



Heads Up

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Newsletter of the W.F.A.
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Once again, our Annual Meeting can be classed as a raging success!

We came up with a head count of approximately 170 attendees, give or take a few, who made it in to Nanaimo. Our thanks to those members that took the time to come out, hear what is going on and to support their organization. Some of you definitely travelled great distances to get together. Due to unanimous consensus amongst the membership, Nanaimo will be the host town for the 2007 WFA AGM.

Special thanks to our corporate members, Walkers Saw Shop, RB Hi Vis clothing, BC Fallers LTD. and Penncorp for setting up displays and helping out with door prizes. It all helped to make this a true Fallers event! It sounds like Rick Butler from 'RB' is ramping up to put together some Hi-Vis clothing out with the WFA logo on it; we'll let you know when that happens.



Western Fallers AGM, 2006, Nanaimo, BC

A lot of this newsletter will be a recap of the notable things that took place at the AGM as well as the following day when the WFA Board of Directors got back together to hash out their strategies. There have been some policy changes and reviews to announce as well as bring you up to speed on things going on in BC that will affect you as a Faller. There are things that our 'Fallers Report' initiated also that will be discussed through out this memo.



Bill Boardman, WFA Director at the podium



David Anderson, President, Worksafe BC at the podium

Members and membership

Our membership numbers continue to be on the rise. There have been several of our Contractor members that have committed to asking their entire crews to join us and will aid them in doing so by handing out registration forms and pamphlets as well as payroll deducting annual dues and getting them into Wendy. Our Treasurer, Mack Schat put out a motion to the members to increase the dues this year by 50.00 raising them to 160.50 annually. After an open floor discussion on 'why' this should be done it was unanimously agreed upon and accepted by the members in attendance.

Our Fallers Association, though relatively young, has caught up too and in some instances passed the other Logging Associations in the province of B.C. We have to acknowledge the fact that even after this raise our dues we charge at least half of what it would to belong to any other logging organization in the province. As with anything, the WFA cannot run itself. There are months of work that go on annually that are done on a volunteer basis by Wendy, Mike, Mack and Debi. For the most part, no one is getting a wage for maintaining and representing our group, this should stop.

As a friendly reminder, the annual drive and re registration for Western Fallers dues is April 1st, notices will be going out.

A question was raised by several members as to what our 'mission statement', plans, goals and accomplishments are for our association. We feel the best mission statement we could come up with without going completely overboard would be:

'We are committed to improving the existence for the Fallers and their families of British Columbia'.

Quite frankly everything we've done or plan to do revolves around this phrase. Much of this newsletter to you will openly identify our accomplishments to date as well as what we've got our hands in on your behalf in order to fulfill this statement.

From the Boardroom

Sunday, January 15th, the WFA had its first Board of Directors meeting for 2006, with that came the annual restructuring. Tim DeGagne from Revelstoke put in his resignation. We thank Tim for the time he spent with us and wish him the best on future endeavours. We'll now take the time to welcome Mike Roth from Campbell River to the WFA Board. Mike was brought forward, screened, nominated and sworn in on the above mentioned date.

There were two other resignations tendered, then withdrawn. The first group of Board members all agreed to stick with it for 3 years when we first got going in 2003. For part of us that term had come to an end. Because we have a very diverse structure and weren't prepared to break it up, we



managed to coerce the 2 Directors into hanging on for 1 more year. So having said all that, it's probably safe to say we'll be looking for 1 or 2 new Directors from the Interior and one more for the Coast/ Vancouver Island for 2007. All of you please keep this in mind.

So, you're wondering if you might have what we're looking for. We don't ask for much. You must be known and liked within the Falling community, believe in what we're doing and that there is hope (this can sometimes be hard given the trend of the Industry) and be computer literate (we all process a lot of information in a month; the only way to achieve this is electronically). You must be able to understand, question and comment on whatever it is that you have been asked to go over.

The structure of our Board was questioned at the AGM. We believe part of that question was to do with 'is this a closed, 'ol boys shop'? The answer to that is no, we actually have troubles finding Fallers that will contribute their time to make this work, we just covered that a paragraph or 2 ago. Two of our senior Directors finished their terms, wanted to step down and we couldn't let them.

Far as our actual structure goes, here it is. We keep 10 Directors and 3 Executives. The Chairman is a neutral body who holds no voting power. Half of us are over 40, half are under. Half are from the Interior, half from the Coast. Half are Falling Contractors, half are Independents who work for Contractors. If we can't mull over something and make a fair, logical decision that will work for the bulk of the Fallers, then someone please tell us a group that can!

To date, the WFA and its' Board are giving their members strong representation with Worksafe BC (WCB), BC Forest Safety Council (BCFSC), Ministry of Forests, BC Timber Sales, Ministry of Labour, Coroners Office, Interior logging Association, Central Interior Logging Association, Truckloggers and the Steelworkers, to name a few. Anyway, enough politics, let's get on with some pertinent news.

Faller Certification Program

Bill Bolton, the Manager of the Certification Program came out and gave us a brief overview on what's going on with his administration. To date there have been about 2800 fallers certified with 1200 or so left to go. Registration for the true 'Grandfathering' project ended months ago. For the time being the BCFSC is running an entirely separate program which will cost a registrant 900.00. It's a 2 tiered process that's temporarily been put in place to accommodate Fallers that seem to have not heard about the program for the years prior when it was being offered for 150.00, 250.00 then jumping up to 600.00. The 900.00 sessions will run for the next while until a few more colleges are on board after which time whether or not you've been falling, you'll have to start from scratch.

If you are a Faller that has been certified some time ago and wondering why you didn't receive something in the mail indicating this, it may be because your certificate got returned to Prince George. Lots of guys just plain returned theirs for one reason or another, many of us moved. The Faller Certification office has 100+ of these that need owners. Get hold of Paz or Kathleen at 1-877-324-1212; give them your name and current address.

The re-registration fee of 150.00 that we first started talking about last year has been put into abeyance for the time being. This was going over like a lead balloon and rightfully so. To be perfectly honest it will have to be the Fallers themselves that will have to whole heartedly agree (that sounds like an impossibility right there) to pay this fee to keep the program up and running. We are a ways off yet, but many of us can see the day that British Columbia's Fallers have a closed shop and will be truly recognized for being the hard working, death defying individuals that we are. It's been done with other 'trades', it can be done with ours. We want to consult with our members about this, it is important, it's your job!

The next few articles are going to help put into context just what is going on with our certification and how it fits into or should we say, under, 'the big picture'. For more detailed information on this program go to: www.bcfallersafe.org/

Faller Certification Advisory Committee (FCAC)

This group met Monday in Vancouver right after our AGM. They are comprised from a spread of Industry representatives all having alot to do with Fallers. Al Lundgren stepped down as their Chairman. Wayne Lintot was recommended and unanimously accepted to this appointment. Wayne is the CEO of the ILA and has been involved with the Certification Program since '98.

After some generalized formal business was attended to the committee broke into 3 sub- groups to make recommendations on 3 items that we all know are going on.

Item 1: While many Fallers passed their certification, lots have stopped following the Standard. What do we do to get these guys back on track?

Item 2: What dispute resolution should be recommended for Fallers that won't alter poor work practices?

Item 3: The 'regulations' mention the use of 'Qualified Assistance' to assist a Faller. Develop a recommendation that will be effective for all parts of BC.

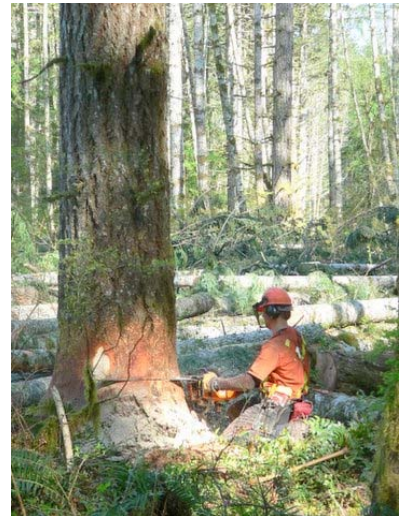
You'll be made aware out the outcomes and resolutions to these matters. Right now the recommendations have gone into review.

New Faller Training

Most of you are aware that the 'Grandfathering' was to make certain BC's existing Fallers were up to speed with the newly developed Faller Training Standard. The 'Standard' was put to task last spring in Courtenay. There was a diverse spread of nine trainee candidates put through the 10 days of practicum then 30 days 1 on 1 in the field. These guys were then ready for placement throughout the Industry as trainees, to work under close supervision of another certified Faller for up too 180 days. After that the trainee will be eligible to become a certified Faller.

That course was administrated by North Island College. Since then there have been quite a few other learning institutions show interest. To date the cash figure circulating to go through 'New Faller Training' is 9500.00. Because this is a recognized course, EI or other various funding is available to help a guy through. Hopefully, there will be some Industry sponsorship become available also.

Many of you have wanted to see our job acknowledged as a trade; well this is one of the most important steps to seeing that concept through to success.



And for those of you who are wondering where the instructors will be coming from, they are the same QST's that put the existing Fallers through the 'Grandfathering' process. They have been taking courses to upgrade themselves to teach new Fallers.

Faller Supervision (Bullbucker) Course

This course has just been developed and about to be piloted in Courtenay this month. Quite frankly, this is the very important other half to any success coming out of Fallers Certification. What's the use of having a certified worker when you have a knucklehead giving him his directions? We've looked at the course, it's all there. Like anything, it has to be put to task, and then tweaked. Anyone interested in getting in on the up and coming courses should get hold of **Gary Banys at (250) 724- 2813**. There has been a huge response from Industry to get their Bullbuckers enrolled in this so, if you're just finding out about this one now, you'll have to be patient.

We'll close off now with our Faller Program section. If any of you were wondering about the validity of your ticket and certificate, we like to think we clarified a few items for you. And yes, no one more than us knows we've got a ways to go yet, but whether you like it or not, whether you agree with it or not, things are moving forward.

WFA Communications Strategy

Well, this newsletter is one of them; sorry it took so long to get something written out to everyone.

We're currently negotiating some money to start doing a small one or two pager twice a month. It will be a Fallers version of the CILA's Facts/Fax that we have been forwarding out to the members we have on electronic file.

'Heads Up', the magazine, is in at the printers right now; we're currently trying to pick up some more advertising from throughout the province. It will be out to you shortly.

Our website is due to be re launched. We had it on line the other day to view and tweak, it's back in Vancouver for the final rebuild before posting.

Those that made it to the WFA's Annual Meeting, heard Mike give a talk on 'making the media work for us'. You must have noticed towards the end of last year that every fatal accident that took place in BC regarding a Forest Worker was getting press coverage. That came largely from us. Here's how that one came about and how you can be an integral part of keeping this going.

Many of us always wondered why, when there is a death in an occupation such as law enforcement or construction it always seems to make the front page, but when a Faller or any Forest worker gets killed there's pretty much squat said about it.



Mike talking to Kristie from CBC

We approached Gordon Hamilton at the Vancouver Sun last spring and enquired why things were the way they were. In short, the reply we got was 'because our deaths take place out in the bush and our Editor doesn't feel it is news worthy'. Anyway, we didn't really want to hear that but felt at least we were told the truth. Four months later, 'A View from the Field', went public causing the entire province to sit up and take notice what truly was going on out in our woodlands. Problem solved.

Our deaths can no longer go unnoticed. What we're asking of you is this. If you are at work and one of the buddies gets taken out, we want to know what has happened! Get hold of Gordon Hamilton at the Vancouver Sun, (604) 605- 2160 or (604) 329- 6135. If you don't want to do this, get hold of your favourite WFA Director or Tanner Elton at the BCFSC (604) 891- 1214. Remember, your job is not to

blame or point fingers, you're giving us a hand to make sure the death of another good man does not go unnoticed. We don't need much to get going, but it must be accurate information in a timely fashion. Incidentally, Industry and Worksafe BC are both in huge support of this project, you are **not** whistle blowing!

Right now, there are a lot of things going on out there that need the attention of Government, Worksafe or some other enforcing body. When you talk about Forest Workers being killed at the rate they do in this province, public awareness soon turns into public outrage. Public outrage motivates bureaucracies to do something.

The WFA is always looking for Faller pictures, hey, we'll make you famous, just ask Johnny Myshrall... Our communications department needs them for up and coming publications; our web gal can use some for our site. If they are digital send them through to Wendy at kitfox@shaw.ca or Debi at dmckibbin@monarch.net or through to us at wfabc@westernfallers.com.



What went on with the 'Fallers Report?'

For every action, there's a reaction!

Many of you are aware of the attention that our 'Faller Report' got when it finally came out from under embargo and went public. We tend to think on a fairly grand scale around here but what went on immediately afterwards and continues to do so, exceeded any of our expectations. As with the media coverage over Forest worker fatalities, many of the things taking place are a direct spin off of our actions.

With the generous help of the Interior Logging Association who chose to print all 72 pages of text in their quarterly magazine, there are now 6000 hard copies in circulation. It has also been posted on 5 websites which can be down loaded and printed off. 'A View from the Field' has become a 'must read' for anyone interested in Forest worker safety and accident prevention. All we did was put together an easy read which was 100% truthful. Though the document was lightly questioned by some groups, no one could deny its contents. Could we have said more? Yes, but that was enough to get the ball rolling. The WFA is still doing interviews over that document, mainly on a national level.

Many of you have contacted us wondering why there hasn't been huge change for the better. We are well aware that, to date, the Fallers aren't seeing too much at ground level. Look at 'Turbo' Ted Gramlich's fatality; the bulk of the events leading up to this tragedy are printed in clear English on page 55. The rest of the compounding factors are all in that 'Report'. Why did this death happen?

Many of the items and situations that we identified did not happen overnight, we all know that, they are policy decisions that have been made over the years with none of the decision makers considering what it would actually take for a Faller to go out and conduct his business in a safe, civil manner and stay within everyone's guidelines. There has been activity spawned out of our report taking place at a high level, which incidentally is exactly where things had to go on, that we'll list off. Some outcomes are already in effect.

Worksafe BC reviewed and came up with a new compliance strategy for its Officers. In this program, there is nothing new. It was built upon existing regulations. Their officers have been told to get out and look at the entire picture when visiting a Logging Operation. Licence Holders, Primes, Subs, Independents and workers.

BC Timber Sales (BCTS) has acknowledged that there has been no safety concerns' going on with them. They created a Safety Initiatives Manager, Ken Matthews, who spoke at our meeting, to look into and monitor what is going on with their sites. The Director of Operations, Grant Parnell requested that when we are involved or observe anything really absurd to report it to him. His number is (250) 387-8309. They also have added a Forest Safety section to their website at www.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/

Worksafe and Ministry of Forests have struck up a group to sort out the Policy and Regulatory overlap or under lap, whatever we want to call it. Decisions and information is still pending.

Worksafe is currently reviewing their policies as to who is an actual contractor and who should still be deemed an employee. This has been going on for a while and we are anticipating a decision to come out in short order.

Mike attended a meeting in Richmond with Worksafe just last week that may spark a review off concerning the 'walking wounded'. Interest has been shown by people within their office over this matter. This will be huge, but it has to be done. We'll keep you posted as this is in the early stages.

The Steelworkers had their high profile Summit in December where about 100 delegates from Industry, Government and Worksafe got together. Out of that came commitment for more 'Board' officers and a Coroner to look into Forest worker fatalities.

There have been small Industry orientated wins taken by the Fallers throughout the province that have been documented by us. A Licensee in the Interior committed to making sure their Fallers aren't wading around in hazards on the low side of the road. They recognized a problem and have taken the initiative to correct it. A crew was turned around and sent home during the monsoon season when there was a high risk of slides in the area they were working. BCTS has also committed to monitoring and cleaning up the low sides of their roads. We know these may seem like small items, but they are positive steps being taken to look after the Fallers a bit better. Never forget we are just getting started.

BC Forest Safety Council

It just wouldn't be a newsletter without mentioning Tanner and the BCFSC. If you've been following the media coverage over the last week or so they've had some fairly substantial announcements. Many of you know who Tanner is; he came and spoke at both our last 2 AGM's. If he didn't know too much about the Fallers in 2005, he definitely had a better idea of what we're about and the issues we're up against us by 2006.

Our Fallers Certification and the 2 other programs we mentioned earlier are administrated by the BCFSC. Here's the 'Readers Digest' version of the other initiatives they are working on at present. We urge you to go to their website where there is vast amounts of information posted. The BC Forest Safety Council can be reached at www.bcforestsafes.org

Qualified Companies: We all know of our certification, well bring on Company Certification. Right now both the Licensees and the Ministry of Forests are saying if you are not a Qualified (SAFE) Company, you won't be working on our lands. To become a **SAFE (Safety Accord Forestry Enterprise)** Company you will have to go through an audit performed by an external body. As with

Fallers Certification, there is nothing new that will be asked or expected, it has been built off the contents of Worksafe's current regulation. It is things that should be in place already far as safety for workers is concerned. You may be asking, what this has to do with the Independent Fallers and how do we fit in. In order for our Employers to receive their certification, they will have to be staffed with certified Fallers and sooner or later an entire certified crew.

The Contract Fallers, along with the small Operators, will have a small audit system to go through eventually, this is still under construction and will have to be reviewed. Eventually this program will be linked into a Certificate of Recognition (COR) program going on with Worksafe making the appropriate candidates eligible for a 5% rebate on their assessments. This program is already up and running in other high risk sectors.

Industry Safety Ombudsman: This position will operate out of Councils' office and will be set up to handle safety issues within the Forest Sector. This should be an interesting position.

Safety Advocates: These guys will be working for Council to help Contractors prepare for their Safety audits. The QST's that have been out there visiting us could be likely candidates for these positions. They know right from wrong, good from bad. Besides they are already on Council's payroll. As mentioned, go to the BCFSC website for more information.

CEO's Meeting: There have been 2 meetings that were sponsored by the Council late last year which brought in the Chief Executive Officers from the major Timber Licence holders in B.C. The main gist of these meetings was to remind and clarify that even as CEO's they do have a responsibility to the health and well being of everyone working on their claims, no matter how far the contracting out has gone under current Industry standards. Worksafe was present at one of these meetings for sure as it's their Act that states they do have a responsibility and always have.

Accountability Meetings: Council has also sponsored 2 huge Industry Accountability sessions which go hand in hand with the last heading as well as the SAFE Companies Initiative. These are to sort out who owns what when it comes to worker safety. There is this attitude amongst some that because they have farmed out the work, they have passed on the accountability and liability. Wrong!

Fallers Wages

So what can be done about this? It's a hot subject with most of us. We talk about sorting out deeply rooted problems and issues within our community, well this one believe it or not started going down the tubes over 30 years ago. There has been a posting put under 'Opinions' on our website, www.westernfallers.com. Many of you know the fellow that took the time to write in to us. This composition spells it right out in black and white, where things went wrong and why they are still wrong.

A lot of why Industry has gotten away with keeping our wages recessed has to do with supply and demand factor as well as the fact we're scattered. The trend for quite some time has been the Contractors that pay good, get the good Fallers, there are still outfits operating like this today. The cheap, not so savoury guys, when they couldn't find any true Fallers to do their work, would give the opportunity to some young fella's, the skidder man or whoever else they could find willing to grab a saw and fall at a cut rate. And around and around it's gone. We believe that our Fallers Certification and the New Training Standard should block this from taking place in the future; we've tried to be as transparent as possible as to what's going on with both these programs. This should bring some much needed professional recognition back to our job.

Can we blame this wage problem on the Fallers themselves? It's fairly safe to say yes, in many cases. We all chose this career but we haven't looked after our own destiny very well. In the same breath, all we ever wanted to do make a living at something we enjoyed doing.

You are all aware of the structure of the WFA Board half Contractors, half Independents. This was set up this way for a reason, to be able to hash out situations just like this and come to a conclusion that is going to work for everyone.

Right now we have some Licensees and Contractors that are more than willing to pay accordingly for our services and some that have gotten so tight with the funds, it almost isn't worth going out for them. Our job is about to become a lot harder to get into, therefore making Fallers harder to acquire. Whether we like it or not, this is being done for us. The only way to stabilize the wages is by dealing with the problem ourselves. Our Chairman has a proposal.

We have some very reputable Falling Contractors on the WFA Board of Directors as well as for members. What has to be done is get a fair group of actual contractors (members or not) together under one roof for a good, sensible talk over the rate structure. Given the amount of Industry inflicted cutthroating and bad mouthing that's gone on over the years between us; this could prove to be an impossibility but this is where it has to begin.

There has to be an accord between the whole works of us, without it, this will not work. As mentioned, we're not treading into uncharted territory; some outfits are doing just fine. Let's take their program and apply it to the entire Falling Sector.

Other Associations get together with Licensees to set wages, we could also. Now, if anyone figures we're going to hang signs off our necks and sit on our asses on strike, please drop that notion right now. As mentioned, what we're after is already there, we just have to broaden the wage structure horizon. Anyway, discuss this amongst yourselves; if the interest is truly there we should pursue things in a logical fashion as a group. If it's not, the oil and gas as well as the mining sectors pay very well and are coming up short of workers, maybe we could lobby the Provincial or Federal Government to retrain a bunch of us to head off in those directions?

This will not take place this year, there are going to be too many other things to contend with, we can see that coming down the pipe already.

Fallers and Worksafe B.C. Assessments Rates: If you are an Independent or Contract Faller and registered as one you're premiums should have dropped another buck this year. This concludes our rates dropping to be even with the rest of the Forest Sector. If you didn't notice a drop, you may want to contact someone in the Assessment Department of Worksafe in Richmond.

Regulation and Walkerized Saws: Another item that came out of our AGM is Worksafe BC appears to be willing to review their policies towards modified saws. As Fallers using these products the pros greatly outweigh the cons to letting Donny build them and us use them. They help keep our production levels up while contributing less impact to our bodies, we all know this. Why do you think we like running them? We'll follow what takes place on this matter and definitely throw our support in behind Walkers Saw Shop to have things resolved in theirs and our favour.

Heads Up!
And we mean it

We mentioned WSBC new compliance strategy; we'll remind you that the only thing that is new is they are actually out there enforcing what they should have been for the last however many years.

Now, this action on their part is catching even the real good guys a little off guard. As a Faller make sure:

- A- You have your log book and wallet card fairly close to where you are working, if not in your pack, in the crummy or possibly in a Tupperware container at the Heli- pad.
- B- Remember how you were conducting your business when you passed your certification, you best be still doing that. If you aren't, something will be said and documented.

If you are a Contractor or Bullbucker make sure:

- A- You have and can produce some Safe Work Procedures for your Company.
- B- You are practicing these and looking after your men.
- C- You are having regular safety meetings with documentation.

Start remembering and following these few points right away, most of our members already are. If you had the ambition to actually join us, you are probably operating as a Professional Faller already. If you're not, get with the program.

When we went through this certification one thing became apparent right away. There was a group that just stepped up to the plate, went through the process and passed with flying colors, many without reading any of the content contained in the info flips.

Though no real fault of their own, there was a definite following that had to be 'bottle fed' through. They had trouble. This is the group that really has to watch out for the enforcing bodies coming along. You passed the thing alright, make sure you keep working like a professional, not a product of Industry.

We are aware of an incidence that has taken place to our members that we will call an **abuse of power**. It came from Bullbuckers that had a hard on for a crew and used his position and the certification program to put the run on some perfectly good men. We are currently getting to the bottom of this as this letter to you is being written. Our organization has already documented cases against this man as well as the Company he works for. It's truly a shame that this is going on, but at the same time it's not a total surprise. Those of us that have worked on this project over the last 5 years knew very well that there are management sorts that will take this Fallers Certification and use it against the very group it should be protecting. If you are involved in a situation like this get hold of **Mike (250) 638- 8729 or Bill Bolton (250) 890-3696 ASAP! We have to know who is abusing this program.**

On the other hand when this abusive situation was going on, a Falling Contractor who everyone knows as a complete haywire got shut down also for running his operation as per. This would be the program working properly.

Other Items Worth Noting

Our Disability Insurance people at **PennCorp** made a positive announcement to the members at the AGM. They now have a sickness policy that can be added on to your current policy with them. For more information, get hold of **Scott Connolly at (604) 323- 4972**, he'll bring you up to speed on what's going on with their group and the Fallers.

Our colleagues at the **Interior Logging Association (ILA)** are ramping up for their **Convention** to be held in Kamloops on April 20th, 21st and 22nd. This is pretty much **THE** logging event in B.C to attend. For more information contact **Wayne, Nancy or Leanne at the ILA office, (250) 503-2199**. You'll probably see the WFA Directors manning a booth at this event this year also, we have been invited!

After burning down some time back, the ILA has their new Forestry Museum coming back on line. Would any of our group happen to have any museum grade (gravity feed) power saws etcetera they might be into contributing or loaning Wayne and the gang for display. If you can help out, phone Wayne at the above number.

Anyway gang; let's do our absolute best to keep the tragedies down to an all time low this year. Look after each other like we haven't for years and never forget **Unsafe is Unacceptable!**