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President Obama ignited a firestorm of criticism last month from the usual chorus of critics when he said at a news conference, “The private sector is doing fine.” He was immediately labeled as out of touch with the state of the American economy.

Obama backtracked and tried to clarify his remarks, without success. In retrospect, he probably should have said “some parts of the private sector are doing fine.” With that, he would have been accurate, since some parts of the private sector are indeed doing fine. The oil and gas industry is doing better than fine. The auto industry has come roaring back from near bankruptcy. Depending on the crop and the region’s rainfall, some parts of the farm economy are doing fine. Still, overall job growth has been anemic and the housing industry can’t seem to work through its backlog of distressed properties and move forward.

In my travels and conversations with members, nonmembers, manufacturers and others, I would say “some parts of the tree care industry are doing fine.” That might come as a shock to folks in Georgia, California and large pockets of the Midwest, but in many areas of the country TCIA members are earning healthy, if not record, profits. Utilities are also spending more on tree trimming, boosting that sector of the industry.

Most heartening is that many of the tools and machines used in tree work are still manufactured here in the United States. I saw that spirit of growth firsthand recently in Iowa, where Vermeer Corporation is roaring forward with new equipment destined for U.S. markets and, increasingly, overseas. Chippers, stump cutters and grinders for wood waste are selling almost as fast as they can make them, which I learned is pretty fast indeed.

It is heartening to see a multigenerational, family-owned manufacturing business such as Vermeer sustaining jobs and creating machinery for tree care companies, many of them multi-generational, too. Vermeer’s success, as is the case for many commercial tree care companies, is testament that some private sector companies can do fine – even in a difficult economy.

Mark Garvin
Publisher
New for spring of 2012 is the all new RG1645S self-propelled stump cutter. This compact unit takes RAYCO’s popular RG1645 platform to the next level of performance with a heavier cutter wheel and improved cutting torque. A swing-out operator control station allows for maximum visibility of the cutting action while keeping the operator shielded from chips and debris, and swings in line with the machine to pass through gates. Wider tires help to improve flotation and traction and removal of the outer dual wheels allow passage through 36” gates. The RG1645S is powered by a Kubota 44hp turbo diesel engine that meets tier 4 interim emissions.

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Safe Lifts in TREE WORK
One of the biggest misconceptions in crane operations is that a (fill in the blank)-ton crane can pick the full-rated tonnage load and place that load a quarter of a mile away from the crane. It just doesn’t work that way.

There is only one place that you can pick the full-rated load and it is right in front of your nose at a short radius. The crane is capable of doing what the manufacturer states in terms of capacity, but it can only do it at a very short radius in the load chart.

With that in mind, crane work in general is pretty basic. The same holds for crane use in tree work.

Safe lifts involve knowing two key pieces of information: What weight are you lifting (picking) and how far out you are placing that weight (radius)?

Once you know these two key pieces of information, then other factors become important. Selecting the right crane by using the crane’s load chart or knowing your crane’s load chart determines whether you can make the lift safely. After you have determined that your crane is right for the job, placing the crane at the job site then becomes important.

Lift planning

There are a multitude of different hazards and obstacles for a crane, and every single place you work is different. You are going to have other trees and building obstacles and power lines and underground utilities along with other underground hazards. You may need certain permitting depending on where you are.

Every crane should have a good tape measure, and you should use it rather than rely on the crane’s computer gear. Computer gear can be very accurate, if you make the big assumption that it is calibrated correctly. If you measure it out and compare it manually in the load chart, then there is no guesswork. It is stated in crane regulations that operator aids are not to replace good craning practices, which means you don’t rely on the computer in place of using manual calculations.

What is the crane capable of? What is the crane configuration and crane setup data, rigging data, lift data and load data? You don’t have to document this, but it is information you need to know.

There is some lifting software out there to help with the data gathering. For what arborists do, it probably isn’t critical, but it can be useful if you want to get a little high tech and it is a good way to document things ahead of time.

Very important to any crane that you plan to use, regardless of manufacturer, you always want to read the load chart notes. The load chart notes discuss the limitations of your crane and any unique features. There are various danger, caution and warning notes. There is information about rope and there are different reeving charts for different reeving patterns, and there are reeving capacities. (Reeving refers to parts of line or falls of line. You use multiple parts of line when your rope capacity cannot handle a single-part load.)

Lift, transition and land

The operator must plan three phases of the lift. The three lifting phases are “Initial lift,” “Transition the load” and “Landing the load.” Each phase can present unique challenges. Changes in radius, hazards and operator visual references can change dramatically.

The phase that presents the most challenge to tree care professionals is the “Initial lift.” Initial lift is the first loading of the log to the crane. Tree care professionals must estimate their load weight. Under “normal” crane operations this would not be an acceptable means to determine load weight.

The current OSHA 1926.1417 “Compliance with rated capacity” states: “The operator must verify that the load is within the rated capacity of the equipment by at least one of the following methods: (a) The weight must be determined from a source recognized by the industry (such as the load’s manufacturer), (b) by calculation method recognized by the industry, or (c) by other equally reliable means. In addition, when requested by the crane operator, this information must be provided to the operator prior to the lift.”

Tree care professionals have been trained and qualified to determine by a calculation method recognized by the industry.

Once the final cut is made, you own the lift!
So you are a tree care professional and you are trained to calculate log weight. If you have calculated wrong, you get into a world of hurt very quickly. Sound planning is the key to minimize your risk.

Once you have the proper weight calculation, then you must consider the effect of dynamic loading. Dynamic loading occurs with a load on the move. Dynamic loading can appear in two different ways. First if the operator does not load up the rigging to the approximate weight of the load, then the cut log can fall and greatly increase the load stress, perhaps beyond the crane’s capacity. You can easily damage the crane permanently. The second way to overload the crane dynamically is to tighten the rigging beyond the final load weight, then make the final cut. In this case, you have, in essence, created a very large sling shot. The load can bounce uncontrollably and, again, dynamically overload the crane.

Transitioning the load is rotating the cut log toward the landing zone. During this operation you can encounter increasing radius, blocked vision and obstacles to avoid.

Landing the load is usually pretty easy, however the operator must ensure all personnel are clear of the landing site and avoid any other identified obstacles. Landing a load in tree care is not usually that big of a deal because by this time the operator is past the major problems we have already discussed.

**Crane inspection**

Conducting crane operations requires appropriate documentation required for your area. Different states have different requirements such as inspection, licensing and/or permits. For example, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York have their own licensing agencies so you have to go through the state to obtain the proper credentials.

Additionally, ensure your crane has had a DOT inspection, and for larger cranes road permits may also be required. General crane inspection is required annually and is separate from the DOT road inspections.

Basic inspection – When you do your walk-around you want to check your welds, look for damaged fasteners, make sure there are no leaks and check your engine fluids and hydraulic fluid. These checks should be visual checks only.

Are you familiar with hydraulic oil injection? This is really bad stuff and it can kill you within 20 minutes if you handle a pressurized system and get a hydraulic oil injection hit. Even if your crane is idle for a long time, there can be residual pressure inside the system. When you are doing your inspection, it is by visual check only and not with your hands.

Tire pressure and tire condition are not generally a big deal during lifting operations because the tires are lifted off the ground during setup. The reason the tires must be off the ground is because the tires and the axles are engineered to be part of the counter weight. If your tires are on the ground, you invalidate your load chart. The ASME B30.5 standard and other regulations support this.

Now let’s look at a few of the points discussed so far in more detail.

**Crane placement**

Crane placement establishes the center of rotation. All radius measurements will start from this point. These radii will also establish lifting limits. Deploy the outriggers properly and use mats where required. In residential work, sometimes people place their cranes in the street. This could be a good place because of minimal obstructions. On the other hand, you want to be aware of underground utilities, sewers and other underground hazards. Also, increasing your picking radius may reduce your lifting capacity to minimal amounts.

“Ground conditions” is a new consideration to the OSHA Subpart CC (1926.1400) Construction regulations. Tree care is exempt from these regulations: however, if you use your crane outside of the tree care realm you may fall into this regulation.

Ground conditions are discussed in 1926.1402. If you are doing tree work at a residence, the crane operator must ask some key questions. The controlling entity is responsible to provide all known underground hazards to the operator. In the case of a residence, the controlling entity is most likely the homeowner. Ask about sewer pipes, washouts or septic tanks. You may require some sign-offs or disclaimers.

The good news is that most of the boom trucks and the lighter truck cranes don’t put that much pressure on the ground. Pay particular attention to your cribbing mats. The larger the cribbing mat, the less point pressure will be on the ground.

When you have an entity that is in charge of a facility and they are very serious about maintenance and crane work of any kind, then they probably will provide you with an actual known ground pressure.
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In the tree care industry this will most likely be an unknown. As a crane operator, you should ask the key questions of the property owner.

Setting up cranes close to buildings can place side forces on the foundations. It is required that, for example, if you have an eight-foot foundation, the closest you may place your crane is eight feet. Farther away is better. You don’t want to end up collapsing the foundation.

**Leveling the crane**

You must level the crane within one degree of level according to manufacturers’ and industry standards. If you are as much as three degrees out of level, you can lose up to 50 percent of your capacity chart with certain boom configurations.

I teach two methods of leveling the crane. One is to place a level on the turntable – both front to back and side to side – when the boom is out of the rest. If you have the boom in the rest, you are actually applying torque to the turntable and you will get an inaccurate reading. Take the pressure off the boom before you do your final level.

I use the pendulum method when I don’t have a level. I drop the ball, if it is a single-part line, and use that as a pendulum or plumb line to determine level front to back and side to side. It is a very accurate method if done properly. Sometimes you don’t have the space to use this method.

Make final checks of crane functions, rigging and reeving. When operating in northern climates, you want to make sure that you “exercise” your equipment before you put it under loaded conditions because you want to heat up your hydraulic oil. Confirm your capacities from your load chart. Confirm reeving. Again, reeving refers to parts of line or falls of line. You use multiple parts of line when your rope capacity cannot handle a single-part load. What that load is will vary from crane to crane. You want to make sure that you are selecting rigging that is appropriate for the loads that you are picking up.

**Determining load weight**

Tree care professionals can make log weight calculations that are accepted as an industry standard practice. In order to do this there is basic data required.

- Identify the tree species – each species has a unique density, or weight per cubic foot.
- Calculate the square-foot measurement of the log from its diameter. To determine diameter of the log you will have to measure the base and the top and average the two measurements. Consult the green log chart for the species and diameter. This will give you the weight of a one foot section.
- Finally, measure the log height and calculate its weight.

Example: My planned lift is with an Oregon ash that averages 20 inches in diameter and the cut length is eight feet. Using the green log chart, find Oregon ash with a 20-inch diameter. Your index weight is 105 pounds per foot. You should come up with a log weight of 840 pounds. Now add your rigging weight, which for this example is 50 pounds of rigging. Your net load is 890 pounds.

Now add a safety margin of 20 percent. Safety margin is not defined in any of the written standards or OSHA regulations. The 20 percent is based on a “Duty Cycle” reduction that is part of standard crane load chart notes by many crane manufacturers. Duty cycle reduction in crane work usually refers to high frequency, repeated motion lifts. An example would be lifting concrete buckets to roof tops all day long. In your specific operation, you may want to make this safety margin higher. The adjusted weight for our example is 1,068 pounds.

You may also want to factor in dynamic loading as an additional safety margin. In many cases a 50 percent added safety margin is not unreasonable. In our example, let’s add a dynamic loading margin of 50 percent greater than the 1,068 pounds. The result is 1,602 pounds. Now look to the load chart and see if your crane is capable of this pick.

When you start to add specific safety margins to your lift planning you give yourself an added cushion of safety. One result will be limiting the radius at which your pick can occur safely.

The more safety you build in the better. Personal safety margin is not identified in any of the regulations or standards, but should be carefully considered through experience.

Joseph W. Birkbeck III is a master instructor with Altec Industries, Inc. in Birmingham, Alabama, and a member of the Altec Sentry Safety Department. He is also an NCCCO Certified Crane Operator and an NCCCO examiner. This article was excerpted from his presentation, “Determining Log Weight, Using a Load Chart and Adding Personal Safety Margins,” at TCI EXPO 2011 in Hartford.
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The Zelkova tree looked rather poorly last fall. Portions of the canopy were thin and exhibiting early leaf drop. The leaves were small and off-color. The trend continued this spring. The new growth appeared anemic and sparse. I have suspected root issues with this tree, and removed stem-girdling roots (SGR’s) that were accessible near the surface. While parts of the root collar showed proper flare entering the ground, other areas showed no flare, entering the ground vertically. Additionally, these “flat” areas of the trunk seemed to coincide with the weakened areas of the crown. A root crown excavation (RCX) was clearly in order.

Although I see this problem with great frequency, selling a RCX to a potential client can be difficult. The irony is that it’s far easier to sell above-ground treatments such as pruning or fertilization, even though those treatments are likely to have little or no benefit to a tree with SGR or root-girdling root (RGR) issues. I suppose there’s something sexy about the aerial ballet of shiny bucket trucks and climbers to which blowing dirt around with a magic wand can’t compare.

This tree was strategically located to provide shade and aesthetics to a large horse barn. The owner is a well-educated lover of trees. She planted dozens of unusual trees on the property including amur cork, yellowwood, golden chain, sweet gum, katsura, and others. I had done several RCX’s to other trees on the property, with good results. Over time I have convinced her of the benefits of wood chips and proper (which sometimes means no) pruning. We do not fertilize.

The importance of this tree, along with a trust developed over the years, made the decision to do the RCX easy for this client. At best, we could reverse the demise of this tree; at worst, we would get a good sense of what’s happening underground and make informed decisions concerning its future.

We scheduled to do the job when there was a good deal of moisture in the soil. It was a cloudy, misty day. We set up plywood walls to contain the soil and fired up the pneumatic soil excavation tool. It did not take long to reveal the culprit. A root approximately 1-inch thick by 12-inches long was clearly embedded in the trunk, just below the flattened area. While the rest of the root system was growing in a spiral pattern, and clearly had issues, this root appeared to be having a direct impact on the vasculature. We removed this root along with other, lesser RGR’s, and replaced the soil. A thorough soaking was administered. Now we would wait and see.

We returned to the site three weeks later and were amazed at the results. The crown looked full, with good color and normal leaf size. I have seen good results from this treatment before, but never anything like this. The client thought me an “Arborwizard,” but I was doubtful. I checked with some fellow ASCA members to get their thoughts. While not unanimous, the consensus seemed to be that, yes, a direct correlation could be made.

In the words of Russ Carlson, RCA:

“Think about how the tree grows. The cells of the cambium divide and then...
enlarge. Once they reach a certain stage, the cell walls lignify and become rigid, at which point they can no longer grow larger. New cells grow in the now displaced cambium, next layer out. When the cambium has no room to expand, over time you have a series of small compressed cells, so sap transport is reduced. Now you come along and remove the obstruction. The cambium, which apparently was not dead, can grow without restriction once again. Those cells start dividing and the new ones can again grow to normal size. In just a few weeks in springtime, enough early wood can be created to make a big difference in the sap flow to restricted areas.

While I am sure that most RCX’s I have done have had positive effect, this by far was the most compelling. Timing is everything in life, and I am sure that had a big effect on this case, but the results cannot be denied. I have documented this case along with several others, and have used the images to encourage more RCX’s.

I still like my shiny bucket truck, fancy ropes, saws and saddles, but it is becoming clear that the air-excavation tool may be the most unassuming, revolutionary tool for saving trees to date.

Howard Gaffin, BCMA, RCA and Massachusetts Certified Arborist, is owner of Gaffin Tree & Landscaping, a TCIA member-company located in Rowley, Massachusetts.
New England Ropes hires arborist market manager

New England Ropes, a 10-year TCIA member company, in June hired Lars Andersson as market manager for its arborist, industrial and utility, and equine market segments.

Andersson came from GE Energy, where he most recently worked as a quality integration leader. He is a lean manufacturing Six Sigma Master Black Belt. Six Sigma is a lean manufacturing business management strategy used at GE. In addition, he has worked as a sales engineer, project leader, and project manager also for GE.

“We are very excited that Lars Andersson has decided to join our sales team. His extensive experience in lean quality management, marketing, manufacturing, and engineering will prove to be invaluable to our organization and the markets that we serve,” says Chris Lavin, New England Ropes president.

Man Lift names Joe Banks VP of operations

Man Lift Mfg. Co. of Cudahy, Wisconsin, in May named Joe Banks vice president of operations and manufacturing for the four-year TCIA associate member company. Banks is a retired U.S. Air Force officer, a former military and civilian airline pilot, and an accomplished operations executive with more than 35 years of operations and manufacturing experience.

“I am thrilled to join Man Lift in such an important role and am looking forward to driving a number of quality and efficiency initiatives,” Banks said.

“The addition of Joe to our executive team immediately adds a wealth of experience and leadership ability that will have a tremendous impact,” said Phil Sprio, Man Lift president.

Barko Hydraulics acquires Norco assets

Barko Hydraulics, LLC, a forestry and material handling equipment manufacturer headquartered in Superior, Wisconsin, in May acquired the assets of Norco Equipment Company of Oconto Falls, Wisc. Norco, which previously purchased Dynamic Manufacturing, was a 12-year TCIA associate member.

The acquisition will enable Barko to expand in the forestry, bio-energy, recycling and right-of-way maintenance (ROW) markets while complementing its existing line of material handlers. Under the PUMA Equipment brand, Norco manufactures four- and six-wheel forwarders, track harvesters, processing heads, and firewood processors. Norco offers a full line of wood processing equipment – hand-fed brush chippers, high horsepower whole-tree chippers and grinders – under the Dynamic Manufacturing label.

“The completion of the Norco acquisition represents the latest step in our strategic plan to aggressively grow our forestry business offerings,” said Eric Blashford, Barko president.

“The combination of PUMA, Dynamic and Barko’s products, sales and product support creates an expanded offering for our customers, and further strengthens our global dealer network,” said Steve Kiefer, Barko vice president of sales, marketing and business development.

OSHA renews Altec alliance

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in June renewed its Alliance with Altec Industries Inc. to continue working together to protect workers from fall, electrocution, tip-over and other hazards related to operating and maintaining cranes, chippers, digger derricks and insulated and non-insulated aerial devices including tree care devices.

“OSHA is continuing its Alliance with Altec Industries Inc. to help prevent worker injuries and fatalities in the utility, telecommunications, contractor and tree care industries that Altec services,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health David Michaels. “We value Altec’s collaborative efforts to reach out to vulnerable workers with information and training that will help them keep safe on the job and exercise their rights.”

During the two-year agreement, the Alliance will work to provide Altec employees and others, including limited English proficiency workers, with information, guidance and access to training resources. These resources will help employers protect the health and safety of workers, and assist workers with understanding their rights and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act).

Altec will develop compliance assistance products on crane safety and continue to provide OSHA field staff with Best Practice Seminars the various equipment. Altec will also support OSHA initiatives and campaigns, such as the Heat Illness Prevention campaign, as well as North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week.
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Logan Self-Propelled Dump Trailer

Axis Corporation’s Logan Self-Propelled Dump Trailer is designed to haul up to 3,500 pounds, can be towed over the road with a truck and is self-propelled to work areas where trucks cannot go. Being much lighter in weight than a truck, it can safely be taken onto lawns without worrying about tracking up the grass. The tree professional can use it for hauling and transporting equipment, tools, supplies, debris, branches or cuttings. And when it is time to leave the site, the dump trailer saves time and money because it can be towed from the site full, eliminating an extra trip for loads that won’t fit in the truck. The Logan Self-Propelled Dump Trailer comes standard with a 13 hp Honda electric pull start engine (with hour meter), a 50-inch-wide x 91-inch-long bed, and LED lighting. It can be painted any color to match company colors and comes with the option to add features such as an electric/hydraulic braking system or wood side extensions to increase the height of the bed.

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*A nominal fee is charged for lunch.

For additional workshops listings and details for each workshop, or to register, call 1-800-733-2622, or visit http://www.tcia.org/training/ehap.htm.

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Oregon Convention Ctr., Portland, OR
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; peter@tcia.org

**August 11-15, 2012**
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Contact: www.isa-arbor.com; (888) 472-8733

**August 24-25, 2012**
EHAP and First Aid & CPR Training in Spanish
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Contact: DrMartha@Holistic-Safety.com; (682)551-9771

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Contact: shenson@gptx.org; www.isatexas.com

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**February 24-26, 2013**
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Contact: www.penndelisa.org

**March 24-26, 2013**
Southern Chapter ISA*
Memphis, TN
Contact: www.isasouthern.org

**May 7-10, 2013**
Western Chapter ISA
Indian Wells, CA
Contact: www.wcisa.net

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If you think that you have the ideal 17-year-old employee lined up for a summer job in your tree care or landscape business, you should probably think again.

Rules vary from state to state, but the fairly universal restriction on “child labor” by both the Department of Labor (DOL) and insurance providers is that one must be 18 or older to work in hazardous occupations. In other words, the employee must be 18 to run equipment such as chain saws, stump grinders and chippers.

Additionally, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (DOT) requires the employee to be 18 in order to drive commercial vehicles (10,000 pounds GVW or greater).

Sixteen- and 17-year-olds can work for tree companies, but generally cannot work on a tree field crew because they cannot be around the aforementioned equipment in operation. They can work around the office or shop, or on a lawn or landscape maintenance crew, with some limitations.

Those who are 14 and 15 are restricted to office work only, based on strict part-time and hour limitation guidance from DOL. Some states require that a 14-15-year-old obtain a work permit.

You may wish to check with your state DOL to see if they have any different guidance, but as a rule of thumb, no state’s rule is supposed to be less stringent than the federal rule.

The main law regulating child labor in the United State is the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Generally for non-agricultural jobs (tree care is not considered an agricultural job, whereas work in a nursery may be), individuals under 14 may not be employed at all. Individuals between 14 and 16 may be employed in allowed occupations during limited hours, and children between 16 and 18 may be employed for unlimited hours in non-hazardous occupations.

Violators of child labor provisions are subject to civil penalties with fines of up to $10,000 for each employee who was the subject of a violation.

The DOL’s Wage & Hour Division has a resource webpage addressing a wide variety of child labor issues. The URL is: http://www.dol.gov/whd/childlabor.htm.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
Some of us have been involved in tree industry safety for a long time. Perhaps folks like me should be grinding our teeth down on a nearby log from time to time, but with age comes experience and most certainly our “opinions.” These days a company having a safety manager is a sign that the company going somewhere realizes safety is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. I say this tongue in cheek, as I suspect I might be pigeonholing companies with revenues in the tens of millions. But essentially any company from the independent owner/operator to the mega big, thousand employee concerns, having that responsible “somebody” in charge of safety is a good sign as to a company’s health. Some companies struggling through hard financial times very likely will see their safety commitments and costs as an overhead that can be pruned or maybe even done away with. Again, tongue in cheek, but I am being real here. That’s the “Opinion thing” going on. That is the company on its way out.

After safety another aspect of doing business is the purchasing of equipment essential to getting the job done. I have been fortunate in my career to be asked to assess equipment and write safety and training programs for that equipment – from tractor-pulled deck mowers to an array of boom saws to electrical hazard training trailers, tree felling programs and other things. Perhaps I have an eye for seeing the “What could be better” items. Follow that statement? What could be better? Just because a piece of equipment has been used for years in the field does not mean that it cannot be made safer.

So when the calendar turned to 2012 at our premises here in Rochester, New York, it struck me that an inspection of equipment should receive some attention and determine what could be made better to increase the margin of safety for our number one asset, the field workers. That’s part of my job, right? Certainly, that’s the experience and age thing kicking in. At our companies, we have quite the array of chippers from large, tractor-towed whole-tree machines, to tracked chipper machines to an array of pull-behind models. (I am not including the tub grinders or horizontal.) I picked three units.

Donning gloves and a jacket, camera and clip board, I went to have a look at guarding. Guarding is essentially the device(s) that provide the protection of employees from objects and parts that spin, vibrate, rotate, chop, split, shave, press, stomp and angrily throw stuff...getting the picture? Shrouds, pulley/belt covers, engine compartment covers, rails and doors, etc. protect us from those things and often are removed as inconveniences. Tell me that’s not true!

In the end this was the most rewarding task I have given myself in a while. Quite simply I looked at three items and had all
three items put in the shop, Bam! Were they broken? Well, no. Were they out of service? No. Could something be made better without reducing the integrity of the machine? Absolutely! They needed tweaking.

One machine that is known in the industry as a work horse and for us performs heavy commercial work is our big Bandit 1890 chipper that has been just been re-fitted with a brand new 30-inch feed table. It came from the factory with a 16-inch feed table 13 years ago but times have changed and with more safety-conscious customers, clients and of course our employees, I requested we had a new, larger one welded up, painted and affixed to the unit. The manufacturer calls it the “Intimidator” and it certainly was scary with a 16-inch feed table.

Voicing my concerns regarding a current chipper incident being investigated by Cal OSHA, it was made to happen, and the first thing I heard from the general foreman when he saw it done was, “Thanks! It needed that.” A real feel-good factor all around!

Again, it was a design that needed updating and restoring to a better standard. Purchased in another decade, it has had a safety facelift. We took a feed table illustration sent from the manufacturer and made a replacement unit that will last forever. The new feed table was made to give employees a greater distance before feed-roller contact. It was painted to match. Our state-certified welders are proud of their creation and, as a safety head, I am comforted to know the danger of the machine has been pushed back a bit from the employees and a heightened awareness of the chipper itself is in the field.

Looking at our newly purchased Morbark Mountain Goat tracked chipper with grapple, I could not help but notice the emergency stop button was in a place where storing the grapple could bump it and shut the unit down. In fact, I heard that it had already happened numerous times. A simple fix was recessing the button within an open front steel box so the grapple could not hit the button. A hand will have no problem hitting the button.

Continuing on the Goat it was apparent employees would be utilizing one of the tracks as a step in order to enter and exit the unit. That’s not a bad idea, but the safety manager brain has to kick in at some point and see that would track mud, dirt and filth up the stairs into the cab. Am I right? Absolutely! What’s the number one cause of injury incidents on equipment? Slips, trips and falls from machinery constitute equipment’s number one incident due to muddy and slippery ladders or steps. Any item that was noted and visibly posted on the unit is the manufacturers’ decal to the right of the step stating: “TRACKS CAN CAUSE CRUSHING INJURIES.” Being that the machine does not move quickly, only 1.5 mph, what do you think the chances are somebody might use the tread as a step while it is moving? Is there an employee who might think, “It’s moving slowly enough and I will only be on the track for a sec...”? We humans are fickle beings and look at warnings signs as personal challenges. If a seasoned safety manager can think the worst, then it probably could occur at some point.

I just envisioned somebody disregarding the warning decal and slipping on a moving muddy track and a boot being caught and pulled between the track and undercarriage, a space of about three inches. The operator in the cab five feet away probably would not hear a call for help from a co-worker or stop the unit fast enough to prevent a terrible injury and the story would have an outcome that we can only imagine.

So the equipment manager and the VP and chief operating officer were dragged out to see what I thought so important. After showing and explaining my thoughts, watching my co-workers shudder at the vision I described, it was determined to involve the mechanic shop and get an extruded steel, grated step manufactured that is easy to adjust and take off if need be, but at the same time would cover the track and provide a firm, non-skid step surface. A work of beauty that will safeguard the operator – and it actually works.

Our employees shall never be allowed to use the step while the unit is in motion, but at the same time we will at the very least reduce the likelihood of a turned ankle and reduce mud and filth from congesting the stairway. One should never stop looking for a better way.

Last but not least another pull-behind chipper was looked at and, while it is a perfectly functioning little piece of equipment, it was in need of a tweaking and as the tweaks were so minute the everyday user probably will not notice it. Over the years the emergency stop bar that surrounds the hopper across the top and sides must have been a real pain to place into the stop mode. It was really fiddly. Operating the feed rollers from feed to reverse was no problem, but snagging that “stop” position in the middle was a pain. You might be able to get it there and stop for a moment, but turn your back and, with the vibration I sensed, it would engage on its own. After a little coaxing, I got it to vibrate into feed mode. Not good.

A simple fix was to replace the little three-stage stopper plate that had become rounded off with constant use through the years. While perhaps not a big deal, what do you do when you really have to stop the machine and it won’t stop? I have seen over the year’s dozens of chippers with this ailment. Some of you reading this right now, I am willing to wager, are thinking, “Oh, yeah, I have one that is hard to stop the feed rollers on; I have several just like that.” Well, hello – get it (them) sorted and fixed today!

So the gist of this exercise was to visit three items specifically and see what I could do to enhance safer operations, and I came up with four things that needed addressing. Some readers will consider each and every one of these items to be insignificant, but they should consider the consequences of that particular piece not
being operational as intended. For the sake of a few bucks and perhaps a total of 20 man hours, a long term crippling injury or worse may have been prevented. I hope I will never realize anything different.

OK, one more safety pointer. To continue with guarding as a topic, I will stretch my definition of guarding to encompass a full-body harness that aerial lift operators wear. It guards the wearer against the ground suddenly rushing up to meet a falling tree worker, right?

While attending a storm summit in January for the upcoming 2012 year, I sat with the former safety manager of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for an hour or two exchanging info and comparing notes on things such as professional safety people practice and was showed a picture of a person wearing a harness and lanyard. That’s what I was told it was. The wearer had been caught on a cable reeling onto a spool. The wearer was literally rolled up into the spool with the cable in a space about 2 feet by 3 feet. That man did not have a chance; with the tensile strengths of nylon webbing what it is, a worker will not tear his or her self out of it.

I think how many times over the years I have seen and talked to tree trimmers wearing saddles and harnesses on the ground and you, the reader, are probably thinking how you were wearing your harness or your employees were wearing their harnesses only yesterday standing near chippers, standing on the side of the road, standing near clearing equipment or heavy machinery.

It is a real danger. It’s like giving your children rope to play with – nothing good will come from it.

A webbed harness when working in the air is without a doubt your best friend, but when you are on the ground you become its prisoner and if snagged by a passing vehicle or by a limb feeding into a chipper, hey, guess what, you are likely going with it!

I thought I would share this personal angst of mine as this practice is fairly widespread in our industry. Going forward, harnesses should never be worn walking around on terra firma. It’s like wearing a suit made out of matches. I do realize a common safety topic is not wearing fall protection while feeding chippers, but I see no place on the ground for fall protection whatsoever. Stop, take them off. Manufacturers, please put a warning label on them.

I challenge my peers in the industry to pick a day next week and go out and pay a visit to one piece of your equipment. Turn it on and run it through the paces. Look at the ergonomic placements of on and off switches, handrails, steps. Inspect and repair! Let’s see what could be better today.

John Harris Schwelm, CTSP, is safety director for Ironwood Heavy Highway, LLC and Terry Tree Service, LLC, a 12-year TCIA-member company located in Rochester, New York.

Editor note: The changes to the equipment discussed in this article were done in accordance with the manufacturers’ recommendations and in one case the manufacturer is looking at incorporating the change into future designs.
TCIA’s re-designed and interactive website is full of dynamic new features built to make your online experience with the Association smoother, easier and more enjoyable.

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By Jeff Korhan

Blogs are indeed websites, but there are distinct and relevant differences and advantages to both.

Most people think of a website as a digital storefront – a place for offering products and services, activities that you can also accomplish with a blog. Then what exactly is the difference between a blog and a website?

A blog is a digital magazine

Blogs are websites that are designed to engage an audience with fresh content – just like a magazine. If you are a blogger you are a publisher – no different than a print publisher. The cover of your magazine is the home page – your most recent content.

Google loves blogs because the content they publish is fresh. Fresh content is relevant. It’s current. If it also happens to be high quality, it quickly rises to the top of Google search.

Are you a sports fanatic? If so, then you regularly check the updates at ESPN.com. If business is one of your primary interests, you do the same with The Wall Street Journal at WSJ.com. We all have interests, and the nature of digital publishing drives us to blogs where we can get the most up-to-date news and commentary that challenges or affirms our perspectives.

As a business owner, you have to determine whether being a news source or a storefront is right for you. Which will earn you more business – commentary with personality or detailed product and service offerings? If fresh and original content is most likely to attract, engage and convert prospects into buyers, then a blog or digital magazine as your home page is the right online strategy for you.

A website is a digital storefront

Some consumers are on a short timetable and are more concerned about product and service details. In other words, they are ready to buy. If your products and services are well-known or in high demand, then a website with a home page that is focused on commerce is clearly the best approach for your business.

If like many of us you still need to work at attracting new prospects to your website, then a blog should be integral to your online marketing strategy – and most likely your home page. Remember the purpose of the Web is search, and Google loves blogs because they serve up fresh content that is in demand.

The most promising option these days may be a hybrid site that combines the best of a blog and traditional website.

This effectively monetizes your site by keeping your commerce primary, while also taking advantage of the search engine optimization (SEO) benefits of combining fresh blog content on that same page. My favorite example of this is copyblogger.com. An example of a larger organization is edelmandigital.com.

This hybrid approach gives you the best of both worlds.

However, there is a catch. Yep, you have to do the work of actively creating fresh content. Sometimes even that is not enough. However, it is still the surest way for staying in the good graces of Google.

Jeff Korhan is a professional speaker and digital marketing consultant who helps green industry businesses use social media and Internet marketing to enhance customer relationships and accelerate business growth. He regularly publishes fresh content at jeffkorhan.com.

The Care of Trees, which won the website category in TCIA’s Professional Communications Awards for 2010, includes this blog as part of its website at http://blog.thecareoftrees.com/.
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The ANSI Accredited Standards Committee A300 is excited about the publication of the industry’s first consensus standard for tree planting, ANSI A300 (Part 6)-2012 Planting & Transplanting. As the title indicates, this standard covers more than planting. However, in its initial iteration it only covered transplanting and not planting.

The Accredited Standards Committee (ASC) A300 issued the transplanting standard, ANSI A300 (Part 6)-2005 Transplanting, in 2005. At the time of drafting of that standard, there was some discussion as to why the standard only addressed the transplanting of trees already established in the landscape. One reason was that the committee wanted to be considerate of the needs of members American Nursery and Landscape Association (ANLA) and Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS). While some tree care companies do plant trees, many people think of the nursery and landscape industries when they think of tree planting. It was not clear whether these industries would be publishing standards and if ASC A300 would be creating a conflicting document.

In 2008, the ASC A300 began preparing for the revision of ANSI A300 Part 6. Some members noted that due to production methods, many “planted” trees have been “transplanted” one or more times before being installed in a landscape. Discussion with our nursery and landscape partners also indicated that these industries did not intend to publish their own ANSI Standard for tree planting any time in the foreseeable future. Considering these facts, the discussion of the new standard began with tree planting being considered for possible inclusion.

The American Nursery and Landscape Association led the subgroup initially in order to ensure that concerns from the nursery and landscape trades were addressed and that production and handling methods were not inadvertently impacted by the document.

The Alliance for Community Trees had fairly recently been granted a seat on ASC A300 and was able to assume chairman-
ship of the subgroup for the final year of the process. As ACT members plant millions of trees nationwide, this was a very good role for the organization to play.

The most significant change in the new edition of ANSI A300 (Part 6) is section 6.4, Tree Planting Practices. This section includes the information seen in many brochures and booklets regarding how to plant a tree. The new section includes guidelines on objectives, plant and site inspection, tools and equipment, digging the hole, installing woody plants, support systems, and post-planting care practices.

Here are a few excerpts from the new section:

**64 Planting practices**

**64.1 Planting objectives**

Planting objectives shall be established prior to beginning operations.

**64.1.1 Potential conflict with utilities, lines of sight, buildings, and other infrastructure should be avoided. Tall-growing trees shall not be planted directly under overhead primary distribution and transmission electric lines.**

**64.2 Plant and site inspections for planting**

**64.2.1 Trees shall meet the planting objective.**

**64.2.2 Tree condition, quality, and acceptance criteria for planting should be specified in writing.**

**64.2.2.1 Tree condition, quality, and acceptance criteria should include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:**

a. general health;

b. general structural condition;

c. root collar/trunk flare condition and location;

d. crown shape;

e. size of root ball/quality of root system;

f. foliage color or density; and,

g. any other related issue that will impact the estimated rate of success.

**64.2.3 Trees that do not meet the condition, quality, and acceptance criteria should be rejected for planting.**

**64.2.4 Soil at the installation site should be analyzed and tested for pH, structure, texture, density, nutrients, and percolation.**

**64.3 Digging the hole**

**64.3.1 The final depth of the planting hole is determined by the depth and firmness of the root ball and other characteristics of the site and shall not exceed the depth of the root ball.**

**64.3.2 The depth of the root ball shall be measured from the bottom of the trunk flare to the bottom of the ball.**

**64.4 Installing woody plants**

**64.5.1 Circling and kinked roots should be straightened or severed.**

**64.5.2 Trees or shrubs should be placed in the same compass orientation from which they originated, if known.**

**64.5.3 Bare root plants should be installed so that their root system is evenly distributed in the planting hole.**

**64.5.4 The bottom of the trunk flare shall be at or above the finished grade.**

**64.5.5 All root ball supporting materials should be cut-off from the top third of the root ball and removed from the planting hole prior to final back filling.**

**64.5.7 Backfill**

**64.5.7.1 Backfill should be similar to the soil at the planting site or amended to meet a specific objective.**

**64.5.7.2 Organic amendments incorporat-**
ed into backfill and/or surrounding soil should not exceed 10 percent by volume.

64.5.7.3 The back-fill soil shall be installed and settled in layered sections to limit future settling and prevent air pockets.

64.5.8 Water should be added to the root zone and surrounding soil to bring the root zone to field capacity.

64.5.9 Mulch should be applied near, but not touching, the trunk out to the perimeter of the planting. Initial depth of organic mulch should be between 2 and 4 inches (5 and 10 cm).

64.5.10 Mulch type shall be specified to meet an objective.

64.5.11 Trunks should be protected when damage from sunlight, animals, or other causes is likely.

64.7 Post-planting care practices

64.7.1 Post-planting care shall be specified for an appropriate period of time based on the region, site conditions, and species.

64.7.2 Post-planting care for a minimum of one year should be considered.

64.7.3 Specifications for post-planting care should consist of, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

a. soil moisture management;

b. mulching;

c. integrated pest management;

d. pruning (see ANSI A300 Part 1 – Pruning standard);

e. monitoring;

f. soil management (see ANSI A300 Part 2 – Soil Management standard); and,

g. maintenance/removal of tree support systems (see ANSI A300 Part 3 – Supplemental Support Systems standard).

The transplanting section features sections on practices, objectives, plant and site inspections, tools and equipment, preparing the plant for transplanting (including digging and method), lifting, and moving and storage.

Here is a sample of the revised text:

63.5.4 Transplanting methods
63.5.4.1 The following methods should be considered when specifying a tree or shrub for relocation:
   a. Balled and wrapped;
   b. Bare root;
   c. Boxed; and,
   d. Tree spade.

63.5.4.2 Mechanical and hand digging operations should start outside the finished root ball size, exception: Mechanical tree spade.

63.5.4.3 Balled and wrapped
   63.5.4.3.1 Methods and materials used to protect or secure the root ball shall hold the ball firmly.

63.5.4.4 Bare root
   See Annex A-4 for Bare Root Information

63.5.4.5 Boxed
   63.5.4.5.1 Box sides shall be tight against the root ball.
   63.5.4.5.2 Box sides should be fastened together to limit movement.
   63.5.4.5.3 Box bottom, if installed, shall be tight against the root ball.
   63.5.4.5.4 Box top shall be installed if the box will be tilted during transport.

63.5.4.6 Tree spade
   63.5.4.6.1 Damage beyond the scope of the work to the tree or shrub shall be avoided.
   63.5.4.6.2 Tree spades should be free of fluid leaks.
   63.5.4.6.3 Tree spades shall be maintained according to manufacturer’s specifications.
   63.5.4.6.4 Adjustments shall be made for differences between slope of the old and new site.

   Figure 63.5.4.6.4 Example of an adjustment for difference in slope.

63.6 Lifting
   63.6.1 Prior to lifting root balls, roots should be separated from the surrounding soil.
   63.6.2 The system used for lifting shall prevent damage to the root ball, trunk, and crown.
   63.6.3 Spreader bars should be used to distribute forces away from the root ball and to provide crown clearance.

We are grateful to the members of the subcommittee and full committee for their work in bringing this standard to completion, as well as to Chet Halka, Jr., Nina Bassuk, Gary Watson and Ed Gilman for serving as subject matter experts to the committee regarding various elements of the draft. We hope you will find the standard and associated Best Management Practices to be useful resources in writing, monitoring, and implementing specifications for tree planting and transplanting in your practice.

Michael Galvin is director with the Consulting Group at SavATree in Bedford Hills, New York, and the Alliance for Community Trees representative to the ASC A300.

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Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a skill every arborist should know, and most do since OSHA requires that at least one person on every crew is trained in CPR, as well as first aid. There is good reason for this requirement as every year several tree workers have been saved by the quick action of a co-worker who was trained in CPR. Actually, it’s a skill everyone should know as there are numerous testimonials of the quick response of a bystander trained in CPR being a critical link in the chain of survival for a person in cardiac arrest.

If it has been awhile since you have taken a CPR class (hopefully not more than two years), you’ll probably find that there have been some changes to the practice. I’ll give you a short head’s-up on what you might see, hear and practice next time you take the class. However, this discussion is really just to alert you to those changes you might see in your next CPR class and should in no way be considered a substitution for completion of a class.

First, what is the purpose of CPR? We perform CPR to keep oxygen-containing blood circulating in a person without a pulse and not breathing. Oxygen is critical to all the body’s tissues and organs but some can survive longer than others if the supply is either interrupted or diminished. The heart and brain require a constant supply of oxygen-containing blood and injury can occur within several minutes if this supply is interrupted. Kidneys, on the other hand, may function 45 minutes and skeletal muscle an hour or more before injury occurs. So CPR is performed to keep the brain and heart supplied with at least a minimal amount of oxygen-containing blood.

You perform CPR without the expectation of the person reviving during the procedure, that a pulse and breathing will be restored from this action alone. The objective of CPR is to keep oxygen-containing blood flowing to the brain and heart until other resuscitation efforts can be initiated. CPR can “hold” the person until an AED is brought on site. Administration of an electrical shock through the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) is a common practice for restoring viable heart rhythm.

There are three interventions in CPR, commonly referred to as the ABC’s. A is for airway. Obviously you need an open airway for someone to breathe and this is generally accomplished by the Head Tilt/Chin Lift method, but all arborists should be trained in the Jaw Thrust method. Why? An incident involving a tree worker may also involve trauma injury; an injury that may become worse if unnecessary movement occurs. Once you have an open airway you move on to breathing.

B is for breathing. You have to breathe for the person and while you are exhaling air into them you are still provide air at about 16 percent oxygen to the patient (you are breathing air with 21 percent oxygen), enough to keep them alive. Two rescue breaths are made each time, then back to compressions.

C is for chest compressions. The hands are placed on the lower two-thirds of the sternum and then “Push harder, push faster.” Push to achieve a 2-inch depth and at least a rate of 100 compressions per minute on an adult. You need to be leaning over the person to get enough pressure to push the chest down 2 inches and allow the chest to rebound before the next push. The compressions are alternated with breathing, 30 compressions then 2 rescue breaths.

These three interventions, A – B – C, are familiar to anyone training in CPR, but the
order they are applied may have changed since you last took a class. CPR has traditionally been taught to start with A, then B then C, so check for clear airway, do two rescue breaths and then start compressions. But it is now also being taught to start with C, so the order becomes C – A – B. The reason? If the person just became unconscious, they have oxygen-containing blood in their vessels already. You just need to get this moving.

There are exceptions to this change in order, such as with respiratory arrest that can occur with drowning, where the A – B – C is more appropriate.

Compression can be the sole means of performing CPR on adults suffering from cardiac arrest. The American Heart Association has been promoting a compression only CPR commonly referred to as “hands only” CPR. Many bystanders are reluctant to perform mouth-to-mouth ventilation, as they do not want to risk disease transmission. After all they know nothing about the person or their medical condition. The bystander may also be hesitant just from the vomit or blood that might be present. A breathing barrier provides protection, body substance isolation (BSI), and is carried by EMS personnel, but the average bystander is not likely to be carrying one.

Another reason for hesitation is the bystander is not sure what to do – they either never have been trained in CPR or cannot remember the training. Rather than having a bystander do nothing, hands-only CPR can performed quickly and without much training. If you saw the person suddenly collapse, the hands only CPR is a good means of maintaining blood flow while someone else is running for the AED (and calling 911). The compression rate is the same, at least 100 beats per minute (the same beats per minute as “Another One Bites the Dust” by Queen).

Some arborists are just training in the hands-only CPR, but there is still a tremendous value to tree workers learning conventional CPR as well. The hands-only is an excellent means of starting CPR while another worker runs to the truck to grab the breathing barrier, or if an AED or EMS is only a minute or two away. But if you’ll be performing CPR for several minutes or more, the conventional method should be used, as you need to be circulating oxygen-containing blood, not just blood.

How long can you perform conventional CPR? The rule is you keep doing CPR until EMS arrives. However, if you are doing it right – hard and fast – you’ll most likely wear yourself out in 10 or 15 minutes. If you know there will be 20 minutes or so until EMS arrives, you’ll need to trade off with someone else every few minutes in order to keep applying the proper force.

Next time you and your co-workers take a CPR class, try to practice it as a one-person and two-person CPR; if you are on a rural crew, you might need to do CPR this way in an actual incident.

How we perform CPR is changing, but with these changes arborists need to better understand which method to apply. The next time you take a CPR class, pay attention and practice – the life of a co-worker could depend on your knowledge and skill.

Dr. John Ball, CTSP, is a professor of forestry at South Dakota State University in Brookings, S.D., where he conducts research on tree worker safety. Dr. Ball is also an emergency medical technician and lectures EMT courses at the University.

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Customer service is important. But does it really matter to the bottom line of a tree care business?

Here is a true story of two arborists.

One arborist came after a huge tree fell on our house, saying things such as, “You’re lucky we could squeeze you in …,” “Here is what you’ll have to do when our crew comes …,” and “You’re going to have to wait at least three weeks before we can get to you.”

Years later, following another downed tree, a second arborist took the time to ask what we needed, apologized for the wait, and acknowledged how important this job was for us and our property.

Neither of these people was rude, and both did a professional job. And I am just one residential homeowner. But my wife and I have spent thousands of dollars more over the years with the second arborist for our routine tree care. Why? Because he simply chose different words – words that made us feel good.

This is the real essence of customer service. It isn’t about attitude. It isn’t even about courtesy. It is about teaching your team some very specific communications skills that will bring you more money and clients. Let’s look at some of these skills, and how they can benefit your business.

Making customers feel heard

Most of us think that listening to people is as natural as breathing. We hear what people say, and then we open our mouths and respond. But much of the time, what passes for listening actually involves two people talking past each other:

“I need this finished this month.”

“Ma’am, this is our busy season.”

“But this deadline is really important to me.”

“Ma’am, you have to understand we’re busy right now.”

Real listening – so-called reflective listening – puts good customer feedback ahead of our own agenda. It adds two steps most people never do:

1) Paraphrase what the other person says. Take what they say, gift wrap it in your own words, and hand it right back to them. For example, when a customer says, “We are on a really tight budget,” respond with something like, “So you need this job to be really cost-effective.” This simple act lets a customer know you heard them and have processed what they are saying.

2) Own their emotions. When a customer expresses strong feelings, be right there with them. When a customer says, “I’m upset because your crew was three hours late!” lean right in and say, “Wow, sounds like we really held you up!” Owning a customer’s emotions may feel funny at first, but it is a powerful way to defuse people and get them back on track.

Delivering bad news

Do you ever have to deliver bad news? Of course you do. You have projects that cost more than people expect, situations where your workload and their deadlines are not in sync, and things that can go wrong – like when a spray tech gets your instructions wrong and kills a customer’s shrubbery. And to make matters worse, you work with the unpredictable nature of nature.

Even in cases like these, you can confidently deliver bad news to people – without getting them upset with you personally – by using a three-step process:

1) Introduce the situation. Prepare customers for an important message before you blurt out the bad news. Use phrases like, “Let me walk you through the details of this estimate,” or “We had a situation with your property that we need to discuss with you.”

2) Respond in detail. When we are delivering bad news, most of us say as little as possible, because we naturally move away from painful subjects. When you move toward the pain, and proactively give people details and options, you generally calm
3) Respond empathetically. You have no control over how a customer will respond to bad news, but you have control over what you say. And when you acknowledge the other person’s agenda, as they see it, more often than not they will calm down.

**Showing respect**

Customers always have an agenda. They want their trees serviced quickly. Or inexpensively. They want their property to look good. Perhaps they don’t want to look bad in front of their own bosses when something unfortunate happens, and you can fix it.

Showing respect means addressing the customer’s agenda, and chaining it to your response. Try sentences like this one: “Because you ____, I can do ____.” For example, “Because you are on a tight budget, here are some ideas that might give you the most value.” Another way to show respect and empathy is by acknowledging people, which is not the same as agreeing with them. Here are three quick ways to do this:

Observe what they are thinking and feeling: “I can tell this really inconvenienced you.”

Validate them by comparing them to others: “No one likes to have an unexpected expense like this crop up.”

Identify with them: “If this were my property, I would feel exactly the same way.”

With practice, good acknowledgements will become natural for you – and will change everything about how people react to you.

**When the wheels come off**

You and your team members are reasonable people. And so are most of your customers. But what about those rare times when someone gets really upset, and is in your face about something? It hopefully doesn’t happen very often, but if you work with customers long enough, it will happen (or has happened) to you, too.

I call situations like these the OMG moment, because most of us are thinking, “Oh my gosh, what do I say now?” Instead, change your perspective from what you can say to what you can ask. Have you ever seen a good cop on the scene of an accident? They are trained to do the same thing – ask lots of questions about how everyone is, if people can move, etc. It helps them maintain control.

Good questions show interest in the other person, give you data to help solve the problem, and drain the heat from a tough situation. Explore what went wrong, how it affects the other person, and what they feel would make the situation better. Acknowledge everything the other person says, without judging it. Then you will set the stage to negotiate a solution everyone can live with.

**Powerful problem-solving**

Listening to people and acknowledging them is very important, but eventually, you have to dig in and solve the problem. How you do this can make all the difference in the world, both to the customer and to your negotiating posture.

Most of us frame problems in terms of us: what our constraints, our limits, our schedules are. “It’s going to cost at least $4,000, and our crews are really busy, so it’s going to be at least a few weeks.” Instead, try a simply technique I call the “can-can” – respond with what you can acknowledge and what you can do. For example, “I know you want these trees serviced as soon as possible. Here is how we could stage this project to get the most important parts done first for you.”

Good acknowledgement and good problem solving becomes even more important when customers get upset with you. In situations like these, you aren’t just solving the problem, but helping everyone save face and feel like they “won.” With good, sincere acknowledgement and a focus on what is possible, you can often take someone who is demanding the moon and the stars, and send them away happy with the half of the moon and a quarter of a star you can actually provide.

**It’s all a matter of skills**

People mistakenly believe that good customer service is all about smiles and courtesy – and that it has little bearing on their business. In reality, excellent service comes from skills that the very best firms train and coach their teams on, and top service leaders generally dominate their markets. Learn and practice these skills, and watch them have a measurable impact on your own bottom line.

Rich Gallagher heads Point of Contact Group in Ithaca, New York, and is the author of the book What to Say to a Porcupine and his forthcoming project, What to Say in Your Very Worst Customer Service Situations. This article was based on his presentation on the same subject at Winter Management Conference 2012 in Curacao this past February.
In this feature, a take-off of the Highlights Magazine children’s puzzles, our goal is to point out unsafe behaviors that can, and have, led to injuries or deaths in the tree care industry.

One month we run the image and challenge readers to identify one or more hazards depicted. The next month we identify the hazards and run a new picture. The intent is that these will be used individually and/or by crews, for tailgate safety sessions or in other training.

Email your name, title/job and company name along with the hazards you find to editor@tcia.org. Each month we will draw a name from the list of those who submit the correct hazards and award a prize to one winner.

Extra Credit: Point out any Z133 Standard section numbers violated.

Caution: This is a staged photo intended to show one or more ANSI, OSHA violations, or other hazards.

Activities shown are NOT approved practices.

Cuidado: Esta es una foto para mostrar una o mas ANSI, OSHA u otras infracciones de seguridad. Las actividades mostradas no son practicas approvadas.

For the previous Hi-Lights picture, at right, which ran in the May 2012 issue, unsafe behaviors include:

Violations of the Z133.1-2006 standard:

- 3.4.4 Clothing and footwear appropriate to the known job hazards shall be approved by the employer and worn by the employee.

  Sneakers widely recognized as inappropriate for the hazards.

- 3.4.7 Eye protection shall comply with ANSI Z87.1 and shall be worn when engaged in arboricultural operations.

  There is no eye protection.

- 8.1.5 Arborist saddles and lanyards used for work positioning shall be identified by the manufacturer as suitable for tree climbing.

  While it appears to be a climbing saddle, it is not being used correctly and is not properly adjusted, as a reader pointed out.

- 8.1.8 Arborist climbing lines shall have a minimum diameter of ½ inch (12.7 mm) and be constructed from a synthetic fiber, with a minimum breaking strength of 5,400 pounds (24.02 kN) when new.

  Rope isn’t synthetic, and doesn’t meet strength requirement.

- 8.1.18 Arborists shall have available a climbing line and at least one other means of being secured while working aloft; for example, an arborist climbing line and a work-positioning lanyard.

  He has no lanyard.

  8.1.19 The arborist shall be secured while ascending the tree. The arborist shall be tied in once the work begins and shall be tied in until the work is completed and he or she has returned to the ground. The arborist shall be secured when repositioning the climbing line.

  He is not secured.

Reader comments:

1. Construction-type helmet lacks chin strap or other securing device.

2. Manila rope, in this era? Bizarre. No climbing aids to secure/belay himself to the lines. Not even a double bowline or rappelling wrap to the waist/crotch.

3. Tennis shoes and worn out jeans, while not “illegal” are poor choices (Especially bell-bottoms. This guy has ZERO sense of style.)

4. Harness is neither fastened or adjusted to climber, or attached to lines. No leg straps apparent.

5. Self -hauling on two lines. He’s not thrusting from the hips, making the effort tiring, leading to further bad judgment.

6. Installed red line appears proper for SRT. Therefore this crew has not coordinated and briefed the scope of work and techniques.

Congratulations to Joseph C. Grimme, owner of Very Fine Tree Care in Minneapolis, Minnesota, whose name was drawn from our group of May Hi-Lights respondents. He wins a copy of TCIA’s new Pro Arborist Series Volume 1: Climber Safety, a $44.99 value ($34.99 Member price).
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Stump grinders, like good suits, come in all sizes and styles. The challenge is to get one that fits you best.

Stump machines are divided into basically three classes: small, medium and large. That does not mean good, better, best. Rather, each class serves a specific and deliberate function.

At one end are the handlebar types, either push-able or self-propelled. The larger you go and the more rugged terrain you cover, the more you will want self-propelled; it’s easier on the body and far safer. Handlebar types go anywhere, including the tightest of tight spots, right up to a foundation. All the handlebar types are gasoline-powered.

In the middle is a class representing the core of service units for the tree care professional. These are all self-propelled and often called the walk-beside, walk-behind or “backyard machines.” Why? Most can get through that garden gate directly; some, however, may require all of five minutes’ work to pull the outside wheels. There are various capabilities available within this class; they boil down to horsepower, gas versus diesel power, rubber tires versus tracked, and the arc swing of the cutting arm and wheel. The greater the horsepower and the broader the arc, typically, the more work you can get done faster. These are the industry workhorses, especially for making light work of big trees in a backyard.

At the high end are the large capacity, big processors – the tow-behind stump cutters. These are best for the large companies that do a good amount of large lot-clearing jobs, large trees or have many larger-scale jobs making it economical to go quickly from job-to-job.

Making a purchasing decision is a matter of matching the machine to your business application. “If you’re doing back yard work, smaller stump grinders could be the best since they are easier to maneuver.”

Lee Schroeder, Vermeer

Bandit’s Model 2250XP is a powerful, competitively priced stump grinder requiring less maintenance than other stump grinders in this class, according to the company, yet powerful enough to handle larger jobs encountered by stump grinding professionals.
Bandit Industries offers the full range of stump machines, according to Jason Morey, small equipment sales manager. Selections start with the smallest handlebar units equipped with gas engines from 13 to 27 horsepower. One model is push-able, another self-propelled with a joy stick controlling a drive motor on each wheel.

The next class includes Bandit’s backyard, self-propelled models on either rubber tires or tracks and ranging from 27 hp gas to 114 hp diesel, and two tow-behind models at 66 and 77 horsepower, respectively.

“At TCI EXPO last year, we introduced the (Kohler gasoline engine-run) 27-horsepower, 2250XP, which has been selling like crazy,” Morey says. “This small, self-propelled backyard machine has been great for tree service companies and rental agencies. What is unique about this unit is that we have eliminated belts altogether. Most stump grinders have two belts, one to drive the cutter wheel and another to drive the jackshaft that engages the cutter wheel. What now engages the cutting wheel is a hydraulic pump to drive a hydraulic motor to the shaft. There are no belts or bearings to maintain. About the only maintenance is grease.” The price is about $16,000.

Continuing, he says “This machine also features a 50-inch swing arc, which greatly reduces the number of times needed to reposition the unit over a single large stump.”

Looking forward Morey says, “After six months of field testing, we are coming out with another model, a step above the 2250XP called the 2550. It is essentially the same machine but with more power – 35 to 44 horsepower gas and diesel options. For those who do bigger stumps, this is better efficiency in a compact size. Engine options will be either a Briggs and Stratton 35 hp gas, Kohler 38 hp gas or Kubota 44.2 hp diesel. Morey says, “Tree care guys probably will want diesel with a bit more power and longevity, and diesel is a bit of an industry standard.” Production was slated to begin the end of June, and orders were already backlogged, according to Morey.

Jason Showers, product manager at Morbark, says, “We offer only self-propelled stump grinders, no handlebars and no towable units. What we are seeing is an increased demand for compact machines with higher horsepower.” Morbark offers one gasoline model; the rest are diesel. Power ranges from 27 hp gas to 99 hp diesel.

“Besides accommodating the tiered diesel program, we made evolutionary changes in electronics and proportional controls,” says Showers. “One of biggest pieces of feedback we got was from users who had not run remote controls. They said they could not ‘feel’ the grinding operations and functionality of the machine using remote controls. Working with our electronics supplier we can now deliver with remote controls the feel of the propor-
tional valve controlled machine. Rather than a sense of on-off, operators can vary remote control feel to fine tune operation. As with a hydraulic valve, you push more to open and increase speed; the harder you push the electronic control, the faster the machine goes. The operator is more in tune with the machine, and that goes for steering and driving, not just cutting,” Showers adds.

The G42SP is Morbark’s newest stump cutter model, coming out two years ago and featuring either a 27- or 38-horsepower Kohler engine. According to Showers, “This is an entry level backyard machine where we see the bulk of business is. It is especially popular among businesses just starting out and for part-timers. Many times stump grinding is an afterthought with not a lot of perceived income for a tree care company. Guys can buy in with a machine like this at a low capital investment and make money,” he says.

Showers adds that in another series, the long-boom, 52-inch-swing arc D52SPH, there will be increased available horsepower. Limited previously to 44 horsepower, the new engines broaden the horsepower range from 34 to 62.

Making a purchasing decision is a matter of matching the machine to your business application, according to Lee Schroeder, solutions specialist at Vermeer. “If you’re doing backyard work, smaller stump grinders could be the best since they are easier to maneuver. Each of ours can go through a 36-inch gate. Taking out a couple of bolts to take off the outside dual tires will get even heavier equipment to the right spot.”

“Vermeer offers machines ranging from 27 to 110 horsepower for backyard work. These are great for guys needing high production and wanting to get in and out with a self-propelled unit,” Schroeder says.

He adds, “One thing to weigh is maneuv-
verability, which is obvious with a large unit, and the footprint can be heavier, creating more depressions, tracks and ruts. However, there is a stump cutter for any application,” he adds, starting with “our small SC252 with a 27-horsepower (Kohler gas engine) up to the SC1152, with a 110-hp Cummings diesel.”

All are self-propelled and all are delivered to the worksite on a trailer. Options include rubber tired versions and the tracked SC60TX with a 60-hp Caterpillar, and tow-behind units. “The tow-behinds are great for right-of-way work and for sidewalk jobs; just pull up and go to work,” Schroeder says. He says to watch for a smaller, tracked Vermeer unit with smaller horsepower that “is easy to move stump to stump.”

Rather than just three, Rayco further defines the classes of stump cutter. “We have, pretty much, five classes, breaking down the self-propelled into three sub-categories,” says J. R. Bowling, vice president of marketing for Rayco.

“They are the handlebar kind primarily used by those doing small jobs or those in tight areas,” says Bowling. “Then there is the core market for self-propelled small-, medium- and large-size walk-beside machines for areas where access is an issue, such as a backyard. These begin as good, low-cost, entry-level machines. We distinguish those classes further with features like a swing-arm operator control station to allow for better visibility and to allow the machine to get through the garden gate. Then there are the full-featured, usually high-horsepower stump cutters at the larger end of the self-propelled class, some with 4-wheel drive. These are aimed at professionals who do a lot of stumps,” he says.

“We are excited about the new RG1645S, which is a new take on the older model 1645,” says Bowling. “This one has new features like a heavier cutter wheel, wider tires for better flotation over lawns, and a swing-out arm with a Lexan window to protect the operator. It features a 44-hp Kubota diesel engine, a cutting arm with a 60-inch swing cut, and a built-in, hydraulic-powered blade for fast backfill once the cutting is done.” The unit weighs in at just over 2,500 pounds, but there are no licensing requirements in most states, he adds.

“Our last segment is the tow-behind, the smallest segment of the market. What they do best is large stumps such as in cities taking out large mature trees or storm work cleaning up root balls and blow-downs; or for contractors in rural area who do not need a self-propelled model.

Dale Winkelman, director of Echo Bear Cat’s business unit that offers handlebar stumpers, says his company offers one model. Unlike most cutters, the SG340 features a horizontal rotating cutting head, as opposed to vertical. It also has 12 hardened, carbide steel-tipped cutting teeth that can be re-sharpened. “We used to use four teeth but recently went to 12 for a lot smoother operation with far less tooth
wear. This means you do not have to change out teeth as often, he says. “This setup also allows the engine to rotate at high speed for faster grinding, smoother cutting and smaller chips and debris.”

“With the compact body width at only 23 inches, our SG340 easily can get through gate openings and extremely close to buildings, sidewalks and other fixed objects. A 340cc Honda OHV (overhead valve) engine will let you grind down stubborn stumps in minutes,” he says.

“The single wheel brake allows the operator to pivot the cutting head across the surface of the stump as the machine holds a fixed position. A screen-cover provides a clear, protected view of the cutting action. Power transfer from the engine is through a double-banded belt drive. Large pneumatic tires take much of the effort out of changing locations, and heavy-duty sealed bearings keep these machines working for years.

Winkelman says, “In the northeast corridor, because of yards with fences, we recognize the need to get in tight locations for tree removal due to disease or weather. At less than 200 pounds, this machine is easy to move. Its large tires make the SG340 easy on the turf. You can get right next to obstructions with the horizontal teeth and get roots out with the horizontal cutter to a depth of about 6 inches.”

Likewise are, “…the advantages of the small size of the Husqvarna SG13 stump grinder,” according to Husqvarna’s stump grinding expert, Jody Kerr.

She says these “easily fit through gates and small openings that a towable or driven unit cannot reach. They are very portable. There are four lifting handles, so the SG13 can be placed even in the back of an SUV or minivan. The handle can be ratcheted down, adjusted so the highest point becomes the engine, not the handle — again, making it possible to put in an enclosed vehicle.”

“The compact size of this stump grinder allows the operator to cut next to buildings, lawn features or within a wooded area. Because of its smaller size, the unit can be repositioned frequently to change angle of attack. And the SG13 can cut about 12 inches below the surface to get rid of a stump,” adds Kerr.

“The SG13 grinder is a great size unit for a tree care fleet; especially if it is their only grinder. Larger units could be rented for larger cleanup. The SG13 can also be a great supplemental unit to larger professional organizations that may already have larger, driven stump grinders. Though this grinder can really grind any size of stump, realistically, it is best aimed at stumps up to 18 to 20 inches,” according to Kerr.

The SG13 utilizes three-sided, carbide-tipped teeth that allow for three fresh cutting surfaces per set. Once one cutting surface has been used, it’s a simple process to reposition a fresh cutting face on-site in seconds with a standard wrench.

According to Kerr, the SG13 offers three types of cutting teeth to accommodate soil conditions: standard tooth, rock tooth and sand/clay tooth. She adds that, “the cutting wheel has a lightweight design that reduces the load on the engine for faster recovery time and increased belt and clutch life. This size of machine is easy to use: set the disc brake on the left wheel,
J.P. Carlton makes stump grinders in all three classes, says John Bird, vice president of marketing. “The company started in 1952 doing handlebar stump cutters. At the time, they were the industry standard. Over the years, large tow behinds took over because of their speed and power. As the U.S. population grew and population density grew and residential yards got smaller, the self-propelled machines came to complement tow-ables due largely to their ability to get into those (yard) spaces and get a lot of work done.”

“In ’96, Carlton was the first company to offer a high horsepower, self-propelled stump cutter with the characteristics of a tow-behind and the speed and power of a smaller cutter,” Bird says. “In 2011 we introduced two new high-horsepower, self-propelled units using Kubota 66-horsepower, Tier 4 diesel engines: the SP7015 and SP7015TRX (wheeled and tracked, respectively), both featuring a 70-inch swing arc.”

“What we have seen in the last 10 to 15 years is an industry push to higher horsepower, self-propelled machines with the ability to get into those backyards but with enough power to be a high production machine,” he adds, “and to be able to get by with one machine for most all their needs.”

He concludes by adding that, “As the industry is going to compact machines with high horsepower and capable of fitting through a 36-inch backyard gate, this puts the very high production tow-behinds into the land clearing and storm cleanup market.”

When it comes to selecting a stump grinder, it all seems to depend on what your typical workflow is, how productive you want to be and what you are able to afford.
By Tamsin Venn

What is your newest product for tree care?

The treeShield® Service Warranty, started about a year ago, is the first formal service warranty covering tree work, and it is only available to clients of the companies in HMI’s AM Network. It works like any other warranty. When you buy a car from Ford, and you get a warranty that covers the cost for specific repairs. HMI’s AMs provide their clients with services that are intended to keep trees healthy and better able to survive damaging effects of storms. With the treeShield Warranty, any time a storm damages a client’s trees, the AM’s costs to clean-up or repair the trees is covered by the warranty. We have 70 companies in our AM network and about 20 of them are already distributing treeShield. It represents an important new customer service and competitive advantage.

The treeShield Warranty was developed to provide our AM’s clients with critical services that their trees may require following a storm, such as tree/debris removal, restorative pruning, hazardous tree/limb removal and cabling. Since most homeowner and commercial property insurance is not designed to cover tree damage, the warranty can save property owners thousands of dollars.

What is your company’s main goal?

I would say that HMI’s primary goal is to create a competitive advantage for the professional tree care companies that are in our AM network. We accomplish this in a couple of ways. First, we educate the insurance industry about the need to use qualified companies to assist their clients with tree damage. Many insurers now use HMI and our Network members as their preferred vendor for tree removal services. HMI qualifies all referrals generated by these insurers and provides them to our AMs. We also assist our members in getting jobs approved and paid for quickly. Secondly, we help create programs such as the treeShield Warranty that further differentiate company’s in our network from their competitors. We have a very symbiotic relationship with our members – as they succeed, we succeed.

How are unpredictable weather patterns affecting your business?

All indications are that we’re in a cycle that’s driving more extreme weather, and that is concerning. It’s not just big storms that are causing problems, but also droughts that weaken trees and make them more susceptible to future failure. The offshoot of this activity is that it is creating more demand from the insurance industry for clean-up and recovery solutions to offer their customers. The indicators are that we’re going to be busy. Let’s leave it at that.

What is something unique about your company?

To a great degree HMI is a marketing engine for the companies in our network. If you look at all of the things TCIA embraces – quality standards, Accreditation, certified tree care safety, marketing a tree care company’s values to their clients and prospects, we really do that on behalf of our Authorized Members. We offer all of those benefits to our insurance clients on a national scale, providing HMI with more influence than our members could have individually. It has enabled the companies in our network to become preferred vendors for insurers such as Nationwide, USAA, Chubb, Amica, Chartis(AIG), Ameriprise, The Hartford and many more.

What image does your company look to portray?

To the tree care industry we want to be viewed as a company that is innovative, professional, easy to work with and, most importantly, committed to promoting the industry. Our AM network and the treeShield Warranty are new products and...
services we have developed that help our companies compete and help us help them grow their businesses. To the insurance industry we want to be viewed as a company that provides high quality, expert services and data to help them resolve claims involving plant material anywhere in the country.

What is the greatest challenge your business currently faces?

Education remains a big challenge for us. We still have work to do educating our members on how to best work with us so they can take full advantage of the opportunities we provide them. We’re also still educating insurance companies that there is a large cost to them for continuing to do business the old way.

Does your company use Social Media for marketing?

Not so much. The people we have to reach are a fairly finite group. We’re not reaching out to property owners individually, we’re reaching companies in our network, and a few large insurance companies. We use press releases, email and webinars extensively for communicating with our clients and business partners. We have begun to use YouTube links on our website and that has been effective.

If we interviewed some of your customers, what would they say?

Our insurance company clients would say that they are relieved to have a single resource to address claims concerning trees and shrubs almost anywhere in the country. These types of claims have been difficult to resolve in the past. The arborists we work with would give varying responses. Those who have worked with us enough to learn our protocols are very happy with the role that we play. There is a learning curve however. We require a certain discipline. Everything gets completely documented, with signed proposals, photos, certificates of satisfaction and direct payment authorization, so there’s a little more paperwork involved. Over time arborists become comfortable with the process because it improves their close rates and speeds up collections. We contact each client to first qualify the job and to let them know what to expect when the arborist comes on site. We also help our arborists solve problems including job approvals, collections or paperwork. We try to offer them back-office support where they need it. The more they know us, the more they like us.

What TCIA programs is your company involved with?

Partners Advancing Commercial Treecare (PACT) member, Winter Management Conference, exhibitor and speaker at TCI EXPO, Voice for Trees Political Action Committee.

Why does your company support TCIA as the industry’s trade association?

We support all of TCIA’s initiatives because we use those initiatives to distinguish the members in our network – safety training, Accreditation, technical training. We really market those attributes to help us grow our business. When we read about the TCIA’s vision for the industry, it was clear that we needed to become involved with them. Being a member of TCIA is a requirement to join our network.
Accident Briefs

Taken from published reports.

Tree worker killed in fall
Randy Roger Lane, 43, of Siloam, North Carolina, and co-owner of a local tree service, reportedly was killed in a fall while working in a tree using a bucket truck May 4, 2012, in Yadkin County, N.C. Lane co-owned the tree service with his brother, Charles Walter Lane, according to the Mount Airy News.

Climber dies when tree splinters
Anthony K. Woods, 52, of Belfair, Washington, died May 5, 2012, after the tree he was cutting down unexpectedly splintered, causing him to fall about 60 feet to the ground and strike his head on a fence post. He died at the scene.

The top portion of the tree had a cable attached to it that was tied or was being tied to a backhoe. The cable was to guide which way the tree would fall. Woods was using proper tree-cutting equipment, including an attached belt secured around the tree, according to the report.

As Woods was cutting off the portion of the tree, it snapped unexpectedly, causing him to fall. He hit his head on a fence post during the fall, causing major skull trauma.

Woods was an experienced tree cutter, according to the Kitsap Sun report.

Submitted by Doug Cleland of Cleland’s Tree Removal in Port Orchard, Washington.

Pinned climber rescued
A tree trimmer pinned 40 feet up in a tree by a cut log had to be rescued by firefighters in West Jefferson, Ohio, May 5, 2012.

The log, which weighted approximately 800 pounds and was tethered by a rope held by a helper on the ground, swung toward the tree instead of away, pinning the man’s foot and ankle against the tree.

Rescuers were able to get the tree-trimmer to safety by extending a fire truck ladder with a bucket on it into the tree, where they freed the tree trimmer and lowered him to the ground. The man reported being in pain in the leg that had been trapped. Medics say he did not fall because he was rigged in a safety harness. His injuries are not believed to be life-threatening, according to the NBC4 report.

Bucket operator electrocuted
Chester Sipes, 47, of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, operator of a local tree service, hit a 30-foot line carrying more than 13,000 volts of electricity while ascending in a bucket May 9, 2012, in Edgeworth, Pa. The local police chief was in the area and heard the shock and saw the flash, then saw Sipes collapse in the bucket. Sipes was taken to Sewickley Valley Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

It took rescuers additional time to bring the bucket down because the power went through the truck and severed the vehicle’s hydraulic lines, according to the KDKA-TV report.

An Associated Press report said Sipes backed into the line, and that two other workers called for help immediately, but that it took crews about 10 minutes to lower the bucket because the electronic controls had been destroyed.

Submitted by Doug Bozich, tree service operator in Verona, Pa.

Tree worker hurt in 30-foot fall
A 46-year-old Asbury Park, New Jersey, tree worker fell approximately 30 feet out of a tree May 10, 2012, in Manalapan, N.J. The extent of the man’s injuries were not immediately known, but he was taken to Jersey Shore Medical Center for treatment. It was the man’s first day on the job for a local tree service, according to manalapan.patch.com.

Woman killed in struck-by
A woman walking along the shore path of Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, May 10, 2012, was killed by a falling branch while a tree-trimming crew was working in the area. Jane L. Westmas, 61, died of massive internal injuries to her chest.

Westmas and her son, Jason Westmas, 35, had been walking the path near an interfaith retreat center. Workers from a Crystal Lake, Illinois, tree service were trimming trees at the time.
The data that TCIA collected on tree care accident rates for 2009 and 2010 comprised over 10.9 million production hours and almost 5,000 employees. Eighty-eight TCIA member and 72 non-member companies responded to the survey.

While 10.9 million production hours may sound like a lot of data, there were not enough survey responses for TCIA to compare distinct groups within the survey population; i.e., member vs. non-member, accredited vs. non-accredited, etc. as we have in recent years.

We feel confident making one correlation in the survey population as a whole. We found that when companies adopted more safety program elements, their accident rates went down.

The survey asked these four questions:
1. Do you have a written safety policy & procedure? 73 percent did.
2. Do you use the ANSI Z133 Standard and follow its requirements? 81 percent did.
3. Do you have documented safety training? 73 percent did.
4. Do you perform documented crew safety inspections? 60 percent did.

We measured an accident rate statistic known as the DART rate. The DART represents the number of accidents that caused the employee to have Days Away, Restricted duties, or Transfer to another job, for the equivalent of 100 employees in a year.

The graph at right shows the relationship of company’s DART rate to the presence (or absence) of “formal safety program elements” in the company.

Companies that had all four elements (the 4 group) tended to be the largest companies, with a median number of five employees in 2009 and 2010. Company sizes are compared in Table 1.

When companies had only three of the four safety program elements, the element that was typically missing was documented crew safety inspections.

When companies had only two of four elements, there was a fairly equal mix of which two elements they had. In companies with only one of four elements, the element they tended to have was the Z133 Standard with 65 percent of the group.

There is an apparent anomaly with the “Zero-to-one” group being statistically the safest. What reason could there be for an employer with little or no formal safety program to experience the lowest accident rates? The likeliest explanation is that the safe work environment is attributable to the direct supervision of every job by the owner. Typically it is the owner who has the most experience, and arguably it is the owner who has the most to lose should the job incur any sort of loss. In safety circles, this is called “retained responsibility” for safety. The burden of safety falls mainly on one person’s shoulders.

As a safety strategy, retained responsibility can be very successful, but only in a small company with a very knowledgeable and experienced person in charge.

Table 1: Company size (no. of employees) vs. no. of safety program elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of elements and percentage of survey responses</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four – 50%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three – 17.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two – 11.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero or one – 20.6%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 238 total survey returns. Seventy-six indicated they were “part-time businesses” accumulating 1,000 hours or less of production per year, and were not included in the survey analysis.
Accident Briefs

(Continued from page 46)

The workers apparently told investigating officers they called out a warning to the walkers.

However, a branch fell and struck Westmas who was transported to Mercy Walworth Hospital and Medical Center in Lake Geneva, where she was pronounced dead, according to a WalworthCountyToday.com report.

Tree trimmer electrocuted
A 23-year-old tree trimmer died May 14, 2012, at a Fort Worth, Texas, job site after a piece of his equipment came in contact with power lines.

Jose Murcia was working with a lawn service crew at a home. The shock scorched the tree limb and left him dangling from the tree. Firefighters spent about an hour getting his body down. Murcia, from Arlington, Texas, and had owned the tree trimming service for 10 years, according to the NBC 5 KXAS report.

Man, 84, killed cutting tree
An 84-year-old man was killed when he was struck by a tree he was cutting May 16, 2012, in Oakfield, New York. A friend was checking on LaVerne Bridge the next morning when he found Bridge’s body in a small stream. Deputies say Bridge was cutting a tree when it split and hit him, according to The Daily News of Batavia and The Corning Leader of Corning.

Bridges was cutting a 10-inch diameter tree with a chain saw about a half mile behind his home when the tree came down, striking Bridges in the head, according to a WBTA AM 1490 report.

Boom truck operator hurt by cut tree
A 57-year-old boom truck operator working for a local tree service was rescued May 17, 2012, in Dracut, Massachusetts, after the tree trunk he was moving slipped and knocked him from his seat.

Several trees were being removed at a residence at the time. The victim was sitting on an exposed seat on the truck, about 10 to 15 feet in the air. He was reportedly assisting in taking a tree down when the tree apparently split or slipped. A large portion of the tree apparently swung down and struck the operator, knocking him off of his seat.

The man was taken to the hospital, but suffered non-life threatening injuries, according to the 7NEWS/WHDH and Lowell Sun reports.

Tree worker dies in fall
Steven A. Joseph, 43, of Winsted, Connecticut, died May 18, 2012, at a Hartford hospital one day after being injured in a tree cutting accident in New Hartford, Conn.

Joseph, who worked for the New Hartford highway department but also ran his own tree service, had taken the day off to do some tree work. He and another man were doing the tree work when the accident occurred, according to The Hartford Courant.

Joseph was struck by a falling tree limb and fell from a tree, hitting the ground head-first, according to a NewHartfordPlus.com report.

Man seriously injured in fall from tree
A man was seriously injured May 18, 2012, in a 40-foot fall from a tree in the Huntsville, Alabama, area. The 42-year-old was cutting a tree at a job site when the accident happened. He was taken to a local hospital with critical injuries, according to reports in The Huntsville Times and the Daily Comet.

Climber injured in fall
A tree climber was injured May 18, 2012, after falling an estimated 20 feet from a tree in Lexington, Kentucky. Something caused the rope he was hanging from to snap or come undone and the man fell, apparently landed on his head.

The victim was alert but wasn’t speaking or moving much, but was moving his arms a little bit, and had a big mark on the side of his face where he had hit his head, according to a witness quoted in an NBC LEX Channel 18 report.

Climber cuts wrist when chain saw slips
A professional tree cutter was taken to Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, Washington, after the chain saw he was using slipped and cut into his wrist May 20, 2012, in Bremerton, Wash.

Responding firefighters found the man, described in his late 20s, attached to a tree about 35 feet above the ground. They bandaged the man’s wrist before helping him out of his harness and getting him to the ground, according to the Kitsap Sun report.

Submitted by Doug Cleland of Cleland’s Tree Removal in Port Orchard, Washington.

Spray worker run over by tractor
A Wichita, Kansas, man was injured when he was run over by a tractor while working in Geary County, Kansas, May 21, 2012.

A tree company line clearance crew was working down in a ravine and workers were pulling a hose down to spray chemicals used to kill tree stumps. A tractor was situated at the top of the ravine with a tank on top that held the chemicals. The tractor rolled down the hill, rolling over 23-year-old Bryan Casey.

Casey complained of back and chest pain at the scene and was airlifted to Wesley Medical Center in Wichita. Reports indicate that he was listed in stable condition, according to a www.wibw.com report.

Bucket operator hurt in fall
A tree worker in his 20s was rushed to the hospital May 22, 2012, after falling 30 feet from a bucket truck while trimming trees in West Palm Beach, Florida. The man was airlifted to St. Mary’s Medical Center where he was listed as a trauma patient, according to a WFLX Fox 29 report.

Tree worker killed in fall
A tree worker died May 31, 2012, in a fall while working in Austintown, Ohio.

Timothy Wiech, 42, of Chardon, a tree care company employee, died almost immediately from blunt force injuries to his head and chest at an Ohio Edison substation, according to a WYTV Channel 33 report.

Send your local accident reports to editor@tcia.org.
CTSP CEU Quiz #2012-4: July 2012

1. The quick response of a by-stander trained in CPR:
   a. means no ambulance is required
   b. can be annoying to the victim
   c. has no place in tree care operations
   d. is a critical link in the chain of survival for a person in cardiac arrest

2. The heart and brain require a constant supply of oxygen-containing blood and injury can occur within
   __________ if this supply is interrupted.
   a. several hours
   b. several minutes
   c. 45 minutes
   d. several times

3. Which is not one of the three steps to CPR?
   a. check for responsiveness
   b. call 911
   c. charge the AED
   d. perform CPR

4. An excellent means of starting CPR:
   a. is the hands-only method
   b. is not available to tree workers
   c. involves jumper cables and a vehicle battery
   d. is to apply a breathing barrier

5. There are three interventions in CPR, commonly referred to as:
   a. the 1,2,3’s
   b. the CPR’s
   c. the AED’s
   d. the ABC’s

Certified Treecare Safety Professionals can earn one (1.0) “professional development” CEU toward their recertification by taking this short comprehension quiz that is tied to this month’s safety articles in this issue of TCI Magazine. The CTSP CEU Quiz is a bi-monthly feature in TCI. This quiz is based upon information in the article: “What’s Best in CPR – ABC or CAB, Hands-Only or Conventional?” by John Ball, (page 32).

To obtain CEU credit: you may copy this page, answer the questions and either fax the answer sheet to TCIA at (603) 314-5386, or mail to: TCIA - CTSP, 136 Harvey Road - Ste 101, Londonderry, NH 03053.

Circle 24 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org/Publications

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to learn more about CTSP or to enroll in the program.

The results are in.
TCIA Member companies with employees enrolled in the Certified Treecare Safety Professional program are 10 times less likely to experience a lost workday incident compared with non-CTSP companies.

The numbers don’t lie...
safety-conscious tree care companies that get involved with the CTSP program experience fewer accidents, fewer injuries, and less lost time – PERIOD.

Upcoming 2012 Workshops

August 9 & 10 - Portland, OR
September 12 & 13 - Hayward, CA
November 6 & 7 - Baltimore, MD
Neal Reilly, owner of Reilly Tree & Landscape Company, Inc. in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, thrives on change.

“If you aren’t changing, you’re stagnating,” Reilly says. Times change. Landscapes change. Clients’ needs change. At one point in their lives, clients are having picnics under the big tree in the backyard. At another, they’re getting their house ready for resale.

In addition, he says, employees need change, which is one reason the company’s services range from PHC to design/build.

“Everybody does everything here,” he says. “We’re constantly trying to create new positions for people, so it’s not a stagnant place to work. It’s an opportunity for the guys to excel in their careers.”

The one constant in Reilly’s life has been his love of trees and landscaping. In high school, he worked for a variety of tree and landscape companies. He earned his degree in Urban Forestry from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. He went to work for the well-respected tree care company Hartney Greymont in Needham, Mass., and became a member of the Massachusetts Arborists Association.

He also was an instructor for a year at Harvard University’s Arnold Arboretum, where he taught plant identification and pruning and planting skills to homeowners.

He spent 10 years at Hartney Greymont, as a crew leader, safety officer and sales representative.

“As safety officer, I made sure, first and foremost, that the company was operating by TCIA best business practices and OSHA standards,” he says. “And when I got into sales, Mark Tobin, the president, taught me as much as I could possibly ask for: How to communicate, how to problem-solve with clients, how to manage people. He taught me that honesty is the best policy. He was quite a mentor.”

Reilly is still listening to the voices of experience, including those at TCIA. “We’re looking very hard to continuously learn. If I can listen, I can learn a great deal.”

He started his own company, Reilly Tree & Landscape, in January 2003. He joined TCIA the next year.

Some 35 percent of the company’s work is PHC. “We do a lot of soil tests,” he says. “They’re a great indicator of why a shrub or tree might be struggling. We can improve the health and vigor so it doesn’t get infested in the first place.”

When they prune, they have a specific intent with every plant. “Each has a different shape and branching structure — and it has to live in New England. We incorporate all these factors to keep trees from being torn up in storms.”

To minimize pests, they have a maintenance program to monitor clients’ trees. Other tree services include removals, stump removal, emergency tree services and the winterization of evergreens. They do most of their shade tree pruning and removals in the winter.

“We aren’t large into removals, but it is part of the business and we have to do it,” he says. It also helps keep their permanent employees working during the winter, and is something that can be done in the snow.

But why limit arboriculture to just trees, he asks? “You can’t be an expert in just trees. You have to be a plant person.”

The company also does lawn maintenance and design/build.

“I feel passionate about having the landscape design match the architecture of the house and the surroundings,” he says. “And it gives us another opportunity to service our clients.” He comes up with the designs himself and the company does the landscape installation. This ensures that the right plants are in the right place and they’re all installed properly.

Reilly Tree & Landscape has 15 permanent employees, including the business manager and the shop foreman, both of whom have been with the company for its entire 10 years. Reilly hires an additional five people in the summer.
“I’m very fortunate to have very, very talented people working here, people I can rely on to problem-solve on their own,” he says.

All the employees are trained in electrical hazards awareness with TCIA’s EHAP program, including first aid, CPR and aerial rescue, and they receive additional training specific to their job areas. This makes the work more interesting for them, and it also makes the company more flexible, because employees can fill in for each other. Those who find an area they’re especially interested or skilled in can choose to stay in that area.

In their weekly safety meetings, Reilly encourages employees to bring up any experiences of accidents and close calls they had the previous week. “Usually someone has experienced something,” he says. “As the owner, what an opportunity! Everyone’s going to make mistakes. If they keep them bundled up, no one else can learn from them.”

The company has grown from four or five employees to 15 to 20 in just three years. “Growth is an employee-retention tool,” he says. “It makes employees want to stay.”

This, too, is a result of his adaptability to change. “We managed by working harder, staying hungry, making good business decisions and being very proactive with clients,” he says.

His positive attitude also applies to customer complaints. Even when customers call with a complaint, they tell him that the crew was working hard.

“My guys are the greatest, and they’re proud of their work,” he says. “We fix whatever happened. By doing that, we’ve developed relationships where clients know they’re guaranteed to be happy at the end of the job.”

Approximately 80 percent of his clients are residential and 20 percent commercial.

They do a lot of marketing. They send out renewals to the customers who are on a regular maintenance schedule for PHC and pruning. They have a referral program. They advertise in local newspapers, are members of a few networking groups in the area and are on Facebook. They also do some targeted marketing.

Reilly donates the work of the entire company on Arbor Day. They’ve planted memorial trees at schools and cleared out the local YMCA property and ball fields. They help maintain Julia’s Garden, one of

(Continued on page 68)
Do you have a favorite handsaw or hand pruner? We are guessing you do, and we are guessing that some of those who sell these tools know what it is. So, TCI Magazine asked them!

We asked what hand saws and pruning tools are most popular this season, whether because they have great features, cool new innovations or because they are tried-and-true old standbys. Generally – what is selling and why do they think it is so hot? Following here are some of the responses received.

“Our J-SM13 series of saws have been our best-selling hand saws since we introduced them over 20 years ago,” says Don Blair, owner of Sierra Moreno Mercantile in Hagerstown, Maryland. “Although the smooth cutting tri-edge blade is the end that does the work, it is the other end that we feel makes this saw the modern classic that it is. The handle is ergonomically correct so it just ‘feels right’ in most hands. The $25 retail price also ‘feels right’ to our clients all over the world.”

“The marine-grade plywood handle is virtually unbreakable and is unaffected by extremes in temperature,” says Blair.

“The Ichiban series from Kanzawa is an excellent saw for the professional arborist, and the fast-cutting, impulse-hardened Japanese blades are an excellent value, according to David Stice, trainer with WesSpur Tree Equipment.

“Sierra Moreno Mercantile Company collaborated with the saw maker to design the ‘D’ handle, which we prefer. Compared to its equally popular pistol-gripped brother, we feel the ‘D’ handle is superior for the following reasons: the handle helps protect your knuckles, branches are far less likely to snag the handle and pull it free from the scabbard, and the ‘D’ shape makes it far easier to maintain control when cutting with the saw upside down or in an otherwise awkward position. Even though these saws are not flashy or given cute names that nobody can pronounce, they continue to remain our most popular arborist handsaws.”

“We feel that the ARS UV-32E Superturbo Cut Pruning Saw is equal to any 13-inch arborist handsaw in the industry today and at a more affordable price,” says Bob Gallen, sales manager/buyer at
American Arborist Supplies in West Chester, Pennsylvania. “This saw also comes with a choice of either a regular tri-cut or gulleted tri-cut blade.”

“Not only is the ZUBAT 300 Silky’s most popular curved pruner, it is also the top selling Silky saw across the entire commercial arborist market,” says Clay Thornton, director of marketing for SherrillTree in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The Silky ZUBAT 300 heavy-duty hand saw features an 11 4/5-inch, rust-resistant, hard chrome-plated, taper-ground curved blade with an impulse-hardened non-set tooth design. The precision-ground blade with four cutting angles provide fast, clean and extremely smooth cutting action. The hard chrome-plated blade resists rust and the effects of tree resin, and wipes clean easily. It features has 6.5 teeth per inch, and a molded-rubber handle that really sticks in your hands, says Thornton. The ZUBAT is available in five blade lengths: 9 1/2-inch up to 15 2/5-inch. The 11 4/5-inch blade version weighs 3/5 of a pound.

“Silky Sugoi 390-36 saw cuts so well and is such a good fit for general tree work that you may end up leaving your small chain saw on the truck,” says Thornton. This Silky Sugoi 390-36’s mono-constructed, 14 7/8-inch curved blade features an aggressive tooth pattern that is ideal for pruning large limbs. A taper-ground profile reduces drag and directs more usable energy to the cutting edge. The hard chrome-plated blade has 5.5 teeth per inch, and this version weighs 7/3 of a pound. It is available in two blade lengths: 14 1/8-inch and 16 7/8-inch. It comes with a high-visibility yellow plastic sheath with belt clip.

“The coolest pruning tool” for Bartlett Arborist Supply & Manufacturing Company, in Marlette, Michigan, is actually a combination of items, according to Bartlett’s Sheree Kappen. “This handy pruning tool has all of the tree services buzzing!” says Kappen. “It includes two of the 10-foot Bartlett round poles, a Marvin Head, and pruner rope. This pruner allows for a quick disconnect and rope extension. With eyebolts strategically placed in the pruner pole, the rope is always in place.”

Custom hardware on the “2-stick” makes for an easy transition from a 10-foot to 20-foot pruner, says Kappen. Their item number PP-125M-20 retails for $158.25.

“Ahlborn Equipment introduced a new 13-inch pruning saw this year after extensive testing with our power-line clearing customers/business partners,” says Tracy Ahlborn, executive vice president of Ahlborn, based in Sayner, Wisconsin. “The FZHDX saw is drawing rave reviews from users and purchasing agents alike.”

Pointing to robust sales, Ahlborn says he believes “this is the best pruning saw in the industry today.”

“The coolest pruning tool” from Bartlett Arborist Supply & Manufacturing Company includes two of the 10-foot Bartlett round poles, a Marvin Head, and pruner rope. Custom hardware makes for an easy transition from a 10-foot to 20-foot pruner.
and a newly designed handle that offers ergonomic comfort, this saw represents a culmination of efforts with business partners and our product development team.”

“The FZHDX stands for Forester Extreme (Ahlborn used Forester branding for a lot of its products), Extreme for our higher-end, best-performance items,” says Ahlborn. The “HD” refers to hardened steel, and the “X” is for extra sharp.

Offered for sale with a rugged scabbard, “the FZHDX is truly an excellent alternative to the Silky and Zubat blades at a fraction of the cost,” says Ahlborn. “What makes this new saw exciting from our perspective is that it is a culmination of efforts with our business partners to develop a product that achieves or exceeds the required performance with the needed comfort for extended use at a price point that makes sense in a commercial application.”

The newest pruning product from Jameson is the Big Mouth heavy-duty pruner, according to the folks at Forestry Suppliers, Inc. in Jackson, Mississippi. The Jameson Big Mouth cuts limbs up to 1 ¼ inch in diameter, has a beveled hook edge for dual cutting action, recessed nut and bolt, and forged steel arm, blade, and hook for durability. Plus it comes with a double pulley and an adapter.

“We’ve been seeing a rising popularity of the Samurai saws from Kanzawa (photo, page 52). We’ve sold these for a number of years, and the word is starting to spread about how great they work,” says Jessica Lough in the Marketing Department at WesSpur.

“The Ichiban series from Kanzawa is an excellent saw for the professional arborist. I’ve been using this saw since 2002,” says David Stice, trainer with WesSpur Tree Equipment, Inc. in Bellingham, Washington. “These fast-cutting, impulse-hardened Japanese blades are an excellent value. I feel the 13-inch saw equals the performance of the Zubat, with a much easier impact on the tool budget. The saw makes an excellent general pruning saw; the tapered spine on the blade allows for fast cutting with no binding in the kerf. Overall, I have been quite pleased with the performance and value of this fine cutting implement.”

“The Ichiban blades have the added benefit of fitting on most universal pole saw heads for a fast and clean-cutting pole saw.”
ALVEO

Designed with arborists in mind, the ANSI rated Petzl ALVEO features a unique honeycomb construction that provides excellent protection and comfort at a weight so low you'll forget you have it on.

- **Lightweight:** ALVEO VENT - 340 g; ALVEO BEST (electrical protection) - 345 g
- **Adjustable:** CenterFit system comfortably centers helmet on head
- **Customizable:** Reflective and clear stickers allow for visibility and personalization
- **Modular:** Compatible with the VIZIR visor, Pixa headlamps, and hearing protection
An Illustrated Guide to Pruning
by Edward F. Gilman

Reviewed by Tchukki Andersen, BCMA, CTSP

An Illustrated Guide to Pruning, Third Edition, by Edward F. Gilman, not only steps up to the plate, this newly updated text makes a huge swing that takes tree pruning out of the park, yet keeps it under the wires.

The second edition was published in 2002 and reflected the most “cutting edge” pruning techniques of the early 21st century. And here we are only a few short years later presented with an exceptionally high quality manuscript that has “topped” its predecessor in numerous ways. Arboricultural research has taken exponential strides in the last few years and the 3rd Edition captures many of the newer pruning concepts.

Notable changes begin in Chapter 4 with Gilman’s detailing of tree biology. This chapter contains a greatly expanded analysis of tree biology from what we were presented with in the 2nd edition. As an example, here’s an excerpt:

“One of the objectives of pruning is to develop and maintain a strong architectural structure that resists failure. In order to meet this objective, appropriate live stems and branches should be pruned regularly. Pruning live branches wounds the plant, removes live photosynthetically active foliage, and causes a reaction that consumes energy. The reaction is probably triggered by a sudden reduction in auxin supply from the branch, or the sudden influx of air into the wood beneath the pruning cut surface. Bacteria and fungi follow the advancing front of air. Reaction zone is the term used to describe the poorly understood regions where the tree appears to resist advancing organisms as it attempts to seal off, surround, or encapsulate the infection (figure 4-4 and figure 4-5, left. It is often dark in color.”

A section on bark tissue composition also is “included” to show that an understanding of all tree tissue types is necessary to guide pruning choices.

Another example of extended information is given in Chapter 14, “Mature and Storm Damaged Trees,” which has gone from a couple of paragraphs each to an entire chapter discussing the related complexities. Here we are introduced to new terms not in the second edition: retrenchment, cabling and bracing, the effects of flooding and saltwater damage in regard to pruning, and much of Gilman’s latest research on wind loads on trees. Tree nerds everywhere will enjoy this expanded chapter.

The most striking difference between the 2nd and 3rd editions is the many additional drawings and photos. The third edition is filled with more diagrams and photo examples of pruning and tree response to pruning. This makes creating pruning goals easier for the arborist. Still-applicable diagrams have had color added and are placed next to actual tree response photos, alongside well-written explanations. These photos greatly improve the quality and clarity of the information, as well as give these pruning concepts a more updated look.

Some of the “Check Your Knowledge” tests and the “Challenge Questions” at the end of each chapter were restructured slightly, but I think Gilman missed a teaching opportunity by not updating chapter quizzes with the newer information that fills this book. Then, again, I and perhaps three other people are the only ones I know who even look at tests in the back of text chapters, so it is probably a moot point.

This is an excellent reference book. This Third Edition greatly expands on the previous information. It brings the discerning arborist completely up to date with relevant research and the newest practices. The bonus information – such as Appendix 9: Tree Quality Cue Cards – was also a nice surprise. There is no need to debate further whether or not you should buy this book if you already have the 2nd edition. Gilman created a very meticulous and inclusive manual that supersedes its predecessor by leaps and bounds. Go get it and put it to good use.


Tchukki Andersen, BCMA, CTSP is staff arborist for the Tree Care Industry Association.
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TREE Fund EAB grants sow seeds for major funding

Ohio State University researcher Dan Herms and his colleagues have been investigating EAB resistance in ash trees using TREE Fund research funding since 2004. They have identified resistance mechanisms in Asian ash trees and continue to search for EAB-resistant germplasm in the few trees which survived southeastern Michigan’s EAB onslaught.

The importance of their work to the industry was recognized by the TREE Fund Research Committee nearly a decade ago. More recently, Herms and his colleagues were awarded a $1.5 million grant from USDA APHIS to support their quest to develop EAB-resistant ash cultivars and reintroduce ash trees to the urban forest.

Brian Sayers named newest TREE Fund Trustee

The TREE Fund is pleased to welcome Dr. Brian Sayers of Clarence, New York, to its Board of Trustees. Sayers founder and CEO of The Tree Doctor, a 13-year TCIA member company. Sayers, an ISA-certified arborist and immediate past president of the New York State Arborists, is a skilled millwright and woodworker, and holds a doctorate in philosophy from Queens University in Ontario.

Join One-Day Ride for Research in Oregon

Cycle with the 2012 Stihl Tour des Trees for the day on August 11. The 585-mile Oregon Tour des Trees closes with a 25-mile recreational Ride for Research (R4R) through Portland that’s open to everyone. The R4R concludes at Portland’s beautiful Laurelhurst Park during ISA’s Arbor Fair, Arbor Market and International Tree Climbing Competition. A $50 registration includes a T-shirt and lunch at the park. You don’t need a fancy bike for this ride, but helmets are required! A limited number of bike rentals are available. Register now at www.stihltourdestrees.org

Tee off for the TREE Fund

Help raise some “green” for the TREE Fund with a morning of golf on Sunday, August 12, at Heron Lakes Golf Club, only 10 minutes from the ISA Conference hotels in Portland, Oregon. Designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., Heron Lakes’ course was rated 4 out of 5 Stars by Golf Digest’s “Best Places to Play” for 2008/2009. Registration is $175 with your ISA Conference registration, or register through Asplundh.

For information on the golf, the Raise Your Hand for Research auction, the Stihl Tour des Trees and other TREE Fund activities, visit www.treefund.org.
The natural world is diminishing at an unprecedented pace.

Humankind’s hand in the destruction of earth’s original forests has parallels in our urban forests and the familiarity of the hometowns and backyards of our youth. The majority of us grew up in cities, small and large. How many trees of your childhood still exist? For those who grew up in rural areas, how pervasive is the loss of wildlife and the woodlands you once explored. If you grew up in an inner city, can you recall a tree or park of significance? We will lose more of the quantity and quality of nature than we will gain in our lifetimes. Future generations will experience even more accelerated losses of trees and forests. As a result of these losses worldwide, there will be the inevitable extinction of even more wildlife species.

Nature is over

In a powerful article, “Nature is Over,” Time magazine senior environmental writer Bryan Walsh writes:

“Humans have had a direct impact on more than three-quarters of the ice-free land. Almost 90 percent of the world’s plant activity now takes place in ecosystems where people play a significant role...there may be no room for nature, at least not nature as we’ve known and celebrated it – something separate from human beings – something pristine... that will mean changing strategies, finding methods of conservation that are more people-friendly and that allow wildlife to coexist with human development..Our ability to comprehend the full extent of the human impact on earth puts us in a unique position as planetary gardeners, a responsibility we have no choice but to take on.”

As tree guardians, arborists worldwide are aware of the modern day reality of Bryan Walsh’s timely analysis. The arborist’s emerging role as a planetary mediator and nature advocate has never been more important. Arborists’ responsibility to lead has become increasingly significant in advocating for new tree plantings and sound tree preservation strategies. This is no small challenge. The forces working against trees, particularly in densely populated areas, are formidable.

Worms in the woodwork

“A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.” – William Blake

Space for trees is increasingly limited and compromised at best. While conscientious arborists work skillfully to maintain trees within these compromised settings; there are just as many, if not more, careless, unyielding forces at work. At odds with nature is a collectively large, heavily equipped labor force that is more than willing to oblige those seeking, for a multitude of reasons, the systematic reduction of the urban forest canopy.

Bound by budget constraints, quality tree care is too often sacrificed for an outdated, tree cutting/landscape maintenance model that stresses speed shearing and tree topping. These high production, foliage reduction methods are deeply ingrained practices, easily taught and difficult to remedy where there is blind acceptance by a poorly informed public.
and detached property managers. The result is an unnatural, unhealthy “landscape of addiction” that requires subsequent, frequent shearing/shaping to control the survival mode stimulation of unsightly, weak sprout growth. When the principles of shearing and shaping are misapplied to once tall, stalwart trees, we are left with a glaring reminder that something is strangely amiss.

Commercial properties are especially rife with poorly planted trees, mutilated mature trees with sheared/severed tops or over thinned, “lion-tailed” tree crowns. Misguided property management concepts are too often carried over into the residential landscape. Such aesthetically uninspiring, miniaturized landscapes are counterintuitive to the long-term sustainability of urban green spaces.

Educating our communities to a more enlightened view is an essential step toward restoring and reclaiming green spaces. With the unparalleled loss of trees worldwide, there has never been a more critical need for arborists to promote the value of trees, green ways and parks in their communities. Challenging the “mow it, shear it, saw it, make it linear, make it neat, but get it out of the way” mentality is no easy task. It will require conjuring up new strategies and, perhaps, even a bit of ancient wisdom to exorcise the “worms in the woodwork.”

The arborist as planetary mediator

“Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.” – Albert Einstein

For ancient cultures to survive, understanding and living with nature precluded all other things. They fully understood that their health and welfare depended on living with nature. Their intuitive “deep knowing” of nature transcends that which our rational, scientific brains are capable of fully experiencing. Fortunately, their foresight, understanding and respect for nature provides us a body of wisdom that has the potential to inspire those with an open mind and heart. Native American scholar Judie Bopp metaphorically writes, in The Sacred Tree:

“The ancient ones taught us that the life of the Tree is the life of the people. If the people wander away from the protective shadow of the Tree, if they forget to seek the nourishment of its fruit, or if they should turn against the Tree and attempt to destroy it, great sorrow will fall upon the people... the day would come when the people would awaken...to search again for the Sacred Tree.”

The work of an arborist potentially stands as a reawakening of the value and reverence for the natural world order. The late leading tree scientist and educator Dr. Alex Shigo emphasized the value of nature wisdom when he chose to etch Chief Seattle’s words in gold letters on the outside, back cover of his book, which today stands as the most authoritative guide on the care and treatment of trees and forests worldwide – Modern Arboriculture: A Systems Approach to the Care of Trees and Their Associates:

“This we know:
The earth does not belong to man;
Man belongs to the earth.
This we know.
All things are connected like the blood which unites one family.
All things are connected.
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of earth.
Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

Chief Seattle spoke directly and warned of the mass destruction of nature. Alex Shigo’s integration of these words within the context of his applied tree science strikes an indelible chord with arborists and urban foresters worldwide. Chief Seattle and Shigo were of vastly different epochs; yet, were like-minded visionaries who sought a higher standard of care for the natural world order.
The diminishing role of nature wisdom in science and in technological societies as a whole has contributed significantly to the environmental challenges we now must confront. A blending of nature’s universal truths within arboricultural science will provide meaningful, practical and sustainable solutions for trees of the future. From the viewpoint of the planetary arborists’ watchtower, nature is not over; however, her last stand is clearly within sight. As long as we collectively communicate the interconnectedness of trees and nature to the overall well-being of our communities and hold steadfast to sound, respectful practices, nature’s wisdom will prevail and protect. If not, the continued losses and desecration of our natural world is inevitable.

Fortunate will be the world’s sprawling cities where there is a collective of inspired planetary mediators working in the field of modern arboriculture. The answers can be found in consistently elevating the status of trees, developing wise, creative, tree preservation techniques and strategies that inspire and awaken a greater connection to nature in our communities – one tree at a time, one woodland at a time, one parking lot at a time, one rain forest at a time, one city at a time, one day at a time...

David Lusk is president of Lusk Tree Care Services, Inc., a 28-year TCIA member company located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and a consulting arborist and licensed psychologist.

References
Great article on mini lifts

Rick Howland is to be congratulated on an excellent article, “Will Mini Lifts Put an End to Climbing,” (TCI, June 2012). However, “safety” is a frequently mentioned word (as it certainly should be) in the article, but a huge element of what makes lifts the safest option was totally left out: You may build the safest lifts in the world, but it makes little sense if people don’t get the proper training in how to use them, both in general and for your industry.

The greatest single cause for accidents involving aerial lifts in general is operator error and lack of proper training. In the tree care industry, I see a challenge and a paradox: Because tree care professionals are used to working with various kinds of dangerous equipment, less priority is given to proper lift training and certification; yet TCIA is a leading source for safety training for climbing trees and tree care activities in general. That is an important point I would have liked to have seen driven home in the article.

Ebbe H. Christensen, president & CEO
Reachmaster
Kingwood, Texas

Editor’s note: The letter writer and ReachMaster’s Bluelift line of 39- to 72-foot tracked lifts were omitted from the June article. They will be included when we follow up in September with an article on aerial lift safety and training.

Good job addressing “controversial” subject

Just a little feedback from the response we have gotten so far from Rick Howland’s article and our ad in the TCI Magazine June 2012 issue.

The response we received from tree companies has been phenomenal. Rick did a great job writing this “controversial” article. Everybody pays attention to controversy. This is very good for the TCI Magazine readership, making them aware of the future. Many tree companies that called us commented that they understand the hazards of tree climbing, it being an extremely dangerous occupation, destined to be obsolete and can see that it will be phased out in the near future, as more and more companies are shifting toward aerial lifts.

This is great open door for future articles concerning the dangers of tree climbing.

I read an article many years ago how the HSE in the UK (equivalent of our OSHA in UK) reduced injuries and fatalities by 70 percent to 80 percent in the tree industry there by requiring tree companies to use aerial lifts all the time and climb trees only when it could be proven that there was absolutely no other possible way to either trim or remove trees.

If a similar approach was used in the U.S., would that mean that possibly 7 to 8 out of 10 monthly injuries and fatalities in (TCI’s) “Accident Briefs” could be preventable?

Lenny Polonski
All Access Equipment
Beverly, Massachusetts.

Peter Gerstenberger, TCIA’s senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards, responds: There’s no question that a backyard lift can reduce risk in certain scenarios, same as a crane.

In 2010, only 19 percent (17 out of 89) of all fatal injuries (in U.S.) that we know of were falls out of trees. Three out of 89 were falls out of aerial lifts, and another three were falls off ladders; 23 total fatal falls. It may be that the article referencing the UK statistics indicated that in the UK they reduced all FALLS by 70-80 percent?
Crews counting drought-related dead trees in Texas

Texas has started a more specific drought count to determine how many trees died from last year’s devastating dry spell. The Texas Forest Service in May said that forestry crews would spend the next two months on the ground surveying 700 plots of land. The areas were targeted by analysts who studied satellite images of tree covers.

Crews will count the number of dead trees in a 75-foot radius per plot. Experts will also seek information on insects and diseases that can endanger drought-stressed trees.

Coordinator Chris Brown says knowing the mortality rate of trees will help communities plan for reforestation.

The Texas Forest Service last December announced a preliminary estimate of up to 500 million trees killed by the drought. A new study found that, with few exceptions, the frequency of crimes reported in a particular block or neighborhood goes down as the tree cover gets thicker. Just a 10 percent increase in leaf canopy was associated with a 12 percent drop in crime. The study, published online in the journal Landscape and Urban Planning, supports arguments by advocates that environmental factors, and not just more police, can fight crime. And it challenges the notion that thick vegetation gives cover to car thieves, muggers and other would-be criminals.

While shrubs may shield bad behavior, mature, well-tended trees do just the opposite, said J. Morgan Grove, a social ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service and one of the study’s three authors. That could be important for a city like Baltimore, where trees cover just 27 percent of its landscape and some neighborhoods are practically barren.

The study, underwritten by the Forest Service and the National Science Foundation, looked only at the statistical relationship between trees and crime, without trying to prove cause and effect. But Grove, who’s part of a wide-ranging, long-running ecological study of Baltimore, had a couple of theories about why trees might curb criminal activity.

Trees “get people outside,” he said in a recent interview while walking around Franklin Square, a West Baltimore neighborhood with both leafy and treeless blocks. Shady streets are cooler in summer, encouraging people to sit or stroll outside. And criminals likely avoid places where their deeds might be spotted and reported, Grove suggested.

It’s also likely that a block lined with healthy trees encourages troublemakers to see it as a tight-knit area where people look out for each other, Grove added. That’s a variation on the “broken-window” theory, which suggests visible signs of disrepair like a broken window tend to encourage vandalism and escalating criminal activity.

“In the tree world, we call it the ‘empty tree pit’ theory,” said Grove, referring to the holes cut in sidewalks to accommodate trees. “If you have trees in the pits … they’re symbols of the fact that the neighborhood is cared about. … If they see you breaking into someone’s car, they’re going to call the cops.”

Another study, also by Forest Service researchers, of 2,800 homes in Portland, Oregon, found fewer crimes around places with many large, mature trees. But the Baltimore study is the first to analyze such a large area. Researchers mapped tree canopy information from satellite imagery and then fed the data, along with crime data, into a computer to match it up.

The link to reduced crime was most apparent on public land, such as parks, schoolyards and other government property with lots of mature trees. But tree-lined streets and avenues also had somewhat lower criminal activity. Grove said he hoped the study’s findings would boost and help guide tree-planting efforts in Baltimore.

Erik Dihle, the city’s arborist, welcomed the report, noting that his budget has been cut the past two years, from $4.4 million to $2.9 million. Even so, with the help of other agencies and nonprofits, he hoped to boost the number of trees planted citywide, from nearly 7,000 last year to 9,000 in the coming year.

The full Baltimore Sun article can be found at http://actrees.org/news/trees-in-the-news/newsroom/trees-linked-to-less-crime-research-finds/

Trees linked to less crime

Researchers have found that leafier places in Baltimore tend to have lower crime rates than those with few or no trees, according to a May 19 article in the Baltimore Sun.

A new study found that, with few exceptions, the frequency of crimes reported in a particular block or neighborhood goes down as the tree cover gets thicker. Just a 10 percent increase in leaf canopy was associated with a 12 percent drop in crime, it concluded.

The study, published online in the journal Landscape and Urban Planning, supports arguments by advocates that environmental factors, and not just more police, can fight crime. And it challenges the notion that thick vegetation gives cover to car thieves, muggers and other would-be criminals.

While shrubs may shield bad behavior, mature, well-tended trees do just the opposite, said J. Morgan Grove, a social ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service and one of the study’s three authors. That could be important for a city like Baltimore, where trees cover just 27 percent of its landscape and some neighborhoods are practically barren.

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Turning chips to gasoline

Des Plaines, Illinois-based Gas Technology Institute (GTI) is starting production of biomass fuel at a Chicago plant as part of a pilot project with the aim of selling it in conventional gas stations starting in 2014.

“It’s an aggressive timeline but it’s not unrealistic,” said Vann Bush, GTI managing director of energy conversion.

GTI, a not-for-profit research organization, recently demonstrated the technology behind its plants-to-fuel process.

“We take biomass material and chemically transform it with heat and pressure into gasoline and diesel ... it’s a biomass refinery,” Bush said. Cornstalks, algae, wood and solid waste are among the raw materials GTI will use for its new fuel.

In the next two years, GTI anticipates obtaining necessary federal certification to begin wide-scale distribution of its fuel across the country. This involves establishing additional manufacturing plants near sources of biomass.

The organization anticipates its biomass fuel will cost less than $2 a gallon to produce. It then gets blended with conventional gasoline, similar to the process used in creating ethanol. The final cost will depend on the selling price of conventional gasoline.

GTI, however, isn’t the only biomass kid on the block. A number of other biotech companies are working on producing bio-

(Continued on next page)
wood chips to gasoline

(Continued from page 68)

mass fuel, which should be available in a limited supply this year, said Seth Snyder, Argonne National Laboratory biofuels expert.

“The short-term goal is to make it competitive. The long-term goal is to make it cheaper,” Snyder said.

Americans already use a corn-based fuel – ethanol – on a daily basis. “Right now 10 percent of the fuel supply is from biofuels,” Snyder noted.

For more information on biomass, check out www1.eere.energy.gov/biomass/index.html.

Reported by the Daily Herald in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Accreditation: Reilly Tree

(Continued from page 51)

the nicest parks in the Northeast, he says.

The company became accredited in April 2012.

“I’m very excited about it,” he says. “I think the industry is moving toward it. There’s a large push in educating consumers on the difference between using companies that are accredited and not accredited.”

It took three to four months. They already had their management and safety systems in place, but the business plan was extremely difficult, he says. “Putting it down on paper makes it real, and we’re very goal-oriented.”

The biggest advantage Reilly sees is that Accreditation provides structure to the company, he says. That helped put policies and procedures in place for growth and the continued operation of the company, with or without him as owner. It also levels the playing field for the employees and protects him, because employees have signed off on the policies.

Accreditation also helped with the company handbook, which companies like his, with plans for growth, need.

“In a few years, hopefully, the company will be twice the size it is now,” he says. “We want to grow at a clip where we can maintain our quality, profit margin and great working environment for our employees. Wherever that takes me, that’s great.”

Janet Aird is a freelance writer in Altadena, California.

Arlington Heights, Illinois.

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Reported by the Daily Herald in Arlington Heights, Illinois.
Over the many years of being an arborist and meeting with thousands of customers and clients, I have had many wonderful experiences and a few strange ones. Yesterday was one of those strange ones!

I was called to a prospective customer’s home to inspect a tree and determine if the tree posed much risk to the residence – what we call a “tree risk assessment.” As I drove up in front of the home in a quiet neighborhood on a dead-end street, I was approached by a lady who appeared to be homeless, and we shared a few words with each other. I then went to the door and was warmly greeted by the homeowner. Our conversation started by me relating the conservation I had just had with this seemingly homeless lady, only to turn around and watch her drive off with my car!

Immediately, I dialed 911 and ran to the street to see which was she was turning. As I was watching my car disappear, the homeowner, whom I had never met before, ran to get her car out of the garage so we could chase my stolen car. We raced down a few streets trying to find the car and thief with no luck.

The police, after being notified by 911, quickly jumped into action. All local police departments were notified of the stolen car. Idaho State Police set troopers out on Interstate 90 to watch for the car. The A.L.P.R. (automatic license plate reader) cameras on the freeway were activated in case the car was being taken out of state. The State of Washington and City of Spokane police were notified.

As all this was taking place, this wonderful homeowner and I were back at her home talking about her trees, reviewing her options. We were both bewildered and a little amused by what had just transpired. Imagine yourself being stranded at the home of someone you do not know after chasing around town in their vehicle looking for your stolen car! I was most upset that my golf clubs were in the car, and I was scheduled to play just a couple of hours from then in a men’s league.

About an hour after the car was stolen, I received a call from the sheriff’s department notifying me they had my car and the thief in custody. From what I understand, the sheriff’s department received two calls about a white Toyota Camry driving recklessly off the road and through people’s lawns. One of the callers continued to follow the car, giving the police directions to where the car was headed. The police finally got her stopped (in the middle of someone’s lawn) and made the arrest in Hayden Lake.

After the good work of our local police departments, the Kootenai County Sherriff’s Department and the Hayden Lake Police, I had my car returned to me undamaged. I was then able to make it to the golf course on time, only to lose my golf match.

Tim Kastning, CTSP and BCMA, is president of Grace Tree Service, Inc., an accredited, 13-year TCIA Member company located in Hayden, Idaho.
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