

## Unsafe Is...

### Unacceptable

MaryAnne Arcand is a BC Forest Safety Council director known affectionately throughout the industry as "bulldozer." In April of 2007 she received the Interior Logging Association's Member of the Year Award.



A director of the Council's Forestry TruckSafe and Northern Initiatives program, MaryAnne earned the nickname and the award for her relentless pursuit of safety in the industry and her outstanding contribution to the harvesting sector.

## TAKIN' PRIDE IN YOUR RIDE... AND IN YOURSELF

I must have been doing this job for too long now. I'm starting to think big trucks are beautiful! After thoroughly enjoying the Big Rig weekend in Chilliwack in June (despite the rain), I'm about to head out the door for the Island Truck Show at Black Creek. What started out as just another public relations gig for Forestry TruckSafe last year has turned into a series of events that I really look forward to.

So as I pack up the trailer for the long trek from Prince George to Black Creek, I'm asking myself, "Why? How are these events different from the hundreds of others I do every year?" And the answer is pretty clear – it's the pride!

I deal every day with truckers from around the province, folks who are going through incredible challenges these days in terms of trying to make a decent living, trying to still have a family life, and trying to look after themselves and stay healthy in the midst of slowdowns, strikes, high dollars, high fuel costs, and so on. And most of the time when I talk to them, in person, or on the phone, what comes through is the weariness of fighting battles every day – with other road users, regulations, the economy – and a general resignation that trucking is a tough way to make a living. Many times I have asked individual truckers why they keep doing it, and the answer comes back, "Cuz, it's all I know", or something like that.

But, go to the truck shows, and see these folks and their working trucks, all spit-and-polished up despite having hauled a load the day before, and you see the heart of it all. Truckers love their trucks. They love what they do. And they keep doing it despite all the crap that comes their way because it's who they are – it's not just a job. The pride they show in their ride is a reflection of their pride in the profession, and an extension of their pride in themselves.

Getting to the truck show when everyone is showing up is like being at a family reunion. Haven't seen cousin so-and-so for years? Well, it's the same thing. Haven't

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seen Fred or Joe or what's-his-name since last year's show. Hey! He got a new truck! Or, holy smokes, look at what he did to that old baby!

Drivers bring their families and friends. Little kids look up at their dads with awe as they scramble into the cab and sit in daddy's seat behind the wheel. Spectators come out and look at these rigs up close. Trucks become objects of beauty to be admired, rather than monsters on the road to be feared. Drivers become people, just ordinary guys who are more than happy to show you around their pride-and-joy, rather than the heartless, reckless maniacs they're portrayed to be in the media. And, at least for a short couple of days, the trucking profession becomes a thing of pride, and struts its stuff. At least for the weekend, truckers can share their love of trucking and their trucks with anybody who'll look or listen.

Monday morning comes quickly enough, and it's back to crowded roads, lousy maintenance, more regulations, and getting cut off by little red Toyotas heading for Walmart.

Some old time truckers have told me that they used to take pride in being professional drivers, and that those days are gone. I'm going to argue with that. You only have to go to one of the truck shows to realize it's not gone, just buried under the day-to-day stuff that comes with doing a tough and complex job. Clear some of that away for a couple of days, pull it out and polish it up, and you realize that these truckers aren't just taking pride in their rides – they're taking pride in themselves and their thousands of brothers and sisters on the roads.

Kudos to John, Donna and Tori, Dennis and Yvonne, and the Pro-Trucker team, for keeping these events on the road! I plan to keep coming for a long time – I feel like part of the family now too! And I am proud to be associated with a great bunch of hard working, decent people who keep this country moving. I saw a sign in my travels recently that said, "If you bought it, a truck brought it". Keep on truckin', guys. Be proud of who you are and what you contribute, not just as a profession, but individually. And let's do it safely - unsafe is unacceptable. □