

ney and danger attracts 1 generation of loggers

By Happie Thacker

Today are not exactly the snoose-whiskey-guzzling Paul Bunyans of old. Today they are just as likely to be graduates who prefer beer to

Eberhard is one of these modern loggers with a college degree in mechanical engineering. He moved to Oregon from New York six years ago and began logging

with two or three friends from college to work in Portland," said Eberhard. "I came out here to visit them and when unemployment ran out I had to find a job. I got me a job setting chokers." Eberhard is now a climber and head rigger for E Logging out of Estacada. He set out setting chokers and worked his way up, all the way up the tree. "Setting and rigging trees involves climbing as high as 60, 80 or 100 feet up a tree using steel cable and pulleys (called blocks) up the tree for the lines through which pull the logs out of the tree. The easiest way to explain high-lining, as this is called, is to compare it to clothesline with pulleys at either end. The yarder provides the power at one end of the lines, as a person would for a clothesline. The pulleys (or blocks) at the other end are what the rigger puts in the tree. The logs are attached to the lines with chokers, as clothes would be with buttons, and pulled (yarded) out of the

work isn't easy and neither is working in any sort of weather.

"In the snow, rain, mud, sun," Eberhard said, "no, actually it's nice being in the morning. Most people don't see the beauty of nature. Paul Rehberg, a timber faller, spent three days

around a stand of timber where a logger had his nest.

"I spent three days looking for some-thing to set a hen and then we took the hen for the hen to hatch before we started falling," Rehberg said.

Eberhard has been logging for a year and a half. The first six months he spent chasing logs (unhooking chokers, cutting limbs and marking them before they are loaded on trucks).

"This (logging) is the longest job I've ever taken," he said. "I've never had a job interesting enough to keep long."

Interest and danger seem to be a common reason for men to stay in the woods, and the danger is all too real.

"My partner got hurt real bad the other day," said Rehberg. "He was bucking (cutting fallen trees into truck-size logs) off a windfall and it fell and smashed him against another log."

"We packed him out of the brush on a stretcher and called an ambulance. They said he lost four or five pints of blood and had some bad internal injuries. I'm afraid to find out how he is but I heard he was feeling better. I sure hope so."

Jack "Sonny" Oberg is another cutter who is concerned about the danger -- and about conservationists.

"The Sierra Club should realize what we go through out there," he said. "How would they like to pay \$40 for a two-by-four? I agree we should stay out of the water and streams but trees are like wheat -- they grow back."

"I agree," said Eberhard. "I've been logging in places that have been logged three times -- and they didn't practice conservation in the old days."

"I think some of them should work in the woods and see what we do," said Rehberg. "A lot of trees are rotten and just spread disease or blow down. Then the lumber is lost."

Oberg is an Estacada native, who although he has been around loggers all his life (his father works in the woods) has only been working there himself for the last two years.

"The money's better than most other jobs," said Oberg. "I used to tend bar here (the Shingle Mill) and then I planted trees for awhile. A friend told me about this job and the money was better."

The U.S. Forest Service ranks no better than the Sierra Club in the opinion of these loggers.

"I want to know why they went out to the unit (stand of trees) we were supposed to cut and marked them all blue and then went back and marked the ones we were supposed to fall, yellow," said Oberg. "Why didn't they just mark the yellow ones?"

"They put the paint on the trees so you could tell they were trees," said Eberhard. "No, first they sent out the blue paint



John (Swampman) Eberhard
...relaxing after a hard days work.

crew and then they sent out the yellow paint crew," said Rehberg.

"Either they think loggers are ignorant or they have a lot of paint," said Eberhard.

"No, they're ignorant," said Oberg, "they painted all the trees so they could find their way out."

They also accuse the Forest Service of being responsible for most of the forest fires in this area.

"Ninety per cent of the fires are controlled ones that got away," said Eberhard.

"You couldn't get a logger to go in the Bull Run if the whole thing caught fire," said Eberhard, "and it is going to burn down if they don't log it."

Eberhard feels that all the old growth timber in Portland's water shed is rotting, is a fire hazard and should be logged while it can still be used for lumber.

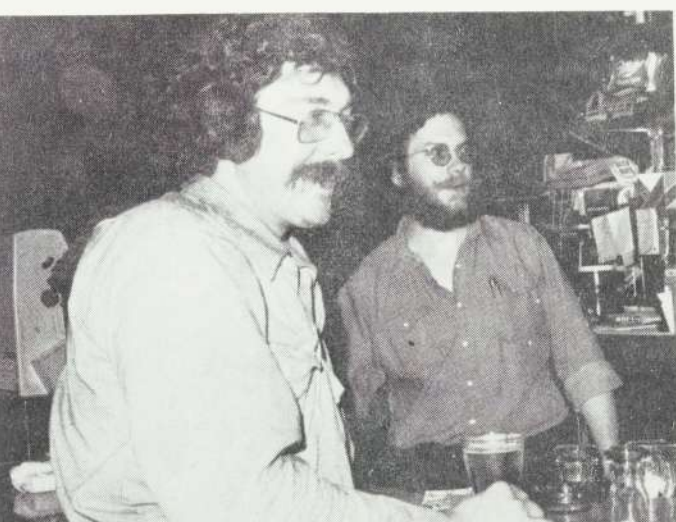
Today's young logger is interested in money and logging pays from \$6 per hour to over \$10 per hour, but more than that he is attracted by the job itself.

The danger is very exciting, hardly a day goes by without a brush with death, but more than this is a feeling of being close to nature and experiencing the seasons firsthand.

"I don't think I could ever work in an office," said Eberhard, "even though I ask myself why every morning when the alarm goes off at four o'clock."

'Give a logger a steel ball to carry across a clear cut and before he gets there, he'll either break it or lose it.'

-- Anonymous



Photos by Happie Thacker

It is a well known fact among loggers that more logging is done in the taverns on Saturday than all week long in the woods.

Thursday, June 2, 1977

Estacada

Page 9

