

# LOG TRUCKER

VOLUME 44 NUMBER 5

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MAY 2017

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**May 19-20**



# REPORTING IN FROM...

## CONRAD KRISIK

Conrad Krisik has been in the timber industry one way or another **since the early 80s**. Ever-shifting with what the markets ask for, **Krisik currently has eight trucks** and keeps busy being the **company driver, mechanic, book-keeper and dispatcher**. As Krisik would tell you, there's no day off, just log trucking.



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## IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE FRONT: Conrad Krisik's 1986 Mack sits fully loaded. Krisik has a soft spot for Mack trucks as they were some of the first trucks he learned how to log truck in. With a V8 producing 500 horsepower, Krisik keeps this classic on the road. See "The Last Gyppo"

starting on Page 4

### 2. REPORTING IN FROM...

### 4. THE LAST GYPPO

CONRAD KRISIK TIMBER SERVICES *by Brandon Hansen*

### 11. RANDOM TRUCK SHOTS MACK EDITION

### 17. ADVERTISERS INDEX WE'VE GOT WHAT YOU WANT

## LOG TRUCKER

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*Published by*

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# THE LAST GYPPO

Conrad Krisik has stayed on the road through thick and thin in NE Washington



## OKAY MAYBE HE'S NOT THE LAST GYPPO OUT THERE

But Conrad Krisik continues to keep log trucks on the road. "I don't get rich doing this but it's like a sickness." Krisik stands in front of his Peterbilt pet project No. 14 "Whiskey Runner" truck.

By Brandon Hansen  
For Loggers World

Conrad Krisik has been in the business for several decades, experiencing the ups and downs of being a gyppo log truck driver, and considering the large number of log trucks in his yard, he hasn't regretted the ride at all.

"I don't get rich doing this but it's like an addiction," said the friendly Krisik in his Colville-area shop. "I must like it because I keep purchasing trucks."

Conrad is currently riding through the muddy spring that has most of the Eastern Washing-

ton logging industry in limbo by having his drivers make a trip for cedar in La Conner and making the long trip back to Kettle Falls to drop off one load a day at Columbia Cedar. He'll shift back to closer hauls when things get drier, but considering the landlocked town of Colville looks like it's by a lake right now, that might be a little while.

The Northeastern Washington log trucker is always shifting and making changes. Tweaking this or that. Working on this truck and that truck.

(Continued on Page 8)  
See "Krisik"







### LIFE OUTSIDE THE TRUCK

(LEFT) Conrad does all his paperwork, payroll, quarterlies, accounts payable and receivable, dispatch and much more. (RIGHT) Conrad's children Myles and Callie Krisik stand in front of his 1986 MACK truck.



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### ON THE WAY HOME

After a long trip to the west side of Washington and back to Kettle Falls in NE Washington, Dylan Snyder poses in front of Krisik's No. 10 Peterbilt with the signature Road Runner artwork on the side.

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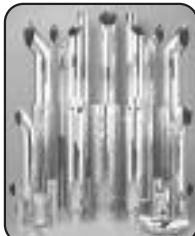
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### LOADED AND HEADING NORTH

Braden Bundy stands in front of the No. 18 Kenworth truck after passing through Chewelah. The Kenworth is one of the newer trucks in Conrad Krisik's fleet. Braden has been driving since May of 2014. He grew up in Chewelah and said he loves being in the woods. "Driving log truck is something I always wanted to do. I love the challenge of it. It has been a very rewarding and challenging career for me."

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(Continued from Page 4)

Currently he works at his Colville shop to keep his drivers on the road, but he also drives truck, loads logs and does all his company paperwork. Conrad is a gypso in the truest of fashions, going where the work is and adjusting to what that work is.

From hauling logs, lumber, chips, bark and hog fuel, Conrad has done it; from working for mill companies like Vaagens Bros., to hauling for logging companies and then owning his own trucks; tearing down a truck and rebuilding it to what he wants, Conrad has done it.

(Continued on Page 13)

**See "Krisik"****STEPPING IN**

John Williams, who normally operates loader for Richmond Logging, took the spring breakup to drive truck for Krisik.

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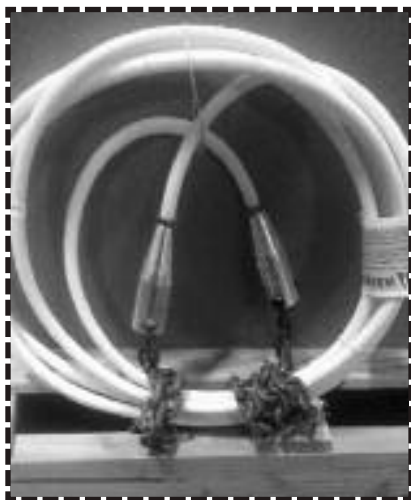
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The No. 12 truck is what Conrad calls the "Kegg truck," after it's old owner Fred Kegg of Yreka, California. The old Peterbilt has a 6-4 transmission and a new engine, after Conrad decided revitalize the truck. It had been sitting in the field after it had blown a rod over Blewett Pass. He hopes to have the Kegg truck running on the road in the future.

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Dylan Snyder gets unloaded at Columbia Cedar in Kettle Falls, Wash. Krisik's drivers have been making the trek to La Conner in Western Washington, picking up a load and then driving back all the way to Kettle Falls - 400 miles round trip - to drop a load off. The wet and flooded conditions in Eastern Washington right now have made it tough for local loads since many loggers are currently out of the woods.

### IN THE SHOP

Ryan MacArthur helps with the maintenance around Conrad's shop just outside of Colville.



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## MACK EDITION

### This 1959 B61 Mack

is owned by  
Ken VonDrasek  
from Cleveland, Ohio.

His '59 Mack has a 673 motor  
and a 10 speed duplex trans-  
mission.

Ken did all the restoration  
work himself.



## MY FIRST TRUCK

Gene Brazier of Castle Rock, Washington sent us these pictures of his first truck. He started out as a student driver for Weyerhaeuser in 1956. At age 21, Gene says he was "like a kid with a new toy - proud to go to work!"

Notice the "old" Weyerhaeuser logo on the door



This 1951 LT SWL Off Highway Mack was Gene's first truck at Camp Coweeman. He describes as a "1951 LT SWL Off Highway Mack, NHRS 275/320 charger, 5-speed, 3-speed "G" Brownie, 72,000 Lb. Mack bogies, 9' with 12-24's rubber, 10 foot railroad bunks, with 250 gallon water tank for brake cooling. It had a Page trailer with 36,000 lb. Kay-Benner axles, each with it's own triple valve and air tank." Gene says it was the Cadillac of off highway trucks at the time. It got 1 mile per gallon of fuel.







### CONRAD'S PROJECT

The No. 14 long-nosed Peterbilt 359 is Krisik's pet project. He purchased the truck off the internet and had it brought over from Kentucky. His friend showed up with the truck and a Harley Davidson in the back. "I'm going all out and no expenses spared on this truck," Krisik said. The truck used to transport whiskey barrels at a distillery which is a theme Krisik has incorporated in the paint job. He got it two years ago and hopes to have it in prime condition - he admits he's already put quite a bit of money into it.

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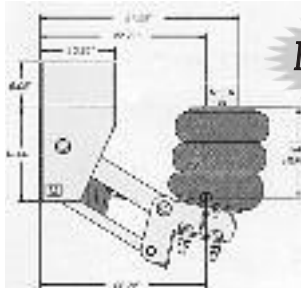
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## Krisik

(Continued from Page 8)

"Coville is the sweet spot right here," Krisik said. "It's kind of a sweet spot for logging with what is around here. It's a great place to be a logger and logging is one of the few industries you can get in around here that pays well sometimes."

Every one of his 11 trucks has a story behind it. One sat in the pasture for eight years before putting in a new engine, one is getting a new hood, one is a passion project for Krisik, and another is being put together for one of his drivers.

Krisik began his professional career going to college at Washington State University to be a chemical engineer. The egos of the people going into that field got to be too much and Krisik left that program to be a diesel mechanic. He studied at Universal Technical Institute down in Phoenix while working for some trucking companies on the side.

He said at that time he saw tow truck drivers were making \$1,000 a month and thought was a lot. Times have changed, he added.

In 1991, Krisik moved back to Colville and got a job working for the Chevrolet dealership working

for six bucks an hour. That was until he was told that mechanics were being hired at the Vaagens saw mill in town.

They didn't have an immediate mechanic opening so they put him in the sawmill running the resaw. During that time, Krisik would meet friend Dennis McNamee. Since he owned a trucking company in Kettle Falls, McNamee let Krisik drive his log truck one day.

"He slapped me behind the wheel and I guess that is where I got hooked," he said.

Eventually Krisik got put on a Vaagens' wood crew, claiming he dropped a few names to get the

job, and hauled bark from log yard to log yard while also burning brush. Working for boss Glen "Shorty" Englehardt, Krisik got to work alongside guys like Scott Bronkhorst, Rory Davis, Alan Robertson.

"Glen needed a truck driver and I wanted the job," Krisik explained. "Since I was green, he had me ride around with Elmer Brazel - a thirty-year vet of Vaagens - for about a month."

The truck that Glen wanted Krisik to drive was a Model A Kenworth with a twinstick 6-by-

(Continued on Page 14)

**See "Krisik"**



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(Continued from Page 13)

MAY 2017

LOG TRUCKER

4, which the boss wanted Elmer to show Krisik how to use.

"So we were both wedged into this little Model A," Conrad laughed. "He showed me how to drive it to the Ione mill and then shortly afterwards he called Glen and said I was ready. He just wanted out of that Little model A. The brownie stick kept hitting his knee."

But Krisik made it work and worked 12-14 hour days. "Days seemed like they flew by," Conrad said. "In the mill it seemed time stood still."

Krisik hauled sawdust to Sanpoint, logs to Colville and hog fuel to Avista Utilities in the 1972 Kenworth which was apparently decked out to be a road show truck back in the day and had a 350 Cummins in it.

Krisik would eventually go on to haul for Jack Murphy out of Northport, who was one of the nicest guys that Krisik said he's met. Murphy put the Colville driver into a 1988 V8 Mack that was just five years old.

"I think that's why I like Macks so much," Krisik said.

Krisik would go on to haul for other NE Washington companies like McNamee Logging, Larry Richmond Logging, JA Dokkins and George Selder. Selder had Krisnik in another V8 Mack truck. Since hauls were sometimes slow, Kirsik said he had trucks from both Selder and Murphy parked in his yard sometimes at the same time.

"The new guys don't have an idea of how good they have it around here," Krisik said. "For the past three-four years there's been good money in log trucking. A while back, you'd have to like it, because the truck would make just \$500 a day and it was a miracle if you made over \$600."

In October of 1995, Krisik bought his first truck, a 1979 Kenworth with a twin stick 6-4 shifter with a 350 Cummins engine. When he drove it into town the first time, however, the transmission blew up on him and he had to work on that before he even got going.



#### CONRAD IN HIS NATURAL SETTING

Krisik spends a lot of time in the shop keeping the trucks out on the road. Krisik went to school to be a mechanic, and has saved a lot of money stocking parts and doing repairs on his own. He drives truck when he needs to as well, since being your own boss usually means you're answering to whatever needs to be done on a day-to-day basis.

(Continued on Page 15)  
See "Krisik"

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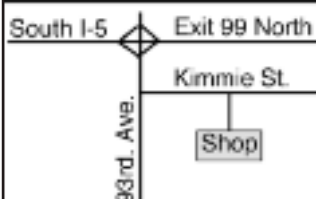
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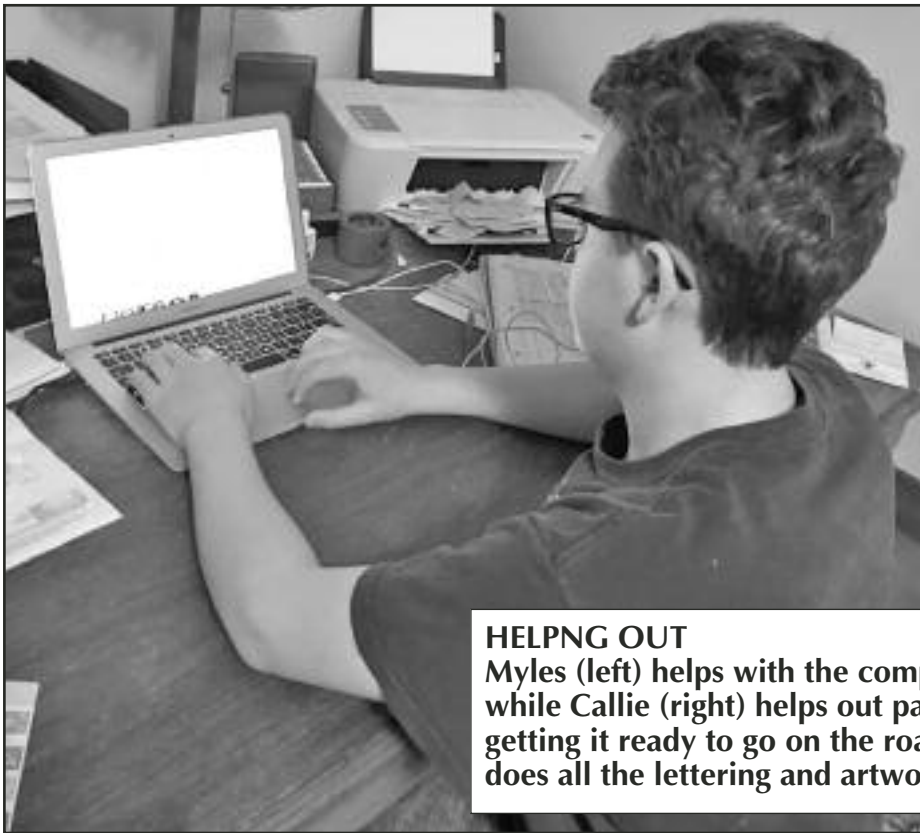
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**HELPING OUT**  
Myles (left) helps with the computer programming, while Callie (right) helps out painting a Mack wheel, getting it ready to go on the road. (Below) John Race does all the lettering and artwork on Krisik's trucks.



## Krisik

(Continued from Page 14)

Krisik would begin to haul for Pernsteiner and Ross MacArthur, and would also haul for Butch Segal and Walt Accord as well.

With the economy not being too vibrant in Colville during the 2000s (Krisik said there were a lot of beat up log trucks during that time period), Conrad had to make a change and began hauling chips.

Krisik expanded to four chip trucks and eight drivers on a double shift. It didn't pay amazing but it was consistent work for Krisik. He eventually shifted back to log trucking where he swears he was one of two gyppo trucks in the Colville area. The

economics of making profit had wiped out most of the independents.

"During this time a bunch of independents went broke, got into construction and got into the oil fields in North Dakota," Krisik said. "I tried the oil fields for two months but you didn't make any more money than hauling logs."

So he came back to Colville again and continued to haul logs. Now, it appears, Conrad has become a bit of a truck collector. He now spends a lot of his time working on trucks in his Colville shop. He hires out drivers and currently has eight running trucks.

(Continued on Page 16)  
**See "Krisik"**



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(Continued from Page 15)

MAY 2017

LOG TRUCKER

The drivers are making trips to the coast to haul cedar back as mudded out Eastern Washington is making it tough in the spring.

"If you have one driver you have to pay them well and treat them well," Conrad said. "That seems like the way you attract drivers. You treat one driver well and it seems like then you have ten."

Conrad drives himself but cuts costs working on his trucks and stocking parts in his own shop. The drivers are currently doing the heavy hauling.

"I offer 30 percent for the drivers," Conrad said. "Sometimes people will say it's 30 percent and then have surcharges and other things taken out," Conrad said. "I don't take a dime for fuel. The drivers get a full thirty percent. You have to be honest with truck

drivers."

Seven of his eight trucks are long loggers and he can have mule trains at a time. Krisik has several people he hauls for and is always calling around for more. Ryan MacArthur has been helping with the maintenance but Conrad said he does about 95 percent of the work on his trucks.

"I don't have a day off and it's usually a 16-hour workday," Krisik said. "It's an insane commitment but what are you going to do? It's the only way."

Conrad does the dispatching, Maintenance and payroll all by himself. He hops in the truck when needed. About the only thing he doesn't do is taxes, he gets an accountant to figure that out.

"It used to be we made \$500 a day now it seems like we're making \$1,000-\$1,400 a day," Krisik said.

Younger guys are joining the driver group, as Conrad's drivers are between 23-35 in the Colville

area.

Krisik's yard is a testament to his truck-collecting habits and his vintage snowmobile collection. He also had a log loader when it's needed for him to do so, and he is also open for repairs in his shop to the general public if people need their trucks worked on.

When Krisik is working in the shop, he gets a hand from Norm Titus, who drives the No. 3 1985 Mack Truck. The truck was originally No. 13 but nobody would drive it - so Krisik changed it to truck No. 3.

"Nobody is getting rich doing this, it's just something I do, where it stops nobody knows," Krisik said.

One of his pet projects is Truck No. 14, which is a 1986 Peterbilt that hauled bourbon in Kentucky for a distillery. Conrad is lovingly restoring the truck and putting a fortune into it, sparing no expense. It has been dubbed "The Whisky Runner."

Every truck has a background and has a story behind it. Krisik's own story is pretty memorable, as the last "gyppo" driver continues to independently haul around Northeastern Washington.



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