

LOG TRUCKER

VOLUME 45 NUMBER 4

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APRIL 2018

RAY WARNER

FROM
FRENCHTOWN,
MONTANA

TRUCKING



FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

RAY WARNER TRUCKING

Ray Warner has been driving truck since 1965 and currently has two 1995 Kenworth W900Ls with Peerless Trailers based out of Frenchtown, Montana. Warner loads these trucks working for Salmon River Wood, owned by Joe Fraser.

FRENCHTOWN, MONTANA

FRENCHTOWN MONTANA

Frenchtown is a small town in Montana with a population of 1,825. A post office called Frenchtown was first established in 1868 and a large share of the early settlers in the area were French Canadians. Located in Missoula County, it's part of the Missoula Metropolitan Area. Missoula was originally part of Washington Territory when the county was incorporated in 1860. Missoula became part of Montana Territory in 1864 after being signed into law by Abraham Lincoln. According to the 2010 census, there were 109,200 people in the county and the area's economy is diverse as a regional trade center, the University of Montana, regional hospitals. The U.S. Forest Service is also a major employer.

IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE FRONT: Ray Warner loads his own truck - a 1995 Kenworth W900L with a Peerless trailer. Warner loads for Salmon River Wood while owning two trucks driven by Shane and Mike Guthrie. See "Loading and Log Hauling" starting on Page 4

4. LOADING AND LOG HAULING

RAY WARNER TRUCKING *by Brandon Hansen*

17. ATTENTION TO DETAIL

SHANE GUTHRIE *by Brandon Hansen*

19. ADVERTISERS INDEX

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LOADING

and log hauling

GETTING UNLOADED

Shane Guthrie gets his 1995 Kenworth 900L unloaded at the mill, Guthrie is a driver for Frenchtown's Ray Warner.



Ray Warner loads his own trucks as a 50+ year veteran of the Montana timber industry

Photos by Shane Guthrie
Story by Brandon Hansen
For Loggers World

The big spaces of Montana mean that log truckers there might have to drive a little longer, but many will tell you it's well worth the view.

For long-time Frenchtown log truck driver Ray Warner, it has been a way of life in Big Sky country. The owner of Ray Warner Trucking near Missoula has been driving truck since 1965 and is still out in the woods, although he's running loader now while his drivers Mike and Shane Guthrie drive his two 1995 Kenworth W900L trucks with Peerless trailers.

"I really appreciate all the people that have helped me out throughout the years," Warner said. "I've been really lucky to have two good drivers that help things run smoothly."

Warner started out like many, with father Buster Warner in the log trucking business so he saw the ropes of the industry

up close and personal.

"My dad had trucks all the time when I was growing up," Warner said. "It was just fun being on the mountain when we were kids and we'd help him on the weekends and pack around wrenches."

He learned to drive a log truck at an early age around Bozeman, and his dad eventually moved over to Missoula and after a few years Ray began hauling full-time for people around the Missoula area in 1970 and got his first truck in 1975.

His first truck was a 1969 Peterbilt with a 92 Detroit Diesel engine and a 13-speed transmission.

Warner cut his log trucking teeth with George Thomas, who is now a retired log trucker. The two grew up in the same neighborhood in Missoula and would help each other with their trucks.

His brother Sonny Warner also got into the log truck business as well.

Through the years, Ray also

got into the loader seat quite a bit. Many times he would be asked to pick up a load where he'd show up to the landing, load himself and head off. While he always had one truck, a fellow log truck driver was retiring around 2006 and Warner bought

his truck, expanding his operation to two.

"I replaced the trucks over the years, I would find good buys with older trucks and kept them

(Continued on Page 7)
See "Warner"



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MIKE GUTHRIE

Mike Guthrie, brother of Shane, stands in front of Ray Warner's 1995 Kenworth 900L with Peerless Trailer. Both of Warner's trucks are the same setup as they haul all around Montana and the Pacific Northwest.

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READY TO ROLL

Ray Warner's 1995 Kenworth 900L sits at the ready after getting its Peerless trailer loaded. Shane Guthrie drives the truck and Warner loads both trucks for White Salmon Wood.

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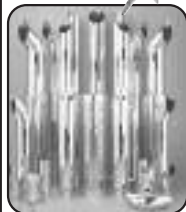
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Warner

(Continued from Page 4)

on the road," Warner said.

Warner has a shop in Frenchtown and can do a lot of the maintenance work himself. He also uses Brett Collins of C&C Contracting in Townsend, Montana.

"I've rebuilt motors, done rear-ends and transmissions, those trucks take quite a bit of money to keep running but it's a lot better than worrying about a payment every month," Warner said.

In 2000, Warner got out of the logging truck and began op-

erating a loader full-time. He was a bit leary of doing loader work as sometimes that left him empty-handed, but Missoula logger Joe Fraser of Salmon River Wood asked him to do the job and after some deliberation (using the age-old logger term "I'll think about it."), Ray agreed.

The joke between Fraser and Warner now is that Ray had to think about it for a while.

"He has treated me really well and he's one of them most honest loggers I know," Warner said.

Warner now operates a 2015 Doosan and loads his own trucks along with others. His trucks

primarily haul for Salmon River Wood and there is no shortage of work.

"He keeps me pretty busy and going full-time," Warner said. "We haven't had much of a spring breakup as of late and he seems to be able to keep us working and we usually don't slow down for more than a few weeks."

Weather can be an issue in Montana, particularly the winter variety.

"We can have some terrible winters up here," Warner said. "We're hauling up by White Sulphur Springs and they were closing the highway this winter be-

cause of severe conditions. The drives are longer too, going 130-140 miles to get to a job is a pretty normal distance now with all the mills spread out."

Warner said he used to have spring breakup to break down the trucks and build them back up as sort of a refurbishment for the year. Salmon River has been so busy he hasn't been able to do that lately.

"One time I broke down my truck and Joe called me the next day and said he had work," Ray said. "So I don't do that anymore."

(Continued on Page 8
See "Warner")

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(Continued from Page 7)

APRIL 2018

LOG TRUCKER

With the big distances of Montana, they sometimes just spend five-six days near the jobsite and go home for the weekend. With the Guthries driving Ray's 1995 Kenworth W900Ls with Peerless log trailers, they haul right alongside Fraser's trucks and other independent drivers - although those are becoming tougher to come by.

"Everybody does a good job around here helping one another. If you need a load they'll come to you or help you out," Warner said. "It's a good bunch of people and a lot of loggers and drivers around here know each other."

Working for Salmon River has taken them into Washington, Idaho and all over Montana.

"We have been doing a lot of forest service and state sales," Warner said. "Joe seems to bid quite a few forest service jobs."

He also stays busy running his own business, always running parts and helping keep his trucks on the road. For his parts,

he goes to Kenworth Inland Parts and for tires he goes to Townsend Tires and Les Schwab in Missoula. His daughter Jennifer Warner-Loterbauer also does all the bookwork for the log truck company.

Warner used to have two Harley Davidson, and also enjoyed hunting, usually trekking out into the woods with a mule while doing it. Running your own company while also working for a logging operation can eat up your time, and Ray has found himself pretty busy now. He's pretty busy in his scarce free time keeping up with all his grandkids. One is a college wrestler while another one of his grandkids is a mechanic and Ray said hopefully that will translate into his grandkid working on his trucks.

Since starting out with his 1969 Peterbilt, the industry has no doubt changed throughout the years but Warner is still a part of the Montana logging scene, and he still knows how to keep log trucks rolling on the long roads in Big Sky country.



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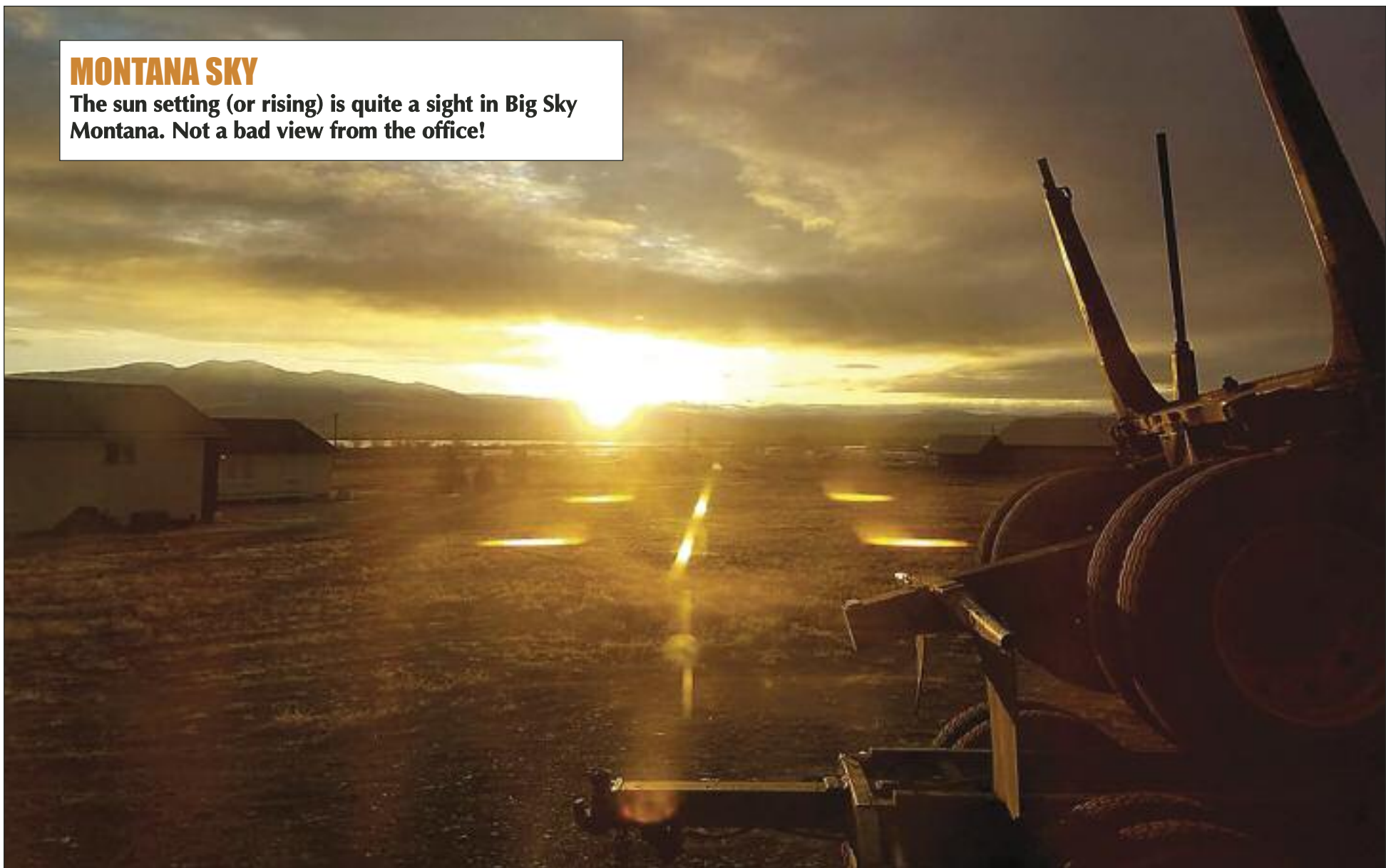
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FULLY LOADED

Ray Warner's 1995 Kenworth 900L with Peerless trailer heads down the road. Shane Guthrie drives the truck and Warner loads both trucks for White Salmon Wood. "I really appreciate all the people that have helped me out throughout the years," Warner said. "I've been really lucky to have two good drivers that help things run smoothly."

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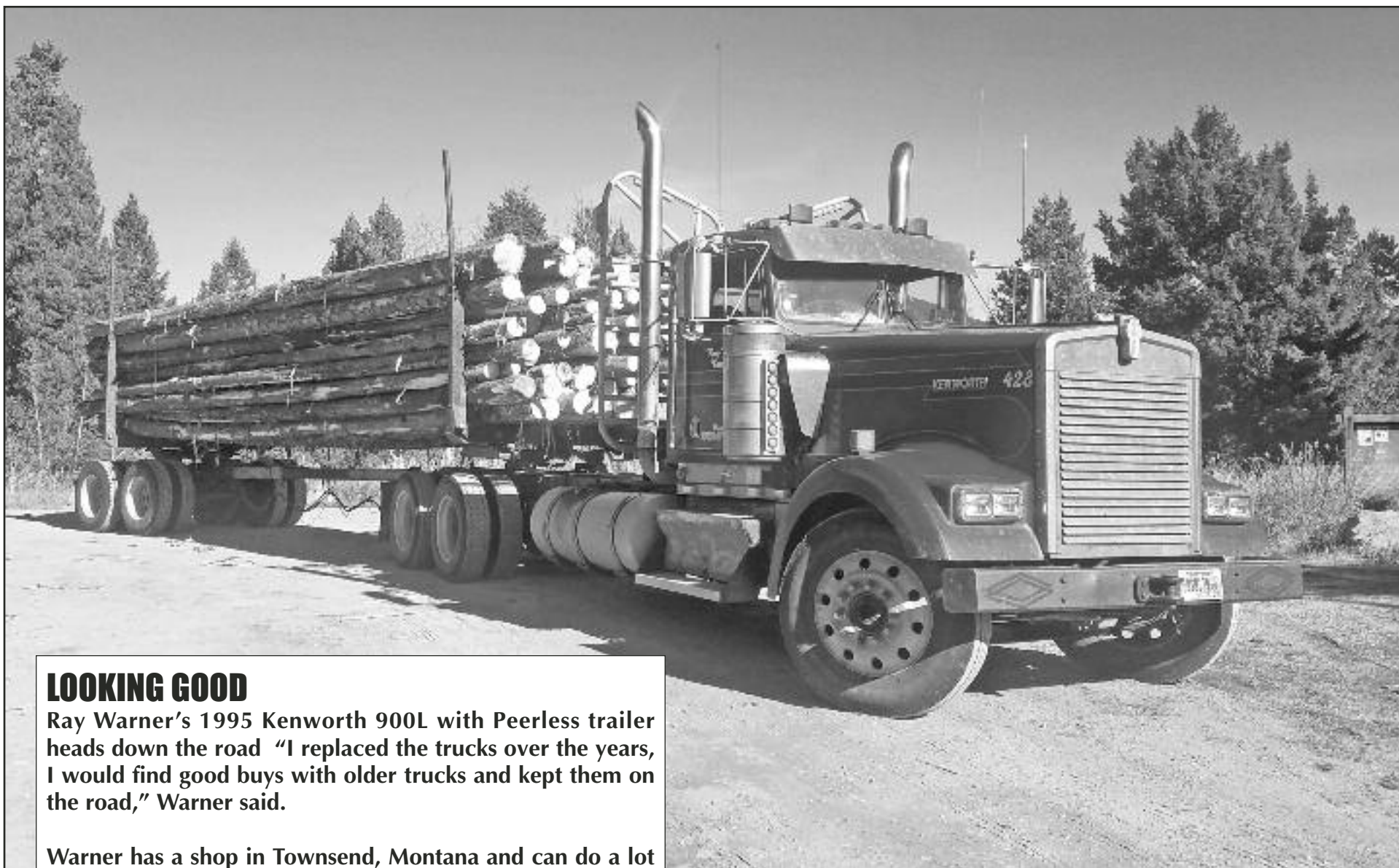
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Ray Warner's 1995 Kenworth 900L with Peerless trailer heads down the road "I replaced the trucks over the years, I would find good buys with older trucks and kept them on the road," Warner said.

Warner has a shop in Townsend, Montana and can do a lot of the maintenance work himself.

"I've rebuilt motors, done rear-ends and transmissions, those trucks take quite a bit of money to keep running but it's a lot better than worrying about a payment every month," Warner said.



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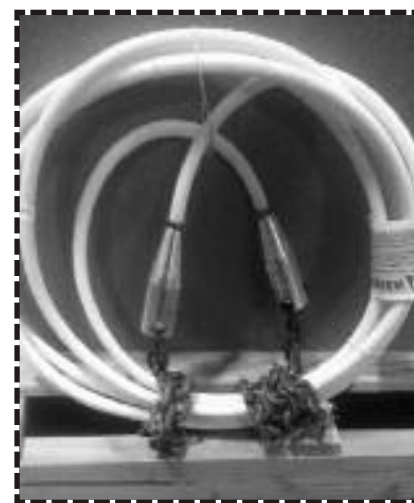
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BUDDY ON BOARD

Ray Warner's 1995 Kenworth 900L with Peerless trailer has a special passenger while Shane Guthrie drives it. Ray can be seen on the right loading the vehicle in a 2015 Doosan for Salmon River Wood, owned by Joe "He keeps me pretty busy and going full-time," Warner said. "We haven't had much of a spring breakup as of late and he seems to be able to keep us working and we usually don't slow down for more than a few weeks."

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SCOTT NORQUIST

The self loader is an owner-operator Scott Norquist out of Livingston, Montana and is also the truck that Shane Guthrie modeled his wooden self loader model after.

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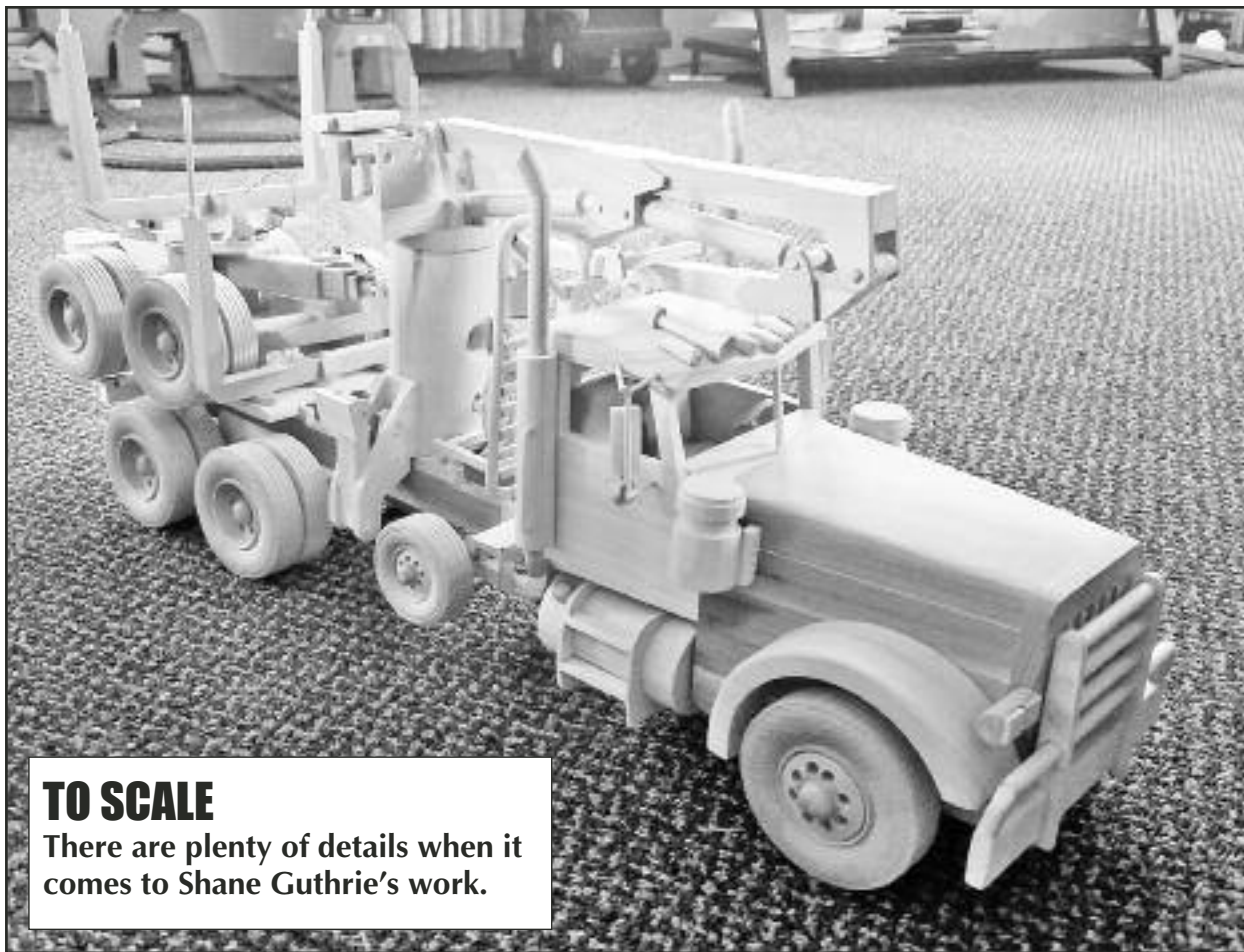


Questions?
Louie Vogel
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vogell9@yahoo.com



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Shane Guthrie imitates work with wooden models



TO SCALE

There are plenty of details when it comes to Shane Guthrie's work.

By Brandon Hansen
For Loggers World

Hauling for Ray Warner out of Frenchtown, Shane Guthrie spends a lot of time out on the road and in the woods. When he gets the time, however, Guthrie sneaks out to his workshop in his garage for his hobby, which also happens to include trucks - wooden model trucks that is.

Guthrie, who has been hauling since he got his license at age 19 and began hauling for Warner in 2017, had always enjoyed woodworking.

"I really do enjoy it and have been doing it for a long time," he said.

Guthrie was raised in the logging industry and learned everything he knows from his dad who owned and started L&G Logging for 30+ years. Guthrie started out in a 1989 Freightliner that was a lowboy truck that he took the sleeper off of and built a

Intermountain

(Continued from Page 18)



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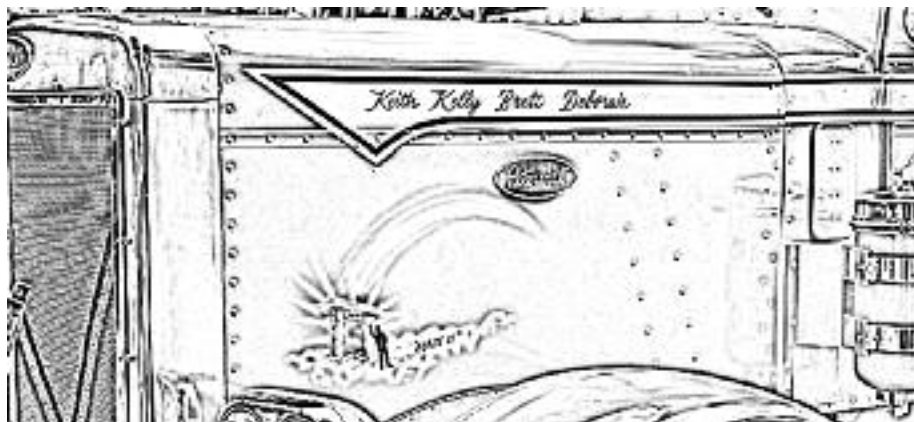
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(Continued from Page 17)

logging truck out of it.

He's assembled a collection of equipment out in his shop. It began after he had returned from the North Dakota oil fields to haul logs again. The idea of making wooden trucks was something that interested him and he wanted to see if people were interested.

"I asked a few people and I got some orders and I'm doing these log trucks," Guthrie said.

Born and raised in Townsend, Guthrie's dad owned log trucks for 30+ years so it's not a subject he was unfamiliar with. Typically it's seven-10 days to build one but that's usually spread out over a month or so because of work.

With the Guthrie's driving Ray's 1995 Kenworth W900L's with Peerless log trailers and the big distances of Montana, they sometimes just spend 5-6 days near the jobsite and go home for the weekend, along with a few other independent drivers hauling for Fraiser.

He cuts the truck parts from one-inch board on his bandsaw and hand sands the pieces down. He's gotten very detailed and tries to add all the little touches you'd see from a craftsman.

"I usually work on the weekends and pick one day to really work on them," Guthrie said.

Along with log trucks, he'll also do other logging equipment and he'll do woodworking pieces upon request.

For more info go to his Facebook Page, search for "SG Custom Woodworks."



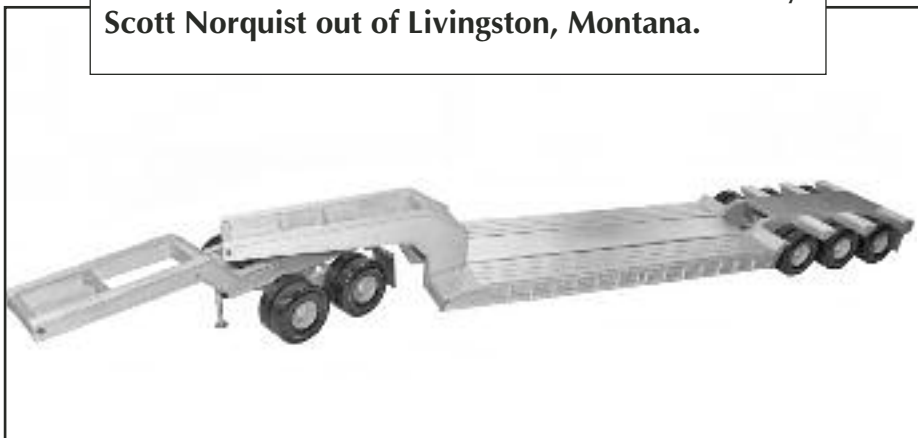
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SELF LOADER

This self loader is modeled after a truck owned by Scott Norquist out of Livingston, Montana.



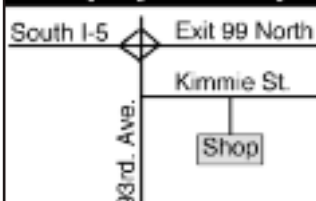
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