Here's why Disc Chipper users are going back to Drum Chippers.

More Dumping Fees.  
More Repair Costs.  
More Downtime.  
More Fuel Consumption.  
More Overheating.

Do you need to chip everything?

If you're like most disc owners, you've been chipping more of what was once sold as firewood (or left for people to take), and have watched your dumping fees go up and your productivity go down. Your crews spend more time running to the dump, clearing jammed chutes, washing down radiator screens and waiting for overheated engines to cool.

The Asplundh Whisper Chipper not only offers lower operating costs, but extremely low life cycle costs. And, how many used disc chippers have you seen for sale after ten years of service?

Are you spending more on fuel?

At 70- to 120-feet per minute, it takes a disc chipper almost three times longer than a Whisper Chipper to chip six-inch material. How much more fuel do you think it uses? And, with the engine running longer, you're looking at shorter engine life and, again, higher operating costs.

The Asplundh Whisper Chipper saves time, fuel, and, most important, money.

Are you paying hydraulic mechanics more?

The chart below compares replacement parts for a Whisper Chipper with those of a popular disc chipper.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Whisper Chipper</th>
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<td><strong>Feed System</strong></td>
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<td>Feed wheels, feed teeth, bearings, bushings, feed wheel springs, feed wheel yokes, etc., etc.</td>
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Whisper Chippers have far less downtime. That translates into more time making money and less spending it.

Are you ready to think about a drum chipper?

The Whisper – designed, built, used and backed by Asplundh – carries a one-year warranty honored by the most extensive service in the industry. Plus, with full-sized Whispers starting at $8950, you’ll keep your investment at its lowest and your yield at its highest.

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COVER PHOTO:
Limbs being removed with a speedline. Photo courtesy of Don Blair.
OUTLOOK

When you have something nipping at your heels, you really have to stay on the ball and keep alert so you don’t get bitten. You can’t sit still for a minute or someone will be right there to take over and then you have to play catch up. Don’t ever let that happen. You need to be one step ahead all of the time. So does everyone else who is successful in business.

Since I wrote my last editorial, I’ve have visited more tree companies in the West, the Rocky Mountain states and the Midwest. The innovative ideas that some tree companies are using to sell and service accounts are absolutely fantastic. However, as soon as competitors see what these folks or you are doing, they will try to do the very same things. That’s business. You just have to do it better and continue to develop new strategies to cope.

One thing I often hear about is the need to convince clients that you are the very best arborist in the whole world. Attracting attention and then instilling consumer confidence is the top priority. Nobody even talks about meeting competition on a price basis. Everybody thinks in terms of service, performance and professionalism.

According to a study on public perception of arborists that was done as the first part of the NAA/ISA IPM study, consumers had little confidence in arborists because they didn’t guarantee their work. Now guarantees are in place all over.

The second priority I hear about—both to meet competition and to deal with the cost of doing business—is operational strategies. High-tech, low-maintenance equipment, minimal administrative costs and as few un-billable hours as possible are on everyone’s mind all of the time. If it isn’t cost-effective, don’t do it. If there’s a better way, find it. This isn’t the time to be complacent.

I have been most impressed by the degree of business sophistication that I see in the industry. The dedication to the preservation of trees hasn’t been lost in the process. That’s considered a given. It’s just that another dimension has been added that wasn’t a big priority years ago: being a business person as well as an arborist.

There is lots of opportunity for the tree care industry in 1991, even in areas where the economy is slow. How well you play arborist and businessman at the same time—not what the competition does—will make the difference!
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Rigging For Removal

By Donald F. Blair

For years, I didn’t think that there was any money in large removals. You don’t get any repeat business from a removed tree. In general, removals go to the lowest bidder. Big wood is hard on the men and equipment. I developed this opinion 20 years ago when all we had to work with was manila rope and an occasional wood pulley. I may also have inherited some of that opinion from my father who pruned trees with a handsaw for 47 years.

In 1971 I lost a night’s sleep worrying about the next day’s removal. It was a huge, heavy creekside sycamore with about 70 feet of 4-foot diameter trunk angling directly over the roof peak of the house beneath. A colleague and I had been loaned to a friend of ours who had his own doubts after he sold the job for some ridiculously low price. We had no blocks, no slings, didn’t know about a speedline, and we couldn’t afford a crane on the low bid.

All I could see in my mind’s eye all night long was a log in the living room. I knew there had to be a way to do it safely and efficiently, but at the time I didn’t know what it could be. I walked away from the job and into a lifelong interest in rigging and removal.

Twenty years later, I wouldn’t think twice about taking that job. We’d speedline the brush over the house into the street and chunk the wood down with a false crotch made of a whoopee sling and a Hobbs block, taking our wraps on the lowering device. Equipment with know-how and experience does make a difference. It’s the true mark of a professional.

When to rig

Rigging is necessary when free-falling is not possible because a structure is in the way, sensitive landscaping would be damaged, or energized conductors or other obstacles present a hazard.

Although not always necessary, there are several scenarios in which rigging is desirable. One such instance is when roping large pieces provides better control and greater efficiency than chunking down smaller pieces, i.e., piecing back a limb on a hillside backyard. If you don’t rope it, you might have to chase a piece through two or three yards and fish it out of a swimming pool.

A second is when large pieces may produce a more valuable byproduct than firewood. Sometimes taking down a tree in saw-log lengths provides saleable lumber.

A third instance is when rigging increases the margin of worker safety. In my opinion, rigging’s primary function is to decrease worker exposure to hazard. Consider this situation: You are faced with a long horizontal limb. You can chunk it down if you make 20 small cuts, hold on to them and throw them out 10 feet to clear an obstacle. It will take you 15 minutes to rig a tip tie, butt hitch and a tag line, but then you can take it in one cut. One cut means you have reduced your exposure by a factor of 20 to 1. Those are excellent odds. Even though 15 minutes of rigging might seem like a long time of doing nothing with a team, when done properly the time invested works out to be less than the time needed to chunk out 20 pieces.

A fourth instance for rigging arises when you can’t reach it with a crane or a crane is not economically feasible.

Ropes for rigging

Rope design and construction for tree work have seen revolutionary changes since 1970. We used to do everything with 3- and 4-strand manila. Now, we use synthetic braids and 3-strands.

The term “synthetic” refers specifically to arborist grade ropes of a polyester construction. Nylon and polypro-
In photo at left, a false crotch consisting of three round turns and a square knot support a clevis and pulley. The photo at right shows a closeup of the square knot, tidied up with clove hitches.

Polyethylene are synthetic ropes with high tensile strengths, but they are unsuitable.

Tree workers who are replacing manila rope with synthetic might consider down-sizing by no more than one increment as a reasonable standard. For example, 3/4-inch manila could safely be replaced by a 5/8-inch synthetic. I personally recommend downsizing only to braided type construction. You’ll get more strength and less stretch than from a 3-strand synthetic.

Compared to 3-strand, braid has a higher strength-to-weight ratio, less stretch, and is easier to handle. Although its initial cost is higher, it outwears 3-strand 1-1/2 to 2 under normal usage. Originally designed as winch lines, braided ropes work best with pulleys, the lowering device and figure-eight descenders.

Stay with ropes designed, manufactured and warranted by the manufacturer for tree work. Several good brands are available. A 5/8-inch braided arborist grade lowering line makes an excellent choice for that 150-foot standard equipment bull rope that should always be on the truck. We’ve never had a rope fail because it was overloaded. When in doubt, use a bigger rope.

When doing critical rigging involving the use of two load-sharing lines on the same piece, be sure to use “same size/same type” lines. Don’t mix a braid with a 3-strand. They stretch at different rates, so they won’t share the load equally or as intended. In general, 3-strands stretch more. In practice then, under maximum loading, the braid will find itself all alone and doing all of the work.

When it breaks, the 3-strand is all alone and it will fail, too. Believe me, it’s happened just that way.

Design

There are three main components to rigging.

1. Rope—Load line(s), tag line(s)

Load lines are your work horses. Be careful not to slam-dunk weight into them. Five-hundred pounds freefalling five feet will hit the rope with a real impact shock load of 3000 pounds. Here’s a rough shock load formula: For every foot an object falls, it gains a unit of its weight plus one. Thus, 500 pounds multiplied by 5 feet equals 2500 pounds plus 500 pounds equals 3000 pounds.

Where do you tie the load line? Tying in the middle of the limb is the hardest to judge, and not recommended for the bigger stuff. It’s too hard to get it right. When rigging to the middle, be wary of heavy foliage endweights.

A butt hitch, tied near the point of severance, will cause the tip to drop down. The climber has to be wary of getting hit.
Two lowering lines and two tag lines provide complete control for a large log over a house roof.

ram. About the only time this sort of rigging can justify itself is in working closely over a roof or some other obstacle that cannot be cleared by either a single butt hitch or tip tie.

The tag lines are the reins to control the work horses. Proper use and placement of tag lines will control swing. Without them, a log in motion can become a potent battering ram.

You can do a lot of work with a combination of knots. Remember, in general, a knot will weaken a rope by 50%. A good rule of thumb for calculating practical safe working loads is to use only 10% of the published tensile strength and cut that figure in half to allow for the use of a knot.

Several good rigging knots to know are:

- **Bowline**—Generally possible to untie after heavy loading.
- **Running bowline**—Watch the direction of pull when setting a running bowline. Set properly, it will cinch tight. Set opposite, the running bowline can loosen and shift around on the piece. It can even slip off. Used correctly, the running bowline is one of the best rigging knots.
- **Running bowline with a half-hitch**—Adding a half-hitch about two log diameters away from the running bowline will greatly increase gripping power on the limb and help to damp pendulum swinging quicker.
- **Clove hitch**—Good for tying on tools. Be careful when used as a rigging knot. A clove hitch can roll itself undone in a nano-second. On heavy rigging, a figure eight knot on the tail will jam the half-hitches and help prevent slip-through.
- **Timber hitch**—I only recommend this knot for cinching up a rigging rope. Do not use it for lowering limbs or skidding logs. The problem is a matter of policy. The timber hitch will work fine when tied properly, but it’s hard to judge from the ground by a foreman. For that reason, it’s been banned by several companies to avoid a disastrous “roll-out.”
- **Truckers hitch**—The come-along in a coil. You can cinch a speedline, tighten a guide rope or secure a load of brush.
- **Figure eight**—It’s a good all-purpose jam knot.
- **Sheet bend**—If you want to join two ropes, it works pretty well.

_2. Crotch—natural and rigged (false)._ A natural crotch is great when strong enough and in the right position. When selecting a crotch, make sure it is U-shaped enough to keep from binding and strong enough to handle the job. On a removal, it is a good idea to cut the bark out of the crotch so the rope will run on sapwood. Otherwise, the rope can cut a groove into the bark and jam solid. Also, the extra heat generated can fuse the rope into something that looks like a brown candle at best, and cause a melt-through failure at worst.

False crotching allows you to hang your ropes where you need them. Classic false crotches were always of rope. With synthetic line, rope-to-rope contact generates too much friction/heat and can lead to premature aging of both rope and climber.

You need to secure a pulley or shackle to a location in the tree best suited for the rigging plan. There are several suitable methods to accomplish this:

- **Use a length of rope long enough to make three round turns around the anchor point, and tie a square knot. Secure a shackle or a pulley to the one strand that doesn’t comprise the square knot. Use a larger rope than your lowering line;**
- **Use a rigging rope—typically, a length of rope with an eye spliced in one end. Secure a pulley to the eye and timber hitch the block to the tree;**
- **Use a sling. There are many sewn slings of various lengths, widths and strengths. The most important thing to remember when using slings that have steel D-rings sewn into them is to never run a lowering line through the rings. The rings are only there to anchor a pulley or shackle. When selecting a sling, keep shock-loading stress in mind and specify one that can handle the unexpected. I recommend that all rigging components exceed the rating of the strongest rope used. If your weakest link in design is the lowering line, then you can be more assured of dealing with a known factor of performance.**

Once you’ve selected your method
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of securing the false crotch, you'll need to use a shackle or a pulley (block: terms are interchangeable). They come in all sizes, weights and capacities. Be sure to select one that is rated well above the ropes you will be using with it. Learn to use, rely upon and love blocks. They will save you money on rope, make you money on your job, and give you a measure of control and security that you wouldn't think possible.

3. Control—tree trunk wraps, lowering device and figure eight descender.

After selecting the rope and rigging a false crotch in the right place, take a wrap or two or three around a tree trunk or truck bumper made of pipe. A round object to take wraps against is called a bollard in naval terms. The minimum ratio is 3-to-1. So, if you were going to take a wrap around a bollard with a 3/4-inch line, the minimum diameter should be 2-1/4 inches.

Whatever you use, the key is the ability to hold and release at will and with precision.

The biggest drawback to taking wraps is the difficulty in taking up enough slack to avoid stretch. The lowering device is a basic component of many of our rigging practices. Some of our techniques are impossible without it. With the lowering device, you can be precise with your wraps, take up all slack and even raise a piece above an obstacle.

A rigging scenario

This scenario deals with a horizontal scaffold limb, below a strong spar-structured canopy.

We've got things pretty well in hand now. We didn't have a good enough crotch so we rigged a block to a 3-turn square knot for a false crotch. We've selected a bull rope large enough to do the job and in good condition. We have double checked to see that it is long enough.

We opted to use a figure eight descender instead of taking trunk wraps. We're gaining control. Are we ready to cut yet? No.

We have a problem. If we butt hitch, the tip is going to hang up in some lower scaffold limbs that we need for later work. If we tip tie, the butt will smash into the side of the house. We'd better add another line. Now we're double-hitched. Ready yet? No.

We've got the weight under control, but we don't have any control over swing. Add a tag line and take a wrap. Are we ready? Maybe. What kind of a cut are you going to make?

A top cut creates a hinging effect that causes the tip to drop as the cut opens up. Depending upon the type of tree and whether it is alive, dying, dead or rotten, it is going to react in one of the following ways:

a. Break over nicely and hold on a hinge. With ash or pine, that hinge might be a bundle of splinters;
b. Break over nicely until the hinge lets go and a long barber chair tear rips along the standing section of limb. On elm, it could tear all the way to the ground;
c. Snap off without warning. Dead oak.

A tip cut with an undercut won't tear, but it can "cock" a tremendous amount of energy if it hangs up and holds without falling free in one smooth motion. If that happens, be prepared for a pretty good jolt when it lets go.

A face cut with a back cut can be used even on a horizontal limb. You can make use of a notch undercut and then a top cut. You'll gain a controlled drop into the face and a more or less predictable letoff.

The undercut works well when using a crane or the lowering device. With all slack taken up, the rigging operator lifts the piece off and away. Done properly, there is no drop and no pinching on the saw. You have to be extremely careful when working with a crane. Too much tension can cause the piece to tear off unexpectedly, fly into the air with more lift and greater force than anticipated. Easy does it. A tiny kerf (10% of diameter) laid into the top of the limb is a good idea to insure a clean lift off.

Hardware glossary

We've touched on the basics. Here is a list and definition of some special tools that come in handy.

1. Carabiners: Oval spring-loaded snap devices that are common in rock-climbing and mountain rescue work. They come in a range of sizes and tensile strengths. They come in locking and non-locking configuration and carry ratings all the way up to 15,000 pounds. They are handy for hanging blocks, tools and sliding down a speedline.

2. Come-along: Handy for adjusting tension on a speedline or working as a hold-back on a leaning trunk.
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3. **Figure eight descenders:** Used in mountaineering as a rappelling brake, we use them for holding tension on a speedline and holding a tag line.

4. **Ground anchor:** When you're rigging a speedline, a ground anchor will do the job if nothing else is handy.

5. **Throw line:** Handy for setting a tag line or bull rope in places where wise men fear to tread.

6. **Plastic falling wedges:** These little devils are cheap insurance. They'll unstick your saw and help to lever over a leaning trunk.

7. **Plywood:** More cheap insurance. Use it to protect windows, cars, plants, lawns, roofs. We've even cribbed up over a flower bed. It saved a lot of cleanup.

8. **Tires:** They make a really good mat for reducing the impact of a falling tree trunk.

**Speedline**

Doing things in the proper sequence can make the difference between an "easy" efficient job and a back-breaking, no fun, money-losing proposition. In general, it's a good plan to brush out the tree first. Be sure to leave good crotches and limbs as you go for rigging the next section. Resist the urge to knock out the easy stuff just to get a bunch of brush on the ground. If it's easy now, it'll be easy later. It also might make something else easy instead of nearly impossible.

With the exception of clearing a path for a clear shot, starting in the top and working down is generally a good plan.

Consider using a speedline to facilitate brush removal. The speedline has evolved from high-lead logging greatly scaled down and every climber's experience of having brush tangle in his/her climbing line. Set a speedline in the tree angled towards the ground. If the steeper the angle, the faster the descent. Too shallow an angle may cause descent problems.

Speedlines can be attached in several ways: terminated at anchor point in work tree; rope of sufficient length is threaded through suitable crotch and secured to trunk near ground level, saving a climb to retrieve speedline, rigged through a false crotch and either terminated or passed back to ground level; or somehow secured to an adjacent tree or structure (never, never, never a power pole or other utility structure) and passed through work tree.

The speedline needs to be held taut during descent until the drop zone is reached, so it must be anchored. Think of the speedline anchor as a knee-high false crotch. You can anchor a speedline with three round turns and a square knot around a trunk. Hook a figure eight descender to your anchor with a carabiner. A larger ground team can generally take up enough slack without a come-along, but you can add one between the tree and figure eight.

Sometimes you can tighten the speedline with a truck-mounted winch or by driving forward or backing up. I still like to use a figure eight for tension control.

You can also make your own anchor. Run out a rope from something stable. We've gone 100 feet out in some cases. Sink a ground anchor (add it to the cost of the job if you have to leave it behind).

The speedline works best when it is directly above the tree parts in question. Doglegs in the rigging create slack that cannot always be compensated for.

To rig the limb to the speedline, some people use sewn slings. Others put eye splices into short lengths of rope and clove hitch onto the limb part and carabiner through the eye to the speedline. You can make a field sling by tying a bowline into the end of a suitable length of rope and clove hitch around the limb and carabiner through the bowline.

Once the limb is attached to the speedline sling and carabinered into the speedline, the climber merely needs to cut the limb free and if all goes according to the plan, it will slide neatly down the speedline until it reaches the drop zone. At this point the figure eight handler lets some slack run and the limb part will crash land.

When using a speedline, remember that too big, fast and heavy leaves big divots in the lawn. If that will be a problem, you may need to sophisticate your speedline with a haul back line. That is merely a tag line tied to the speedline sling, slung beneath the speedline, crotched in below the speedline and handed to a line handler on the ground. As usual, there is no one way to do this. You can tie off to the carabiner or you can rig a travelling block to the speedline and tie your speedline sling and haul back line to the block.
Our Self-Propelled Model 2000

The Model 2000 self-propelled stump grinder. Featuring a 20 HP Magnum Kohler engine and our commitment to quality, this machine is built to last.

The heavy-duty features of the 2000 include a 1 inch thick cutter wheel, 21 inches in diameter with teeth and a 3-foot tongue cylinder. A 39 inch arch enables grinding of stumps 12 inches below and 34 inches above ground. Timken tapered roller bearings for quality in the pivot head means longer life out of the wear points. Weighing 1200 lbs. and measuring 35 inches wide, the Model 2000 is one rugged machine.

If a portable is not what you are looking for then check out our top of the line Carlton diesel's.

DIESEL MODELS POWERED BY DEUTZ

Model 6800 Turbo Deutz Diesel

With a 68 HP turbo-charged Deutz diesel, the 6800 can handle the big jobs. The 1 inch thick cutter head is 31 inches in diameter with teeth. Featuring a 92 inch swing, this workhorse cuts 24 inches below ground and 44 inches above. This unit also features the Carlton trademark: the 25-foot remote control for safe operation.

Model 4100 Deutz Diesel

Tree stumps know the end is near when the 4100 arrives. With a 41 HP, 3-cylinder Deutz diesel, it can tackle the tough jobs while saving you money on fuel costs. This unit features an 80 inch swing and cuts 15 inches below ground and 40 inches above. The unit is mounted on 14 inch tires and comes standard with remote control operation.
The line handler only has to pull the haul back line and the block and speedline sling is sent directly back to the climber. With a block and haul back line, heavier loads and greater security are possible.

A well-planned speedline can save tremendous time. We've run brush out over roofs from the backyard to the chipper on the street. We've worked over flower beds without having to build scaffolds to protect the plants. An elegant speedline is also a superb marketing tool. Your client will be impressed. So will your competition.

**Summary**

There is no reason for a tree removal to cause damage or injury. All of the principles detailed herein apply to sound, predictable wood.

Always practice new techniques on smaller non-critical branches and trees. Turning a medium-sized tree in an open area into a rigging exercise can be a good investment in time for when you really need to make the experience count.

Do the best you can to keep your rigging high and directly vertical or design the swing away from the climber. Use a tag line(s) to catch and control backswing. Know what you'll need before you get there. Bring a little extra. One less rope or one less tree worker can mean the difference between a disaster and a good job.

---

Donald F. Blair is a second-generation arborist with roots dating back to 1911. He founded Sierra Moreno Mercantile Company (an arborist equipment research and development firm with offices in Maryland and California). He is the director of the Museum of Arboriculture (Clear Spring, Maryland) and lectures extensively across the United States and overseas on practical arborist skills.
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On lump sum bidding

I enjoyed Carl Center's article, "Lump Sum Bidding vs. Unit Pricing." It is evident that there are others suffering the same experiences that I am.

Without going into any details and specifics, Mr. Center has reflected the contractor's dilemma. Being a struggling contractor, it is my feeling he has over-simplified the contractor's problems.

With all of the regulation being imposed, I don't believe this industry under the present policies can continue forever. Some day it will come to a head and I predict the results will be staggering and sobering.

After years of computing hourly rates and lump sum bids I have concluded that the R/W contracting business is too cut-throat to be dependable or profitable, let alone enjoyable. Also, most utility companies' bottom line needs to be reevaluated. I either have to play cut-throat too, or get out. Unfortunately, I usually wind up cutting my own throat.

Keep up the good work and I'll try to keep from cutting my throat.

George H. Snyder
Snyder Tree Service
Clay, Kentucky

Note of thanks

Just a quick note to thank you for the wonderful work you are doing with TCI magazine. I believe it is serving our profession very well.

The recent magazines on quality service and recycling were excellent.

Keep up the good work.

William P. Kruidenier
Executive director
International Society of Arboriculture

Good article

The article entitled "The Nine Deadly Sins" by Dick Proudfoot was well thought out and succinct. It would make a terrific brochure to be given to all developers who intend to work around trees.

I enjoy reading TCI and look forward to its arrival. Keep up the good work.

Kenneth D. Meyer
Mayne Tree Expert Company
San Mateo, California

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - JULY 1991
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And whenever we can improve one of our products, we do. We are, after all, Baker Equipment Engineering Company.

What about service? They say “service” is the watchword of the 1990s. For us, it’s been the watchword of seven decades. Joseph B. Baker set the standard years ago: What the customer is promised is what we deliver—no if’s, and’s, or but’s.

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Yes, that phrase does have an awful lot of mileage on it. But as long as we’re in business, its meaning will never wear out.
Vertical Standard Rule
Publication Expected In December

Final publication of the Electric Power Generation, Transmission, and Distribution Standard (CFR 1910.269), otherwise known as the “Vertical Standard,” is expected in December. This standard will affect firms doing line clearance tree trimming.

A vertical standard has specific application to one industry. A horizontal standard applies to all industries.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has taken a profound interest in electrical hazards in general and the tree care industry in particular since 1985, when the agency proposed the vertical standard for the electric utility industry. The vertical standard has a lengthy section devoted to line clearance tree care operations.

After the vertical standard was proposed, the ANSI Z133 committee invited OSHA to a meeting to discuss the intent of the standard with respect to tree care. The OSHA representative, an electrical engineer with no background or knowledge about tree care, told the ANSI committee that the line clearance industry was regarded as unsafe and sorely in need of regulation.

The standard, in its last draft before public hearings, included a requirement that all line clearance tree trimmers and line clearance tree trimmer trainees be trained in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as soon as they were exposed to electrical hazards.

Line clearance contractors say the CPR requirement is economically impossible to comply with and that it serves no purpose. The National Arborist Association researched that issue and presented testimony at public hearings held in California in December 1989.

In its testimony the NAA said: “An electrocution occurs as a result of direct contact, in almost every case it is fatal.”

“In the case of an indirect contact, ventricular fibrillation almost always occurs. Ventricular fibrillation is a rapid spasm of the heart muscles. If defibrillation is not applied within 20 minutes, in more than 90% of the cases the victim will die whether CPR was applied or not. Fewer than 25% of the emergency vehicles in the United States are either equipped to provide defibrillation or are staffed with people capable of administering defibrillation.”

The comment period on the vertical standard is closed and the OSHA staff is reviewing the written comments and testimony from the hearings. No one has access to the document outside of OSHA and the outcome will not be known until the final rule is published next year.

Since the vertical standard was initially proposed, the NAA has worked diligently with OSHA representatives to change OSHA’s attitude toward the tree care industry. In fact, the same OSHA official who told industry representatives they were unsafe now sits on the Z133 Committee. He has a good grasp of the industry and has been receptive to suggestions, the CPR issue notwithstanding.

The battle for responsible regulation of the line clearance industry took a tremendous amount of NAA time and energy and well over $150,000 in financial resources.
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“To Columbus, Ohio”

“For what?”

“TCI Expo 91”

“When?”

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Timeless Advice

The following letter was written in 1945 by Martin L. Davey Sr., president of the Davey Tree Expert Company, to his son, Martin L. Davey Jr. The younger Davey, who was about to succeed his father as president, was 29 years old at the time and had just returned from active duty in World War II. We think some of the sound business principles detailed by the elder Davey still hold true today.

My son, now that you have returned from Army Service, it is my desire that you take over the active management of The Davey Tree Expert Company, with whatever help and advice you need from me... To the building of this business I have given forty years of my own life. It has not been easy to bring it through all the trials and vicissitudes of that long and rapidly changing period. You will be the third generation to carry our business and professional banner. I hope your most zealous ambition will be to carry it forward, unsullied. I hope, also, that you will take to heart the following advice because, my son, there is no substitute for experience.

Above everything, make your word good. But, and this is terribly important, be very careful about the promises you make. Take time to get the facts, weigh each matter carefully on its merits, then when you make a commitment, keep your word—under all possible circumstances and at whatever cost. If you ever find that it is impossible to keep a promise, for perfectly valid reasons or because of things beyond your control, then don’t delay; tell the other person promptly and frankly.

Next, I would say, is to think of your clients before everything. They are your lifeblood. Make it your business to see that they get honest value, quality workmanship and diligent, conscientious service. They will continue to pay a fair price for that kind of service, sufficient to yield a moderate profit with proper management.

Nearly all of our clients are good people. Therefore, if a client makes a complaint, see that it is promptly and fairly investigated, for the purpose of equitable adjustment. You should assume that the client believes he is right, and let him know by our conduct that we mean to be right. It is very rare that one of our clients has ever tried to chisel or defraud us. In such unusual cases, make him pay, and never serve him again.

Treat your employees as human beings. Good men are ambitious, frugal, and trustworthy. Therefore, you should reward the better men as they earn it, when and as they prove themselves, and before they have to ask for it. Be on your guard against the men who recommend themselves too loudly and aggressively. I have found that some of the best men are a little too modest to push themselves forward. It is part of your job to find that kind and reward them. I have always felt that good sales representatives should make good money, and have always been happy to see them do so. Make sure, however, that they sell and deliver the kind and quality of Davey service that represents true Davey standards, principles and ethics. I do not quite agree with Emerson when he said, “If a man makes a better mousetrap, the world will make a beaten path to his door.” That might be true in a small community, but not in a great country like America. You can’t get anywhere with a sizable business without good salesmen. No matter how good the thing is which you produce, you must sell it or go out of business. It goes without saying that the thing which the salesman sells must be really good or he is soon out of employment.

Watch your credit with a jealous eye, every phase of it. Don’t ever let a note become overdue, unless there is no way to prevent it. Pay your notes on time. Pay your bills promptly. Take all cash discounts. Make it one of the first orders of your business life to protect your credit, pay your bills, and have enough money in the bank to meet payrolls and all other proper and necessary business expenses.

This brings me to the next thing of great and equal importance. Watch expenses like a hawk. Question every expense that is not clearly necessary or the stockholders. Many people will give ideas of how to spend money—other people’s money. Most of them are bad. Occasionally you will get a good one. Put every such suggestion to the acid test: “Is it a good and necessary thing for the business?” One of your most important jobs is to say “No,” and make it stick. On the matter of
expenses. I have had a rule in effect for the last several years that no one could incur any new expense or increase any present expense without my definite prior approval. Experience has made this rule necessary; results have proved it wise.

You must make a reasonable profit if you expect to stay in business. There is no Santa Claus for private business. When your profits disappear, you are on the way out. Therefore, it is part of your job to know your costs, all your costs, and all your sources of revenue, and to know whether your revenue is adequate to cover all your necessary and proper costs and leave a fair profit. If and when you have made a reasonably good profit, and when you have the money in the bank, you can afford to be a little extra generous with the employees who helped you make it.

The average person would be amazed if he knew the enormous amount of time required of the Accounting Department by Uncle Sam's innumerable laws, rules, and regulations, payroll deductions, bookkeeping records, and reports required by all the states. Actually, I would almost dread the ordeal of starting a new business today. Unless you could afford to hire competent outsiders, you would have to be a many-sided lawyer, an expert accountant with varied knowledge and experience, a financial expert, an operations genius, a public relations expert, a labor-relations expert, a diplomat, and a diplomatic driver, a leader who is willing to take a clubbing from various and sundry little tyrants representing the government or others. And you would have to have the patience of Job, the perseverance of Columbus, and the stamina of Atlas.

Now for a few other things. Never do anything while you are angry. It probably will be wrong. If you feel highly incensed by something, write it down on paper and thus get it out of your system—but put the paper in your desk or in your pocket for a few days, and then you will probably feel differently and do differently. I have made some mistakes by not doing this.

Pay a man everything that is coming to him. If he adds up his expenses incorrectly, it is your duty to make it right and pay him in full. But if he puts in more than he has coming, don't pay the excess. If he is honest, he will be glad to be corrected. If he is trying to chisel, he knows he doesn't have it coming. Likewise, if a client pays more than his bill, send him the difference.

Don't do something merely because a competitor does it, or merely because someone well-meaning friend or associate thinks it is a good idea. Of course, you should never be against it for that reason. It might or might not be a good thing. Judge everything strictly on its merit—calmly, judicially, and deliberately.

Please, please, do not try to be popular in your business dealings. You simply can't manage a business properly and be popular with everyone. Some people are inclined to slow down and take it easy; they need to be spurred into action. Some are inclined to chisel if they can get away with it; they need sharp discipline. Some few may become cocky or overbearing or impolite; they need to have their wings clipped and to be brought back to earth. However, you should try to deserve respect. To achieve this desirable end, you should always be just and fair and reasonable, tolerant of minor human frailties. In the long run, the solid qualities of character and old-fashioned virtues are of far greater importance than brilliance or shrewdness.

Beware of flatterers. They have a cunning way of wasting your valuable time, or trying to get something they are not entitled to. When anyone attempts to flatter you or give you profuse compliments, put a big question mark after everything he says or does. Preferably, don't deal with him.

Save your own time, and see that all others respect your time. It is extremely valuable. Parcel it out systematically among people and things according to the order of their importance to the business. Some people talk too much and others are a bit shy. It is easy to tell the difference. Just take time to get all the essentials and then make your decision, or say you will think it over (preferably the latter) and end the interview, going promptly to the next most important thing.

Speaking of time and the necessity of conserving it, you should not burden yourself with details. You must employ others for that. Know all you can about every phase of the business, but get your information from reliable people who handle the details. No man can manage a business wisely or efficiently alone.
unless he gets his head up off his desk part of the time and does some intensive and constructive thinking.

If you expect others to be diligent workers, you must be one yourself. Set an example of diligence. Running an organization is serious business. It is not a social affair nor a fraternity tete-a-tete. One of the most successful men I knew said to me, “For every business that succeeds, someone must give his life.”

You ought to be friendly in a moderate and reserved sort of way. I mean genuinely friendly. And always be polite to everyone. When you give orders, always say please. It costs nothing and makes the order easy to take. For many years, whenever I have sent orders by wire, I have always used the word please, even if it were necessary to pay for an extra word. Everyone with any sense will know it is an order just the same. The occasional dumbbell who thinks he can disobey because you say please, or who thinks

you are soft for that reason, should be taken off the payroll.

There is one thing about business that is crystal clear. You can never coast down hill. There never comes a time when you can sit back, blandly and comfortably, and feel that your work is done, that all your problems are solved for a considerable period into the future. There will likely be fewer serious problems, however, if you are diligent, watchful, and active every day. A successful business is like a well-made and well-oiled vehicle that travels steadily upgrade.

We live and move and have our being in a selfish world. But that is not all bad. It is self-interest that makes the world move forward. Intelligent and properly harnessed selfishness is good for mankind. It is grasping, unfair, cheating selfishness that is a curse. All good business is founded on intelligent self-interest, that of the customer and the employee and the company. Those interests must all be served if a concern is to last beyond a brief time. Those interests are mutual in many respects, and they should never be in serious conflict with each other. You must give and get full value.

It is well to work earnestly toward perfection. You will never reach it, of course, in this imperfect world, but if you keep striving for it manfully and persistently, your business will be infinitely better than it could possibly be otherwise. In fact, I sincerely believe that if you do not continuously work and strive toward perfection, your business will steadily go down hill toward a deserved oblivion. The natural pull of human inertia and indifference is downward. Good management must pull steadily the other way, and pull harder than the normal laws of human nature. I wanted to give this special word of caution. If a man is conceited or too opinionated, he cannot think straight or act wisely. Never let success spoil you. I do not think it would, but these thoughts are a very ardent part of my philosophy. Keep yourself reasonably humble but self-reliant. Keep yourself natural and unspoiled. When difficulties or discouragements confront you, summon all your calm, determined moral courage, and keep going—forward.
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Landowner Liability

A tree falls and injures someone or causes damage to a neighbor’s property. Is the person who owns the tree legally responsible? It depends on several factors, according to the courts.

In such cases, one of the main issues involved is that of negligence. Generally, the courts have ruled that landowners should be taking care of trees on their property so to prevent injury to a neighbor or damage to a neighbor’s property as well as injury or damage on public ways.

Still, a landowner may not be liable for injury or damage caused by a tree on his land under certain circumstances. Several criteria come into play in making the determination: whether the landowner or a previous owner planted the tree that caused the injury or damage; whether a landowner knows the condition of his trees; and whether the incident stems from human activity or is an “act of God.”

The issue is less confusing than it seems. Essentially, the courts have ruled that if a property owner plants a tree, then he is responsible for its care and maintenance and legally liable if the tree falls and causes any injury and/or damage. If the tree is on the land as a “natural condition,” then the landowner is not held responsible.

Here are a few cases that illustrate these points.

A landowner was sued when a tree on his land fell across an abutting public sidewalk, striking a car parked at the curb. The court ruled that the landowner was responsible for the damage caused when the tree fell over. A landowner who suspects that a tree on his land is not healthy must exercise reasonable care to prevent the tree from falling and damaging property or harming a person lawfully using the public way, the court said.

What if the landowner doesn’t know if a tree on his land is unhealthy? The answer goes back to the issue of negligence. According to the courts, a landowner who is properly taking care of his trees should know if they are unhealthy. That was the decision when a passenger in a car was accidentally killed when a tree fell on the car.

As it turned out, the tree had been dead for several years, but bore no exterior evidence of decay. The court ruled that the condition of the tree was the result of natural causes. However, the court also ruled that if the owner knew—or by ordinary care should have known—of the tree’s condition, then it was his responsibility to prevent the tree from falling and injuring someone.

Thus, a landowner is not only expected to properly maintain his trees, but also to inspect his trees to discover possible defects. In essence, the courts have been saying, “If you plant it, you’re responsible for its care and liable if it causes any damage.”

Natural growth

However, the courts distinguish between trees of natural growth and those planted by a landowner. For example, a landowner’s trees extended over his property line. Leaves and bark from those trees fell onto the neighbor’s building and clogged the gutters. The landowner was not held responsible for the damages to the building because neither he nor a previous owner planted the trees. Accordingly, the court ruled that, “Where a natural condition of land causes an invasion of another’s interest in the use and enjoyment of their land, the possessor of the land containing the
natural condition is not liable for such invasion."

What if the landowner or the preceding owner had planted those trees? According to the court’s ruling, the landowner would then be responsible for caring for those trees to assure that they did not cause any damage or “invasion” of a neighbor’s property.

In its ruling the court noted that “natural condition” means a condition “not in any way the result of human activity” and includes “trees, weeds and other vegetation on land which has not been made artificially receptive thereto by act of man.”

Thus, in these cases the question of liability was determined by whether the offending tree is a natural condition of the land.

**Storm damage**

As for storm damage, the issue is slightly different. Suppose a tree is blown down during a storm and injures a neighbor, damages a neighbor’s property, or injures someone or something on a public way. In such cases, the landowner would not be held responsible for injury or damage since the storm was an “act of God” and beyond the control of man. An injured party, therefore, would have no redress.

The courts interpret “act of God” as some inevitable accident that could not have been prevented by human care, skill and foresight, but results exclusively from nature’s cause, such as lightning, tempest and floods.

The courts, however, make a distinction in situations involving unsound trees and have ruled that landowners should remove such trees so to prevent injury and/or damage. Thus, injury or damage that occurs during a storm would not be viewed as the result of an act of God if the injury or damage could have been prevented.

For instance, a foreman was killed when a strong wind occurred during a removal, causing the tree to fall in his direction. The court ruled that the fatality was not due to an act of God since human activity was involved.

Thus, the principle arising from these cases is that the landowner will not be responsible for injuries strictly arising out of an act of God. The landowner is responsible, however, if injury or damage caused by a falling tree could have been prevented by reasonable diligence.

*This article is based on information supplied by Victor D. Merallo, an attorney in Columbus, Ohio, and author of The Law of Trees. It is not intended to replace advice from legal counsel in dealing with particular situations.*
The Locking Snap Controversy

Manufacturers Forced To Stop Making Non-Locking Rope Snaps

By Peter Gerstenberger

Look on the end of any arborist’s climbing line or safety lanyard. Until recently, what you probably would have seen was a forged, self-closing, non-locking safety snap. But that non-locking snap may be going the way of the dinosaur, thanks largely to liability suits brought against the manufacturers stemming from accidents outside the tree care industry.

U.S. Forgecraft is one such manufacturer. John Peerson, spokesperson for the company, says that his firm has been involved in an average of three lawsuits a year in which alleged snap failure contributed to an accident. Of those, only one or two involved a tree care company employee. In none of those cases could it be proven conclusively that an accident was the direct result of snap failure.

It is impossible to say whether the locking snap will prevent accidents in the tree care industry. The D-rings of the climbing saddle and the regular rope snap are designed so that under normal circumstances, the snap cannot be twisted off the ring. A non-locking snap will roll off a carabiner quite readily. This hardware combination should be avoided.

Locking snaps will be more expensive and probably a little harder to use, especially with gloves. They may prevent accidents in the future, however, by making the arborist more attentive when he fastens or unfastens a safety line to his saddle or body belt.

Plaintiffs and their lawyers have established the precedent in court that non-locking snaps are inferior to locking snaps. The manufacturers feel that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and ANSI will soon make locking snaps mandatory for general industry. These developments could spell the end for the non-locking rope snap.
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See us at ISA Annual Meeting
By TCI Staff

When shopping for personal protective equipment, the main considerations should be quality, affordability, comfort and appearance. Probably the most important factor is to get something that will be used!

With the exception of the chaps, back support and gear bag, using the types of protection depicted in this article are either mandatory or strongly suggested for many phases of tree work.

With the assistance of manufacturers and exclusive distributors, we have outfitted a groundperson and a climber in some of the most modern personal protective equipment available. These items and a wide variety of other fine products are available through arborist supply houses and other retail establishments.

Some readers are undoubtedly asking, “What’s the best hardhat on the market?” Our answer to them is, “The one that is on your head the day you walk under a falling limb.”

Eye protection
Eye protection should be worn at all times regardless of whether your helmet has a face shield. Featured is the 8300 PANALITE safety spectacle by H.L. Bouton Company. The 8300 features a lightweight PANALITE frame material which meets ANSI Z87.1-1989 Standards. The polycarbonate lenses (dark on the climber, clear on the groundperson) are replaceable and the contoured shape of the 8300 offers unobstructed peripheral vision. Arborists like their comfort and stylish features. For more information contact H.L. Bouton at 800-426-1881.

Hearing protection
Arborists are subjected to high-decibel noise each day. Comfortable, lightweight hearing protection is essential for the arborist to perform all phases of tree work while still being protected. The climber is wearing the QB2 hearing protector by Howard Leight Industries. It features replaceable soft foam pads which soften with body temperature to provide a comfortable fit. This non-conductive protector features a N.R.R. of 25 dB when worn under the chin, and can be worn around the neck or placed in a shirt pocket when not in use. For more information, contact Howard Leight Industries at 215-667-6046.

Head protection
Probably the most important piece of personal protective equipment is the hardhat. There are many styles to choose from. Featured on the groundperson is the Peltor Lumberjack provided by Tilton Equipment Company. The Lumberjack is lightweight, has a steel mesh safety visor, international orange color for ease of visibility and safety, exclusive stainless spring steel hearing protector attachment providing a N.R.R. of 22 dB, and a patented visor sealing which eliminates the problem of sawdust and twigs falling between the hardhat and visor. For more information, contact Tilton Equipment Company at 603-926-2795.

Leg protection
One of the hottest topics in the industry is the use of ballistic leggings by chain saw operators. Many styles and types of “chaps” are available. One of the most popular types is the Kevlar chaps featured on the groundperson. These new wrap-around chaps feature more protection for the back of the legs and calf area. They have extra reinforcement at the crotch area to
Protective Equipment

eliminate ripping. Made of 1000 denier tough, cordura nylon, they are available in safety orange or green. It is important to remember that chaps will not prevent injury completely and are not a substitute for proper chain saw safety training, but in many cases they will reduce injuries considerably. For more information on this product, contact Labonville, Inc. at 603-752-4030.

Hand protection
The arborist may want to use different types of hand protection to tackle different tasks. The gloves featured have very different attributes. For thorny cleanup jobs, the groundperson needs a thick leather glove that will resist puncturing. The climber who runs a chain saw wants tight-fitting, good gripping gloves with some measure of cut protection—which he gets from gloves made of Kevlar called Armordillos. They are cut-resistant and have a non-slip, super grip surface. For more information on these gloves, contact Sierra Moreno Mercantile at 800-262-0800.

Foot protection
The rigors of tree work demand comfort and durability, so look for those qualities when choosing work shoes. Featured on both workers are Red Wing Model 2233 8-inch steel toe, lace-up boots by Red Wing Shoes. They are made with top grade, full grain leather which is soft, supple and extremely tough. The sole is made of a shock absorbing, long wearing, non-marking, slip-resistant urethane which insulates and remains flexible in cold weather. To find out more about these shoes, contact Red Wing Shoes at 612-388-8211.

Back support
Back injuries are debilitating for the worker and costly for the employer. In an attempt to reduce on-the-job back injuries, some of the largest tree care companies are issuing back braces to their field forces—the early results look promising. The back brace featured on the groundperson is the Back Jack, distributed by Sierra Moreno Mercantile. Lightweight and machine-washable, the Back Jack can be worn comfortably under a climbing saddle. The exterior is 100% cordura nylon and the liner is 80% cotton for comfort.

Gear bag
A gear bag will help organize, protect and preserve the arborist's personal protective equipment. The climber has chosen a heavy-weight, 28-inch, vinyl bag from Charlotte Rigging. Charlotte Rigging products are available through many arborist supply houses across the country.
Aug. 5-9
“The Technical Arborist” workshop
ACRT, Inc. headquarters
Kent, Ohio
Contact: National Arbor Day
Foundation, 402-474-5655

Aug. 11-14
ISA Annual Conference and Trade
Show
Adams Mark Hotel
Philadelphia, Penn.
Contact: 217-328-2032

Aug. 26-30
“The Practical Arborist” workshop
Morton Arboretum
Chicago, Ill.
Contact: National Arbor Day
Foundation, 402-474-5655

Sept. 21-22
Sustainable Forests,
Modern Arboriculture

Featuring Dr. Alex Shigo
Mendocino College Theatre
Ukiah, Calif.
Fetzer Valley Oaks Center
Hopland, Calif.
Contact: John Phillips, 707-459-3015

Sept. 23
Implementing Modern Arboriculture
Featuring Dr. Alex Shigo
Fetzer Valley Oaks Center
Hopland, Calif.
Contact: John Phillips, 707-459-3015

Sept. 26-29
Green Industry Golf Challenge
Myrtle Beach, S.C.
Contact: Laurel Treamer, 603-673-3311

Nov. 3-7
A New Tree Biology,
Featuring Dr. Alex L. Shigo
Appalachian State University
Boone, N.C.

Contact: 704-262-3045, or Jim Rice
(evenings and weekends),
704-264-4882.

Nov. 7-9
Arbor Expo—91
Springfield Civic Center
Springfield, Mass.
Contact: Arbor Age magazine,
818-781-8300

Nov. 12
Urban Soils Management Workshop;
Street Tree Inventory Workshop
Biltmore Hotel
Los Angeles, Calif.
Contact: American Forestry
Association, 800-368-5748

Dec. 5-7
TCI Expo 91
The Ohio Center
Columbus, Ohio
Contact: Thomas Clancy, 603-673-8952

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TREE CARE INDUSTRY - JULY 1991
ISA Conference Offers Recertification Sessions

More than 20 states will be granting recertification credits for pesticide applicators who attend specific sessions at the ISA 67th Annual Conference in Philadelphia, August 10-14.

Some of the educational sessions scheduled during the general program on Monday, August 12, and Tuesday, August 13, which have been approved for recertification credit by various states are: Care of the Mature Tree, Challenging Traditional Paradigms, How the Environment Affects Growth, Pesticides and the Environment, Tree Planting, Right Tree, Right Place, and Care-Wounds and Tree Protection.

All states are giving credit for one or both of the all-day courses on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) which are part of the Tree Academy Program on Saturday, August 10. The IPM Scouting session will train arborists how to monitor plant health. Emphasis will be on looking for beneficial insects as well as pest species. The IPM Marketing course will introduce participants to methods for marketing IPM programs. Participants of this session will produce a marketing plan for their organization.

A complete listing of courses and recertification credits by state will not be available prior to the conference, but will be part of the registration packet for those attending the conference.

In addition to the recertification sessions, Dr. Richard Harris will be speaking on the new tree valuation techniques currently being developed through the Council of Tree & Landscape Appraisers (CTLA) during a special session on Thursday, August 14.

This 2-hour workshop will introduce and detail the significant changes in methods of tree valuation as presented in the current edition of the Valuation of Landscape Trees, Shrubs, and Other Plants. Dr. Harris has been instrumental in the development of the distinctly new formula, which will be published during the first part of next year.

Conference attendees who are active in tree evaluation are encouraged to participate in this important workshop. Fee is $15.

For more information about the conference and special sessions, contact the ISA office at 217-328-2032.
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Management positions. Qualified people wanted to manage their own branch office. Equipment, office and support staff already established. Great opportunity to take a leadership role in large, secure company performing high quality tree work throughout California. Immediate positions available in Sacramento and East Bay area of San Francisco. Send resume to: Arbor Care, 825 Mabury Road, San Jose, CA 95133, or call Peter Sortwell, general manager, 408-453-5922.

Arborist/crew leader position open for responsible individual with an interest in urban tree care. Some experience necessary but will train. We are an established company in Chicago's northwest suburbs that offers an excellent salary and benefit package commensurate with qualifications and experience. Please contact Rodney, McGinty Bros., Inc., 3524 Long Grove Road, Long Grove, Ill. 60047. Phone: 708-438-5161.


Career opportunity: Experienced tree trimmer/arborist, landscape technician, consultant or any combination thereof. Progressive San Francisco Bay Area company seeking motivated, professionally oriented personnel. We provide a broad range of services, including extensive consulting work. We are uncompromising in providing progressive, professional services and a safe, supportive and educational work environment for career-oriented arborists. Looking for trimmer/climber, foreman, consultant. Educational incentives, medical plan, vacation, compensated leave, paid holidays. WCISA certification preferred but not mandatory. Must have clean CDL and truck driving experience, self-motivation, professional attitude. Contact David W. Nelson, operations manager, 415-638-0781. Send resume to Treescapes, Inc., 660 McClary Ave., Oakland, CA 94621.

Salesman/supervisor. Tree service in Palm Beach County, Florida, looking for motivated and knowledgeable individual to sell work and supervise crews. Experience required, college courses helpful and must be familiar with sub-tropical trees. Excellent opportunity to grow with a progressive and rapidly expanding company. Send resume and pay history to PO Box 8373, Jupiter, FL 33468-8373.

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How I Survived My Youth

By Ed “Lucky” Goodfellow

When I think back on all the dumb things I did over the years I’ve been in the tree business, it’s a wonder I’m alive. Now I’m going to do one more dumb thing—take potshots at myself in a national magazine. If this story could make one tree worker think twice about doing something dumb, then it will be worth it.

Flying a kite on the freeway

Back in the good old days, when you could still take brush to a landfill, we used to work without a chipper. We were experts at stacking brush. I once stacked the entire crown of a large elm on a half-ton pickup, but that’s another story. We had one job where we had to grub out several old, overgrown pfitzer junipers. The last one was very flat and spreading—like a huge fan. We pulled it out in one piece and threw it on the load. The load seemed very stable, so we didn’t lash it down. We discovered how wrong we were 15 minutes later at 50 mph on the freeway. That shrub caught the wind gusting over the cab and took off like a glider. Fortunately, the wind blew it onto the shoulder, out of oncoming traffic. You can bet we tied our loads very securely after that.

Battle with a chipper

Somehow, I became a supervisor. When you are a supervisor for a small company, you do a little of everything. One day found me playing chipper mechanic, replacing blades in a drum chipper. Understand, I have about as much mechanical aptitude as a turnip. I had never performed this operation before, and I had never seen an owner’s manual or repair book. I managed to remove the old blades. I had just tightened down one of the new blades and was spinning the drum around by hand when a co-worker asked me a question. I looked up at him and WHAM! All I remember was a very fast car ride to the hospital. Two months, many doctor visits and over $10,000 in medical bills later, I could point my very expensive finger at two things I had done wrong. I had not engaged the clutch to keep the drum from spinning and I had allowed myself to be distracted at a very critical moment.

When the back goes...

It was January, and I had a crew trimming street-side silver maples in 10-below-zero weather. Mistake number one was thinking that four half-thawed climbers could be productive. I was clearing brush and chipping, lifting and throwing branches like Superman to get in out of that cold. That night, as I was eating supper, I felt a twinge. I tried stretching. Suddenly, I felt a stabbing, burning pain in the middle of my back. I stubbornly finished my supper with my chin on the table, scraping food in my mouth. I literally couldn’t lift a fork.

The doctor explained that I had torn apart muscles in my back and that blood was seeping into the muscle fiber, causing severe muscle spasms. I spent a week recovering. Now I always warm up and stretch carefully, especially in the cold.

Butting heads and losing

I was the new recruit on a line clearance crew and the general foreman was putting me to the test in a huge backyard weeping willow. I was slowly removing one horizontal limb that hung over the house service drop. I was mad at the G.F., because he had me climbing around this tree for what seemed like hours, tip tying and butt hitching this limb while the rest of the crew watched. I was so mad at him and so scared being where I was in that tree that I didn’t think about what the limb was going to do after I cut it. The butt of that limb hit me like a bus on the side of my head. Thank goodness my employer made me wear a hard hat. If I hadn’t, I’m confident that I wouldn’t have left that tree under my own power. As it turned out, I received nothing more than a small scrape and a wounded pride.

I could go on, but I’ll spare you. I haven’t had an accident in a long time, and I plan to keep it that way. I enjoy this profession, and want to stay in it a little longer. And as a buddy of mine would say, I love my mother’s son, too. By the way, that’s not my real name. I may be dumb, but I’m not stupid!

Mr. Goodfellow is an arborist from the Midwest. He wished to keep his name and the names of the companies he worked for out of this article.

Do you have a story for From the Field? TCI will pay $50 for published articles. Submissions become the property of TCI and are subject to editing for grammar, style and length. Entries must be submitted by field workers and must bear the name of the worker and his employer or they will not be considered for publication. Articles and photos must be received by the first day of the month for the following month’s issue.
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