



PASSING THE TORCH: A REFLECTION AND AN INSPIRATION

As the TLA 73rd Convention & Trade Show approaches with its theme of “Adapting to Steep Change” and I sit down to write this final article as TLA President, I am set back but excited. I am set back because as I reflect on my two years as president, I find I am disappointed the term is over. The role posed extreme challenges but was also extremely rewarding. I have had the honor of leading an association that is second to none in an industry I enjoy to its core.

My career and life has changed positively as a result of joining the TLA board and then being elected to the executive. I developed a network of colleagues throughout the industry and I continue to grow my knowledge base on the issues, the solutions and the players involved—from government to local communities—as a result of this opportunity. I know this will help me in supporting the next president and vice president, as I sit as past president on the executive for the next two years.

Have we accomplished as much as I thought we would in the last two years? No. However, we are continually “adapting to steep change” in all we take on and we have accomplished a lot when I stop and reflect. I am proud of many achievements and for applying the *steady pressure* in a business environment on behalf of our members.

One achievement I’m proud of is our work to change the culture of safety throughout our forest industry. All of our coworkers, friends and family who have experienced a fatality or an injury in the industry need to know and understand that we are working hard to make a difference and create lasting change so no one else gets hurt. I know we are increasing our voice on committees and our role on issues pertaining to industry safety which is getting results.

Contractor sustainability is another of our key drivers and a real focus during my time as president. It drives all our advocacy decisions because without contractor sustainability all other issues are moot. We did an excellent job of telling the contractor sustainability story in this magazine and face-to-face in industry meetings. We still

have a long way to go but I was heartened at the Innovations Initiative meeting held in November between Coast Forest Products Association (CFPA) and ourselves with FPInnovations facilitating.

I would be remiss not to include my excitement around contractor sustainability as it pertains to First Nations involvement. With First Nations communities acquiring forest tenure and harvesting rights, harvesting contractors, log buyers and service providers alike are pleased to be involved in this changing market. As we participate, learn and educate, I feel a glimmer of hope. A handful of licensees is more a monopoly than a market and the new entrants are a welcome addition to the business dynamic. I am hopeful this dynamic will be built on mutual respect, trust and the foresight to work together for the shared, long-term success of all. I am proud to have worked with our Aboriginal Affairs committee and board of directors to develop a strong position statement on the Tsilhqot’in Decision last year. Right now, we look forward to publishing our upcoming “Draft Guidelines For Contractors To Use In Developing First Nations Relationships” and our First Nation’s focused session, “Embracing Change in First Nations Relationships” at our convention in January.

In order to adapt, represent and stay on top of all of the issues, we must first maintain a strong association. I know the executive and board of directors found this strength through hiring David Elstone. David has been quick to grasp the role, get involved and learn the on-the-ground issues. He has achieved staggering results in his first year with us. Working with the TLA board, David has been quick to hit difficult issues head on, ruffling some feathers and opening some doors with his analytical background and fresh perspectives when working with licensees and government. An analyst by trade, it’s pretty hard to dispute numbers as they pertain to contractor sustainability and how this is an industry issue, not just a contractor issue.

The timing of being sent out to pasture is pretty good. We have a fund in place for

the *Forestry Service Providers Protection Act*. Although we don’t have a funding mechanism yet, we have managed to grow the fund with government participation and are thankful for the progress. The board of directors and staff worked tirelessly on a strategic plan this year that will lead us through 2017. I am happy to leave this role with such a robust and forward thinking plan in place to guide us.

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to thank my wife Krista, our two kids, Shaelan and Paige, the Gregson family (past business partners) and Western Canadian Timber Products (Brian and Tricia Dorman) for their support of this role and my TLA involvement over the years. I also want to truly thank David Elstone, the staff, all the past presidents, the executive and my board of directors for their huge contributions of time, guidance, knowledge and support.

The natural progression for our executive is for the vice president to be elected to the role of president. I want to wish Jacqui Beban, TLA presidential candidate and a partner in Nootka Sound Timber, luck in the election at the AGM this month. She has provided me and the TLA with the support and insight of a true leader in her role as my vice president. If elected, Jacqui will be the first female TLA president and I would be honored to serve as past president on the executive under her reign.

Finally, I encourage all of BC’s coastal contractors to get involved, join the TLA and have your voice heard. Together we can get this industry on track for global success and prosperous longevity by creating a space for change in David and Goliath’s relationship. We are at the table and I encourage the players to listen closely and be open to a new way of sharing information and doing business. This will dictate the outcome for BC’s forest sector—how we meet the demands and compete for generations to come. The time is now. ♣

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