

Timbers Army Invades Camp 18 *continued from front page*

of the Timbers who started the log slice celebration, and has become a cultural icon in the City of Portland. A fan of the club and a professional tree trimmer by



Timber Joey Webber

trade - he actually worked for West Oregon Electric Cooperative (WOEC) in Vernonia for several years - Serrill attended Timbers games in the 1970s when the team was part of the North American Soccer League. Serrill approached the club's ownership and asked if he could bring a live chainsaw to games to help excite the crowd. The team took it a step further and asked Serrill to cut a slice of log following each goal, and a legend was born. Serrill quickly became a fan favorite, revving his chainsaw, banging a bass drum, dangling in a climbing harness from the stadium rafters, climbing a 100 foot log snag pole, and leading fans in chants.

Serrill served as team mascot from 1978 until the team folded in 1982. He returned in 2001 when the Timbers reformed, retiring in 2008. Serrill hand picked Webber as his replacement.

"I really do miss it sometimes," says Serrill about his role leading cheers and cutting logs after goals at Timbers' games. "It's a really heady thing, being up there in front of all those people, cutting slabs. You're kind of playing a role. And Joe has really dedicated his life to playing that role."

Serrill says it took him a long time to find his replacement. It had to be just the right person. "As soon as I shook Joe's hand I knew he was the guy," says Serrill. "I love him like he was my son, but, watching him cut those logs is like watching your best friend sleep with your wife," says Serrill with a grin.

Webber grew up outside Philomath, in the tiny logging town of Wren, Oregon. He was part of a forestry program in high school and attended forestry firefighting school. "I had that tie to the woods and to timber," says Web-

ber. "Everybody I grew up with, either their dad worked at a mill or drove a log truck. So when I saw what Jim was doing as Timber Jim I was really fascinated

by it and how the Timbers celebrated their goals."

Today Webber does a variety of jobs besides cutting logs after Timbers' goals and making personal appearances as Timber Joey on behalf of the team. A former professional rodeo cowboy and professional rugby player, Webber says he does consulting with lumber companies, sells firewood, sells real estate, and even does some concrete work. He says he worked to help get Vernonia's schools back up and running following the 2007 flood and says he has some firewood customers at Fishhawk Lake.

When not leading cheers as Timber Jim, Serrill worked as a tree trimmer for Pacific Power, PGE, Bonneville Power Administration, Puget Power, and for WOEC from 2001 to 2003. He eventually had an opportunity to become a lineman and worked for several contractors around the Portland region. He says he helped build the MAX light rail north line, among other projects.

While Serrill is best known as the high spirited mascot of the Timbers, he is also no stranger to heartbreak. Serrill and wife Diane lost their daughter Hannah in a tragic automobile accident in 2004; the Timbers Army still faithfully sings "You Are My Sunshine," during every match, Hannah's favorite song as a youngster, in honor of Jim and his family. Serrill has twice been diagnosed with cancer, surviving surgery and seven weeks of daily radiation treatments. He

continued to work following his first surgery and has now been cancer free for six years.

Since his retirement Serrill, now 64, has spent his time on gardening projects. He built the Hilltop Community Garden which helps feed 700 families every month through a local food bank. After raising money by selling special scarfs, in 2016 Serrill traveled to Tanzania on the African continent with the Red Sweater Project, and helped build a community garden and taught sustainable gardening techniques at a school for indigenous children. The Timbers Army sent Jim with donated uniforms, soccer shoes, and balls for the students of the school.

He has also used his name to raise money for Meals on Wheels and other charities. He is currently in the early stages of starting a business growing and selling micro greens.

"The Timbers have been a huge part of my life," says Serrill. "They helped me get through losing Hannah." When he retired, Timber Jim was given a lifetime season ticket to Portland Timbers' matches.

Hampton Lumber became an official sponsor of the Portland Timbers in 2018. The Timbers/Hampton partnership was voted by MLS as the league's top partnership at their winter meeting in Philadelphia this past year.

"To be involved this way with the Timbers just makes so much sense," said David Hampton during his remarks prior to the log blessing ceremony. "We have a renewable resource and the Timbers Army is a renewable, reenergized, and exciting group and for us to help bring this together is really great. I love that we can bring the log in from our tree farm that is sustainably managed. We're showing Portland that the timber industry and building with wood is good."

Hampton Lumber is a third generation, family owned company that owns and operates nine sawmills with over 1,600 employees in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, including the Banks Mill. They also own 140,000 acres of forestland in Oregon and Washington and manage 30,000 acres in British Columbia. The company also recently entered the wine business, planting pinot noir and chardonnay grapes at the Hampton Vineyard near Monmouth, Oregon.

Hampton has been recognized for their sustainable approach to logging. Owner David Hampton noted that the company replants four new seedlings for every tree they harvest. "We're doing a little more thinning projects now using highly mechanized equipment that is light on the land," said Hampton. "We're trying to manage our forests to maximize the growth potential that we have here. This is the best tree growing country in the world."



The Victory Log at the Timbers home opener at Providence Park.

The blessing of the log this year clearly worked as the Timbers opened their 2018 home schedule on April 14 with a 3-2 victory over Minnesota United, their first win of the season.



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