



# Heads Up

Vol . 5  
Newsletter of the W.F.A.  
Date: May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Six WFA Directors spent the weekend of April 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> in Kamloops manning the first Western Fallers' booth to go on the road at the Interior Loggers Trades Convention. Everything about this event surpassed our grandest expectations; in short we had a blast! The main theme of our booth, what else, a Fallers' display. We kept a 4 hour movie with some awesome falling footage playing continuously, photos all over the place, springboards, saws and an array of other Fallers stuff, old and new. I think most of you know, unless you are one of us or married to one of us, you don't really understand what we're all about. We welcomed everyone in to our world, and as usual, they loved us!



McKibbin and the Directors managed to take interacting and networking to the highest level, making and meeting all sorts of new friends, acquaintances and contacts. It's fairly safe to say we'll be back there, as well, we strongly urge any of our members to make it out to Vernon to the ILA convention next year, we guarantee, you won't be sorry.

## **Falling Contractors taking on the role of Prime Contractor**

Here we have a problem that we thought was only happening to some of the other Logging Associations members, but it seems to have reared its ugly little head up amongst the falling community as well. Many of our 'Contractor' members are well aware of the duties and obligations to being a Prime Contractor and when asked to take on this status when signing up a simple falling contract, have declined to do so, kudos to you guys. Some Licensees seem to be holding out awarding falling contracts until they can find one of us naïve enough to sign on. They are downloading what should be their responsibilities onto the shoulders of someone that more than likely does not have the capacity to take them and fulfill the obligations of a Prime Contractor. **The WFA is red flagging this issue and asking that anyone signing up a falling contract and at the same time being asked to take on the role of Prime, beware, don't do it!!**

We know the Licensees that are doing this and have sent a formal letter into their Association Representative asking them to stop. This matter is also being reviewed by both Industry and WorksafeBC. As a falling contractor, until we can get a legal mechanism in place to stop this, please keep your guard up. You could end up with hassles and burdens you never dreamed existed.

There has been some chatter about WSBC bringing in some people out of Industry to meet over this matter towards the end of May. Hopefully something becomes of that.

### **Modified Saws**

The WFA initiated a meeting between Don Dahr, a senior Manager with WorksafeBC (WSBC) and our trusted and loyal saw mechanic friend, Don Walker of Walkers Saw Shop about a month ago to start hashing out the problem WSBC has with us using modified saws. All parties were really pleased with how this meeting went. Donny and the Fallers that were present in Nanaimo for this session had all their ducks in a row and sent Don Dahr back to Richmond with a lot of good pertinent information on what Donny is actually doing to our saws and why we like it. A summary of our feelings are, when it comes to a Fallers health and well being, modified saws are doing far greater good than bad. Donny would have liked to have gotten a variance to be able to carry on, but in our eyes and WSBC's that only translated into a quick fix.

Contrary to what you may have been told by one WSBC Officer or another, the true reason they don't like to see modified saws being run by us is it violates one of their regulations with regards to using only CSA tools and equipment. Mike did a follow up phone call to Don D in Richmond recently over the issue and was assured it is being looked at and that some of the 'old wives' tales regarding these saws have already been put to rest. The review is under way; there will be a bit more consultations go on, we will keep you posted as to how things are progressing or Don Walker will know also.

We have a lot of members out there using these tools, and as Donny Walker is still a young man, we anticipate him building these for us for a while. We have to deal with the matter to achieve a long term resolution.

### **Other Reviews in Progress (One Man Companies)**

One of many reviews going on right now within WSBC is the subject of 'one man' companies, are they contractors or employees. A lot of the problems we, as Independent Fallers have found are selves in over the years can be traced back to all of us running these little companies, Worksafe has recognized this and has run several surveys for Stakeholder input.

While in Kamloops last week, Mike met with the Executives of the ILA, TLA, NWLA and CILA as well as some of their Directors to discuss this issue. After a two hour deliberation over the pros and cons to these little companies, we all agreed to submit a letter into Worksafe with the whole works of our logos across the top. Actually, the logging associations have done this before, now the group added the WFA logo to the letterhead.

News of this review has been an area of concern for some of our members over the last few months as Mike has talked to some of you about this already. In a perfect little world it would be nice to shut down all these one man companies. Unfortunately the 'dark' reality and the current state of the Industry are going dictate that Independent Fallers are here to stay, whether we like this or not. Somebody should have thought this one out a little better 25 years ago when the plague was just getting started.

It was to all of our feelings that WSBC was looking at the issue from an accident prevention point of view, with probably having the best of intentions in mind. Both the gas/oil and construction sectors are managing to operate with scads of Independents at a considerably lower accident rate, we're confident the forest sector can achieve this also. We all agreed that both Councils SAFE Companies initiative and WSBC's new Compliance Strategy will have the same positive effect on lowering the accident rates once they are implemented. Start looking after the men working for you, whether they are employees or independents. Right now we can only guess at where they are headed. We are all monitoring the situation to ensure WSBC has all the facts and does not do something that we'll never bounce back from.

### **Internal Business (WFA)**

The WFA website **www.westernfallers.com** has been re launched. What a pile of work, but it was worth it. Though some of the content is original, for the most part it's undergone a complete rebuild, with major additions, check it out!

Western Fallers 'Job link' is up and running. Though not one of our bigger projects we did take a little too long putting this one together. Ours is a little different as to how it works, and if we don't have you on e-file, you're going to miss out, sorry. It's designed to be quick, efficient and as little wear and tear on the Secretary as possible. Trying to keep track of Fallers looking for work is a nightmare. Our set up has the Employers looking for the Fallers.

Mike shipped out a formal letter to all the Association leaders, Licensees, BCTS and MOF to advise their members that if they are in need of Fallers put a brief message together, e-mail it to Wendy, she will forward it out to the 250 Fallers computers she has on e-file. Some of you have already seen the thing working. For obvious reasons this service is wide open to our own Contractor members also. Get enough information on what you're after into Wendy (**kitfox@shaw.ca**); she'll forward it out within hours of receiving it. Those of you that receive requests from us electronically kick them out further on our behalf via the caulk boot telegraph; a lot of our guys still aren't on line.

We went through a bit of Board restructuring since we spoke last. Remember that offer David Anderson, CEO of WSBC made at our AGM to the members about joining the 'Dark Side' and coming to work for him; well Dave Gaskill did just that. Dave tendered his resignation about 2 weeks ago with the WFA Executive. We'd like to thank him for the time he spent with us and wish him the best on his next endeavour! For anyone else interested, we believe WSBC is still looking for applicants for OHS Officers. For obvious reasons, we'd like to see a few more of you out there, go for it.

Aaron Frye, our Director out of Coldstream is currently snooping around for a man or 2 through the Interior to help represent us better through that part of the province. If you're interested, contact him (250- 260-7747). He'll let the rest of us know what's gone on. We are going to have to nail some new Directors down for the beginning of next year; he's covering a huge part of the province by himself right now.

Mike and Wendy are going to do a review in June as to just exactly who is staying current with their membership dues and who isn't. We have let this one slide a wee bit but no longer wish to do this. Some of us have flat out left the Industry, some got terrified of where we were headed and don't want to be associated with us anyway and some are plain cheap, just here for a free ride. Wendy has all the renewals out now, if it's sitting on your kitchen table, fill it out, and send it in with your 160.50 cheque.

As with any organization, the WFA was a little slow at the launch, we had our growing pains. The entire forest industry has watched us catch up and become leaders in BC with ourselves.

Rick Butler, our 'in house' Hi Vis guy has got everything he sells available with the WFA logo on it. We had the first batch in Kamloops with us for display and sale. Hey, the WFA is definitely being heard, it just became a lot easier to see us also! As with anything we just get going, it will be a little haywire out of the gate, unless someone gives us 10K so we could just buy a bunch of stuff and have on hand. For the time being, go to Ricks website, [www.rbvisionsafety.com](http://www.rbvisionsafety.com), figure out what you want, call it in to Wendy at the office. Make sure she has the size and order number of the articles your after. When there's enough piled up to do a run, they will. A run isn't very much either. They'd probably do 4-6 pieces right away. Any of you that are using Ricks stuff already know that it's pretty nice.

### **Super / Bullbucker Course**

This recently developed course went through a real thorough piloting session in Campbell River about 2 months ago. There were 90 candidates, predominately from Vancouver Island stepped up to the plate for the 5 day sessions which went on over a 6 week period. Mike sat in on course number 5, partly as a WFA/Council observer to see what Billie and the BCFSC had come up with and partly to become a Super/Bullbucker.

As with our Fallers Certification program, there was nothing new that Super/Bullbucker course. It has been structured out of existing WSBC regulations and sections of the Act. We have Supervisors amongst us right now that would have found the course quite boring because they have been practicing its content already. Without a doubt, it will be a huge wake up call for some when they have to take this to hang on to their job in management.

There were many pertinent questions arose from the group that Mike sat with as he's sure there should have been with the others. One that really stood out was 'Where's the loot suppose to come from to pay for proper supervision'? Good question, lets face it, one of the reasons things are the way they are, is in order to cut costs the first thing to go was a proper Bullbucker. OK, something that was in everybody's binder of course materials was a sheet of paper called 'The Health and Safety Accord of the British Columbia Forest Industry'. This is an agreement that the entire Forest Sector, including us, signed onto a few years back when we got the BCFSC up and running. If you read down to the 3<sup>rd</sup> section 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet, it's right there, it's suppose to be bid into the work and the person accepting the bid is suppose to recognize this. Are things going to be that simple, absolutely NOT? It's going to be up to us to hold everyone, including ourselves accountable to the content of this sheet of paper. We've attached a copy of the 'Accord' to the back of this memo, it's also available on Councils website.

The Super/Bullbucker course has gone back for a tweaking and will be made available provincially we've been told. The best thing to do is stay in touch with Gary Banys **(250) 724-2813**; he's a Coordinator with the certification group. If you are a Falling Contractor or Foreman in charge of Fallers we recommend you sign up and take this course.

FYI- For those members that did take the course and were overwhelmed by all the WSBC regulations that you were supposed to be able to hone in on, about 85% of these are conveniently listed in the back of 'A view from the Field', the WFA Fallers report that you received from us, funny how that worked out.

## **Forest Safety Ombudsman**

Roger Harris, a retired, injured Faller and past Minister for the State of Forests started his new job with the BCFSC as Forest Safety Ombudsman on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Many of you may have heard about this appointment as the Steelworkers have openly done quite a bit of whining and belly-aching over this through the media since it happened.

In our report we outlined that when bringing up safety concerns to management, you could very well lose your job, the TLA confirmed that yes, this does happen and possibly more frequently than most of us really thought. The position of Ombudsman was created for everyone to have a place to go to too discuss their safety concerns and have them dealt with without getting canned (or laid off when the outfit is already short 4 Fallers).

Roger started his new job with things to look into right away. Boardman and Parkin had the opportunity to sit and meet in Kamloops with him for an hour or so. As Harris had a trip to Vancouver Island planned anyway to meet with a group of Fallers there, he's agreed to stop into Wendy's for another session with her and the Island 'chapter' of WFA Directors.

Right now, if you want to contact the Ombudsman, he can be reached at **1-877-577-7766**. As Roger was an Independent Faller at one time and staunch supporter of the WFA (we blossomed out of his home town), he's consented to give out his home number to our members; it's **(250) 635-3400**. As a Faller, you'll find him very easy to talk too. If some of you still don't feel comfortable going this route, as always, Mike will be there best as he can to answer your calls.

## **Anyone want to be in the Movies?**

About 2 months ago, an Independent movie producer, Gord McLellan sat with a quorum of WFA Directors in Parksville for a meeting. Because the Fallers are a somewhat 'colourful' bunch and he was hearing quite a bit about us over the last little while, he bounced the notion of producing a documentary on Fallers and Falling. After an evening meeting we agreed to give him a hand. So long as he went after the funding and everything else it would take to do something like this, we'd come up with the most important resource, some Fallers doing what we do.

He updated us on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Canwest Global has committed to doing a development phase for the documentary. This translates into a small amount of money to do some research and flesh out the story. This project is still in the developmental stages. If this project actually blossoms to full steam ahead, are there any of you out there that would help us get Gordon out into the field with his camera to get some footage? Don't worry, there won't be a full blown Hollywood set, we're guessing there'd be 2 guys, it's a documentary. Anyone interested, get back to us so we can put you and your crew on a list, this is one of those fun projects that you as a member could be part of!

## **An Offer for Fallers' Kids**

The '**Silver Lake Forestry Centre**' just outside of Peachland in the Okanogan had a booth set up at the ILA Convention. They put on 1 week forest education camps for the kids throughout the summer months that look absolutely fabulous. This is the same group that we're helping to find stuff for their museum that just got back up and running after burning down. You'll find all the information you'll need about them by going to their website at **[www.silverlakekidscamp.com](http://www.silverlakekidscamp.com)** or phone **Monika or Marilyn at (250)717-0033**. They can also be reached via e-mail at **[monika@silverlakekidscamp.com](mailto:monika@silverlakekidscamp.com)**

They are open year round and set up to take on all sort of groups. The WFA Directors present at Kamloops, bashed around the idea of descending on the place in the early fall for a wilderness retreat WFA think tank session; that's got to scare a few people.

### **New Faller Training**

Bill Bolton and Steve Telosky are just finishing off 5 new Faller Trainees in the Campbell River area. The teachers are really impressed with how this group has turned out. This is the first official run using the BC Faller Training Standard, the first go around was a year ago was a pilot session. A lot was learned from that one to make this one run smoother. We've been told that members from Industry have already stepped forward and offered to take on these 5 at different locations in the province to start them on their apprenticeships out in the field, under close supervision.

Shortly after the first group was piloted a year ago, a Bullbucker out of Courtenay was running around condemning the Training course and some of the lads that went through that stating that he wouldn't hire them as Fallers. Everyone must understand that these guys are Faller apprentices once they come out of the 30 day college course, Industry is getting a man that has been instructed properly with some good, wholesome falling knowledge. It's up to the rest of us to give these newcomers a hand under close supervision out in the field to become Fallers. This is how we used to do things, it worked 30 years ago and it will work now!

Some administrators have been questioning the price (9500.00) to go through this course. Well this may seem steep, look at some of the other directions you could go; to be an RPF will cost you in the upwards of 20K, lots of people went through that course over the years and now work at jobs not even remotely linked to the forest industry. Bill Bolton and his group are still exploring ways to help new guys with funding. Mikes still hoping Industry will step up to the plate.

There has been talk of holding the next session somewhere in the Eastern section of the province. When something gets nailed down, we'll let you know.

### **Fallers' Report**

The WFA recently made a contribution of 30 'A View from the Field' reports to a high school up in Terrace, BC. The instructor that teaches Forestry 11 and 12 took the initiative to work the document into his curriculum. We've been told his first class that used it is about to write an exam on its contents. We felt this contribution by us would help keep the WFA's warm and fuzzy image up with the general public.

WSBC recently indoctrinated 'A View from the Field' into their library in Richmond along with all the other accident prevention and health manuscripts they keep catalogued. That really looks different as most of the things they would pick up and acknowledge they have, were written by Doctors, Professors, Kinesiologist's or someone along those lines, not Fallers.

The MOFR and BCTS have also posted our report on their website, hopefully somebody's reading it.

It looks like we were wrong in assuming the powers that be were going to shoot Mike, burn the one and only copy ever printed and all pretend nothing ever got written. Have a safe and productive summer, we'll be in touch!

