the members had. The financial statement, which the BOD had signed off the evening before, was reviewed.

Mike got up and did the 'Report from the Office' due to Wendy's resignation. Next year, Pat will be doing this as Pat has taken over Wendy's duties. Last year we had 100 paid up members. THIS is all we had to operate the organization with! Needless to say, it is difficult to run anything with little funds! It turns out....We have been providing news letters, the job link, countless hours of consultation and problem solving to individuals, (as well as faller representation to the entire Industry), for some who are not current with their annual fees!! It would seem, in many instances, these individuals cannot manage to fill out the membership renewal form, attach a cheque and drop it in the mail. With the utmost respect to those of you that have kept their fees up to date and continue to be part of this organization,...All freebies are coming to an end and real soon!! Having said that,...a registration form will be attached to this package, PLEASE use it. Be sure you give us all your contact info and print CLEARLY so we can transfer it into our data base. With you or without you, this organization will continue to move forward to make things better for Fallers! Many of you are always calling us to task, saying 'what are they doing for me'? I hope this news letter will help clear up some of your doubts!

Our communications strategy is as follows: We know the website is partly down. This is being fixed as we write. The 'Opinions' section, which is not working, will be resurrected as a 'blog' for 'Members Only'. The 'Opinions' took a lot of editing from here to keep the Viagra commercials off. Our apologies for this downtime, we know a lot of people visit the site. The site is also being upgraded. Look forward to this new feature!! Currently, we are in the process of possibly ramping up this newsletter to one issue a month. The BCFSC has always had an interest in the newsletter and is looking to get something going with us. 'Heads Up' the magazine is dead in the water for the time being. We would like to keep the magazine happening but it took a huge amount of time and resources. We've already mentioned the joblink. We are going to continue our alliance with the Vancouver Sun to spread the word when a Faller gets taken out. Everyone must understand, the reason we do this is to acknowledge another tragic death in the woodlands of BC, not to start laying blame and finger pointing. Someone else can do that. We've asked for your help before and we'll ask again. If you are aware of a fatal, contact Mike, Bill Boardman or Bill Bolton with basic information, we'll take it from there.

WFA Benevolent Fund: This was a concept at last years AGM. Mack took the notion and put it to task in a very short time frame. Last year, the fund had 1000.00 dollars in it. We gave it to a member who had broken his back while at work. This helped the family while he was in rehab for 6 months in Vancouver.

We've mentioned the Ron Waterfield fatality early in this memo. Shortly after this tragedy happened, Mack authorized a payment of 3000.00 to come out of the annual dues to go to Ron's widow and 3 children. We felt compelled to do this. At the AGM this year, through a generous contribution of

1500.00 from Penncorp, as well as those in attendance draining their pockets and a pair of absolutely awesome falling pants which were donated by Heiko Notdurfter of Pfanner Tough Gear Canada and auctioned off by our own Glen Erickson for 350.00 with the proceeds going into the 'fund'. It has now grown to 2585.00 **Our thanks to all of you in attendance as well as the 2 suppliers who kicked in to give the widows' fund a much needed 'shot in the arm'!** Though it's truly a sad thing to say, we may have to tap into it before the season's over. Anyone wishing to make a contribution can send it through to Mack at 14914 Round Lk. Rd, Telkwa BC, V0J 2X2. Be sure to state on your cheque that it's for the Western Fallers 'Benevolent Fund' It's a good thing, designed for Fallers to support Fallers. As a current member in good standing, you are eligible to receive financial help from this pot in the event of a mishap. This is one of the WFA members' benefits we hope we never have to use for obvious reasons.

Certified Fallers Program: Bill Bolton, Senior Safety Advisor with the BCFSC and WFA member was our first speaker after members business finished. He gave us a good update of how his programs; New Faller training, Qualified Bullbucker and Basic Forest Supervisor courses were rolling along. Anyone wishing further information on where these courses are taking place in the province should get in touch with Gary Banyas at (250) 724-2813. We personally recommend and have endorsed the above listed programs. They have been designed to give the participant the knowledge to supervise workers as laid out by WSBC regulation. As a Supervisor, you do have responsibilities; these courses will clarify what you should know.

The 150.00 annual fees for keeping your wallet card current that is coming on line this season. It definitely got mulled over by the group in attendance. Without writing a bloody novel on this matter, we'll attempt to shed a little light on the subject for you. To start with, there isn't really anything new here with this fee. Council has been talking about this since we were doing our AGM in Vancouver 3 years ago. The WFA managed to have this fee deferred for the last 2 years; it's time to get on with it before we lose the good that Faller Certification has captured. It's all about the Fallers themselves taking control of the Certification/ Training program. With this concept, there will be costs. Many of you don't like the idea, all we have to say is sorry, it's time to move forward.

Probably the #1 statement we've heard about this is, "What the %&#!, now I have to pay to work as a Faller". Think about this....that is exactly what is taking place. Your occupation is in lock down. Unless you have been certified and have one of these wallet cards, you are not working as a Faller in BC. No longer can an employer pick up the phone and call who knows where for a fresh bus load of 'so called' fallers willing to work for a discount. Other sectors with good paying jobs recognize falling as a certified occupation. Where they were using 'slashers' several years ago, they now are forced to track us down and employ us.

Many of you can't identify any real value to some of the items attached to the user fee. For every person that's balking, there is another that truly wants something it has to offer. An example of this would be upgrades to the qualifications on the back of the card. There is a huge following of guys that can't wait to be upgraded; we know this because we've been taking calls for the last 2 years from fallers asking how they can achieve this. All we could say is you'll have to wait, we're working on it. We could go on and on over this matter. Right now the best thing we can offer is give Mike a call if you want more information or just plain vent your frustrations. The offer is open to anyone as a member. Many of you have been doing this anyway.....

A Death in the Woods: Many of you have seen this Fallers documentary which was spearheaded by Gord McLennan. It's aired 3 times in BC as well as numerous other television channels across North America. Those in attendance last year will remember the film crew set up at the AGM capturing that meeting. While many have seen it, there are a lot of you that keep missing it!! Thus, we had Gord

come in and give us a private screening after lunch. You could not ask for a more professionally done production, it's all about Fallers and falling. Without a doubt, this is one of the biggest 'awareness' projects to date which we've been involved. Every time it airs, there's a flood of calls and emails with positive feedback coming to the keynote participants of the show and our office. It truly is a 'must see' for everyone.

There are copies of this documentary for sale for about 30.00 with taxes. The person to get in touch is Dan Schlanger, the producer. His email is: dilemma@email.com. We're recommending you get a copy for future reference; it could be a long time before anything like this is ever produced again.

Faller/ Blaster Tickets: 'Dazy' Dave Weymer., one of GLM's Bullbuckers from the north end of the Island gave the last presentation of the day on the newly released Faller/ Blaster course. This course was along time coming as many of you are aware. It got ramped up once over the years, then disappeared. When the WFA produced 'A View from the Field' we questioned its whereabouts, may be this helped get the ball rolling again to the point there is now a course being offered by Dazy. Snag and danger tree blasting will more than likely prove to be one of the biggest accident prevention tools ever developed for the falling community. Our hats go off to everyone involved with seeing this project through to completion. Anyone wishing more information on courses or content should get in touch with Dazy. His e-mail is: dazy10@telus.net or touch base with him on his cell at (250) 949-0271.

There's a Crisis on the Horizon: Ted Beutler of Aggressive Falling took the podium towards the end of the day and gave quite an impacting presentation to us. While his thoughts and talk was aimed at the Falling Contractors who are presently trying to do everything right and stay up to date with all the new and old safety requirements, the 'crisis' will affect the entire falling community. What is taking place right now and is only going to escalate, is all these new 'safety goodies', many which are already requirements to bid on a job, are financially breaking the guys who are in fact trying to do everything accordingly.

Ted jotted down a list with 10 items that he, as an employer is financially obligated to look after for his company, bullbuckers or men. And there's more on the way!

Where things have gone side ways is, bullet 9 of the 'Forest Safety Accord' which the entire Harvesting Sector signed on to with the advent of the BCFSC is largely being ignored. It states, '**All owners of forested lands, tenure holders and licensees will give weight to the safety record and current practices of companies in the awarding of contracts and in the determination of fees and levies**'. To date, who cares if your doing everything right, the low ball bid submitted by someone with no safety systems in place is still going to get the job; that or the good Contractor carries the financial burden. Either way, this isn't right. So what can be done? We've hit the panic button on this issue. It must be acknowledged that it's not just our members that are having this problem; all the other logging associations have members in the same boat. Let's face it, we are working in a cash strapped Industry. Mike set this out at a recent BCFSC session in Vancouver, not much took place over that rant, the WSBC representative took a couple of pages of notes...at any rate the entire Industry got woken up to what is happening. There may be funding available through one Ministry or another, Mike has already had some preliminary meetings to get ready to head in that direction. Though action must be immediate it's too early to say much more than that.

What was suggested at the AGM is; get our Falling Contractors, of which tally up to about 24-30 in the entire province, under one roof to discuss this matter. At this meeting they have to be prepared to discuss some form of rate setting which accounts for all the requirements they and their Fallers are shouldering, in short, a Safety Levy. Whatever they would like to do with a bid after that would be up to an individual. Some pay less, efficient with their administrative cost etcetera, others more.

Regardless, all these safety requirements shouldn't land on the contractors' shoulders. There will have to be an agreement struck up and adhered too!

Option 3, let's all go to the mining and exploration sector. They have money and seem to appreciate

their contractors and employees.

At any rate, something has to be done before we finish off the good actors. WFA is working on this, as things transpire, we'll keep you posted.

Individual Owner Operator (IOO) SAFE Companies: The BCFSC recently launched its SAFE Companies program for Individual Owner Operators. The WFA has helped build and continues to support all programs the BCFSC oversees, including this one. What we were having a bit of a problem with when it came to the IOO program was the group it was supposed to be capturing. It was our views that many of the Independent Fallers, on the Coast particularly, shouldn't have to go through this process. Mike stated a case at a recent Council meeting using himself as a Bullbucker and his group of Sibola Fallers. It was plain and simple...those Independents were his responsibility.

He had to ensure that they were given an orientation and 'pre work', endorsed by both parties. The Independents attended and signed into both tail-gate and monthly Safety meetings. Mike did their weekly safety audits and documented this on Sibola forms. It was obvious; these Independents came under the umbrella of Sibola's SAFE Companies status. Everyone in attendance agreed once the case was stated.

So, if you are one of the many Independents who come under the heading of being a 'virtual employee' are already involved and signing into a parent company who is SAFE Certified, you won't be expected to have to achieve SAFE Companies status for your own.

Well this does get a huge group of us 'off the hook', we'll still suggest you get enrolled in the program. There was a lot of work by many accomplished people that went into developing this 'one of a kind program in Canada' and once you've achieved SAFE status, it will only look good on your resume! There has been a tentative 'drop dead' date of January 1st, 2009 to get all medium and large companies SAFE certified. This had to be done to ensure the integrity of this program. This move will back the Minister of Forests and Range's statement of, "If you are not SAFE Certified, you won't be working in the woodlands of BC!" This date has been a long time coming. The Industry owes this to all the players that already stepped up and accomplished theirs, some already on their 2nd go around.

Because the IOO program has just gone through its official launch, there will more than likely be a bit of an extension for the companies enrolled in that program.

If you would like any more information on anything regarding SAFE Companies please phone Keith Rush at 1-888-632-0211.

Auditor Generals' Report: The Auditor General's office recently released their report which was a follow up to the report and recommendation made by the Forest Safety Task Force in 2004. While some recommendations had been achieved 4 years later, many had not, giving the Forest Industry a failing grade in the eyes of the AG's office; as a frontline worker you already knew this. The WFA was involved along with other groups out of our sector to help give an accurate, truthful depiction on what's going on in the bush to date with regards to worker health and well being, to the point we were the only organization, other than the AG office themselves, to help out with some photos.

While there was reference to the Council and some of its programs and the Industry in general, the bulk of this reports recommendation was aimed at several Ministries within the provincial government as well as WSBC.

One of their recommendations that truly stood out was the fact that the Registered Practicing Foresters must be engaged in discussions of worker safety. As a Faller, we all know that our settings we work in are absolutely void of this concept. We brought this to Industries attention in our report several years ago; the AG report just confirmed this.

One other item that caught our eye and we'll give you a direct quote here is, "**Government should work together with Industry to support and invest in worker safety permanently**".

Though a few of their recommendations may prove to be somewhat onerous to fully implement, the team did well with this compilation. It can be viewed on the Auditor Generals' web site or we'll have it posted by next week on ours.

WorksafeBC News: Section 26 of the WSBC regulation, which encompasses Forestry operations, is reaching its final stages to being implemented on May 1st of this year. The entire section went through a review and consultation process leading up to quite a list of amendments. If you would like to see the changes coming down the pipe, you can see them on WSBC's website.

While there was extensive work done on the section 26, there isn't anything all too impacting laid out in the Falling and bucking sub-section. There's been a lot of clarity added (if that's what you want to call it) to our section. If you've taken the Bullbuckers course, you'll already be up to speed on anything going on for us.

We did get involved quite deeply in the consultation process and the fruits of our labour seemed to have shown up in the new amendments. There has been a brand new sub section designed feller bunchers and their operators. Those of you that read 'A View from the Field' know we identified these pieces of equipment as causing more than one of our accidents. Kudos to worksafe for finally getting something in place for that department, it's been needed for a long time!

There has been work done towards multi-employer work places, clarifying who's in charge of what. Now, this doesn't mean that that a licensee can't sleaze some of the responsibility off on an unsuspecting contractor when signing up a job. This has been an article in past editions of 'Heads Up'. One new amendment that came into effect February 1st, 2008 that some of you may want to know about comes under Section 3.17.1, Air Transportation of injured workers. This regulation will have to be considered in areas that a job is underway, where, in the event of a serious mishap you will need air support to come from the closest aircraft hanger to your jobsite, returning to the nearest hospital. These amendments are a direct result of recommendations made to WSBC from the Coroners office after the inquest into 'Turbo' Ted Gramlich's death which happened on the hills in behind Nanaimo. We believe the entire Industry knows what a disorganized mess that unfolded into. The new regulation reads:

3.17.7 Air Transportation

If air transportation is the primary or only method for transporting an injured worker, all of the following requirements must be met:

- (a) before the start of operations in a workplace, arrangements must be made with an air service to ensure that an appropriate aircraft is reasonably available to the workplace during those operations;
- (b) the arrangements in paragraph (a) must include procedures for
 - (i) the employer to determine the availability of appropriate aircraft before the start of each work day, and
 - (ii) the air service to notify the employer if an appropriate aircraft ceases to be available;
- (c) a system must be provided that enables the pilot of the aircraft and the first aid attendant attending to an injured worker to communicate at all times when the aircraft is in transit to the location of the injured worker and during transport of the injured worker to medical treatment

When we first looked at this new regulation during the consultation process with WSBC, our initial thoughts were either this can't really be done or man, is there going to be a lot of Fallers parked in camp waiting for the fog to lift in Prince Rupert so an 'A' Star can lift off during the day for a medivac. Never forget, we have Search and Rescue. They fly 24-7 in almost any weather, make sure you know how to get in touch with them and it is documented in your ERP's. They can not be used as your primary contact, but in a life and death situation, they will come. Item (3) had us stumped when we did our submission. We told WSBC you would need military grade communications equipment in some cases to fulfill this request. If someone who reads knows more about radio communications than us, let us know what you would do or are currently doing. We'll gladly do a follow up article.

High Retention Harvesting and Timber Sustainability on the Coast: This article is aimed at those Fallers that have been or are currently involved in retention falling. A report was released by the Forest Practices Board last month on the topic which the title on this heading states. This report was not about compliance with either the FRPA or FPC, but rather it is about effectiveness in achieving governments' objectives. We've all heard the statement from our favourite politicians "Logging in BC is a sustainable Industry". Well it turns out, when it comes to high retention logging done with helicopters, in many cases, it isn't.

The investigators and authors examined 54 cut blocks operated by 4 separate licensees on both the mid and north coasts as well as the Charlottes. Well they did look at some blocks on the Charlottes that were indeed well within the boundaries of sustainable harvesting, most on the main Coast weren't. Many of these blocks had been creamed out, leaving only valueless junk standing, with no reason to ever go back in for another pass. The authors did openly acknowledge that this form of logging did create work where there may have been none due to inaccessibility etcetera... It is an accurate, well written document, available on the Forest Practices Board website if you'd like to take a look at it. Though it didn't make quite the impact as a lot of things do here in British Columbia, we know it was picked up by Foresters in places as far away as Norway.

Many Thanks to RB Vision Safety: Those who have attended the WFA functions over the years know we sling out a good spread of door prizes at the end of the show to our attendees. RB Hi Vision Safety, the WFA in house clothing suppliers, once again came through 'big time' for us with a generous contribution of hi-vis clothing for the raffle, many thanks Rick and Scott. Here's something for the owners and Bullbuckers.... what Mike does with RB for his fallers. At the beginning of each season, he puts in an order with Scott for a shipment of shirts, vests, etcetera and has them on hand in camp for the guys. Whether you want to hand the stuff out or set up a pay roll deduction, it makes it so simple to keep the guys from wearing rags. Give Scott a call at (250) 246-2688; he'll get your order coming out of Chemainus by Greyhound in an expeditious fashion.

Membership forms: We've tagged a renewal form along with this newsletter. The WFA has worked hard for you to be represented with Industry, as well as staying informed on news and decisions, be it good or bad. We perform many functions for our members. You won't be hearing from us any longer unless you are a paid up member! If your dues are coming up in April as many are, keep them current, if you squared up in Nanaimo at the AGM as quite a few did, thanks for staying up to date, pass the form on.

Penncorp Insurance: As we head off into the bush for 2008, lest we forget to take the time to update or apply for ongoing insurance coverage for ourselves and loved ones. As always, our rep, Scott Connolly is available. He can be reached at his office 604 589 1381, on his cel 604 323 4972, toll free 1 800 268 2835, or @ www.penncorp.ca.

In closing... the season is off to a rough start with the passing of the 2 men. We are being bombarded by all sorts of new safety programs designed to bring our accidents and fatalities down. The best program we know to date is one that's been around for years.... Fallers looking after Fallers. Keep your head up for yourself and those around you, if you see someone heading into a real tailspin of a situation, take the initiative to either stop or correct it! Play safe and we'll meet again soon....

