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OUTLOOK

Excellence In Arboriculture

Beginning on page 71, you will find descriptions of this year’s award-winning projects in the Excellence in Arboriculture awards program. Selected from a record-setting level of entrants, 1998’s examples nearly span the globe... from Hawaii and Australia to Massachusetts, Vermont and South Carolina. Most winners, and many of their clients, were able to join us at our Winter Management Conference in New Orleans in February at a special banquet.

The Excellence in Arboriculture program was started by the National Arborist Association (NAA) in 1995 to recognize and salute our members and their customers whose work demonstrates the strongest commitment to the highest standards of the tree care industry as stewards of our environment. They reflect a determination to preserve the health, beauty and environmental contributions of trees in local neighborhoods and communities, both in terms of the tree care firms, large and small, which performed the work and the environmentally responsible citizens and companies who underwrote the costs of these projects. More than just saluting outstanding tree care work, the program strives to increase the public’s understanding and appreciation of high-quality arboriculture and reinforce the commitment to excellent performance on the part of NAA members.

Interest and participation in the program is growing, but it is still far short of its potential. This can be attributed to many causes, most of which relate to a lack of understanding. For example, some don’t want to be involved in a “contest,” which our program is not, since entries are only judged against a set of predetermined criteria. Or, others believe involvement in the program will take too much time, is only for the big firms, is too expensive or they just don’t perform any “special” tree work during the course of the year. Again, all myths, since the costs in terms of time and money are relatively small, nearly every NAA member at one time or another during the year undertakes that special job and the program’s award winners come from all ranks of our membership.

Finally, some say that this program has no benefit to their companies. The fact is, many NAA members who have won the award use it aggressively and effectively in the marketing of their services to customers old and new. It gives them instant recognition and credibility, as the stamp of approval for the highest standards of professionalism by a national association like the NAA is another attestation of your high quality work. It says you are committed to excellence and that this is recognized by your professional peers. One recent award winner told me it guaranteed him three additional years with a very large and lucrative client.

So what are you waiting for? With a little planning, determination and follow-through, your excellent work can be recognized in a way which highlights your commitment to quality while also giving you another effective tool to improve your financial performance.

Barry Cullen
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Therapy for Damaged Trees

By Nelda Matheny & Jim Clark

Saving trees before and after construction is a matter of timing and knowledge.

Working With Landscape Pros

By D. Douglas Graham

Landscape professionals often call on the expertise of arborists. Are you first on the call list?

Ice Storm '98: A View From Front Lines

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Trees are biological and structural systems that have certain requirements in order to stay upright and alive. When we remove or violate those basic requirements during the development of land, no amount of therapy can compensate. We don’t want to admit that our options are limited—and our clients don’t want to hear it—but sometimes it’s a fact of life.

As arborists, we must be able to distinguish when we may be able to improve the biological and structural aspects of tree growth. In construction, we strive to reduce the negative impacts to a minimum and give the tree time to recover. In some cases, the tree may be unable to recover and should be removed.

What can we do?

Arborists are most effective when they are proactive and get involved in projects early enough to educate the project team about the tree’s requirements for growth. In our experience, most people on a construction project have good intentions. They want to retain part of nature around their homes and communities. It’s our job to communicate to them the biological realities of what can occur. We must stress that successful tree preservation can only occur if we can keep an adequate amount of space around trees.

Arborists must also understand that the goal of a construction project is to erect a structure or structures and that buildings have certain requirements. For example, structures rely on soil for their stability. Stable soils are created by removing the parts that have voids and can decompose. So, the first thing builders do is remove the vegetation and organic layer which, of course, is the area in which the roots can live. In addition to creating a stable base, engineers sometimes need to change existing grades. During the process of grading, roots are severed. When the grade is raised, not only is the soil compacted in order to get a stable base, but cut roots are covered with fill. Since another requirement for structures is space, so portions of the canopy may be removed to create enough vertical space.

All of these measures modify the ability of a tree to remain a viable biological organism, one that can stand upright. With all of these requirements for change, the people who fight for tree preservation may need the therapy, not the trees.

Impact

The impacts that occur during construction (Fig. 1) include:

- mechanical injuries to the root, trunk, or branches, caused by equipment;
- compaction of soil, which restricts activity of existing roots and inhibits development of new ones;
- restricted drainage, which can suffocate the roots;
- changes in the grade can cut off and/or suffocate roots;
- alterations in soil hydrology—either lowering or raising the water table;
- changes in the micro-climate, exposing previously sheltered trees to wind or sun;
- alterations in soil microbiology, associated with stripping to create a stable base for structures.

How trees respond to these impacts, whether they thrive, become stressed, die or fail, depends on a number of things.

1. Species tolerance to impacts. We know that species like American beech and sugar maples are very sensitive, i.e., they often decline and die following construction. In contrast, Norway maple and Douglas fir are more tolerant. In your communities, you should know how each important species will respond to the impacts from construction.
2. Intensity of impact. Impacts from construction vary in intensity and we must consider how severe a particular change will be. How much of the root system are we cutting off or compacting? How much of the top are we removing? The scale of these changes dictates the degree of impact. Generally, the more we do to the tree, the more severe the impact.

3. Presence of additional stress factors. Examples of other influences include drought a year or two before construction begins or repeated defoliation by pests. These stresses use up the tree’s carbohydrate reserves and reduce its capacity to tolerate impacts before construction is even started.

4. Age and vigor of the tree. Old trees and those in poor health are less able to respond and adapt to changes in their environment than younger, healthier ones.

5. Structural development and stability. In addition to tree health, we must also consider the structural stability of the tree following impacts. Forest trees that have their neighbors cleared and are no longer sheltered from wind may not have adequate trunk taper or root development to remain upright.

When considering the potential response of a tree to construction, think about all the impacts that have occurred and will occur in the future. Then, consider the likely response of that individual tree, given its species, age, vigor, structural development.

Therapy during construction

We have developed what we call the “Guiding Principles of Tree Preservation,” and one of those principles is that tree preservation cannot wait until construction. It must begin at the design stage and follow through the construction and post-construction periods. But, unfortunately, we are called out to a new site during the construction phase to remedy negative impacts. So, what are we to do if forward planning has not occurred and we are asked to “save that tree”?

1. Evaluate the tree critically (Fig. 2). If no planning has taken place, an arborist has probably not looked at the tree. Very often, trees are retained that are in too poor condition to be saved. In the forest, it doesn’t matter what condition trees are in, but when we put people and homes around them, their condition becomes critical. The first thing you should do when the superintendent of a construction site calls and says, “Arborist, save this tree,” is make the assessment whether the tree is worth saving in the first place.

2. Take action to correct any existing problems (Fig. 3). For example, remove the fill soil, get the storage material away from the trunk, and address similar problems.

3. Erect protective fencing. Creating a Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) with fencing is the single most important thing we can do to protect trees during construction. We prefer 6-foot tall chain link fencing with the posts sunk into the ground. If support posts are placed into concrete blocks, you may find that the fence is in a different place every time you visit the site—generally closer to the tree!

We have used orange construction fencing. This is acceptable in some cases and is much easier to take down or move. If the construction superintendent doesn’t take a personal interest in protecting the trees, all orange fencing does is serve as a visual indicator. It doesn’t protect very much from equipment or from people throwing materials on top and collapsing it.
4. Once fencing is erected, help maintain a tree protection zone. The TPZ is an area sufficiently large to protect the tree from damage. The TPZ is defined by the fence and nobody is allowed to encroach within it without you and the superintendent knowing about it. They don’t dump chemicals, store equipment, park trailers or outhouses, and they don’t trench through with utilities.

If soil is going to be excavated beyond the TPZ, erect fencing and then trim the roots outside the fence. In this way, once the fences are up and the roots are pruned to our satisfaction, the contractors can do whatever they need to build the road and not injure the tree further. A trench-digging piece of equipment works fine if the roots are 2 inches in diameter or less. For larger roots you need something sharper, like a rock saw or, you can dig and cut by hand.

5. Become familiar with planned construction and work procedures (Fig. 4). The goal of a development project is to change and improve the land. At some point, you have to come to terms with building the project and keeping the tree alive. Arriving at a balance between the needs for construction and preserving the trees requires meeting with the superintendent, project engineer and contractors. Everybody needs to understand what’s going on with the trees and how they play a role in preservation.

Only then can you talk about the best way to accomplish what they need to do with the minimal amount of damage to the tree.

This is something you do as a team. Arborists don’t know what it takes to put in a bridge, but we need to learn enough about what will occur so we can protect the tree. Assist with changes in the field—it’s unusual for a construction project to proceed without something unexpected happening. Maybe nobody knew about the septic tank underground, and now you have to dig the thing out. Help with those changes.

During the field meetings, you should talk about not only what has to be done, but also how it’s to be done. What equipment will be used? How big is it? How are you going to get it into the site? How does it need to move around?

We had a situation where we were constructing a bridge over a creek (Fig. 5). The bridge was designed with the retention of the adjacent oaks in mind. In fact, we excavated around the trees to figure out...
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example, when roots are damaged by trenching, the best we can do is excavate back to sound wood and cut the damaged roots. We don’t paint cut roots. Just cut them off cleanly.

Wounds

For bark wounds, clean out foreign matter and loose bark, and cut the bark back to where it’s firmly attached to the trunk (Fig. 7). Naturally, it’s very important not to make the wound any wider or deeper than it already is. There is no magic shape—it is no longer considered necessary to make them elliptical. If the wood is splintered, you can smooth it, but don’t make the wound any deeper.

If the wound is recent and the cambium is still moist, you can push the detached bark back onto the wound face and tape it closed. If it’s small enough, you can use duct tape. If the tree is young, the bark is more likely to reattach.

You may have to treat...
branches that have been broken and need to be pruned back in the appropriate place. Sometimes construction personnel will cut off a limb to get it out of their way, and we need to do corrective pruning.

Irrigation

Providing irrigation is often very important, even in situations where you don't normally irrigate (Fig. 8). If tree roots have been damaged, consider how the tree's ability to absorb water has been affected. Although roots have been lost, the tree still has the same foliage to support.

Irrigate based on the tree's need. Apply enough water to rewet the roots. Reapply it when that water is gone. The best way to know when and how much is to take a soil probe and check the soil moisture. Avoid light, frequent applications and wetting the trunk.

On construction sites, water is may be limited or non-existent and may only be available through a water truck. Do the best you can. Certainly, blasting a slope with a water truck is not going to work. Be creative in thinking about ways to apply the water and allow it to remain on the surface. It may be necessary to construct temporary berms to retain water. In some cases, we have injected water into the soil.

Mulch

Mulching the soil is the most wonderful thing on construction sites (Fig. 9). It is both an excellent buffer against, and remedial treatment for, soil compaction. Consider including a specification for chipping all brush generated on the site and placing it under the trees and along travel routes adjacent to trees to be preserved. There is very little you can do to restore good structure to compacted soils, so we must protect it from compaction in the first place. If you are in a situation where you cannot avoid equipment passing over the root zone of trees you are trying to save, place a 6-inch to 8-inch layer of wood chip mulch and then replenish it frequently. This has been shown to protect against compaction.

Dealing with pests

Pest management is another important task for us, because we are dealing with trees under stress. A tree can only respond to so many demands on its stored carbohydrates before its reserves are exhausted. In addition, trees become more attractive to many pests when they are under stress. Therefore, managing pests is an important aspect to both maintaining stored reserves and preventing permanent damage. Consequently, thresholds for treatment should be lowered. Our best plan for pest management might be cultural treatment like irrigation, that improve resistance rather than remedial treatment like pesticides.

Lastly, remember you are there to help get the project done, not to be an impediment. Part of your job is seeing the project is completed swiftly—with adequate tree protection.

Post-construction therapy

If one of our Guiding Principles is that
we can't begin tree preservation during construction, it is certainly true that we can't start after construction. But it may happen! Here's another scenario: The development has been built and the property manager calls up and says, "My trees are dying!!" (Fig. 10)

Arborists aren't magicians. When we visit the site for the first time, we need to go through the same evaluation process we use at any time: What is the health of the tree, what is its structure and will it be safe and healthy in this environment? If you were not involved in the project prior to construction, you don't know what the condition of the trees was, what happened during construction and what impacts the trees had to deal with nor what treatments have been applied. Follow a process of investigation to find out what the history of treatment is for these trees and how they have responded.

Fig. 11 - The tree mortality spiral illustrates the gradual decline of a tree when subjected to multiple stresses over a period of time. Once the tree reaches the last two stages, arboricultural treatments are of little help.
A final thought about evaluating trees...

Throughout the process of tree preservation, we've emphasized assessing the health and structural stability of the tree. For most trees, stress, injury and decline precede death or failure. These are distinct stages but points along a continuum, known as a mortality spiral (Fig. 11). In assessing trees, we must understand how they die, the factors important in predisposing the tree to decline or failure and where the tree is on the spiral.

Consider a healthy, mature tree worth preserving. It looks good and has reasonable vigor for its species and age. At this point, it has a bank of carbohydrate reserves that will allow it to respond to stresses and withstand them. Then it experiences drought and defoliation by insects. The tree uses some of its carbohydrate reserves to battle or compensate for these stresses. If construction injury is added to this picture, you will see the physical signs—thin crown, dieback of foliage, early fall coloration, slow wound closure, development of decay, bark starting to slough off—until the tree is declining. The decay may become so extensive that the tree can't support its weight and falls apart. Alternatively, a pathogen may kill the tree. What would appear to have killed the tree, say Armillaria root rot, wasn't acting alone. All the other factors were involved as well.

As arborists, we must figure out where the tree is along the mortality spiral. If the tree is too far along the spiral and can't escape, we cannot prevent death or failure. We need to be able to recognize this point and advise our customers that it's time to replace the tree with something better. We don't have a bag of therapy tricks that will make every tree whole again. Recovery would depend on the species and its ability to respond to treatment, site characteristics, what's occurring naturally in the soil and hydrology.

Construction is the final phase of a long process of design. Trees need to be included in that design. Unfortunately, arborists often are not called until construction has begun. We are expected to magically repair the damage that has occurred. The best we can hope to do is evaluate the tree and its potential to survive, improve the growing conditions in the Tree Protection Zone to the extent possible, and apply long-term, low-intensity treatments like mulch and irrigation while the tree recovers. Our ability to repair damage is very limited, emphasizing the need to protect trees from injury.

Nelda Methany is president and Jim Clark is vice-president of HortScience, Inc. in Pleasanton, Calif.
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Landscape professionals attempt to blend the work of man with nature’s work as seamlessly as possible. Imposing artificial structures on an area where none existed seriously disrupts the local biosphere. An ecosystem with an extremely delicate natural balance, a wetland for example, may be thrown into turmoil shortly after the bulldozers arrive. Trees are highly susceptible to the problems brought on by human mismanagement. Deprived of water, light, nutrients and pollen-carrying insects, even the sturdiest tree may succumb to disease or death over the course of just a few months. Even more likely, construction on a site will begin a long, slow decline that leaves a site without trees within a decade.

“Lots of bad things happen when you build without taking the environment into account,” notes Greg Jones, of Dunbar/Jones Partnership, a landscape architectural firm in Des Moines, Iowa. “Over-paving can make the area too hot for bees and other cross-pollinating insects. Unchecked development can also adversely affect humidity and about a million other natural factors. In the end, it can alter an ecosystem so significantly that it simply doesn’t work anymore.”

While landscape architects prefer to follow the signposts left by nature, their work is often hampered by politics. Vetoes to a design that is healthy for trees may come in the form of zoning requirements, the demands of city councils and neighborhood groups. Countervailing pressure for expediency is often exerted by the people who have the most money to lose by delays. Compromising narrows choices, but it may also create new opportunities for arborists to ply their trade. When the time comes to decide which trees will be retained or which new ones will be planted, and where, an arborist should be consulted to provide both guidance and expertise.

“Typically, these partnerships occur when landscape architects are working on new projects or doing major renovations on old ones,” explains Jack Butcher, president of Madison Tree Service, Inc., in Cincinnati, Ohio. “When construction or renovation is taking place near trees, many things have to be considered. Too much grading, for example, will increase the amount of soil, or compact it, making the earth around root systems impervious to air and water. An arborist can arrest this process. He can help the landscape architect rearrange the design by putting in retaining walls and aerating the area around the root systems. Soil compaction is just one negative outcome of construction. There are many others. Just changing the way the water sheds or altering its flow may siphon too much moisture to the root zones, or dehydrate them. Either way, you’re gonna lose a tree.”

The problem, relates Butcher, is that arborists are usually not invited to participate in a development until it is well underway. Once the grading has begun, tree-saving becomes a much more difficult business. Holes must be dug in the fill dirt area back to the existing grade where the fill was applied. This can be accomplished with drilling or trenching, but both may yield disappointing results. In such scenarios, the overall mission becomes paramount. Economic factors—and the desire to keep the development on track—may mandate a backwards approach to tree management, as changing the grade after the fact will almost certainly compromise the integrity of the entire project. This, according to Butcher, is both regrettable, and preventable.

“An arborist should be brought in at the planning stage, not when the project is already rocking and rolling,” he stresses. “To do otherwise is like going to the police station to report a murder you’ve just witnessed when you could have stopped it from happening by dialing 911.”

The wisdom of master-planning

According to Patrick Moore of Landscape Architects-Site
Planners in Alexandria, La., there are three factors that create value in land development. First, the whole project should be master-planned before the first shovelful of dirt is removed from the site. Master-planning takes everything into account—commercial aspects, residential demands and environmental needs. Second, the grassland within the site, including enriching features such as wetlands, should be preserved as much as possible. Ranking right up there with master-planning and grasslands preservation is the proper disposition of trees, both new and old. Once appraised of the client’s budget, Moore takes one of two approaches. If the area is treeless, he plants the largest and sturdiest specimens he can find. If the site is rich in trees, Moore will protect as many as the master-plan allows.

Arborists obviously come into play in both scenarios, and according to Moore, should be at the table along with all the other people who assist in the master-planning of the project. Acting as consultants, they can determine the health of the trees on the site. They can also steer the project in new directions when it endangers trees, and provide assessments and recommendations on those that are already afflicted with disease.

“A good example of master-planning at work took place in Shreveport in the early 1980s,” Moore remembers. “We were working on a golf development called the Southern Trace Gold Community, and right at the entrance of the course was this enormous oak tree. It was a great looking specimen, and all agreed that it should be preserved. Working with an arborist, we accessed the situation, looking closely at things like paving, and whether or not it would impact the access to water of the tree’s feeder roots. Once we found a way around the problem, the total cost of saving this tree, including trimming and everything else, totaled around $3,000. Not only was the tree preserved, it became the focal point of the entire course.”

Getting noticed

Arborists employed in land development look at trees from two perspectives—health and structural stability. The decision to save or destroy a tree depends upon whether the tree is on its last roots or in the prime of life. A tree that stands in way of development that is also stressed may be a justifiable sacrifice, but the prognosis should be left to an arborist. By the same token, a healthy tree may also be a structural hazard. Large trees often have naturally occurring weak areas in branch patterns and crotch angles. Leaving it intact on a vacant lot may be fine; leaving it hanging over a new patio may endanger people and property.

“I’ve had to go into people’s houses and extract broken branches from the inside,” recalls Butcher. “A weak tree limb can break off without warning and spear the roof of a private home or million dollar clubhouse. We probably clean up 50 of
these situations every year, and at a con-
siderable cost in time and money. I had one client who had a tree in his yard that was destined to do a lot of damage. The guy went into delay mode, then finally called us one Friday afternoon. We scheduled the job for the following Monday morning, but on Sunday the tree broke nearly in half, and cost the customer nearly $30,000 in property damages. When people ask me when a tree is going to die, I answer by telling them - 'that’s a God question.’ A competent arborist can identify a sickly tree, but he can’t tell you when that same tree will shuffle off this mortal coil. Risk determines the timing, and the greater the risk, the less time you want to waste getting rid of it. An older tree with structural flaws should be adjusted. An arborist can put it into an acceptable risk category.”

Most landscape architects are unlikely to possess as detailed a knowledge of tree health and survivability as arborists, particularly those who specialize in construction planning. Arborists know how to preserve and extend the life of trees, they are experts in fertilization, disease and insect control. For all of these reasons, and many more, there are usually more landscape architects looking for arborists than arborists looking for landscape architects.
"For us, working with a landscape architect is icing on the cake," Butcher says. "Most of us funnel our business to the residential side, and that tends to keep us extremely busy. Arborists don't often work with landscape architects, not because we don't want to, but because we're usually called into the project too late. Properly speaking, a landscape architect should get an arborist on the planning team."

Bill Meissner, director of landscape operations for Ruppert Landscape Company in Ashton, Md., typically calls in arborists for new construction. "Let's say it's a wooded area and we need the trees labeled and identified. Also, if there is an question of drainage or on establishing a tree-protection zone, we call in arborists."

The most common reason Meissner might consult an arborist? "When we need to review and assess the existing plant material on a job."

Of course, any work on mature trees that requires specific heavy equipment prompts a call, too. "If we are moving large caliper trees or dealing with a significant specimen, we call arborists immediately. We recognize that we are best at planting new trees and shrubs. We contract out caring for some of the more mature plantings. We use several tree care companies in the area, including The Care of Trees and Davey Tree Expert Company."

"The other reason we would call in an arborist would be for the maintenance side of our business," Meissner continues. "We often take over existing projects with substantial plant material that require a professional coming in to assess the condition of the existing landscape. Any tree work that needs to be done would be subcontracted out."

And where does Meissner find arborists to work with on projects? "I meet folks at local Landscape Contractors Association meetings. These meeting are filled with landscapers, so tree care people will show up and walk around the room introducing themselves and passing out cards."

Meissner stresses that arborists can really make a difference—and earn continuing business—by becoming part of the team. "The landscape contractor is usually given a tight schedule. We like to go in with a partnering type of approach. The customer doesn't care if the arborist is part of Ruppert or not. We come in, solve the problem and move on. That's the approach we like to take with arborists. Become part of the team and service us the way we like to service our customers."

Joseph Hertzler, president of Green Guard Associates, Inc. of Williamsburg, Va., works with landscape designers to preserve trees during construction and on renovation projects.

"We are often called in by landscapers who have clients with trees that are declining," says Hertzler. "We find compacted soils, unhealthy pH and root systems that are totally demolished. "By the time we get into it, there usually isn't much we can do," he admits. "I have gone on a crusade around here with

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landscapers and designers to educate them. They are typically the first person a homeowner deals with, especially in new construction. The landscaper will go in when the house is half built. At that point, it is still possible to see what has been done to the trees—such as how much fill has been brought in, where the concrete has been stockpiled—and we can do a lot to remedy the situation at that point. Two years later after the lawn is green, we can only get a small picture of what went on.”

In addition to construction, Green Guard is often called to improve the health of mature, declining trees. “One thing we often recommend to landscape professionals is to increase the size of a mulch bed around a tree to eliminate competition with the turf and give the root system a place to grow,” Hertzler explains. “They will argue against it, because they spent time and money to establish that turf. If a designer had been considering a larger mulch bed from the beginning, he could have designed the landscape around the tree.”

Hertzler takes an active approach to meeting and expanding his circle of landscape professionals. “I try to make contact with every landscaper I can. I am constantly calling them up. We have also conducted classes to which we invited landscapers (and competitors). We have compiled a list of people who have worked with us or sent referrals. We mail updates, recommendations, pest alerts and other items to them once a month. It’s a way of letting them know we’re here and have a level of expertise that could help their businesses.”

Hertzler finds that the most common gap in knowledge among landscapers is in the lack of understanding of the dynamic between trees and turf. A lot of times when irrigation lines are installed, the roots are cut back. They also tend to put in too much turf—crowding tree roots.

“Another major issue we run into with landscapers is with the application of mulch,” Hertzler notes. “Landscapers love mulch, because they charge by the yard. Mulch is a wonderful thing, but sometimes if it is piled too high it covers the roots stems, causing problems with root collars. Also, shredded hardwood mulch tends to compact, forming a layer that is impervious to water.”

Getting noticed requires a combination of self-promotion and advertising. The yellow pages are a good place to start. Holding small seminars and sending out brochures to the offices of landscape architects is another avenue. But the real benefit comes from word of mouth. Reputation is everything in this business, so encourage those you work with to pass your card along. If you keep on top of your profession, people will come knocking at your door.

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - APRIL 1998

TCI
Encouraging Students

I recently took the opportunity to sign up a number of students from the Ranger School as student members of the NAA. May I say thank you to your organization for providing this service. The publications are professionally done, and they are very educational and informative. They are a great help to young men and women who may be considering tree care as a professional opportunity. I think it is very admirable that your association supports this type of program.

Dr. Michael R. Bridgen
Associate Professor
State University of New York

Nilsson Article on Money for Industry

In response to the article in February 1998 entitled "The Secret to Pricing for Profit," by Mr. Phil Nilsson: I think the ideas expressed are right on the money. As an estimator, I realize there are a lot of variables in this industry. Still, I think a "standard" to begin from would be very useful. With careful research, many variables could be addressed with cross-referencing or scales of hazard level...maybe even added compensation for dangerous (not just time consuming) projects. If we come together to help Nilsson with input and ideas, and we respond honestly and openly to his research questions, surely he could put together an intelligent and useful publication.

Melanie Ashby
A & A Tree Service
Oldfield, MO.

A Perspective from Vermont on Nilsson

Phil Nilsson’s philosophy (Feb. '97 issue) is obtainable within the criteria set by particular states. I would like to share my experience from the Green Mountains (Vermont) on our need for better development of pricing practices.

In Vermont, you must be licensed for everything else but arboriculture! Prices, in general should reflect qualifications and experience in all aspects of plant care and should include passing a required state test and being committed to continuing education throughout your career. I know that passing the test has meaning and creates high self-esteem. Obtaining the license provides a company with substance that can be characterized by individual homeowners. How well you are educated in arboriculture reflects how well you can convey information to clients.

Yellow Page ads read, “Will beat any written bid.” This means, of course, that the competition has an opportunity to look at our proposal and haggle with clients! This is not fair competition. The practice creates tension between companies and degrades integrity in the field. “Cut throat” prices slowly bring the whole industry to a halt. Another service seen often in unregulated states, like Vermont, is “topping,” even though years of teaching and text warn against this practice.

Vermont’s prices for tree work are significantly lagging compared to the rest of New England. Why? The belief that residents of Vermont pay considerably less to live is wrong. There are very few distinctions comparable to other states. Trickledown economics is a concept that rarely finds itself workable in this area of New England, unless towns you work in have all professional companies, and are licensed and certified.

Nevertheless, I do agree with 90% of Mr. Nilsson’s thoughts. Converting to a per hour rate would increase profitability to all arborists. It could also easily help to maintain solidarity within the industry, creating a link to mutual understanding. Furthermore, providing explanations to difficult to deal with homeowners as to our rates would not be necessary, because all of us would be similar in that regard. So, in many states this is feasible, such as those states where many communities truly care about judgement and foresight and are willing to pay the price for quality. However, even though the daily life here in
More of your letters ...

Vermont is great, it is evident that price is still holding fast as the biggest consideration to winning a contract. At best here in Vermont we as professionals know our own weaknesses and strengths, and that helps us come closer to realistic prices. And at very least, we can hope that the people and legislature of this great state will think of us as highly as they do hairstylist, and massage therapists.

David M. Neal
Woodstock, VT

Confusing Design on Crossline Speedline

While I can see the advantages of setting up a crossline speedline, the article itself was very hard to follow. The illustrations, the numbering system and layout of the photographs, the photographs themselves, and the general article as a whole was not designed for easy understanding. A better way to have laid it out would have been to illustrate with drawings and good photographs of each piece of equipment, its position in relation to the whole setup, and a clear photograph of the whole system set up - with the Gibbs ascenders, figure 8, Munter Hitch, fiddle block (4:1 pulley), etc. (easily seen in relation to the job, anchors, and end desire of the project). Maybe you could run the article again—this time with a little more clarity. I did figure it out—and it works great—but it took longer than necessary to understand the first time around.

Matthew Kortenhoven
Tree Worker/Climber
Stanford, CA.

Thanks for Help

I just wanted to drop you a line to say thanks for your contributions of time and hard work along with your sponsorship of our International Climbing Competition. Your efforts and input continue to make this a first-class event. For the past six years, the competition has brought many fond memories to my family and has afforded me the opportunity to meet some of the nicest and most professional people imaginable.

P.S. Looks like I’ll get another go at it. I was fortunate enough to win the 98 Michigan chapter, and it was truly the stiffest competition to date. Twenty-two young hopefuls participated and proved to be much better prepared than in years past. I had a very good day and won four of the five events. However, I only won the overall by 11 points. I think I’ll continue to compete until strength prevails over experience.

Dale Jacob
Boyne City, Michigan

Did Spraying Contribute to Cancer?

I was an NAA member for many years when Bob Felix was director. He came to our home to deliver a bicentennial plaque in 1976. I ordered this plaque to promote my tree service in Darien, Conn., and it still sits proudly in place beside a 300-year-old Red Oak off Route 1. Great advertising!

My purpose for writing this letter is as follows: About a year ago, near my 65 birthday, I had my first complete physical exam. (Good clean-living tree work?) My doctor reviewed my test results and coldly announced “You have multiple myeloma!” (Practically a death sentence!)

The oncologist confirmed a lesser, chronic cancer named Waldenstrom’s Macroglobulinemia. About ten adults per million in the United States annually get this disease! It was suggested that “pollution” could have been a cause for this cancer. (Our local paper stated that Fairfield County, Conn., has the most air-pollution in the country!) But, what if tree-spray chemicals over 20-plus years contributed? I only used WP Sevin + Malathion—wearing no protection in the 70’s. Is there a link? Are there others out there who have a “pollution” type blood cancer? I’d like to know! If you would help me develop a data-file for future cancer research, please phone me at 888-655-8819.

Donald Miller
Darien, Connecticut

More Chatfield

I really enjoyed the article by Dr. James Chatfield. An old-timer such as myself can recognize wisdom that comes from experience and really looking into problems. The adaptation was a little clumsy at times, but overall thanks for the good work.

M. Browner
Boulder, Colorado
When it comes to insurance, CNA looks at businesses from all perspectives. In fact, CNA has been designing customized programs for more than 25 years. We even have one that’s pruned to the exact needs of the tree care industry. It’s more than basic property protection; it offers coverages for underground storage tank pollution, transportation of designated pollutants, other limited pollution and pesticide/herbicide applicator.

To see how we can branch out for your business, call 1-800-CNA-6241.
Defining Disability

The Americans With Disabilities Act is one of the most far-reaching and misunderstood laws ever enacted. At least part of the confusion stems from the fact that the ADA has spawned countless lawsuits, most of which have yet to be decided in the courts. And those cases that have come to trial have produced conflicting results in different courthouses. So certainty in many respects won’t arise until the U.S. Supreme Court starts hearing appeals.

One area of the act that has caused concern with tree care company owners is drug and alcohol abuse. If alcoholism is a disability, for example, are business owners prohibited from firing employees with drinking problems?

The answer is no. The ADA does not prevent you from promoting a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. A business owner may fire an employee who returns from break under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

An employer may also discipline employees whose substance abuse affect their work behavior. Showing up late to the job site, constant absenteeism or poor performance are all legally valid reason for discipline.

A note of caution, however. Without a drug test, you could be held liable should you discipline an employee based on gossip or ambiguous clues, such as slow performance in the morning.

Low-Cost Benefits

Finding and keeping good employees has never been more difficult in the tree care industry. Costs are rising, while prices remain relatively constant. How can you attract entry-level employees and hold on to the workers you have paid to train?

Expanding benefits is one way to build employee loyalty, but it’s also a way to price your services beyond the market. In 1996, the average cost of employee benefits in the United States stood at 41.3 percent of payroll, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The same survey found the average annual cost of all benefits for full-time workers totalled $14,086. Fortunately, some employee benefits can be offered at almost no cost to employers.

For example, you can offer employees savings on their home or auto insurance at almost no cost to your tree care business. Employee-paid group insurance discounts for autos or property have long been available to workers at large firms. But recently, insurers have been aggressively targeting smaller firms with the same or similar offers. The savings for employees can be substantial.

Here’s how it works:

Employees switch their car or homeowner’s insurance to the group provider and pay premiums through payroll deductions. You will have to coordinate deductions with the person or service that does your payroll, but not much more is involved.

Ask your insurer about the idea.
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Phone, fax or e-mail your request for a free Cooperative Tree Manager demonstration system, or for information on contract utility foresters, the Tele-Time system and our other utility services.
A recent headline in a Manchester, N.H., paper shouted the news of yet another fatal fall from a tree. The victim was not an employee of a commercial tree care company, but a middle-aged man doing a favor for a neighbor by pruning some diseased limbs. Regardless of his professional status, witnesses on the ground said the man "appeared to know what he was doing" as he climbed the tree unsecured, jumped on a limb high in the tree to test its strength, and then proceeded to cut branches above his head, letting them free-fall to the ground. It was one of these branches that ultimately killed him.

As anyone who has ever climbed a tree professionally knows, it is not enough to merely "appear to know" what you are doing. As the unfortunate man learned, it's what you don't know that will kill you. Even more foolish than pruning a tree in ignorance is blatantly disregarding the knowledge you've gained, or refusing to learn from the experiences of others. As an industry, we often gripe about OSHA—how confusing the regulations are, how the enforcement officials don't understand our work, or how standards are inappropriately enforced. Still, the industry is concerned with safety as a necessity of the nature of our work, and therefore, because OSHA was found lacking, the collective experience of the industry was used to pound out rules which made commercial tree care safer. Thus the ANSI Z133 safety standard was born.

Our hearts were wrenched at the NAA office yesterday when we heard of a fatality in the Northeast. The company owner called in a panic, looking for help in getting out of the hefty fines about to be levied against him. Criminal charges might be pending. Once the story was told, it became clear that this time OSHA had done their job, and done it well. The citations written were appropriate, and even referenced ANSI Z133. Even so, NAA asked the employer two questions: was he in compliance with Z133 when the accident happened? Was there any case for claiming willful employee misconduct?

Sadly, the answers were, respectively: "What is Z133" and "no." Here is a case of another life needlessly lost because all parties concerned were operating in the dark. NAA pours out safety and regulatory information. Members of this industry talk to each other. Innovations are shared, and horror stories become legends. We at NAA grimace at the thought of the free copy of Z133 sent to all new members sitting, unread, in a corner of the office gathering dust.

We wonder who broke the news to the victim's young widow. How will she explain to her toddler children where their father is? What will this employer say to the family at the funeral—"we thought we knew what we were doing"? In this case, the precautions would have been so easy.

A very wise (now retired) safety director once said that the only way he ever found to get his crews to comply with all safety regulations was to ask them directly how they wanted their deaths explained to their wives and mothers. If you're thinking about cutting a few safety corners, if you think you don't have time for training, take a minute to look at your crew. With whose wife do you want to have a very difficult conversation tonight? How would you want your death explained?

Amelia Reinert is deputy executive director of National Arborist Association.
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Ice Storm '98

By Donald D. Fox

The call came at 6:00 on Thursday morning, January 8. Our general foreman, who has a way of turning a phrase, said, "Grab your bags and pack your rags. We're going on storm damage."

Little did I know I was about to begin an odyssey that would encompass 18 long days and nights in upstate New York. Since going to work for Asplundh Tree Expert Company, I had often heard tales from coworkers of trips they had taken in the past to do storm work. Each one seemed to start with, "Remember the time ... " usually followed by gales of laughter as they shared their memories. Finally, I thought, I'm going to have some stories of my own.

We departed Bradford, Penn., in a steady rain that continued the entire journey. As we wound our way along in a truck that was not designed for highway travel, it was hard to imagine what lay ahead. My foreman, a veteran of quite a few storm damage trips, tried to answer all my questions. His most frequent reply, though, was, "Every trip is different. You just have to deal with whatever comes up." Not exactly what I wanted to hear.

After hours of bouncing along, without even the creature comfort of a radio, my enthusiasm began to wane. Like a child on vacation, I longed to ask, "Are we there yet?"

It was well past dark when we entered Oswego County, N.Y. Interstate 81 had been closed to all but emergency traffic, giving the highway an eerie feeling of desertion. But still, there was no evidence of the devastation we would soon witness.

It was almost as if Mother Nature had drawn a line at the Jefferson County line. The damage of the ice storm became evident. Everywhere trees hung heavy under the weight of an ice coating an inch or more thick. Bent over double under the weight, some had snapped, reaching out into the road. In the light of our headlights, it resembled a fantasy land of crystal designed by a mad scientist.

Upon reaching our destination just south of Watertown, N.Y., we were greeted by what seemed like total confusion. Dozens of trucks were lined up as the drivers awaited instructions. Crews from as far west as Michigan and as far south as North Carolina had been called in to try and deal with the mass destruction. Tree trimmers, employees from electric utilities, workers from telephone companies and cable companies had all converged on this area after the call had gone out.

Getting our orders, we followed our "bird dog" as he worked his way around downed power and telephone lines to get us to downtown Watertown. It was an obstacle course of indescribable proportions.

If the highway had seemed deserted, the town seemed unreal. Not a sign of life showed anywhere as we wound our way around darkened streets. A curfew had been imposed and, thankfully, everyone seemed to be observing it.

Reaching our destination, we quickly set up and began to work. It immediately became evident just how dangerous this whole situation was as the sound of ice-laden branches crashing to the ground filled the air. Over and over the warning could be heard, "Watch out overhead! Don’t stand under any trees!"

After several hours of clearing branches from the power lines, the order was given to stop for the night. I couldn’t help but feel a sense of relief as we packed away our equipment and headed back out of town for a hot meal and a few hours sleep.

Up at four, we ate breakfast by candlelight before heading back into Watertown. It wasn’t until daybreak, though, that we really got a chance to see just how bad things were. Everywhere, lines sagged heavily under the weight of the ice. Some had been ripped...
right from the sides of the houses, others lay pressed to the ground under the weight of branches that had come crashing down. Over and over, I heard experienced co-workers comment, “I’ve never seen storm damage this bad.”

Mother Nature wasn’t done yet, though. Steady rain had fallen throughout the night and continued as we struggled to deal with the damage. To keep things interesting, a little thunder and lightning arrived before the morning was through.

Branches continued to crash to the ground as our feeble efforts continued. Without warning, branches five or six inches in diameter would snap, undoing all the work we had struggled to accomplish. As the day dragged on into night, utter confusion was slowly replaced by organized chaos as the efforts of the hundreds of crews began to come together. But still, there was no light at the end of this very long tunnel.

Our second full day brought sunny skies and a feeling of hope. However, a brisk wind off Lake Ontario brought down even more branches, making a bad situation worse. The sunny skies also encouraged people to come outdoors to survey the damage. Few realized how much danger they were putting themselves in as they videotaped and photographed the damage. Repeated warnings were shrugged off as people stood in small groups and compared damage with the ice storm of ‘91.

Up well before dawn, working way past sunset, the 16-hour days we endured began to take their toll. And with each section we finished, more stretched out ahead of us. Finally on day five, we left Watertown to concentrate our efforts in the outlying towns.

With each area we went to, the same questions were asked, “When do you think the power will be back on?” And, “Is this the worst storm you have ever seen?”

The constant replies were, “I honestly don’t know”, and “Yes, without a doubt.”

As our first week ended, the weather turned. Bitter cold and snow replaced what had been relatively mild temperatures. It did little for our outlook as equipment balked and protested. Thoughts of home and our own warm beds began to creep in, though few were willing to say anything out loud.

As we talked to local residents, it didn’t take long to realize how fortunate we were. Starting their second week with no power, the stress was beginning to take its toll on them. They still offered us coffee and snacks, but their expressions told the real story. Hope was beginning to be replaced with frustration. They thanked us for our efforts, but their disappointment clearly showed when told we had no idea when the power would be back on.

The days began to blend one into another as our second week dragged on. Our efforts moved to the Thousand Islands area along the St. Lawrence Seaway. The weather continued to be a factor as temperatures seldom rose above freezing and often hovered in the single digits. Incredible sunrises and beautiful sunsets made us think of how beautiful this area could be in different circumstances. Say, summer vacation.

By day 14, rumors began to circulate that were going home, though others were just as sure from there we would be going to Canada, also devastated from this same storm. Phone calls home always ended with the question, “So when do you think you’ll be coming home?” and answered with, “I honestly don’t know.”
Day 16, the word finally came down. We were released. With a few exceptions, everyone's mood brightened. Talk of what the first thing we were going to do upon arriving home ranged from hugging our wives to taking a long hot shower. One guy was overheard to say that he was going to hug his dog. To each his own, I guess.

During our last meal at the restaurant where we had eaten for the last two weeks, the waitresses took note of our jovial mood. Gone were the long, tired expressions that they had watched the previous nights. They were now replaced by excited chatter. Having gotten to know us so well, they offered their good-byes and well wishes as we finished our dinner. One waitress in particular thanked us for our patronage as she explained she was finally going to get her car fixed with her tip money. We wished her well, too.

Up bright and early on day 18, it was a happy but tired group that began the long trip home. Friendships had been made and friendships renewed, as is common in this line of work. Everyone who had been through this thought, knew full well that it wouldn't be until the next storm that we would see each other again.

As we headed south on Interstate 81, I couldn't help but think of how different it all looked. Though still dark, just like the night we arrived, the ice had long since melted. A light snow was falling as the wind swept it around and across the road. Conversation was sparse as we were lost in our own thoughts.

I couldn't help but think of all that I had seen and experienced since our arrival. I felt good for all the people we had helped, but my heart went out to those who were still without power. Though our job was done, the linemen still had a monumental task ahead of them as they headed out into the rural areas to continue resetting poles and stringing new wire. It only made home seem that much more welcome. And now, when the stories are told and the memories recalled, I'll have a few of my own to share.

Donald D. Fox works for Asplundh Tree Expert Company in Bradford, Penn.

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Below freezing temperatures kept ice in place for more than a week, and additional snow slowed restoration operations.

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When you play in a team environment, you look at people as three-dimensional. They are more than what they do. It seems like common sense, but teams that tend to succeed know each other beyond “you’re the manager, I’m the player,” or “I’m the worker, you’re the boss.”

For example, I’m a speaker, but I’m also a dad—a single father for the past five years and the primary care giver of a 6-year-old girl. I spend about 35 to 40 percent of my time raising her. I grew up in New York City, I live in California now. We are all more than one-dimensional players.

First, a few general words of advice.

1. ABL (Always Be Learning)
One of the key elements that inspires groups of people is teaching them something new. If teams are learning, they tend to be motivated and perform well. If nothing is happening, or if it’s the same rut day after day, the motivational environment tends to decrease, as you can imagine.

2. Be Present
Woody Allen used to say, “90 percent of life is showing up.” You come in with a lot of skills and knowledge already. I’m not suggesting that you dump everything you already do and I won’t just tell you to do this or that. I would suggest, however, that you pick out two or three things you already do and add to it. Being present is a big part of teamwork.

3. Stretch
Challenge your conventional wisdom. Just because you think it’s true doesn’t necessarily mean it is. There is a great book out about the “capacity” of our brains and how much we use over our lifetimes; the average person uses less than 5 percent. Projections suggest that someone able to increase to 6 percent would be a thinker on the order of Einstein. Few of us will ever attain that level, but my suggestion is “stretch.”

**Five Keys to Successful Teams**

There are five principles that are the underpinning of building good teams. Think for a moment about the best teams you’ve either been on or witnessed in action. Write down the five to six elements that you think are central to the best teams. What are some of the common elements of great teams?

1. **Clear goals**
The fundamental thing about teams that do well is they have a clear goal—absolutely, pristine clear.

2. **Role definition**
In your business you must have either a job description for every employee or something that defines what a person does.

3. **Communication**
In particular, redundant communication. Good teams over communicate. Studies show that people must be told something six times before they remember even half. Therefore, good teams don’t assume clarity of communication.

4. **Attitude of accountability**
Team members hold each other responsible for team success. Everyone pulls his own weight.

5. **Talent**
You can’t have a great team without some talent. Of course, you can have the most talent in the world, but if you don’t have some of the other things, you don’t perform as well. Look at teams in sports. Lots of talent, yet they don’t win. Why? Something else is happening. They aren’t communicating, attitude might be out of whack. Those are just as critical as talent.

Allow me to share with you the results of a survey which asked that question. The answers were:
1. Nature of the work. Is it interesting?
2. Feeling of being “in” on things.
3. Recognition.
4. Job security.
5. Money.
6. Advancement in the company.
7. Growth
8. Benefits
9. Working conditions.
10. Good boss

In other words, money matters but it isn’t the most important item. And for all those of you who worry about being a good boss, no one cares.

Some items, such as working conditions, money, good boss, job security and benefits, are known as “satisfiers.” Others—such as advancement, nature of work, growth, feeling of being in on things, and recognition—are known as motivators.

The different between motivators and satisfiers is what you call a “Performance Continuum.”

What this shows is that motivators and satisfiers have a different impact on the level of performance and productivity. If I want to motivate performance and I rely on the motivators, I will create an environment where people perform at high levels. It’s more difficult if I rely on satisfiers. I can give people more money, more benefits, better working conditions—and they will be more satisfied—but they will not be more motivated.

Think about the last time you gave someone a raise. It motivated for about a week, and then performance went back to the old level. Productivity goes up temporarily, but satisfiers such as money and working conditions don’t maximize performance.

Motivators, on the other hand, recognize performance. If I give an employee an opportunity to grow in my business, be listened to and be in on things, he will be more motivated, which means his performance level will be higher. If the work is dull, a person will lose motivation and perform poorly. That’s the difference between motivators and satisfiers.

You need both. You can’t pay people way under market and expect them to feel highly motivated no matter how much you listen to them. Salary, benefits and working conditions all have to be satisfactory, but what needs to be exceptional are the motivators.

Examine your business and ask yourself, “Do I have the right people in the right jobs, am I recognizing performance, and is there a place for them to grow?” Finding positive answers to those questions will go a long way toward...
Can we actually motivate people to make them more productive? Probably not, because motivation starts from within. In your workplace, some are motivated and some aren’t. My point is, you really can’t motivate an employee, but you can optimize the environment in which that person works. In any team you will have a few superstars and a few who are deadwood—

with most somewhere in the middle.

Where do we spend most of our time as managers? We try to bring up the overall average where some are probably deadwood. We spend too much time with them, because we expect the superstars to excel. Superstars always end up leaving, because no one has paid attention to them and they always get loaded up with more work to make up the slack. Their “reward” for being superstars is “more work.”

Figure this out. If you spend a lot of time with the deadwood who are never going to change, and you ignore the superstars because you expect them to excel, what happens to those in the middle that are just “average.” The key here is to spend less time on those who can’t be motivated.

Four Steps of the Management Circle

There’s a basic circle of management regarding how to run a company, and it works as follows:

1. **Set goals**
   Teams with clear and achievable goals tend to perform well. Provide a goal and people will try to achieve it. **Goals should be SMART** (Simple, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Oriented, Time-bound).

2. **Provide feedback**
   Teams that know where they stand know when to respond. They harbor little ambiguity. Teams for which the ambiguity level is low spend less time worrying about **how** they are doing and more time worry about **what** they are doing.

   People like to know where they stand. They desire some level of certainty. Teams that receive feedback also learn faster than teams for which feedback is infrequent or inconsistent. Feedback comes in the form of budget vs. actual dollars, customer surveys, performance appraisals, one-on-one praise, recognition or constructive criticism. **Feedback is a powerful performance motivator.**

3. **Involve teams in solving problems**
   Teams that solve problems together learn accountability and initiative and develop confidence in their abilities, as well as ownership in the performance of the team and the company. Team problem solving is a process of problem identification, reflection, search for causes and collaboration on solutions. **Involvement in problem solving that has a direct impact on the nature of the work is a powerful performance motivator.**

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4. Share rewards

There are many ways to reinforce desired performance and results. These include cash and non-cash incentives and rewards. The key philosophy behind sharing rewards is to encourage risk sharing among team members, encourage initiative and to say "thanks" for a job well done. Rewards—in almost any form—are powerful performance motivators.

**The Art of Leadership**

These are the philosophies shared by all successful organizations we have observed. Good organizations do not depend on one leader—they involve all in leadership by promoting and training and conducting business according to these philosophies.

1. **Teams create value for the customer.** Do you sell service or solutions? Most tree care people see themselves as selling a service, but customers buy solutions. You might be selling pruning or fertilization, but what you are really doing solving aesthetic or safety problems for the client. The best teams fundamentally focus around the customer.

   Is there a mechanism to make this happen? Yes, by measuring customer satisfaction and value. Get feedback from customers so the team knows how well they are doing, how good the product is and the level of quality of the solution you deliver. How do your teams know to do this? You have to tell them. There has to be a mechanism in place. The teams that do the best are those that receive constant customer feedback.

2. **Treat people with dignity.** This is an important principle in building teams. There are a few ways to make that happen:

   - Set high standards for quality and productivity;
   - Provide regular, honest feedback;
   - Shut up and listen.

   It's a simple and powerful formula—expect excellence. Let people know where they stand and listen to their ideas; share values that establish a standard to which all must aspire; provide performance feedback by training managers how to coach; and listen by involving staff in problem solving. Do all these things and you will demonstrate the sensitivity a business needs.

3. **Share a clear vision.** Well-defined goals, such as performance standards, are critical. Do you have a vision for your business? Where do you see your company five years down the road? What will it look like?

   I bet if you thought about this, you'd be able to describe what you want your business to look like, what kind of people you want to hire and what kind of work you want to do. But projecting into the future is scary. Since people can't really control the future, they tend to slow down (or actually stop), because any step
could be the wrong (or last) step. There is a true story behind this:

A group of people found themselves precisely in that situation. Stuck in a snowstorm and freezing to death, one of the fellows in a group of eight pulled a little map out of his sack, and spread it on the ground. They all looked and tried to figure out where they were. They mentioned the name of a town on it. They said, “let’s go there.” So they all got up and they skied ... two-and-a-half hours later, they came over a hill into a glen and knocked on the door they came to. They were invited inside and started to talk with the people there. They mentioned the name of the town, but the people living in the home have never heard of it. They pull out the map and look down in the key in the bottom left corner of the map: it said, “Pyrenees Mountains, Northern Spain.” These folks are in the Swiss Alps in Northern Italy.

What’s the moral of the story? Better some map than no map at all. That map got a group of people to stand up and go someplace. Make a map for your business.

4. Measure, measure, measure.
This refers back to goals. What is measured is talked about. And what is talked about gets done. Measurement focuses people on results instead of task completion. Without a measurement system, managers end up micro-managing. But measuring makes the problem everyone’s problem, not just the manager’s.

Goals don’t have to be complex, but they do have to be simple and visible so people know what everyone is trying to accomplish. There are a lot of things you can measure in your business.
1. Productivity—hours worked vs hours billed
2. Quality—Customer Satisfaction, Feedback, Remarks, Scores
3. Safety
4. Overtime

Pick a limited number of items that are critical for your business—I suggest you limit measurement to three areas, or four, at most. Measurements are important because are forced to keep track of what’s happening, and solid measurement provides information with which to make changes. Too often, in business and in life, we keep doing the same things the same way “because this is the way we’ve always done it.” Measurement helps you out of the rut.

5. Share the fruits of success.
The most motivated employees in the world, at least the ones I’ve seen, are ones with a shared “risk and reward” environment. Who’s at risk in your business? Everyone is at some financial risk but you, the owner, have capital invested, so you’ve got more to lose than everyone else. It’s your money on the line. Wouldn’t it be nice if your employees shared your concern?

How do you encourage people to start feeling as invested as you? Since you want to motivate them to work as hard as you do, be as productive as you are, and work with the same level of quality, they need more than a wage. It’s too easy to earn a wage and go home at the end of the day, especially if that’s all you are paying them to do.

The most motivated employees are those who work in a shared risk and reward environment. Pay-for-performance programs are the wave of the future for two simple reasons. One, most companies cannot afford to give employees 4 percent to 5 percent raises every year and hope to remain price competitive. Also, along with other non-cash reward systems, they are the most powerful performance motivators we know.

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TREEmE CARE INDUSTRY - APRIL 1998
good people you have to give them a raise. If they are really good, you want to give them a good raise. If prices are, on average, not increasing as quickly, the gross profit will shrink. How do you deal with this? Shared risk and reward.

Go to the troops and say, “Tim, you are one of my best people here. This year, no raises. Yet, if the company hits certain profit levels, I can give you a 10 percent raise because I am willing to share some of the profits or success of the business. But, we have to hit the number.”

When you begin a program where you reduce the raises and increase the bonuses, what happens in the first year? Everyone works real hard. A note of caution here: if you are going to do this, you do it in a good year, because if crews don’t reach that bonus level, you will have a lot of angry employees around, and you may end up losing a few. So think about this type of system carefully before you implement it.

What happens with this type of system is that crew members exert peer pressure to ensure everyone is working hard. If one person is pulling his weight and another isn’t, it will be addressed by members of the “team.” Also, employees will start coming up with suggestions on how things can be done better, faster, or more efficiently. Why? Because their money is on the line.

Increasing productivity is more than simply prodding people to work faster. Among your measurements, in addition to speed or efficiency, will be safety and quality. Sacrificing or downgrading safety or quality for the sake of speed will cost you a lot in other ways. Lowering quality will cost you customers, and not emphasizing safety will cost you a lot more. So, the whole notion of encouraging people to work faster can work against you in the long term.

Be careful. Relying too much on some sort of commission structure can drive people to act in dysfunctional ways. Be smart, use multiple measures and start off in a good year.

Leadership is critical to the success of teams. Despite what I said above, I’m not a big advocate of using money as a motivator. While money is important, don’t rely solely on a monetary system to motivate your people, because they’ll concentrate solely on the system.

It’s up to you to create a motivational environment for your team. The future of your business just may depend on it.

Kevin Kehoe is a management consultant and owner of Kevin Kehoe & Company based in Laguna Niguel, Calif. This article was excerpted and adapted from a seminar presented at TCI EXPO ’97.
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April 25, 1998 (Rain date: 5/2/98)
ISA Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Annual Climbing Jamboree
Fort Washington Park, Maryland
Contact: Jim Martin, 703-818-8228; E-Mail: ISAtrees@aol.com

May 4-14, 1998
Committee for Advancement of Arboriculture
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May 8, 1998
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May 18-20, 1998
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National Conference on Disaster Mgmt.
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Contact:NADF at (402) 474-5655

May 29, 1998
ISA Midwestern Chapter
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Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis
Contact: Droeger Tree Care, 314-863-1903

June 6, 1998
New Jersey Society of Certified Tree Experts
Seminar and Prep Course for Tree Expert Exam
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June 16-21, 1998
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August 17-21, 1998
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Orlando, FL
Contact: Alison Pruitt, 561-832-9274

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October 7-10, 1998
American Society of Consulting Arborists
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November 5-7, 1998
TCI EXPO '98
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Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD
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Big Al Fontaine had been planning this job for months, waiting for the winter storms to clear and the emergency work to be completed—and billed.

Big Al’s “number one climber,” Max Bunyan, was making his way up the thick-barked, Stone pine tree that dominated the backyard of the Widow Carter’s ivy-covered cottage. This behemoth had origins that reached back to prehistoric times! Max fearlessly set his load line and blocks in the tree for what he hoped would be a spectacular speedlining operation extending over the house to the chipper in the front yard.

In the glow of preparation, Al had spent his hard-earned dollars on the latest speedlining kit. Anxious to begin guiding wood over the tiny dwelling, he instructed his ground man to pull the truck forward to tighten the load line in preparation for the onset of 500-pound logs in controlled flight en route to their safe and planned destination.

Everything was set. As Max strategically cut the top out of the ancient tree, a colossal log began its tram-like descent over the house to the front yard. As the first branch slowly approached the peak of the house, increased sag in the load line alerted the crew that something was terribly wrong! Hastily, Big Al barked instructions to the ground man to pull the truck forward to tighten the line and, hopefully, raise the now house-bound log above the peak of the roof. From the tree, Max’s feeble yelps were barely audible as the quarter-ton log splintered the roof of the tiny house.

Witnessing the disaster, Big Al and the ground man stood helplessly by as the rest of the tree (fully uprooted, with a white-faced Max clinging to its impressive girth like a rag doll), followed the severed limb, and dropped uninspected into the Widow Carter’s house.

With the crystal clarity that comes only from hindsight, Al (at last) remembered the three crucial elements that had been conspicuously absent from the job site.

Remember the Basics

Even though Al’s speedline kit contained hardware and ready-made ropes that provide a faster, easier method of accomplishing “rope tricks” that normally would require years of knot-tying experience, the originators of the concept cannot and should not be expected to visualize every situation the purchaser will encounter. Al should have tightened the rope using a safe, controllable method such as a z-rig or a piggy-back rig, as opposed to his two-ton truck, which is a method that taxes the capability of any manufacturer’s recommendations. The kit is designed to expedite, but not replace, common sense, and it does not eliminate safety as a first priority. Convenience is not a substitute for a time-tested safety program.

Check for Hazards

Before the advent of today’s speedlining equipment and kits, Al would have taken the time to check the strength and integrity of the roots, trunk and branches to determine their availability to withstand dynamic loading. His failure to do so, combined with other things, such as the superhuman force of a truck pulling at the already-compromised integrity of this tree’s trunk/roots, resulted in disaster. These are the kinds of things that result in major loss to the homeowner and potentially serious injury to the tree care worker.

Evaluate the Situation

After you have checked for hazards, it may be impractical to deploy a speedline operation. In this case, a crane would have been more appropriate. Every situation dictates its own solution. Don’t fall victim to the easy temptation to follow the latest trend. No single answer solves every situation. Carefully apply your training, experience, and abilities to maintain a safe environment for your workers and your clients.

The Widow Carter will thank you.
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95-2205 1989 Ford diesel chassis, 5/2. AB, with a matching Hi Ranger 6H-55PB1 (098916636) 60' working height, two man platform, upper tool outlets, lower boom isolator, full line body. Unit is RTW. $47,000.00

95-3110 1993 Ford F700 diesel. FS-5106 nylon brakes, with an Altec LB650 (119213R0134), 56' working height, behind the mount axle, single platform, dump body. $58,500.00

95-1946 1986 GMC diesel chassis, 5/2, with a Hi Ranger 5F1-52PB1 (3768001). 57' working height, single platform, lower boom insert, mounted over the rear axle. Unit and chassis have been painted. Many other Hi Ranger from which to choose. $38,500.00

95-2076 1991 Ford F800 chassis, Ford diesel engine, 5/2, with an Asplundh LR50 (900705) 55' working height, overcenter operation, lower boom insert, multi lever control, chip dump. $49,500.00

95-3187 1991 Ford F700 diesel. 5/2, with an Asplundh LR50 (900705). 55' working height, dump body. $52,500.00
Eighty-One (81) 1994 Altec AN755P’s.
Each of these units have:
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• Caterpillar 3116 or Ford FD 1060 210 hp diesel
• All have automatic transmissions (either MD3060 or MT653)
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New President

The Care of Trees family of companies announced that Scott Jamieson, 35, has been appointed company president and John Hendricksen, 50, has become chairman/chief executive officer. Mr. Jamieson was previously chief operating officer and Mr. Hendricksen was president of the company, which has divisions in the Chicago, New York and Washington, DC, metropolitan areas and has 360 full-time employees. Mr. Hendricksen has a master of management degree from the J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management and a bachelor of science in civil engineering from Northwestern University, Evanston, IL. He is past president of the Illinois Commercial Arborist Association, Illinois Arborist Association, National Arborist Association and the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association. Mr. Jamieson has a master of business administration degree from DePaul University, Chicago, a master of science in urban forestry from Michigan State University and a bachelor of science in urban forestry from Purdue University. He is a founding board member of the City of Chicago’s Environmental Fund and has served on Mayor Daley’s Landscape Committee.
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ACRT introduces a special version of its Utility Tree Manager for Windows software program specifically for the needs of cooperative and municipal utilities. Using Windows 95 or Windows NT, vegetation managers can save time and money (and reduce the number of costly outages) with the extensive data at their fingertips. System information allows management to analyze crew productivity and compare jobs based on the number of units completed, number of hours per unit, and cost per unit. The software will invoice and create all required reports at the needed time and the error-check system validates time-sheet data from contractors. For more information, call 1-800-622-2562; fax 330-945-7200; E-mail: askacrt@acrtinc.com; http://www.acrtinc.com.

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Gempler's now offers a complete line of head-to-toe safety gear for professional chain saw operators. Their protective clothing prevents injuries from saw kickback, slips and flying debris. Leg chaps, vests and hand mitts are made of a special material that resists cuts from chains moving at speeds up to 3,000 feet per minute and explodes in contact with running chains to jam with saw sprocket to stop chain movement. To prevent head and face injuries, head protectors come with a mesh face shield to screen out flying debris. For more information, call 1-800-382-8473. Fax: 1-800-551-1128, or visit their web site at: http://www.gemplers.com.

Australian guide bar specialist Griffiths & Beerens recently upgraded its range of high-tech titanium extra-long chain saw bars by employing its FX nose bearing cartridge design. Originally developed for bars used on mechanical timber harvesters, the system is well-suited for extra-long guide bars because of the increased leverage they often endure. The FX nose is secured by a steel Security Tang which fits snugly into friction-fit cavities within the bar body and nose cartridge. After a bending incident, simply replace the Tang at a nominal cost and the bar/nose assembly is ready for more. For more information, call GB American in Lancaster, NH at 603-788-2825; Fax: 603-788-4529.

ACRT introduces a special version of its Utility Tree Manager for Windows software program specifically for the needs of cooperative and municipal utilities. Using Windows 95 or Windows NT, vegetation managers can save time and money (and reduce the number of costly outages) with the extensive data at their fingertips. System information allows management to analyze crew productivity and compare jobs based on the number of units completed, number of hours per unit, and cost per unit. The software will invoice and create all required reports at the needed time and the error-check system validates time-sheet data from contractors. For more information, call 1-800-622-2562; fax 330-945-7200; E-mail: askacrt@acrtinc.com; http://www.acrtinc.com.

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Line Tamer, Inc. recently introduced a complete replacement to bucket trucks and existing mechanical tree trimmers by incorporating safety and productivity through a multiple function cutterhead supported by a rigid 75-foot insulated articulated boom on trucks, rough terrain carriers, and all terrain track-mounted carriers. Also offered is a self-contained sub-frame for installation on customer-furnished trucks. The main components are three 16-inch saws that offer articulating and orbiting action using a clamping device to assure complete control over limbs that cannot fall freely. For more information, call Lewis Hickman at 334-409-0479; Fax: 334-274-9864; or visit Line Tamer's web site at: http://www.linetamer.com.

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New literature on firewood processors is now available from Multitek, Inc. This literature describes the basic firewood processing equipment product offering with color photos, model specifications, machine dimensions, and performance capabilities. For more information or to order your copy, call 1-800-243-5438.

Feed your soil with organic-based food for plants. New Product Developers offers all-purpose plant fertilizer for application on turf, trees, shrubs and ornamentals. These products are chelated and complexed with natural organic and amino acids for foliar and soil applications to prevent and correct iron and other micro-nutrient deficiencies. Completely biodegradable. For more information, contact New Product Developers, Inc., PO Box 95, Monticello, UT 84535. Phone: 435-587-2165.

The new Smith Relax backpack sprayer features patented Relax Pump Technology: 50 percent reduction in effort, constant low pressure volumes and uniform controlled droplet size. It also has a foaming nozzle that allows for marking and elimination of drift, resulting in dramatically reduced chemical usage. As a bonus, a high-pressure chamber is included. Ideal for spraying insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers. Free Roundup concentrate included with each sprayer. For more information, contact D. B. Smith & Company, 23 Garden Street, New York Mills, NY 13417. Phone: 1-800-311-9903. Fax: 315-768-4220.
Jeff Jepson’s new manual, *The Tree Climber’s Companion* is a compact and inexpensive field manual that will interest every tree climber. It is small enough to carry to the job site, and it doesn’t put a dent in your bank account. As Jepson states in the introduction, “The Tree Climber’s Companion is an endeavor to provide what many climbers were demanding—an informative book that is affordable and yet small enough to be accessible and inviting to use.”

Jepson’s start as a writer came while preparing to give climbing workshops. He decided to write a small manual to help facilitate teaching for the workshop. The manual was very popular with the trainees, encouraging him to expand that original handout.

Jepson bases the manual on a step-by-step tree climbing system called P.E.P., which stands for Pre-Climb Inspection, Entry and Position. The organization of the manual follows this concise and logical system. Each procedure and technique is fit into the P.E.P. model and instructions for each are given in an accurate and clear manner.

To compliment the systematic approach of the manual, Jepson incorporated artwork by Bryan Kotwica for those of us who need a little help visualizing each procedure! Kotwica’s name should sound

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familiar to many in the industry: He creates the monthly cartoon for THE TREEWORKER, the National Arborist Association's newsletter for field personnel, as well as drawings for other NAA publications and TCI advertisers. Kotwica's accuracy in the technical aspects of his drawings is a result of his professional experience in the tree care industry. He has worked for Hendricksen, the Care of Trees for almost 10 years now.

This versatile manual is an excellent complimentary guide for training videos, can be used with on-the-job training, and also makes a handy pocket reference. The manual is carried by most arborist supply houses at the suggested retail price $10 plus shipping. Jepson invites you to send your comments and suggestions to HC 1, Box 546, Longville, MN 56655, or call him at 218-363-2260.

Robert Rouse is staff arborist with National Arborist Association.

Here is an example of how one procedure, the secured footlock, is illustrated in The Tree Climber's Companion.

1. To footlock, the climber grabs both ropes with hands below the knot. The rope is placed against the outside of one foot.

2. As the legs are raised, the rope is scooped up with the opposite or lower foot.

3. The rope is then gripped securely between the feet with a wrap around one boot.

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Dr. H. Marc Cathey, President Emeritus of the American Horticultural Society (AHS), working with Meteorological Evaluation Service Co., Inc., (MES), Amityville, NY, has created the first ever AHS Plant Heat-Zone Map for the United States. This 12-zone heat map will influence the way plants are purchased by over 72 million gardeners in America today.

AHS Heat-Zone Map will be used in the same way. There are 12 zones of the map that indicate the average number of days each year that a given region experiences “heat days”—those days with temperatures of over 86 degrees and the point at which plants experience damage to cellular proteins. The zones range from Zone 1 (less than 1 heat days) to Zone 12 (more than 210 heat days). The zones will be used in a coding system which will be applied to plant labels, publications, and in garden centers to educate consumers as to the heat tolerance of plants. This coding system will fully integrated by spring of 1998. A laminated full-color poster size version of the map with country designations is available for $14.95 (includes shipping and handling) by calling 1-800-777-7931 ext. 45.
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A cool, damp day in Southern Maryland. The scent of hearth-cooking is in the air. Members of the St. Mary's City Militia are preparing for the Battle of the Severn, the largest military engagement of the English Civil War to be fought in the New World. As the men prepare for battle, the far skyline is dotted with...arborists crown cleaning historic trees? This unusual scene was the setting for one of the Maryland Arborist Association's (MAA) service projects.

The event took place at Historic St. Mary's City in St. Mary's County, Md. The location was Maryland's first capital, the fourth permanent settlement in British North America, and the site of the first English Catholic Church in America. It was also where the Ark and the Dove brought Lord Baltimore's colony to the New World, and was the only site in Colonial Maryland where blood was shed over the political issues of religion.

The involvement of MAA with the site began when Mary Alves, Historic St. Mary's City (HSMC) horticulturist, contacted the Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service office. The site had many mature trees in areas that were currently or proposed as frequent use areas, and many young trees that were in conflict with site use and management objectives. Professional assistance was needed to assess the situation. Will Williams, Regional Information and Education Specialist contacted me regarding the performance of hazard tree evaluations and other management recommendations. In the summer of 1996, I spent two days at the facility performing the needed assessments at a number of locations throughout the facility. Based on these assessments, a priority list was generated in case the facility received funding to perform the work.

MAA's board of directors voted to approve the site as one of two Arborist Day service projects. HSMC was very pleased to have been selected. However, there was one significant complication. Annually, the facility conducts a Grand Militia Muster to re-enact the Battle of the Severn. This event is one of the largest gatherings of 17th century military units in the eastern United States, and is a major event for the facility. It happened to fall on the same day that MAA had pre-selected for Arborist Day. MAA member firms...
had already had the day reserved on their calendars. HSMC had also already advertised this date for the Grand Militia Muster. Neither organization could re-schedule. The tree work was almost canceled due to concerns by the facility's director about the potential conflicts.

A change in directors at the site brought a change in attitude. It was decided that the events could take place concurrently with significant pre-planning. Not only would the events not be in conflict, but the proposed work was seen as a potential added attraction for the visiting public. The schedule of militia events was reviewed against the tree work. MAA members had to move into or out of certain areas within specific time frames. Chain saws could not be used at sites in proximity to Militia events. A work schedule was established that was acceptable to all parties.

As is often the case, an unmanageable variable showed up the day of the events. After a drought-plagued summer, a front stalled over the Mid-Atlantic coast and brought incessant rain in the days before the event. The morning of Arborist Day, a light mist was in the air until about 8:00 a.m. Crews arrived at the scheduled times. The company closest to the site traveled one hour; the furthest came from two-and-a-half hours away to participate in the event. In spite of all the complications and the adverse weather, the Asplundh Tree Expert Company, the F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service, and Southern Tree Service all arrived ready to participate.

After fortification by coffee and donuts courtesy of our site host, we conducted a pre-work job briefing. Each firm was provided with waiver forms and other appropriate paperwork. Maps of the site and schedules of work to be performed were provided to each crew. All trees to be removed were mapped in red; these trees were
flagged with red survey tape in the field. All trees to be pruned were noted in green on the map; in the field, these trees were delineated with green flagging. A safety briefing was performed. All participants were reminded that appropriate personal protective equipment was required at all times, and that all work was to conform to ANSI A300-1995 and ANSI Z133.1-1994 standards. These standards were briefly reviewed.

The work consisted primarily of the following: crown reduction of four large trees encroaching on historic structures; crown raising a large number of 5-inch to 15-inch DBH trees over traffic, parking, and recreational areas; crown cleaning three large (less than 40 inch) willow oaks and one large (46 inch) silver maple; and removal of a number of dead and hazardous trees.

Some of the removals posed unusual challenges. One involved the removal of a dead 72-inch DBH tulip poplar, which had a historic structure to the rear and desirable trees on either side. After rigging a bull rope to the company truck’s winch, the tree was expertly felled in a field. This not only relieved the facility of a significant hazard in a proposed high-use area, but also provided a nice log for canoe making, as well as a good deal of firewood. In previous years, the facility had a fallen tree brought to the site to serve as a prop in the climactic battle re-enactment. This year, MAA members scheduled their day so that a dying ginko, scheduled for removal, could be taken down, stripped and dragged to the battlefield for use in the day’s events.

The arborists and militia participants managed to maintain adequate distances throughout most of the day. In the instances when we had to share space for brief periods, the militia participants were more than cordial. The tree work must have been performed to the highest standards—we were never fired upon!

Just as the last crew packed up to leave the site, the wind picked up and the rain began to fall again. Some of the participating tree care professionals almost had to be forced from the site—they didn’t want to leave while they still saw work to be done. Our schedule had placed us at the close of the day in an area adjacent to the location of the Grand Militia Muster’s climactic battle; we had to abdicate to maintain the historic integrity of the event. The F. A Bartlett Company agreed to revisit the site and donate additional work that could not be performed at the time. The staff at Historic St. Mary’s City were extremely pleased with the improvements to the site. The participating members enjoyed protecting and enhancing the resources of this great historic facility on the St. Mary’s River.

Michael F. Galvin is Southern Region Urban Forester for Maryland Department of Natural Resources—Forest Service.
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Wrapping to Increase Safety & Efficiency

By Norm Hall & Scott Prophett

From the inventors of the widely used Porta-Wrap comes an improved version called, “The Wrapman.” There’s a different “look” than its predecessor for several reasons. The most obvious is the short leg is much shorter and not angled down. Since only a half-wrap is needed, the short leg only needs to be as long as it is. Other differences are:

- **Minimal clearance between the pin and main body**, which captures the rope and holds it along the main body to help keep the load where most of the strength is. The bent pin helps prevent the rope from coming off the short leg when the device drops, such as when lowering trunk sections off itself (drop hitching). The amon eye on top serves a dual purpose. It helps capture the rope when drop hitching and adds an addi-

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 5

Figure 4
tional rigging point. The pin at the end of the long leg is longer to help in cleating. The main body is shorter, as it only needs to be this long. The result, a highly-refined, weight-reduced product.

Available in two sizes. The smaller size is for rope diameters up to 9/16 inch and loads up to 2,400 pounds (including the shock load). The larger size is for rope diameters up to 1 inch and loads up to 4,800 pounds (including the shock load).

It is hard to explain the proper way to wrap the rope around the device, so this article is accompanied with photos which will solve that problem. As seen in Figure 1, The Wrapman is attached to the tree using a sling. Notice that the device is close to, but not touching, the ground. We have found that this is the most beneficial height to have, as once the first half-wrap is taken, we can pull up to take out the slack using our legs as well as our arms. If the device is mounted higher, it gets harder to pull out the slack.

Also notice we are showing two methods of attachment. One with a whoopie sling and connecting link (Figures 1, 4 and 5) and one using a spliced eye sling and cow hitch (Figures 2 and 3). There are a few different methods of attachment, use the one with which you are the most comfortable.

Figure 2 shows the proper way to start wrapping the device. It is imperative that the wrapping procedure start this way. (The running end of the rope must always be between the tree and device before the first half wrap.) Bring the rope under the short leg, between the pin and main body, and pull the slack out. This will pull the device upright into its working position.

If you are lowering wood that is crotched above the block, maneuver the rope in front of the angled pin as seen in Figure 3. This additional maneuver prevents the rope from coming off the short leg when the device drops, as when lowering trunk sections off itself. That's what is unique about this particular device.

Figure 4 shows how the rope crosses the main body upwards at a 45 degree angle and then takes additional wraps on the long leg.

Figure 5 shows how we can tie the rope off to the device in case we need an extra body elsewhere. It’s important to notice that there are a minimum of four turns on the long leg before the rope is cleated. With fewer than four turns, the half-hitch could be hard, if not impossible, to untie. Also, the number of turns will increase as the wood gets heavier.

After wrapping the device, take note if the device is going to drop or change its position. If it is determined that it is, it is important to help tend the slack by pulling on the running end of the rope in the direction of the long leg. If the device is allowed to drop, the rope may cross over itself, causing it to bind.

This unique device has increased our safety and efficiency tremendously.

Norm Hall and Scott Prophett are employed by The Care of Trees, Inc. Hall works in Wheeling, Ill., Prophett in Herndon, Va.

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continued on page 68

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Paul Wolfe Named NAA President

Paul Wolfe II was installed as president of the National Arborist Association at the organization’s February Winter Management Conference in New Orleans.

Born in Albany, N.Y., 46 years ago, he grew up in the Pittsburgh area. He received a B.S. in soil science from Michigan State University in 1974. He is a licensed Tree Expert in Maryland as well as a Certified Pesticide Applicator in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Like many of the leaders in this industry, his career as a commercial arborist had humble beginnings. He began as a hose dragger for the F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company in 1971 in Bala Cynwyd, Penn., then as a brush dragger for the Davey Tree Expert Company in Paoli, Penn. He later worked for Smith Tree and Landscape in Lansing, Mich., and was an area manager for Bartlett in Marshall, Va. He spent 10 years with Gustin Gardens Tree Service in Rockville, Md., prior to founding Integrated Plant Care in 1988. He is president of his Rockville-based company.

“When this profession beckoned in 1970, I had no idea there was an NAA,” says Wolfe. “Through the years, however, I have come to recognize and appreciate the vital role this Association plays in addressing the needs of commercial arborists. “The NAA has 1831 Active and Affiliate members scattered all over the world,” Wolfe notes. “Our membership consists of tiny, relatively unsophisticated companies, such as my own, to major operations with multiple offices. Some perform utility line clearance while others remain strictly in the residential tree care market. There are those who treat for pests, transplant large trees and take down the ones for which Mother Nature has decided the time has come. The NAA also counts over 200 Associate members who work to provide our profession with all the needed materials and supplies to aid us in running our operations better. “As individuals, we have no real power in affecting positive actions for the overall good of our profession. However, through the collective coordinated efforts of all, we have made giant strides forward. Facing a never-ending array of new challenges, the need for your involvement in NAA has never been greater.”

One of the key areas the new president would like to focus attention on this year is communicating with the buying public about the importance of tree care and why they should have their trees tended to by a member of NAA.

His experiences have given him a familiarity with all phases of tree care. He has found a unique way of running his own business: he subcontracts all his tree work and provides plant health care programs through his two employees.

Some of the unique experiences he’s had include collaborating with attorneys and testifying in U.S. District Court as an expert witness, testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives, and speaking at numerous meetings and seminars.

Wolfe has a strong dedication to public service. In 1993, he was instrumental in organizing a tree care project at Arlington National Cemetery, which enlisted the voluntary services of 400 arborists from 22 states plus Canada to provide an estimated $250,000 of tree care in a day’s time. Plans are underway for a day of service this fall.

He is a nationally-ranked U.S. Table Tennis player (really low, by his own admission) and Montgomery County Swim League Official. He has been married to his wife, Ellen, for 18 years and has two daughters, Margaret, 15, and Liz, 13.
Honoring Excellence in Arboriculture

The gala Excellence in Arboriculture Awards Banquet, held at NAA Winter Management Conference in New Orleans in February, recognized a record number of entries. Projects were submitted by companies large and small, describing massive relocation efforts and preservation of a single tree. Below are descriptions of the honored projects.

Grand Awards

Company: Treeworks
Located: Montpelier, Vermont
Category: Residential under $5,000

The subject tree is an old apple located in Quechee, Vt. It was the inspiration for the original logo on tile pieces from the Simon Pierce Company. A large trunk cavity was the cause of concern.

Treeworks' goal was to extend the tree's viable years by reinforcing the weak area. Treeworks used a modified version of the design used in suspension bridge construction, using towers and cable to distribute and support weight. Minimal excavation was performed to facilitate installation of inner washers and nuts. They kept a low profile to the design for safety and aesthetics.

The cavities are no longer under continual tension in the vertical plane and have added support in the lateral plane through the two safety bolts.

Company: Trees of Hawaii
Located: Honolulu, Hawaii.
Category: Commercial under $5,000

The project was a large Indian banyan in Banyan Tree Plaza, Honolulu. This Banyan is 10 feet in diameter, 70 feet tall, with a 160 foot canopy spread. It is approximately 125-150 years old. Banyan Tree Plaza was built 22 years ago, and the tree became the centerpiece for a drive-up entry and parking structure. Most of its aerial roots had been removed, contributing to its present structural problems.

The goals of this project were to correct structural problems to prevent future limb failure, contain the canopy from structures and roadways, and educate the owners of the importance of regular maintenance. The corrective measures taken included crown cleaning, removal of selective aerial roots to leave only that needed for future limb support, re-cutting improper cuts where possible and removing stubs to minimize decay, and crown thinning to reduce the weight of large limbs and allow air and light to penetrate.

The tree company's satisfaction was achieved in preserving one of the few remnants of the past and in creating a unique, inviting setting apart from the hustle and bustle of the tree's surroundings.

Company: Tree People
Located: Honolulu, Hawaii.
Category: Heritage Tree(s)

Between 1853 and 1871, Dr. William Hillebrand introduced many trees to Hawaii for potential economic value, especially for shipbuilding and repair. Two of these species, a 135-foot Earpod and 125-foot Queensland Kauri, were planted at his residence, the site of today's Foster Botanical Garden. In 1975, the Legislature
of the State of Hawaii took measures to safeguard exceptional trees. Twenty-six of the 100-plus exceptional trees in the City and County of Honolulu are located at Foster Botanical Garden.

In 1995, a large canker with a cavity was noted on a 24-inch diameter branch 80 feet off the ground. Also observed was significant deadwood in the upper crown and a 16-inch Earpod branch that had "grafted" to the adjacent Kauri.

Tree People's goal was to reduce the potential of major branch failure in a high visitor site without significant change in tree form and aesthetics.

Pruning specifications were drafted to correct the three problems observed. All branches over six inches in diameter were to be lowered to protect lawn, understory botanical specimens, and the tree itself. The tree work was handled by up to five climbers, and special plans were devised to give more employees the experience of working in such large, historic trees.

Company: Environmental Design
Located: Tomball, Texas
Category: Tree Relocation

The trees involved in the preservation effort, two live oak at Grand Casinos in Biloxi, Mississippi, were approximately 100-125 years old. Because of the trees' ages and aesthetic value, the developers of the project decided to save them.

Prior to moving the trees from the construction site to an adjacent public park, Environmental Design performed soil tests, investigative digs to determine the overall soil composition, and salt water intrusion tests.

Each of the trees were root and limb pruned. After the root pruning, the root balls were wrapped in protective layers of burlap and boring began. Approximately 40 six-inch pipes were placed beneath each root ball to facilitate lifting of each tree with the company's specially designed lifting gantry. Planting sites were prepared.

The trees were lifted one at a time onto heavy-duty trailers and trucked one-eighth of a mile to the planting site. Once the trees were in place, each one was backfilled using the soil removed during the root pruning and boring. Overhead and surface irrigation systems were installed in each tree to ensure constant and even moisture levels.

The trees survived relocation with minimal stress and no detectable negative effects.

Company Name: Arbor Care
Located: San Jose, Calif.
Category: Construction Site Tree Preservation

The site, Vintage Oaks Development in Menlo Park, has over 400 Coast Live Oak spread out over approximately 40 acres of undeveloped, unmaintained woodland. Coast Live Oak is intolerant of soil compaction, irrigation, and soil grade changes.

Arbor Care had four goals for this project: to meet the developer's time demands; to satisfy two consulting arborists, one representing the developer and one the City of Menlo Park; to not compromise quality or safety; and to enhance the health and beauty of the trees.

Four-hundred trees had to be pruned, 36 had to be removed, one 40-foot tree had to be transplanted, and all the trees had to be fertilized. In addition, steel fencing was to be installed around all the trees. In all, 2,500 man hours of work needed to be done in four weeks, 850 man hours of which had to be completed within eight days of signing the contract. They had less than a week to prepare.

The trees weathered the heavy construction and heat of the summer in good shape. The transplanted tree, although it went through intense shock immediately after transplanting, is on the road to recovery. Arbor Care is currently doing more work for the developer.
Awards of Distinction

Company: Davey Tree Expert Company
Located: Kent, Ohio
Category: Commercial over $5,000
Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens is the former home of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company co-founder F.A. Seiberling and his family. The estate is now a historic landmark. The original landscaping of the property in 1913 included a three-and-a-half-acre apple orchard that served as a welcoming entrance to the estate. Unfortunately, the majority of the trees died over the years from lack of proper care.

The goal of this project was to restore the apple orchard as closely to its original appearance as possible. Davey accomplished this by taking cuttings of the existing apple trees, identifying them, grafting them onto standard rootstock, growing them to three to four inches in caliper at their nursery, then transplanting them back to the site.

Company Name: Adams Arborcare
Located: Bloomington, Indiana
Category: Residential under $5,000
Fifteen apples were planted by Adams’ client in 1977 when they were two to three feet tall. Nine of these 15 trees uprooted in a heavy, wet snowstorm. The arborist’s task was to straighten and preserve the trees without disrupting any of the adjacent garden areas.

Each tree was pruned, then slowly pulled upright, with care being taken to avoid breaking branches or tearing the bark. Anchors and cables were installed, tension was released and each tree was left to stand on its own. All of the trees have survived in satisfactory condition.

Company: Hendriksen, the Care of Trees
Located: Wheeling, Illinois
Category: Commercial under $5,000
The project took the name Arboriculture Under Glass because it involved pruning arid climate plant specimens in a greenhouse. Most species were cactus and Euphorbs. The trees were, in general, overgrown and poor in structure. Many of the existing plants were in good health and worthy of retention and improvement.

The goal was to improve the appearance and health of the plants in the house through pruning and removal. One of the first challenges the arborists encountered was what made this project so unique - Midwestern arborists pruning exotic species under glass in Chicago.

Company: Britton Tree Company
Located: Napa, Calif.
Category: Residential over $5,000
This was a classic crown restoration project, but on a huge scale. The trees were mature, very tall blue gum eucalyptus. Several factors made this a unique project. One was the very size of the job. Crown restoration was needed on twenty four of the large blue gum, complete crown cleaning and crown thinning was performed on the remaining ten trees.

Another was the type of client. The client was determined to save the trees, knowing they could provide a breathtaking site due to the size and beauty of the long, upright trunks, and the views of the valley and vineyards below.

Extensive rigging was used to protect trunks to be saved. Cables were installed to reduce failure potential in 20 of the 34 trees saved. In one case, one tree was cabled to another using large compression springs to reduce shock load on the hardware.

Company: Alpine, the Care of Trees
Located: Norwalk, Connecticut
Category: Commercial over $5,000
The property, Peter Cooper Village & Stuyvesant Town, occupies 94 acres from East 14th Street to East 20th Street and from First Avenue to Avenue C in Manhattan. It is comprised of 110 apartment buildings ranging from 12 to 14 stories, housing approximately 26,000 people. The condition of the trees at the beginning of the project, in general, was fair to poor. The trees have not received professional Arboricultural care in the past 20 - 25 years.

The goal of the project was to preserve and maintain one of the largest privately-owned urban forests in the country while reducing hazards. The theme of the site is “Country Living in the City.”

Company: Valley Crest Tree Service
Located: San Fernando, Calif.
Category: Tree Relocation
This was a classic crown restoration project, but on a huge scale. The trees were mature, very tall blue gum eucalyptus. Several factors made this a unique project. One was the very size of the job. Crown restoration was needed on twenty four of the large blue gum, complete crown cleaning and crown thinning was performed on the remaining ten trees.

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location without the use of cranes or large equipment. A system was developed to containerize, lift and move the tree on its own custom built rail system, using nothing bigger than a 15-ton track machine.

Company: F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Co.  
Located: Osterville, Massachusetts  
Category: Tree Relocation

Neighbors had asked a development corporation in Cambridge, Mass., the property owners, to preserve a mature Japanese red maple, a neighborhood landmark. The lot was too small to accommodate changes in plans for the structure, so they contracted with Bartlett to move the 59-year-old tree about 24 feet to a more remote location on the site. The well-publicized move aired on the PBS show, This Old House.

Company: Low Country Tree Care  
Located: Hilton Head Island, S.C.  
Category: Construction Site Tree Preservation

This construction site is located on an 18-acre island connected by a short bridge from a major harbor on a resort island in South Carolina. The harbor is surrounded by villas, stores, restaurants and gift shops. The construction began in December 1994 and was completed in March 1996.

The goal of the project was to construct state-of-the-art villas in 32 buildings that, when completed, would seem as if they had been there for years. Since it is an environmentally sensitive area, the survival of the trees was paramount to the project. The developer’s goal was to preserve the natural integrity of the island while meeting the needs of his potential clients. It was critical to remove as few trees as necessary and, in particular, to preserve trees close to the buildings.

Company: Arbor Care  
Located: Sarasota, Florida  
Category: Construction Site Tree Preservation

The tree is located in historic Hyde Park, Tampa, Fla. The project goal was tree preservation before, during and after construction as well as aesthetic enhancement over time. Ultimately, Arbor Care’s goal is to raise public awareness for tree preservation.

Work involved installation of barrier fencing, root pruning along future hard surfaces to limit damage below ground, hazard reduction pruning and crown cleaning in the first stage of care, and ongoing tree fertilization and compaction reduction through hydraulic application. Also added to fertilization program was inoculation with mycorrhizal fungi to counteract any disruption of soil microbial activity.

Honorable Mention

Company: Preservation Tree Care, Inc.  
Located: Beaufort, South Carolina  
Category: Construction Site Tree Preservation

The construction was 11 acres fronting the only North-South corridor entering into the rapidly-growing residential and commercial areas of Beaufort County. Abandoned years ago, it became overgrown with vines and understory growth.

The company’s goal was to bring seven massive live oak and one large Southern magnolia to optimum health through pruning and soil treatments, to protect the trees during construction, and to install a soil aeration system and tree wells to protect the trees which would have 24 to 30 inches of fill soil placed over their root zones.

Judges’ Awards

Company: Golden Bear Arborists  
Located: Monrovia, Calif.  
Project: Koala Habitat, Los Angeles Zoo

Golden Bear received this award for a unique project in which they harvested eucalyptus limbs to create a koala habitat for the Los Angeles Zoo. The zoo was completing renovation of the building housing their koala exhibit. The finishing touch of the renovation was the installation of large sections of eucalyptus that would simulate the natural habitat of the koala.

It was important to remove 15- to 20-foot lengths from the crown without damage. Using two aerial towers, the operation required precise timing and good communication to work safely while preserving the natural appearance of the limbs.

Company: F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company  
Located: Norfolk, Virginia  
Project: Tree Inventory of Norfolk Botanical Garden

The grounds at Norfolk Botanical Garden have a wide variety of trees and rare plant collections. Norfolk staff became increasingly concerned over the health and liability issues involved with the aging dominant tree species, loblolly pine.

A grant was obtained for the development of a tree inventory and management plan for a sample area of the garden. The purpose of the inventory was to study the current conditions of the trees and site and make appropriate decisions based on scientific data and Norfolk objectives. The overall goals were to minimize the risks associated with hazardous trees, develop a plan to manage an overly mature tree canopy, maximize tree health and longevity and determine the causes for decline in the rhododendron collection.

The National Arborist Association, the National Arborist Foundation and the Excellence in Arboriculture Committee would like to once again thank Altec Industries for their generous support of this program. A special thank you also goes to John Benton of Bayou Tree Service in Jefferson, La., for his help in securing the venue for the awards banquet and cleaning up the trees and shrubs on the property prior to the event.
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By Dave Penstone

As I pull into my first job on a gorgeous mid-July morning, a gentle breeze is blowing over the landscape. In the corner of the backyard is a large pencil plant (Euphorbia triucalli). Its thick, weighty branches push outward into three adjacent yards. It has also grown upward, lacing and intertwining itself through the telephone and cable lines.

Having worked with and read about the pencil plant, I'm familiar with it. For instance, it was introduced from Africa by the Spurge family. Its rubbery branches are succulent, green and elongated, resembling pencils. Its milky sap sometimes causes an irritation to the eyes. Also, it can cause a skin disorder (dermatitis) when spread over a wet or perspiring body.

Most of us are familiar with members of the euphorbia family. For example, the "Crown of Thorns" encircling the head of Jesus when he was crucified, and the plant we use in abundance around Christmas season, the poinsettia. These are two of the many euphorbias we have in and around our neighborhood. I am familiar with them, but what was about to happen was altogether new to me.

I was to cut this tree or large shrub to the ground. Because of the growth features and proximity of the surrounding obstacles, judicious cutting was the main word. I was working alone, but I thought there would be no problem. The cutting process was easy. Laying into the top of the tree I would, with heavy-duty loppers, cut a branch above the wires working down to the wires, then cut below them threading the growth through them. Always pulling the cut branches to me and throwing them into the customer's (herein known as Mr. B) yard.

The breeze felt good. I noticed the sap was especially fluid, probably because it was a warm summer day. The dirt from the plant, mixed with the sap, literally flowed onto me. My clothes and hair were covered in no time. When the plant was free of all wire obstacles, I decided to bring in the big guns. My 16-inch chain saw was prepared to go. Laying again into the top of the tree, I cut off a limb, letting it rest on the lower branches, grabbing it, and throwing it into Mr. B's yard. I repeated the system over and over again, until the tree was safely on the ground. As I was working the tree down, the sap would gather, gumming up the saw. I had to stop and clean out the saw, crank it up again, and proceed. Very little time was lost.

As the chainsaw revolved around the bar, particles of sawdust mixed with the sap were thrown into the air, then picked up by the gentle breeze and blown back onto me. And that was the beginning of my problems. The milky substance was getting into my eyes. Before long, a slight irritation caused a continuous burning sensation. More sap. More irritation.

I would come down, take a clean rag, saturate it in water, wash my eyes out, load the cut limbs on the truck, climb back into the tree, then cut some more. More breeze, more irritation, more water in the eyes, more loading, more washing. As the process continued, my vision was not just getting fuzzy, I was going blind. Had some acid in the liquid eating into my eyes, causing permanent loss of vision?

I sat down on the ramp of my truck to contemplate my next move. I could not see to drive, but I could not leave my truck in the street. The police would definitely ticket it. And worse yet, a vehicle left overnight encourages the petty thieves and vandals. After considering
all the possibilities, I concluded that the only thing I could do was to have my truck towed home.

I decided to go talk with Mr. B. You can imagine the look of disbelief and horror in Mr. B’s expression when he answered the door. The numerous questions running through his mind as he saw this alien George Lucas creation before him covered from head to toe with sawdust mixed with milky sap. My eyes and surrounding areas were deep red. He didn’t know what to think. For that matter, neither did I. I had to convince him that my insurance covered the situation, but I had to have a tow truck come and get me and my equipment and take me home.

I had to explain to him that I would finish the job later. Seeing the pain I was in, he agreed to let me return later to finish the job. While waiting for the tow truck, Mr. B found some sunglasses for me. By this time, I was completely blind. (You might ask at this time why I hadn’t worn protective goggles. Sometimes the warm day combines with perspiration to fog up the inside of the glasses. This was one of those times.)

The tow truck driver was shocked to find that the truck was fine but I was broken down. By this time the dark sun glasses had eased the pain, although I was still blind. When I arrived at home, I found my way to my favorite chair and sat down. I started contemplating what had happened and, of even greater importance, what I was going to do. I didn’t know whether the blindness was permanent or temporary, and, if temporary, for how long?

First things first. Get out of these clothes and into a shower. With the help of Head & Shoulders, the crud melted off the top of my head. Unfortunately, it melted down my face and was absorbed into my sinus cavities. Oh God, did it hurt! But it had to be washed away.

I would open my eyes as best I could and splash some water into them, again and again. Finally, the bulk of the residue was washed out, but I stayed in the shower for what seemed like hours. My eyes continued to burn. I couldn’t keep them open more than a fraction of a second. My eyes and chest were now a burning inferno but, that’s not all! As the liquid flowed over my chest and down to the lower extremities of my body, they too became inflamed. The pain was almost unbearable.

My sinuses cleared up in a couple of days. I was able to go back to work a few days later. The dark glasses stayed with me for a couple of weeks. My chest and lower body? I would come home from work and use ice packs for at least a fortnight.

I have been around plants since the early ’50s. I thought myself very knowledgeable. I have been to college and taken extensive night courses. My years of experience have been valuable to me. But this? Totally unexpected.

This article was not written to cause fear, but both the novice and the experienced arborist should be wary and informed about _euphoria triloculli_, more commonly known as the pencil plant.

_Dave Penstone is an arborist in Escondido, Calif._

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Outgoing President Dick Proudfoot presides over a meeting to discuss NAA business concerns and direction.

The gala Excellence in Arboriculture awards banquet attracted a full house to honor companies and clients who uphold the highest standards of professionalism in the industry.

The final event—a Cajun Fais Do-Do, featuring Rocking Dops and the Zydeco Twisters capped a thoroughly enjoyable conference.

A full slate of informative talks gave attendees valuable advice on running a tree care business. Jim Leatzow, pictured here, spoke on "How to Improve Your Business Practices and Remove Yourself From the Lawyer's Food Chain."

Winter Management Conference always allows ample opportunity for attendees to network and discuss common concerns involved in managing a tree care business.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ACRT, Inc.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42. Pete Mainka Enterprises, Inc.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ADI Pruning Tools by To! Incorporated</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>43. Fred Marvin Associates</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Altec Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>44. Miller Machine Works</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. American Arborist Supplies, Inc.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>46. NAA - Membership</td>
<td>64/65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. American Arborist Supplies, Inc.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47. NAA - A300 Pruning Standards</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. American Arborist Supplies, Inc.</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48. NAA - EHAP</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ameriquip</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>49. NAA - Rigging for Removal Video</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Andy's Truck Center, Inc.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50. NAA - Tree Care Specialist Program</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. ArborSystems, LLC</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51. New England Ropes, Inc.</td>
<td>Inside Front Cover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Bandit Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53. Novartis Crop Protection/Specialty Products</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Border City Tool &amp; Manufacturing Co.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56. Peavey Manufacturing Company, Inc.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Brut Manufacturing Corporation</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58. Porter-Ferguson</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. CAG, Inc.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>59. Rayco Manufacturing, Inc.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. CNA Commercial Insurance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60. Roots, Inc.</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Carlton Company, J.P., Div. DAP, Inc.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61. Royal Truck &amp; Equipment Inc.</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Cob Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62. Sabre Saw Chain</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Cummins Michigan, Inc.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>63. Safety Test and Equipment Company</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Cutter's Choice</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64. SavATree</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Fanno Saw Works</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>66. Sherrill, Inc.</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. First Sierra Financial, Inc.</td>
<td>Back Cover</td>
<td>67. Southco Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Forestry Equipment of Shelby, Inc.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>68. Southco Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Forestry Suppliers, Inc.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>69. Southeastern Equipment Company</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. GFX Corporation</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70. TCI EXPO '98</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Gravely International</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>71. Tamarack Clearing, Inc.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Green Oil Company, Inc.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72. Terex Telelect, Inc.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Green Pro Services</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73. Timberwolf Manufacturing Corporation</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Hartford, The</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>74. Time Manufacturing Company</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Hollie Wood Enterprises</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75. Tree Tech Microinjection Systems</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Husqvarna Forest &amp; Garden Company</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76. Weaver Leather, Inc.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. IML - Instrument Mechanic Labor, Inc.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77. Western Tree &amp; Landscape Supply</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. ImpuleMax Equipment Company, Inc.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>78. Westhaver Company, Inc.</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Kramer Equipment Company, Inc.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>79. Wood-Mizer Products, Inc.</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. A.M. Leonard, Inc.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80. Woodsman</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Leonardi Teeth/Simonds Industries, Inc.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>81. Yale Cordage Inc.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Lewis Utility Truck Sales, Inc.</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>69</td>
</tr>
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TREER CARE INDUSTRY - APRIL 1998
Honesty Pays Off

By Doug Althoff

Approximately 10 years ago, a customer called me to his home to cut out a stump. The customer advised me that wind from a recent storm had uprooted a pine tree, which was laying westerly towards his house. He accepted my proposal over the phone and gave directions to his home as "one mile east of the Brownstown Exit on US 40."

I went to his home and cut out his stump. It is customary for me to place the bill on the customer's door if he is not home. When I went to the door, I noticed there were no curtains and no furniture inside, and the house looked abandoned. I thought nothing more about it and just left the bill.

About a week later, the customer called back and asked when I would be over to cut out his stump. After a long pause (and remembering that the "customer is always right"), I asked again for the directions. He said, "Go to the Brownstown Exit and turn one mile west on US Route 40." Immediately I realized that I had removed the wrong stump. So I beat it back over there, cut out another pine stump and collected my fee from the customer, who was home.

I then drove two miles east and, sure enough, my bill was still in the door of the unoccupied house. My first thought was to take the bill out of the door and return home. Surely this property owner wouldn't be upset at getting a free stump job. After thinking about this a long time, I decided to leave a note explaining I had made a mistake and changed his stump from solid to a pile of chips. If he wished to contact me, I asked that he give me a call.

About a week later, the homeowner called to say he had needed the stump removed anyway, and asked how much he owed. I was shocked that instead of a lawsuit, I was going to be paid. Not only did this customer pay for my honest mistake, he had two more stumps that needed to be removed—without a proposal.

Doug Althoff is the owner of Althoff Stump Removal in Effingham, Ill. TCI

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