

WOOD N YOU LIKE TO KNOW

Elmsdale Lumber Company Limited

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Issue # 299

Notes from the Editor

I would like to tell you an “inside joke” but I am concerned our outside readers may not get the joke without the “inside” information. So, for reference, I must tell you years ago, employee Darrell Davis nicknamed Derek Prest, our General Manager at the time, “GOD”.

Now that you are in the loop, I can proceed. On March 3, 2021, we were experiencing an extremely cold day. During a visit to the planer mill, I asked Darren Isenor why someone forgot to call God and remind him it was now March. Without missing a beat, Darren responded, “I do not have Derek’s phone number”. Good one Darren!

If you told me a year ago, we would still be knee deep in a pandemic, I wonder how I would have processed that information. I am glad I did not know then what we all know now. This global health crisis is unlike any in recent history; one that is killing people, spreading human suffering, and upending people’s lives. The full impact of the human, economic and social crisis is still undetermined. So, it seems very, very petty when I complain about my longing to travel. Every day, my email is littered with temptations of exotic destinations and incredible deals. I need them to stop it!

But here we are, and I am pleased I now have my first dose of the Astrazeneca vaccine, with a follow up on July 6. The look of our new “normal” will depend upon the actions of the global community and their willingness to follow the most basic COVID health guidelines: get vaccinated, wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, avoid crowds, wash your hands often and clean and disinfect often. It seems to me, the more people vaccinated, the better our chances of returning to “normal”. I would support airlines, cruise ships or other places where people are confined next to one another to require proof of vaccination prior to inviting them “on board”. We have become a globe trotting society and if getting vaccinated is an incentive for people to be welcome to travel, I am in favour!

Until next month, Gennie.

Notes from the Safety Committee

2021 in Review

Jan	0 lost time	0 medical aid
Feb	1 lost time	0 medical aid
Mar	0 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 and be sure to ask your supervisor or any member of our safety committee about any questions you may have.

Our sprinkler system in the planer mill is well underway and progressing well. Thank you for your attention to safety during this project.

Based upon the upcoming projects, we will be “under construction” for the next year or two and will be asking everyone to be extra attentive to the upcoming changes, additional traffic, outside guests, and other construction hazards.

Just a reminder to pay particular attention to the 3 way stop when exiting our site. We tend to look left and right but neglect to survey the traffic coming from directly across the street. There have been reports of several near misses and as we are all aware, near misses will most likely result in accidents.

We look forward to getting together as a group as soon as COVID protocols allow.

Until next month, Nick Miller, Don Isenor, Darren Isenor, Craig Isenor, Angie Kainola, Mark Wilber

Notes from the President's Corner

Last month, I reported we need to increase the size of our boiler as our existing boiler just cannot produce enough steam for our requirements of heating 2 kilns and providing heat to 2 plants. As with all equipment, there are lots of options. Warren secured 3 quotes from 3 different companies. These quotes were 40+ pages long, with lots of technical information, therefore, he had to study each and come up with the best option for our needs. As our protocol insists, our whole team remained involved, but we gave the bulk of work to Warren. I know Warren spent many hours examining each quote and he came up with a pros and cons list for each option. In the end, he made a great presentation to our team and we arrived at a decision to purchase a Hurst boiler with an expected delivery 16 weeks from now. This puts the pressure on constructing an addition to the boiler room itself to accommodate the larger sized boiler. Hurst is working on completing accurate drawings to present to Lindsay Construction.

Warren and our team continue to have a lot of help from our good friend Blair Saulnier who has 3 decades of experience in running biomass energy boiler systems. He will continue to offer his assistance throughout this project, including the commissioning of the new equipment. His knowledge is invaluable. Thanks Blair!

We continue to consider many options for the sawmill upgrade project including different types of equipment, several manufacturers, and the complexity of optimization. Following these decisions, we must figure out the size of the building we need to house this equipment. I mentioned in our last newsletter that Fritz Weirathmueller is the guiding force trying to navigate us through the huge number of options. We are still working through all of this, but we are getting closer and closer every day to pulling a few triggers to set the wheels in motion for the sawmill for the next several decades.

Notes from the President's Corner, con't

The sawmill and the boiler are not the only upgrades on the list. Believe it or not, the office needed and received an upgrade. I am guessing about 15 years ago, we had a photocopier, a fax machine, a couple of dot matrix printers, and an electric typewriter. As technologies improved our typewriter was downgraded to a label printer only, which I loved because I could type my own labels. When the old typewriter died, I was forced to ask for assistance in printing labels. Our next photocopier included a fax machine. When it was time to say goodbye to that machine, we donated it to the Elmsdale Legion and they enjoyed many serviceable years.

Our most recent photocopier not only made copies (including colour), it was also networked to each computer in the office. You could easily scan and email documents both internally and externally. After 6 years of loyal service, it was time for another upgrade. Our last 2 copiers were purchased from Workplace Essentials. Over the years, they offered great service and quality products. We reached out to them again and their quote was reasonable, so we ordered a new and improved copier.

What to do with the old copier? Gennie suggested we should donate it to the East Hants Community Learning Association (EHCLA), and I agreed. To ensure the copier could continue a maintenance plan with Workplace Essentials, it was required they transport the copier to EHCLA for setup. It was going to cost a couple hundred dollars to do this. Gennie spoke with the salesperson Louise about our intentions to donate our old copier and asked if Workplace Essentials would consider stepping up to the plate and covering the cost of transportation and setup. Louise was reasonably new to Workplace Essentials and was not sure if this could be done but she promised to investigate and report back. Shortly thereafter, Louise told Gennie Workplace Essentials would be happy to get onboard. Our community thanks Workplace Essentials. Kindness makes the world go round.

Until next month, Robin.

Notes from Sales

The past 7 days have been a great example of a typical March day in Nova Scotia. Last Friday we had a 15+cm snowstorm, followed by a week of 10–15 degree temperatures.

I must say the extra hour in the evening coupled with better temperatures has brought out the families in our subdivision. Walkers, runners, bikers, etc., are the norm on the streets this past week and I love it! The kids are staying outside until dark which means they sleep GREAT.

The warmer weather also means people are assessing projects for the summer and the hardware stores are picking up in activity. I expect treated wood, stain, outdoor furniture, and the likes will be a hot commodity over the next few weeks. I know my plan is to get everything I need before the rush. Last year's lack of items on the shelf is still engrained in my head. Of course, that means I know picking up product for outdoor projects means my next few weekends are scheduled with checking off things from the honey-do list 😊.

Enjoy the longer days and get your project materials early!

Joel MacLaggan



Notes from Woodlands

It might be a coincidence, but it seems the first few days of nice weather in the spring activates a jump start of forestry activity. This past week was such a time. Lots of phone calls from contractors looking to organize spring and summer plans for silviculture and harvesting work. It appears to be a motivating time for most, and I suppose that can be expected considering a winter where social and other activities were very limited, especially travel.

Notes from Woodlands, con't

I hope the nice weather continues and we dry out in the woods so all this energy can be put to work, but not too dry. After all, March 15 was the start of fire season.

The last few weeks have seen much discussion around the proposed Biodiversity Act our provincial government has brought forth to increase the protection of biodiversity in Nova Scotia. However, the bill has sparked much debate with many stakeholders, especially landowners in the province with many concerned the bill seemingly would allow the provincial government unprecedented power over private lands. Those concerns were brought forth in droves to all levels of government and it now appears that Premier Rankin has recognized the comments and will revise the proposed act to limit enforcement on private lands. At this point, it is not entirely clear what the new bill will look like, but the hope is that it strikes a good balance between the protection of biodiversity and landowners' rights.

I would be willing to bet that the average age of a pre-commercial thinning saw operator is well over 40 years old. I work directly with two that are in their mid 60's and I can't think of anyone under 30 that is on the ELCO crew right now. Not to imply the folks in their 60's are struggling, in fact I am pretty sure they would run circles around me. I bring this up as a reflection of some of the challenges we are and will continue to face in the forest industry where certain positions, especially heavy labour ones, are increasingly hard to fill and attract younger generations. Now, pre-commercial thinning work is by no means a walk in the park, but a skilled motivated saw operator can make a good living while enjoying the perks of piece work such as flexibility and being outside. I am not sure what the future will look like in this work force space, but for now I hope our existing crews are in no rush to retire.

Until next month, Jason Casey and the Woodlands Team

Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner

It's a Tree

Last week, while I was on the trimmer, Whitey came up and questioned me. "Craig wants to know if you want this. Otherwise, he's going to put it on the yard sale site." He proceeded to show me a photo of it. "Well, what do you think? Do you want it?" "Well, that's hard to answer as I don't know what the hell it is." Whitey explained, "It's a tree to hold K-cups for the Keurig machine in the lunchroom." Yippee, for sure we will take it! I will be honest, I was kind of surprised by Craig's generosity but pleasantly so. I was under the impression that he is of the same mindset as me, TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF first and foremost (LOL). Craig donated the tree and Whitey donated the Keurig machine. Now we just need to find someone to donate some K-cups and we are good to go. Thanks Craig!

Honesty is the Best Policy

This month, while shopping at the Superstore in Truro a co-worker found a wristlet. I had no idea what a wristlet was until it was explained to me. Apparently, wristlets are small wallets which are connected to your wrist by a bracelet. My co-worker did the right thing and turned it into the manager and resumed shopping. Within a couple minutes, the manager tracked down our Good Samaritan and her family, thanked them again and gave them a well-deserved gift card. This co-worker is modest and didn't want her name mentioned so I won't. However, I would like to say that everyone at the planer is proud of HER.



I Still Got It!

As I was getting out of my truck at the Legion to go to work, a silver pickup pulled in directly behind me blocking me in. When I got out, the guy in the passenger's seat rolled down his window and while laughing said, "You still got it Buddy!"

"Thanks, I still got what?", I asked. He just pointed to the back of my truck. As I turned to have a look, I saw what was making him laugh. "Thanks, but believe it or not, I do that a lot." He was pointing at my brown food scrap bag resting on the Tonneau cover on my pickup. I was supposed to drop it off at our garbage shed, which I obviously forgot. And, to the person who picked up the blue bag that I also placed on the cover and is now mysteriously nowhere to be seen, thank you!

Last year, I probably was guilty of doing the same thing 3 or 4 times. You see, Maggie gives me the garbage and I toss it on the cover on the back of the truck and on my way out I am supposed to stop at the shed and drop it off. Last year, Bubba was coming in for break when he asked me, "Did you forget anything on your way to work?" "I don't think so but I'm guessing I have if you are asking me, but what?" "It's on the back of your truck." "Jesus, it's a garbage bag, isn't it?" "Correct", Bubba acknowledged.



Notes from Peter Dillman's Corner

Who Am I?

Years ago, there was a TV show called, "REACH FOR THE TOP". It consisted of two teams of high school students from different schools competing against each other by answering questions put forth by the host of the show. Each correct answer earned points, typically worth between 5 and 10 points and the team at the end of the show with the most points was the winner. Each week there was always a closing question worth 40 points if answered without any clues. If neither team was able to answer the question another clue was given to help but it meant a drop in points to say 30. And repeat, until a correct answer was given. I want to try this.

Anyone can answer but this is really meant for Amanda. CLUE: I was recently at a local business getting some work done. Upon completion, as I got ready to leave, I was asked, "Peter you work at Elmsdale Lumber, don't you?" "Yes", I replied. "Would you know AMANDA?" "I certainly do", I said. I asked, "And how do you know AMANDA?" "Oh, she happens to be my _____."

Who was it I chatting with for 40 points? (Amanda, I am sure you got this).

Notes from Amanda's Corner

I am responding to Peter's "Reach for the Top" challenge. Question: Will I earn the full 40 points if I had to "Phone a Friend" to make sure I answered correctly? You see, I was thrown off by Peter's reference to "getting some work done". Over the past few years here at ELCO, I have come to enjoy (and look forward to) Peter's articles in the newsletter. He certainly knows how to turn a phrase but "getting some work done" does not usually apply to a visit to an optical store. My mother-in-law works at Vogue Optical in Elmsdale. You can clearly see (pardon the pun) that I was thrown off by this description.

So, if by using my "phone a friend" to correctly answer Peter's question reduces my point value to 30, I will accept this outcome. This leaves me to wonder, what is the redemption value for 30 points?

March 50/50

March 5	Jason Molnar
March 12	Matthew Dillman
March 19	Gennie Himelman
March 26	Roland Murray



April Birthdays

Peter Dillman	Apr 11
Matthew Dillman	Apr 08
Dwight Isenor	Apr 26



March Anniversaries

Peter Dillman	42 years
Greg Grant	23 years
Warren Hirtle	37 years
Craig Isenor	20 years
Roland Murray	4 years
Joey Preeper	34 years
Craig Stewart	30 years

Downey Thompson 74 years

