

WOOD N YOU LIKE TO KNOW

Elmsdale Lumber Company Limited

November 2020

Issue # 296

Notes from the Editor

I don't like roller coasters! Not one bit! This month has been a roller coaster ride like none other. I had been long awaiting Nov 3, 2020. That promised to be the day Trump would take a kicking in the vote and Biden would be proclaimed President Elect. On the morning of Nov 4, I arrived at work feeling totally defeated. I was surrounded with empathy and a moderate amount of teasing (which provided a moderate amount of relief). As the days passed, the light at the end of the tunnel became more and more bright as most of the world had proclaimed Biden as President Elect. The roller coaster eased.

As promised by science, we should anticipate the second wave of COVID-19. Science was right and we were back on the roller coaster. We were enjoying a slow ride and then, in the blink of an eye, we were at full speed. I have every faith Nova Scotians will rise to the occasion once again and slow the spread as we wait for the world to be vaccinated.

For the past 28 years (the full length of my employment with ELCO), I have enjoyed working with Derek Prest on ELCO's order file. As Robin will explain in his newsletter, we will be challenged to fly solo without Derek's oversight and experience. Everyone at ELCO extends their sincerest thanks and well wishes to Derek as he strategizes what his future holds. One thing is for sure, he is far too young to be idle. Good luck and thanks, and please don't be a stranger!

During COVID, we have become used to the word "bubble" to indicate a method for us to socialize safely. For the past several years I have been privy to another bubble. It consists of Robin and Chris Wilber, Greg and Brenda Roach, and Herve and Lorraine Burri. This "bubble" has been answering the wishes of the Colchester East Hants Health Centre Foundation and covering the costs of much needed equipment.

This month, the foundation reached out to this amazing

Notes from the Editor, con't

"bubble" with a pretty substantial request. Here is an excerpt from the email requesting the "bubble's" assistance:

"Our current intubation system is reaching its end of life and recently experienced a failure during use. The C-MAC video laryngoscope has been identified as a critical priority by Site Chief, Emergency Medicine, Dr. Jan Sommers as well as the Administrative Leaders for the ED Program of Care.

Given the strain our emergency department is already experiencing and that we inch closer to a full blown second wave every day this piece of equipment is significant to say the least. It is also worth noting that while CEHHC was designated by the province as the COVID Centre for the northern zone, they provided no funding to accompany the designation. Any equipment required to care for COVID19 patients had/has to be funded by the Foundation. Since March we have already provided funding for almost \$200,000 worth of equipment.

The cost of the C-MAC is higher than pieces previously funded (\$40,000), however, we wondered if this is something we could structure in a multiyear proposal - i.e. \$5000/year for 3 years per partner. Or, if your group might consider a one-time donation, we could seek other partners for the remaining funds. We are open to any scenario that might work for you. Having said all this, please know that we are acutely aware that these are challenging times for everyone, and should this not be a good time to look at funding we completely understand and will regroup when the time is right".

Signed: Erin Vandermeulen, Events Coordinator, Colchester East Hants Health Care Foundation.

The "bubble" received this email at 1:30 pm on November 23.

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Sometimes, quick action is required. The email below was received at 10:30 am on November 24, after learning that the “bubble” would be covering the entire cost of \$40,000 for the much-needed equipment.

“Good Morning Everyone:

I wish I could share with you our jubilation when I opened this email. The image of Sharon dancing in her office was priceless. This is just the most incredible news and mere thank you's will never be enough. We will share this news with our ER and COVID teams immediately.”

So, on behalf of everyone at ELCO, to this amazing “bubble” please accept our heartfelt thanks! The world is much better with generous souls like you.

As this is the last newsletter of 2020, stay safe everyone and enjoy your celebrations over the holiday season.

Gennie

Notes from the Safety Committee**2020 in Review**

Jan	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Feb	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Mar	0 lost time	1 medical aid
Apr	0 lost time	0 medical aid
May	0 lost time	0 medical aid
June	0 lost time	0 medical aid
July	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Aug	1 lost time	0 medical aid
Sept	1 lost time	0 medical aid
Oct	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Nov	1 lost time	0 medical aid

The minutes from our last safety meeting are posted on the bulletin boards around the property. Please take a moment to review them & be sure to ask your supervisor or any member of our safety committee about any questions you may have.

Big thanks to Darren Isenor & Nick Miller for completing our quarterly inspections. Thanks guys, we appreciate it.

Each month, we make payments to WCB to ensure our workers are covered in the event of a safety incident happening while at work.

Notes from the Safety Committee, con't

Our WCB premiums are directly linked to our WCB claims. The more costly the claims, the bigger the premium. We are pleased to report that beginning January 2021 our rate has fallen a bit which will result in reduced premiums. Well done everyone – this is a direct result of everyone working with a safety mindset.

As this is our last newsletter of 2020, and Nova Scotia's COVID-19 cases are ramping up as we head into the Christmas season, we implore you to follow the safety protocols put forth by Public Health. Maintain social distance, wear your mask, and wash your hands. It really is NOT too much to ask.

Until next month, we hope Santa finds you all, and we wish you health and happiness for 2021.

Notes from the President

If I told you “God” was taking some time to readapt and reconfigure, you might think I belong in a straight jacket. But it is true, read on. Derek Prest was born in Mooseland where his dad, Fraser Prest and uncles, Sterling and Murray Prest operated a sawmill under the banner of Prest Brothers. My father and Murray shared common interests and were very astute businessmen and saw eye to eye on most every issue. Murray had a bright young nephew and he saw this young man could have a successful future in our industry. He thought some mentoring outside Prest Brothers circle would broaden his experience and knowledge. In 1981, at the age of 17, Derek came to Elmsdale Lumber for a summer job and turned it into a full-time job.

In those days, lumber wasn't sorted by length or grade at the sawmill. This manual process happened at the sorting chain. It was hard work but for a young 17-year-old who like to lift weights, this was not an issue.

Notes from the President, con't

The following summer, Derek also learned to drive a forklift and from time to time, drive our delivery truck. In the 80's we would deliver loads of lumber to construction sites all over HRM.

After 4 years, Derek's passion for the industry led him to enroll in UNB to graduate as a Forest Technician and once again, he returned to Elmsdale Lumber.

The old, single axle delivery truck was put to pasture. Derek's Uncle Dougal Prest (owner of Nova Trucking) purchased a boom truck. This was a major change in the way we delivered our products. Derek was enlisted to be the boom truck operator. Little did we know, this became a mentoring process in lumber sales. Derek became very friendly with all our customers. My father knew Derek could have a long and prosperous future with our company. Derek graduated from the boom truck to coordinating the production of the planer mill with our customer order file. This was much more complicated than it is today as we were supplying a significant number of contractors with a wide variety of products.

He quickly moved into the position of Sales Manager. A post he would hold until the sudden passing of my father on July 2, 1990. Until his passing, Derek and I, along with our Controller, Jim MacDougall had been under the watchful eye of my father. Abruptly, we found ourselves alone to handle everything. I remember saying to Derek, "The Sales Department is all yours and I will not be looking over your shoulder, but my door is always open and is only 20' away".

We were operating 2 sawmills on site and realized we needed to change things up if we were going to continue to be successful. Our goal was to modernize one sawmill, reduce excessive manual labour and flip from a retail to wholesale strategy. Derek assumed the role of General Manager. That was not the only thing Derek was tackling. Between 1992 - 1994, he earned a designation as CIM,PMgr from St. Mary's University.

Notes from the President, con't

Over the years, Derek agreed with my dad's philosophy that a well-presented product instilled a confidence in our commitment to deliver premium products to our customers. We continue to invest in that philosophy in everything we do.

Attention to detail was a constant challenge. Around the property, Derek soon earned the nickname "God". This was a sign that "God" wanted us to be the best that we could be and that attention to detail was essential if we were going to continue to deliver premium products to our loyal customers.

Years went by accompanied with many changes including in the marketplace. Derek was selling more and more lumber to Eacan Timber for the USA market, the brokerage firm we still rely upon to sell our products. Eacan Timber was also making some changes and offered Derek an opportunity to join their team. In 2009, Derek broadened his horizons and joined Eacan Timber where he continued to successfully sell our production.

Last year, after a long career in the lumber industry, Derek decided to sell his shares in Eacan Timber. As he has always had our best interests at heart, he agreed to stay for an extra year to assist us in the transition and learning curve ahead.

We have had a long, great ride together. We have witnessed several dramatic industry changes and we have managed to come out on top each time.

We wish Derek continued success as he adjusts, strategizes and explores new options. Best of wishes!

Until next month, Robin

Notes from Sales

As winter approaches in Eastern Canada, the cold, wintery weather is upon us. Buyers are still filling gaps in their inventory, buying what is needed and trying to get it delivered before the snow flies. The recent tumbling lumber prices have come to a halt and are cautiously on the rise, which reflects a general lack of supply in the Canadian market, coupled with continued demand.

The upward swing in COVID has likely reassured North Americans that money they usually save for south-bound travel during the colder months will be better invested into either making their existing homes as comfortable and as valuable as possible, or in constructing new houses altogether. The change of power in the US has not seemed to turn the tides in their domestic housing market, as starts in the US are up 4.9%, while permits are up .5%.

Trucks continue to flow at a decent pace, while not at full capacity due to the present lack of reloads in NS, and lots of Christmas trees taking up trailers.

All and all things are still looking up as we enter the last month of the craziest year in the history of time, 2020. Until next time,

Evan Meisner



Notes from Woodlands

There have been many comments over the last 11 months about putting 2020 in the review mirror. I have a hard time believing bad times are related to a calendar, however, perhaps the thought of a fresh start will motivate everyone in a positive way. I tend to believe how we deal with challenges is what defines us, not the challenges specifically.

In forestry, I feel 2020 reflects the above thought for the most part. We spent most of the year coming to terms with having a very limited pulp market. Along with market limitations, we also wait on changes the Department of Lands and Forestry have committed to implement which are supposed to reflect the recommendations highlighted in the Lahey Report back in 2018. The direction this will take forest managers, operators, and stakeholders is unclear at this point as there are many moving parts. Regardless of your views on what forestry should look like in Nova Scotia, I think most are willing to give the concept of a triad or balanced approach a chance. However, the ability for this initiative to be successful will depend upon the efficient implementation of all the pieces together; protected lands, ecological forestry lands, and high production forestry lands. I fear anything short of this will continue to divide those who have different opinions on how we should manage our resource but treasure it equally.

Regardless of these challenges (including post COVID-19), it is necessary to move forward and continue to turn the wheels. For this to happen we had to come up with solutions. These solutions are still a work in progress and will hopefully culminate at some point with both a sufficient low-grade wood market and some clarification on what direction we are heading with the triad approach on Crown Lands. However, in the interim, continuing to practice forestry ultimately requires adaptation from all parties including the landowner, contractor, and mill.

Notes from Woodlands, con't

An example that comes to mind to put this into context is earlier this summer when Beaverdam Enterprises was harvesting in the Pockwock watershed. The harvest was a commercial thinning which requires the removal of declining and poor formed trees, thinning out the stand to increase overall quality and growth rate. Traditionally, this type of harvest would produce a high percentage of low-grade wood. Without those markets available a portion of the wood cut is left onsite with the contractor not paid to cut it and landowner not receiving any value for it.

To make this type of stand improvement treatment possible it was felt that operationally some adjustments would have to be made. For this to happen Stephen Molnar made a trip to the site to meet with Beaver Dam Enterprises and harvest operator Shane Wells. It was well worth the effort and quite surprising how effective some communication can be to minimize waste and maximize saw material to the mill. The improvements to operations are evident, but also evident is not jeopardizing the quality of the treatment and objectives of the stand.

I believe it will continue to be necessary to adapt by bringing all parts of the supply chain together to practice forestry in a productive way. This is especially true as we continue to work with groups such as the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative and many different landowners who require a range of harvesting treatments to meet woodlot conditions and management objectives.

So here is to staying positive and welcoming a new 2021 that will undoubtedly provide further struggles but will also provide our willingness to overcome them.

Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season.

Until next year, Jason and Woodlands

Notes from Santa 2020

Very early into the pandemic, we concluded we would not be able to host a Christmas party this year. That really sucks, but in the big picture, it is necessary to keep everyone safe. There will always be many more years to follow. Our Christmas parties are always tons of fun and legendary stories have been a byproduct. Check out our website for some of the more memorable moments.

In the absence of a party, we thought it would be nice to host a lunchtime turkey dinner. We were able to socially distance earlier this summer for our steak BBQ and we saw no reason we couldn't pull it off again. That was until the second wave of COVID appeared in our province.

Celebrating Christmas together is a huge part of ELCO's culture, and we are committed to overcome this obstacle. So, on Wednesday, December 2, we have a plan of action. Mums the word and you will just have to wait to see what we have up our sleeves.

As this is our last newsletter for 2020, we wish you all the best this holiday season and we wish for a speedy recovery from COVID all across the world.



Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner**As the Season Comes to an End**

On Friday the 13th I was able to finally able to reach a personal goal and I broke 100 on the golf course. While some of the younger guys here do it on a regular basis (Ronnie, Robbie and Craig to name just a few) it's no big deal for them. Even some older guys have done it recently (Mr.Thompson) but not me. I wouldn't put myself in the younger group as those days are gone by, but I wouldn't put myself in the older group either! I guess I would put myself in the middle group. I shot an 87 at Indian Lake! Some of you who golf might say it doesn't count because it's a par 3 course. WRONG. There are six par 4's on the course so its legit. LOL

I would like to thank Chris for the golf cart she had for sale on the East Hants yard sale site. It is quite an upgrade from what I have. It even has a beer holder! Can't wait to try it out. The cart I mean! Thanks again. I am all set to go for next season.

Another Season Draws to an End

As I write this, there are 2 weeks left to go in hunting season for our guys at ELCO. Tyler White got a big buck. Stephen Molnar likewise. John Ashley didn't fool around as his freezer was getting low and got two deer (and some can't even get one). Katie Molnar doesn't go to Sobeys for her meat as she just goes into the woods and shoots her supper and her freezer is once again full. Not to be out done, Phillip Isenor didn't come up short this year either. If I have missed someone, sorry and good luck with the rest of the season.

Have a Holly Jolly Christmas

If there ever was a year to celebrate Christmas this is the year. 2020 has not been kind to us or to Mother Earth. But we are still here, and a lot of folks didn't fare as well as we did. Still, I'm sure everyone has something to be thankful for. I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It's time to put this year behind us and move forward into better times.

November/December Anniversaries

Brian Myers 21 years

**December/January Birthdays**

Weslie Benoit	Dec 25
Jason Molnar	Dec 22
Colin Hallahan	Jan 22
Gennie Himelman	Jan 29
Bret Lively	Jan 27
Brian Myers	Jan 15

**November 50/50**

Nov 6	Robbie Peters
Nov 13	Shawn Preeper
Nov 20	Stephen Thompson
Nov 27	Darren Isenor

