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Dealing with conflict

As we head into the final month of the Major League baseball season, pennant races are heating up and the best teams are beginning to separate themselves from the pack. I’m always intrigued by the team dynamic in professional sports and study how team leaders – coaches, managers and owners – motivate their teams to perform at their best. While we all face challenges with co-workers, employees and supervisors in our businesses, the world of sports magnifies those stresses.

Think about it. The manager of a Major League Baseball team has to keep 25 elite athletes happy, almost all of whom are paid more than he is and have more job security than he does with guaranteed contracts. Including spring training, they eat, sleep and travel together for seven months – eight if they make the World Series. And they have very few days off. A typical team plays 162 games in 180 days. That’s 18 days off between March and October. They play nights, holidays, every weekend and live on airplanes and in hotels away from their families. They have 30,000 people watching their every move, ready to cheer or jeer their success or failure. If they aren’t playing well, they can read about it the next day in the newspaper or hear strangers list their shortcomings on the radio. If that’s not an environment for creating team conflict, I don’t know what is.

Critics will argue that athletes are paid a lot of money, so they shouldn’t complain. Most people would gladly changes places with them. But that doesn’t mean they don’t have ups and downs, nights when they aren’t performing at their peak, and conflicts with their teammates that distract them from doing their jobs at a high level. A baseball manager has an almost impossible job.

In some respects a tree care company is like a sports team, with crew leaders and owners, veterans and rookies, all of whom are expected to pull together for the good of the enterprise. And like a sports team, conflicts will inevitably arise. So what can we observe from the high profile arena of sports that can help us navigate our small corners of the world? I’ll list a few things that I have seen from watching good and bad teams for four decades:

• Avoid ultimatums where one member of the team loses. As an owner, there is a temptation to adopt a “my way or the highway” attitude. Sometimes that is the right solution, especially if you are facing employee resistance to best safety practices. Usually, we should try to think more like a base- ball manager, who needs to motivate long term, compared to a football coach, who can motivate through the fear of instant job loss.

• Start with what you know for certain about an issue. If you can’t agree about the facts that started a conflict, you can’t very well arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

• In a conflict between two members of your team, creating one absolute winner and one absolute loser is sure to generate lasting ill will.

• Confront problems immediately, since they are unlikely to go away and will probably corrode team effectiveness over time. We’ve all been tempted to “deal with it after the busy season,” but the busiest times are exactly when you need your team operating at peak performance without distractions.

• Address the behavior, not the personal traits. Seek to change the behavior you don’t like rather than decide, “I don’t like that guy.” Dislike doesn’t help steer the team in the right direction.

Your view of team conflict and conflict resolution will depend, in part, on whether you are the owner, foreman or newest guy on the crew. But all should strive for the same goal: a safe, productive team that works together toward a common goal. A job is much more enjoyable when everyone is looking out for each other and headed in the same direction.

Mark Garvin
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Although European beech (Fagus sylvatica) has been planted in North America since at least the late 1700s, there seems to have been a demonstrable upturn in planting during the “Gilded Age.” This was a time from 1870-1900 when the U.S. was experiencing rapid economic growth, in large part at the expense of an underpaid workforce. Among other things, construction of elegant mansions throughout the northeast U.S., especially along the Atlantic Coast, marked a sign of prosperity for those few who were reaping the most benefits from the progress of the times. Open grown European beech, with its massive lateral branches and elegant stature on the landscape, quickly became a necessary addition to mansion grounds, and from those beginnings the species also found homes in parks, historic sites, and college campuses.

In addition to its aesthetic appeal,
European beech required little maintenance, remaining free from serious insect or disease problems as other popular shade trees of the time began to succumb to introduced pests or pathogens. In fact, the only noteworthy indication that the beech might eventually have serious problems of its own came to light in 1938 when W.D. Day reported from the U.K. that several species of Phytophthora were occasionally causing a lethal root and collar rot. Sporadic reports in the literature after that continued the association of Phytophthora with a beech disease, but we can only presume that such cases were sufficiently infrequent to preclude the need for more rigorous investigation.

In the mid-1980s, Cornell University faculty and staff became actively engaged in studies to determine the cause of “abrupt” decline and death of mature European beech of Gilded Age vintage when the number of reports of such occurrences seemed to increase dramatically, especially in the New York metropolitan area. Because of the distance between Ithaca and New York, our first forays to examine selected trees were prompted by requests from homeowners or tree care professionals in the area. In virtually every case, by the time we actually arrived to examine a tree of concern it was dead or nearly so, and it was hosting a wide array of wood boring insects, wood rotting fungi, and other common saprotrophic microorganisms. Nothing in those early examinations (three to four per year for three years) shed light on a primary cause until one fortuitous viewing of yet another dead tree caused us to examine “healthy” beech nearby. One of those nearby trees with no crown symptoms had bleeding cankers at the root collar, much like those described previously by Day. With the aid of an Elisa field test kit, we confirmed that a species of Phytophthora was, indeed, associated with the cankers.

This discovery then prompted us to examine other beech throughout the Northeast, and results of those surveys led to conclusions that (1) bleeding cankers occurred on at least 10 percent of the European beech wherever mature (>75 yrs old) trees were growing, (2) species of Phytophthora were associated with the cankers in at least 80 percent of the cases, and (3) isolation of the pathogen(s) for further laboratory studies was best done between mid-August and mid-November. To the latter point, isolations at other times of the year rarely yielded cultures even though Elisa tests indicated that a species of Phytophthora was or had been in the tissue.

Identity of the actual pathogen in question turned out to be more challenging than expected. This was because the “species” isolated by us most frequently (60-70 percent of the time) was P. citricola, a species that had recently been determined to be a complex of at least four different species, all with similar appearances but very different DNA sequences – thus, different true identities. Today we know that the most common pathogen in our surveys was, in fact, P. pini – an organism isolated from roots of a pine tree in northern Minnesota in the mid-1900s and apparently forgotten for the next 50 years because of its morphological similarity with P. citricola.

The second most commonly isolated pathogen in our work was P. cactorum. This cosmopolitan organism was well known to pathologists concerned with root health of fruit trees, vegetables, and other landscape plants, and it showed up in our work 25-30 percent of the time.

One piece of good news from our efforts to secure accurate identifications of the pathogens was that we did not find any evidence of P. ramorum. That pathogen was discovered to be the cause of sudden oak death on the West Coast at
just about the same time that reports of European beech deaths were increasing rapidly in the East, and we had grave concerns that \textit{P. ramorum} may have found its way cross country. For the moment we could (and still can) put those fears to rest. Inoculations of beech saplings in the greenhouse and one mature tree in the field confirmed that, in fact, the species of \textit{Phytophthora} we were isolating from beech trees were, indeed, pathogens. Our inoculations of saplings included insertion of cultures of the pathogens directly into slits in sapling stems or drenching of soil beneath with solutions of spores. With both methods, we were able to kill young trees relatively easily.

Our one inoculation of a mature tree (actually, multiple inoculations of multiple roots on one tree) failed to cause any symptoms in the crown. However, when that tree was removed as part of a campus construction project, we thoroughly examined our inoculation sites at the root collar and found extensive cambial necrosis around each inoculation site. In fact, analysis of that tree together with observations of scores of others convinced us that European beech may show no symptoms up top until 80-90 percent of the root collar or main stem is girdled. And that’s why (we’re supposing) our earliest efforts to identify a primary pathogen stumbled; we didn’t get calls to look at trees until branches in the crown (many branches) started to die, thus attracting concern from tree owners. By that time the trees were nearly completely girdled and classic \textit{Phytophthora} symptoms had been overrun by activity of secondary invaders.

It is important to note here that in addition to isolating putative pathogens from tree stems, we also tried to isolate those same pathogens from the soil beneath both symptomatic and healthy trees. Recovery of one or more species of \textit{Phytophthora} from that soil was relatively easy and predictable. What wasn’t so predictable was that we virtually never isolated the same species of \textit{Phytophthora} from the soil that we isolated from symptomatic trees. Thus, \textit{P. pini}, which was clearly the most frequent and aggressive inhabitant of active bleeding cankers, never showed up in soil samples beneath infected trees. \textit{P. cactorum}, \textit{P. cambivora}, and \textit{P. gonapodyidies} did, but not \textit{P. pini}. And in cases where we isolated \textit{P. cactorum} from cankers, we never got \textit{P. cactorum} (or \textit{P. pini}) from soil beneath. We still don’t know why.

In the meantime, we began conversations with people who had had success in managing \textit{Phytophthora}-caused diseases in other situations. One of those conversations was with colleagues in California whose experiments led them to believe that treatment of trees there with a derivative of phosphorus acid (Agri-Fos) could have some value in managing sudden oak death.

With little else to go on, in the spring of 2004, we began tests using a protocol recommended by company representatives.
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Diseased trees were treated with a bark drench (to a height of 6-8 feet) with a mixture of 31.2 fl. oz. Agri-Fos plus 31.2 fl. oz. water plus 1.6 fl. oz. of Pentra-Bark. The latter is an adjuvant that is supposed to promote movement of the Agri-Fos through the outer bark and into the living phloem and cambium. Most of the trees we treated were in the 30- to 40-inch stem diameter class, and we used about 1/2 gallon of mixture per tree.

When we examined the trees five months later (October 2004), the cankers were still oozing fluids and there was no evidence that the treatments had been effective. However, observations during a second exam in August 2005 were more encouraging. Cankers less than about 1 square foot in area were no longer oozing fluid and, in comparison to pictures taken just before treatment, appeared to be the same size that they were at the beginning of our observation period. Larger cankers had still showed some limited amount of oozing, but markedly less than before treatment. During yet another exam in June 2006, all trees infected at the time of treatment showed no evidence of bleeding cankers at all. In fact, the only way we could find previously diseased areas was to look for the notches we had made in the bark when sampling two years earlier.

Unfortunately, our experimental design was far from optimal inasmuch as we had no untreated trees on the same properties as the treated trees, and on all but one of 12 properties we worked on there were only one or two diseased trees. Thus, in an effort to gain additional insight into the efficacy of selected fungicides, we conducted additional experiments on small (1/2-1 inch diameter), two- to three-year old saplings growing in pots in a greenhouse. The advantage here was that we could have enough replications of any given treatment to conduct meaningful statistical analyses.

Results of those experiments clearly showed that Agri-Fos + PentraBark applied as a bark drench at rates adjusted for the small sizes of the trees didn’t necessarily prevent colonization by any of the Phytophthora species tested, but the treatment reduced canker growth by 34 percent to 82 percent. A full description of our seedling treatments and the results thereof appear in the journal Plant Disease as Weiland, J.E., Nelson, A.H., and Hudler, G.W. 2009. Effects of mefanoxam, phosphonate, and paclobutrazol on in vitro characteristics of Phytophthora cactorum and P. citricola on canker size of European beech. Plant Disease 93: 741-746.

In the meantime, Agri-Fos for Phytophthora-caused beech cankers, applied either as a bark drench or injected directly into the trunks of trees has been approved by the EPA and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Other phosphorous acid formulations also approved for Phytophthora on beech include Arborfos, Whippet, and Alude.

We continue (now five years after the fact) to get positive reports from arborists who use phosphorous acid derivatives in the field on a regular basis. Several people have reported to us that their results were
even better if they scribed the bark from the surface of small (e.g. dinner plate size) cankers prior to drenching the bark. Others report that they are able to cause remission of symptoms (drying of cankers) by using a soil drench of a phosphorus acid derivative rather than a bark drench. And still others are getting satisfactory results by injecting the material into trees with one of the half dozen or so tools currently on the market.

The bottom line is, insofar as caring for European beech trees with bleeding cankers is concerned, our observations suggest that one of the phosphorous acid products offers the best option for slowing canker growth. The earlier that cankers are found, the more likely it is that you will be able to contain them, and treatment is likely to be most effective when trees are actively growing. We have not seen any evidence of phytotoxicity on beech, but we do know that if the bark drench mix of Agri-Fos gets on herbaceous plants or moss, it can burn or kill the plants. If there are valuable groundcovers around trees you’re treating, be sure to cover them with a tarp during application.

One point of contention that surfaces often has to do with the number of applications of phosphorus acid to be making on an annual basis. We only made one treatment in our most extensive series, and it took over a year to see results. Thus, we have urged practitioners to make that one application and then be patient while the material seeps through the bark and into the wood to have the desired effect on the pathogen and the host. And with little more than a best guess to go on, we’ve suggested that follow-up treatments, if needed, be done on an annual basis at most.

However, we have had conversations with many people who are making two applications a year and at least one making an application every month. We have no evidence to prove that more frequent applications are detrimental to the tree or to the useful life of the fungicide, but with the long history of microbial evolution of resistance to pesticides, we’re still reluctant to promote what we perceive to be overuse here.

(In the interest of equal representation, we very occasionally have conversations with tree care professionals who have not had good success in treating beech cankers with phosphorus acid derivatives and have little faith in this approach. If they are getting satisfactory results with an alternative treatment, it apparently is not one that has gained much traction within the profession.)

So what about the apparently dramatic increase in occurrence of bleeding cankers on European beech that started in the mid 1990s and continues to this day? Results of our extensive soil baiting lead us to believe that all of the species of Phytophthora that cause cankers on beech are commonly endemic to our soils, presumably living on miscellaneous organic debris most of the time and causing disease only when the host tree is predisposed. If cankers caused by species of Phytophthora are like those
caused by fungi such as *Nectria, Endothia, Cytospora*, and other fungi, then it’s reasonable to assume that water stress is the most likely predisposing factor. Such stress may simply be a consequence of prolonged drought, but it may also result from soil compaction, competition with neighboring vegetation (e.g. turf), anoxia due to over watering, or increased transpirational surface area associated with increased branching and massive crown development of open grown landscape specimens.

Insofar as the so-called “epidemic” of bleeding cankers that occurred between 1980 and 2010, we presume that that is due to the large number of trees planted in the late 1800s and early 1900s all “coming of age” with respect to disease susceptibility. Most (but definitely not all) of the diseased trees we see are from 70-120 years old and at various stages of maturity (“old age”?) depending on the many other factors that have affected the growth of each individual during the its lifetime. Ecologists refer to deterioration of entire generations of trees from any combination of natural causes or insects or pathogens as “synchronous cohort senescence” and that does, indeed, seem to be one important feature of the European beech population decline in the northeast U.S.

Efforts by tree care professionals to prolong the lives of these trees with improved attention to soil condition, moisture status, and insect and disease occurrence may be successful for the short run, but the prudent practitioner is wise to think about how and where to plant the next generation, as well.

Dr. George Hudler, Ph.D., is a professor of plant science and chair of the Department of Plant Pathology at Cornell University. Among his numerous awards are the Award of Merit and the Distinguished Arborist Award from the New York State Arborists Association. While currently on sabbatical, his research program is aimed at “learning enough about the cause of lethal bleeding cankers on European beech to allow us to address issues related to prevention and therapy with a sound background on the biology of the pathogen(s).”
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Bartlett acquires Collier Arbor Care

Bartlett Tree Experts in July announced the acquisition of Collier Arbor Care, an accredited TCIA member company serving the Portland, Oregon, area out of Clackamas, Ore., since 1937. This is Bartlett’s first office in Oregon, making it the 27th U.S. state that Bartlett serves.

“Working with Collier Arbor Care is the best possible way to expand Bartlett’s presence in the Pacific Northwest. Terrill Collier has built a business with a solid reputation for providing cutting-edge scientific tree care, which is completely in line with our company’s mission,” according to James Ingram, president of Bartlett Tree Experts.

Terrill Collier, former owner of Collier Arbor Care, is joining Bartlett as a plant health care consultant. A Board Certified Master Arborist with 33 years of experience, Collier has a B.S. in entomology from Oregon State University. His new role will capitalize on his extensive knowledge of the insect and disease problems of trees and shrubs.

With this change, Bartlett has selected Kevin Carr, BCMA, to manage the Clackamas location. Carr most recently managed Bartlett’s office in Gaithersburg, Maryland – the largest of the company’s 97 operations. Otherwise, staffing at the Collier office will remain the same, helping to provide a smooth transition to existing clients.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker (middle) tours the manufacturing facilities at Vermeer with CEO Mary Andringa and plant manager Bruce Severson.

Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker visits Vermeer

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker traveled to Vermeer Corporation’s Pella, Iowa, headquarters August 8 as part of a nationwide listening tour, during which she is meeting with businesses and thought leaders to hear about their priorities, concerns and ideas on how the public and private sectors can work together to strengthen the economy and create American jobs.

“We welcome the opportunity to represent the voice of business as the Secretary acclimates herself to the opportunities and challenges industry faces to grow domestically and abroad,” said Mary Andringa, Vermeer president and CEO. “We thank the Secretary for making the commitment to listen to those who are working every day to grow American jobs and American business opportunities.”

While visiting, Secretary Pritzker saw examples of the Vermeer global footprint by touring manufacturing facilities where the company’s largest machine to date – the 200-ton T1655 Terrain Leveler surface excavation machine – is built and then exported around the world; the Vermeer Parts Center where more than 65,000 active parts are stocked and shipments are made domestically and internationally daily; and, the lean brush chipper assembly line where the number of days from raw steel to finished product has been reduced from 52 to two days as part of a Lean journey that began in 1997.

Morbach establishes Boxer distributor network

Since acquiring the Boxer Equipment line from Mertz Manufacturing, LLC, at the end of 2012, Morbark, Inc., has been working to establish a worldwide distributor network for the compact utility loaders.


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Stumper Industries’ new Stumper 240 is a mid-size PTO-attachment grinder that chews up to 8 inches of stump per pass, while offering lighter weight and high- or low-flow hydraulic power options. The 240’s direct-drive system has no gear boxes or electrical connections to maintain. At 475 pounds (215 kg), a cutting diameter of 24 inches (61 cm) and built with the same robust yet simple design of all Stumper models, the 240 is designed for small to mid-size contractors and is compatible with a mini and regular skid steer, mini excavator, backhoe and UTV (utility vehicle). (www.stumper3500.com)

Hansatech Pocket-PEA chlorophyll fluorimeter

Hansatech Instruments newest chlorophyll fluorimeter, the Pocket Plant Efficiency Analyzer (P-PEA), enables arborists to detect reduced photosynthetic capacity due to biotic and abiotic stress factors in a tree or shrub by measuring chlorophyll fluorescence. Chlorophyll fluorescence is a method of detecting reduced photosynthetic capacity due to biotic and abiotic stress factors. Any forms of stress that have an effect on the photosynthetic capacity of a tree will alter the intensity of the chlorophyll fluorescence emission. Changes in the extent of fluorescence emission enables an arborist to infer information about the efficiency of light use for photosynthesis. A reduced photosynthetic rate can put a tree into decline long before the appearance of visual symptoms in the form of leaf yellowing/necrosis or crown/branch dieback. The technique is fast, non-invasive, non-destructive and can be repeated regularly. The pocket P-PEA is probably the most suitable fluorimeter diagnostic tool for arboriculture in terms of usability and cost. It takes measurements quickly and transfers data to a PC via Bluetooth, or to a PDA or smartphone running Windows Mobile 6 so that recorded data can be viewed while on-site for fast detection of potential issues. Distributed in the United States by PP Systems Inc., Amesbury, Massachusetts. (www.hansateh-instruments.com)

Jameson Telescoping Poles

Jameson Telescoping Poles with heavy-duty pruning heads are ideal for trimming hard to reach high spots. Available from Forestry Suppliers, the pruner kit comes complete with a 6- to 12-foot telescoping pole with female ferrule, one JA-14 Pruner with adapter and rope, and one 13-inch Tri-Edge saw blade with pole saw casting and adapter. (www.forestry-suppliers.com)

Air-Spade Utility Air-Spade 4000 Series

Guardair Corporation, Air-Spade Division’s new Utility Air-Spade 4000 Series air excavation tools are specifically designed to uncover underground utilities without damage. Air-excavation is the safe alternative to traditional digging methods, i.e. shovels or backhoes, which can damage or puncture underground cables and lines. Featuring Air-Spade’s patented supersonic nozzle, the 4000 Series can excavate the toughest of soils, but incorporate a high-voltage, insulated barrel and non-sparking brass components to provide a high degree of protection when working around underground electric and gas lines. Capable of running off a standard 185 cfm tow-behind compressor, features include: rugged, ergonomic handle; thermally insulated grip with retractable stabilizer bar and integral air-pressure gauge; dead-man trigger with trigger guard to prevent accidental actuation; insulated, 4-foot fiberglass barrel rated up to 300kV; non-sparking brass barrel sleeves and threaded connectors; and, a non-sparking, adjustable, rubber spray shield. (www.guardaircorp.com)

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Events & Seminars

September 10, 2013
Chipper Operator Specialist safety training workshop
Morbank, Winn, MI
Contact 1-800-831-0042, wendy.hopkins@morbank.com

September 14, 2013
Landscape, Forest Tree and Shrub Disease Workshop
Location: Fernald Hall, Umass, Amherst, MA
Contact: www.umassgreeninfo.org; (413) 545-0895

September 14-November 2, 2013
Openlands Treekeepers Training Program (8 weeks)
Morton Arboretum, Chicago, IL
Contact: (630) 719-5768; sclark@mortonarb.org

September 18, 2013
Chipper Operator Specialist Workshop
Alexander Equipment, Inc., Lisle, IL
Contact: Peggy (630) 917-8733; pdescher@tcia.org

September 18, 2013
State of the Urban Forest & Weed Mgt. for Arborists
Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, MA
www.extension.umass.edu/landscape/upcoming-events

September 19-20, 2013*
Shawnee, OK
Contact: www.oklna.org

September 20, 2013
Tree Climbing Specialist Workshop
Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center, Shawnee, OK
Contact: Becky Sellers (405) 945-6737; info@oklna.org

September 22-25, 2013
Pacific NW Annual Training Conference
Surrey, BC
Contact: www.pnwisa.org

September 24-25, 2013
EHAP Workshop
Surrey, BC
Contact: www1.gotomeeting.com/register/235876049

September 26, 2013
Creating an Ownership Culture webinar-Jeffrey Scott
Contact: www1.gotomeeting.com/register/235876049

September 26-27, 2013
Rocky Mountain Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Cheyenne, WY
Contact: www.isarcm.org

September 27, 2013
Chipper Operator Specialist Workshop
Vermeer Texas, Irving, TX
Contact: Margaret (281) 513-5224; mspsencer@tcia.org

October 2-4, 2013*
Texas Tree Conference
Waco, TX
Contact: www.isatexas.com

What’s coming in TCI?

Each issue of TCI Magazine contains a variety of articles tailored to the specific needs, concerns and interests arborists. TCI solicits a number of articles from outside writers to keep its editorial content fresh.

Do you have a story for TCI? The editor will be happy to review your idea or manuscript and discuss it with you. Here are some of the upcoming topics for the next two issues:

October
Machinery & Equipment:
Firewood Equipment, Cranes
Tools & Supplies:
PPE, Hazard Tree Assessment
Services:
New Technology
Safety:
Chain Saw Safety
Pre-show issue: TCI EXPO 2013, Charlotte, NC

November
Machinery & Equipment:
Aerial Equipment - Mini-Lifts
Tools & Supplies:
Ropes Cabling and Bracing
Services:
Consulting, Fleet Management
Safety:
Site Set-up
Special:
Southeast Regional Section
Contact editor@tcia.org

Advertising: Sachin Mohan, mohan@tcia.org

October 4-5, 2013
Splicing at Yale Cordage w/New England Chapter ISA
Saco, ME
Contact: www.splicingsatyale.eventbrite.com

October 7-9, 2013
Prairie Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Edmonton, AB, Canada
Contact: www.isaprairie.com

October 9-14, 2013
Citizen Science for Trees symposium
Tree Climbers Rendezvous, Atlanta, GA
Contact: www.treeclimbing.com/rendezvous

October 14-15, 2013*
MidAtlantic Chapter ISA Annual Conference
Fredericksburg, VA
Contact: www.mac-isa.org

October 21-23, 2013*
Illinois Arborist Association Conference & Trade Show
Timley Park, IL
Contact: www.ilinoisarborist.org

October 24-25, 2013
Trees South Carolina
Folly Beach, SC
Contact: www.treesc.org

October 25-26, 2013
NJ Shade Tree Federation 88th Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ
Contact: Donna Massa 732 246-3210;
njshadetreefederation@att.net; www.njstf.org

November 3-5, 2013
New England Chapter ISA Annual Meeting
Warwick, RI
Contact: www.newenglandisa.org

November 7, 2013
EHAP/Electrical Hazards Awareness Program Workshop
Lussier Heritage Center, Madison, WI
Contact: kritchotte@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

November 12-13, 2013*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional/CTSP Workshop
Charlotte, NC
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; peter@tcia.org

November 13, 2013*
Tree Injection Summit
Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, Charlotte, NC
Contact: info@tcia.org; www.expo2013.tcia.org

November 14-16, 2013*
2013 TCI EXPO Conference & Trade Show
Pre-conference workshops Nov. 13
Charlotte Convention Center, Charlotte, NC
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; info@tcia.org;
www.expo.tci.org

November 15, 2013*
EHAP Train the Trainer workshop
TCI EXPO 2013, Charlotte Conv. Ctr, Charlotte, NC
Contact: info@tcia.org; www.expo2013.tcia.org

November 15, 2013*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional/CTSP Workshop
Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, Charlotte, NC
Contact: info@tcia.org; www.expo2013.tcia.org

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Certified Treecare Safety Professional/CTSP Workshop
Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories, Charlotte, NC
Contact: info@tcia.org; www.expo2013.tcia.org

February 2-6, 2014*
Winter Management Conference 2014
Atlantic Paradise Island, Bahamas
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; dmorgan@tcia.org;
www.expo.tci.org

February 5-7, 2014*
New England Grows 2014
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Boston, MA

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

More almanac online! For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.tcia.org ⇒ events ⇒ industry-calendar
Send almanac listings to editor@tcia.org, or post them yourself on TCIA’s Industry Calendar – follow the directions above.
The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has proposed a rules change that eliminates the need for “non-defect” commercial motor vehicle inspection reports and also harmonizes the pre- and post-trip inspection lists, according to the Federal Register Volume 78, Number 152 (Wednesday, August 7, 2013).

The notice is found on pages 48125-48133 of the Federal Register, or may be accessed through the federal government’s e-rulemaking portal, www.regulations.gov by referring to Docket No. FMCSA-2012-0336.

FMCSA’s proposal would amend 49 CFR Parts 392 and 396. FMCSA proposes to rescind the requirement that commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers operating in interstate commerce, except drivers of passenger-carrying CMVs, submit, and motor carriers retain, driver-vehicle inspection reports when the driver has neither found nor been made aware of any vehicle defects or deficiencies. This proposed rule would remove a significant information collection burden without adversely impacting safety.

This proposed rule responds in part to the President’s January 2011 Regulatory Review and Reform initiative.

Public comment will be accepted through October 7, 2013. TCIA is evaluating whether it will submit comments in support of the measure on its members’ behalf.

Members may submit comments, identified by docket number FMCSA-2012-0336, using any one of the following methods:

- Fax: 202-493-2251.
- Mail: Docket Management Facility (M-30), U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.
- Hand delivery: Same as mail address above, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. The telephone number is (202) 366-9329.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these four methods.

In 49 CFR Part 392, FMCSA proposes adding “wheels and rims” and “emergency equipment” to the pre-trip list in section 392.7(a) in order to harmonize it with the post-trip list in Sec. 396.11(a)(1).

Additionally, FMCSA proposes to delete the sentence in Section 396.11(b) (2) that reads, “If no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver, the report shall so indicate.” In its place, FMCSA would insert, “The driver of a passenger-carrying CMV (designed to carry 15 or more people) must prepare a report even if no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver; the drivers of all other commercial motor vehicles are not required to prepare a report if no defect or deficiency is discovered by or reported to the driver.”

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
n 2001, Peter Sortwell bought a small tree care company in Hayward, California, and renamed it Arborwell. By 2005, the company was growing so rapidly that he hired Andy LaVelle as vice-president of operations to help.

“I was brought in to bring organization to the organization,” LaVelle says. “A big part of my job was to build teams in the regional offices.”

Today the company consists of offices in seven separate regions. The main office, in Hayward, is occupied by Sortwell, the CEO and a member of the TCIA Board of Directors, and LaVelle, now president, as well as the administration, including that of the safety department. Each office has a production team and manages its own safety department through its CTSP program.

“We have a really special culture in our company,” LaVelle says. He and Sortwell provide the top-level vision. They’re very hands off when it comes to production – and very results oriented.

And the results are clear. Arborwell now serves the entire state. And some 75 percent of their business comes from satisfied customers and their referrals, according to LaVelle. “Our employees are the reason our customers use Arborwell,” LaVelle says.

Customers include commercial and property management companies, business and industrial parks, construction and development projects, governments and municipalities, schools, universities and golf courses. Just five percent are residential. They often find new customers by networking at property management associations they belong to.

“We think of our customers first in everything we do,” LaVelle says. The company’s philosophy is to identify their needs and to apply the principles of arboriculture to them. When customers lack the knowledge about what is best for their trees, employees spend as much time as necessary educating them.

Arborwell has a Tree Wellness Program, a prepaid, ongoing program that begins with planting the right trees in the right places. It continues with pruning to ANSI standards, monitoring and treating trees for insect and disease problems and providing timed fertilization.

“We do a tremendous amount of preservation work,” LaVelle says. In 2012, one of their projects was to relocate some trees from a campus in the Silicon Valley to make room for a construction project. The trees will stay in their temporary home for up to two years, at which time the construction will be completed and Arborwell will replant them back on the campus.

“We also have a cutting edge GIS/GPS mapping program,” he says. “It’s something we’ve taken a very keen interest in.”

The Arborview GIS/GPS program saves property managers time and money as well as provides them with real time updates on the condition of their trees. While employees are in the field, they use GIS/GPS devices to map all the trees on a property and to record their attributes, such as location, species, height and DBH, and the employees’ recommendations for their health.

The company’s ISA-certified arborists do consultations for tree value appraisals, tree inventories, decay detection and measurement, hazard assessments and budgetary management plans.

Arborwell provides 24-hour emergency service and has removal equipment that includes whole tree chippers. They send all their wood chips to a biomass plant where they’re converted into fuel to create steam to turn turbines. The wood chips generate enough clean energy to power an average of 330 three-bedroom houses every year, according to Arborwell’s website.

The company has 160 employees, 130 of whom work in the field. Twenty-one are ISA-certified and 11 are CTSPs. Safety has
always been important to the company, LaVelle says. Employees receive an average of 50 hours of safety training annually, including on the job training, weekly safety meetings and specialized training events.

Arborwell also participates in community service. Sortwell, in particular, has been at the forefront of their charitable giving, LaVelle says. Arborwell has set up a scholarship program in partnership with one nonprofit, Students Rising Above, to provide funding for university for students who manage to get good grades in high school in spite of having difficult backgrounds.

Arborwell was accredited in March 2006, just the third company in California to do so at the time. “Accreditation is a way to distinguish professional companies that are in the business for the long haul from the companies that aren’t as serious about it,” LaVelle says. “I would love to see all tree care companies be accredited, especially the ones we compete with. It would be raising the bar for the industry.”

The process took four to five months. “I don’t remember it being difficult. The company was planned very well. I think that’s the key. We already had all the beginning work in place, for example, the P&L (profit and loss statement), the budget and work standards.”

Even a well-run company can improve, though, he says, because the Accreditation process makes it much easier to see any missing pieces. “Most of all we learned the importance of having a truly organized safety and training program, of not allowing anything to slip through the cracks, and, internally, of having everyone on board.”

Initially, not all the employees were on board with the changes, but most came around. “You tell them, ‘If you want to be professional in this industry, this is what we have to adhere to.’”

Going through the Accreditation process has helped Arborwell with its expansion, and LaVelle expects it to continue to help with any expansion in the future – possibly out of state.

“It gave us something of a template to use when we started in different locations,” he says. “We have the same requirements for any new locations.”

And if a smaller company is interested in being acquired by a successful, reputable organization, being accredited will help. The first thing LaVelle does when he’s looking for a company to acquire is to check if it’s accredited, he says. It’s the best way to ensure that the company cultures won’t clash.

“Some companies may be very good at taking care of trees, but if they don’t have the backroom stuff in place, it’s harder to implement standards and get the financials in place later on. I totally get the passion, but that’s only one part of the business.”

Contact Charlie Tentas for your free assessment and to see what TCIA Accreditation can do for your business, ctenzas@tcia.org.

TREE CARE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
1-800-733-2622  tcia.org  Advancing tree care businesses since 1938
How the CHIPPER Became One of the Modern “Big Three” Tree Care Tools

By Rick Howland

In keeping with TCIA’s 75 Anniversary celebration, last month we explored the evolution of right-of-way clearing techniques and equipment, which blossomed along with America’s post World War II boom. This month we turn to the long and winding road of the chipper, arguably one of the three most influential technologies impacting tree care.

After World War II, as tree care companies were repurposing military surplus and developing new machines on their own, one need stood out: how to minimize the growing piles of tree debris. Burning, dumping and composting weren’t cutting it. It was in this environment that the modern high-speed, high-capacity chipper was born. (There has been some claim to a primitive 1884 German model called the “Marke Angelin,” but there is little history available on it.)

Initially, the mission of the chipper was simple: reduce the sheer mass of material. Safety, like the machines themselves, was primitive. These days, productivity has greatly increased, units are refined to achieve things such as specific chip qualities for biofuel or mulch products, power plants are being highly tweaked for fuel efficiencies, and safety has become prominent issue.

But let’s start at the beginning.

One of the early companies to address the need to reduce tree debris in a big way was Asplundh, which in 1948 developed what is believed to be the first modern chipper. It was largely for its own use, but Asplundh-brand units were sold in the open market for nearly three decades. The early machine was developed in conjunction with a Massachusetts engineering company. Initial units were truck mounted, followed by the more popular and more versatile towable types.

Hyland Johns, retired Asplundh senior vice president, was brought on board after the first chipper rolled out, and he actually worked with a first-generation chipper in his early crew days. “We developed the first chipper after the war, which brought about many technical advances. Brush disposal was always a big a problem, actually half of the problem of trimming a tree. Pile it, burn it... Disposal is as much work as takedown, and there are more variables in residential work,” he says. “Asplundh worked with an engineering company in Massachusetts to develop the chip-Lkg.png

A basic Asplundh chipper unit and engine being mounted onto a trailer frame. By the early 1950s, Asplundh’s chipper manufacturing capacity was not only addressing the company’s equipment needs, but also the demand from municipalities and other entities, making the Asplundh chipper the first to be widely available commercially. The demand for the chipper became so great that Asplundh built its Philmont manufacturing facilities in Huntingdon Valley, Pennsylvania, to keep up with demand. Courtesy of Asplundh.

Asplundh’s first portable chipper was built into a truck in 1948
per. That company manufactured wood hogs (permanently installed) in lumber mills to take care of slabs and edgings left over from the making of finished lumber. Asplundh worked to develop it as a portable chipper, and it was built into a truck in ‘48,” Johns says.

He adds, “We put the first trailer chippers in the field in 1948 in the Philadelphia area. In 1950 when I started working with the crew we had one of those first chippers, a 9-inch.” He quotes his crew chief, who started in 1928, as saying, “When will (they) take this toy (9-inch) away and give us a 12-inch?” Field testing like that, according to Johns, is how progress was made.

“In 1948, we demonstrated that first chipper truck at the annual meeting of the New Jersey Federation of Shade Tree Commissioners. The state convention was attended by people from other states as well. This was documented in the Newark Evening News on December 3, 1948,” John reports.

“Back then, Asplundh did not think of patenting, but the engineering company did. We went on our way using the chippers. The partner company, Fitchburg Engineering, came out with a patented model. One of the features then was a flap-plate to accept limbs from 1-4 inches; it was adjustable to better feed the chipper. Simultaneously, we at Asplundh kept developing our own chippers to include the fixed plate and flywheel, which was kept through a dozen models for 25 years. We just kept innovating and modernizing,” Johns recounts.

“Workers at first did not like them because the chippers reduced their number of trips to the dump. Four or five loads to the dump became one, and they felt they were not getting enough riding time.” According to Johns, the chipper was proving it could make a huge change in productivity.

“Next to the chain saw, I think the chipper was number two in increasing productivity in ‘40s and ‘50s. The third thing was the aerial device,” Johns adds.

“Several years ago (1992), the company sold its chipper, bucket truck and truck body business to another vendor and got out of the manufacturing business,” Johns says, “to focus Asplundh’s strengths in line clearing.”

With more than 30 years in the tree care business, Thomas Wolf, vice president of national utility sales with The Davey Tree Expert Company, also has seen the chipper evolve with the times. Wolf was a second-generation owner of Wolf Tree Inc. in Knoxville, Tennessee, now a division of Davey.

“Asplundh certainly was an early innovator in chippers, as was Morbark and companies like Wayne with an early post-war chipper,” he says, adding that, “There are a lot of differences between then and now.”

“Initially, the vast majority of machines were drum chippers. (The disk-type appeared about 30 years ago.) Today’s chippers have more hydraulics and are far safer. Production horsepower is way up from the early days when the use of 50-horsepower Ford 8N (tractor) gasoline engines were very common. Most are diesel today,” he says, also recalling the use of Ford Pinto and other 4-cylinder gas engines in the 1970s.

“The biggest differences are performance and safety. There have been some horrific accidents over the years. The early drum chippers were primitive with a basic throat, cutting mechanism and discharge chute. The drum turned very fast, so much so that as a branch was grabbed into the machines, the smaller ones could whip you like a good smack from grandma,” he quips.

“Machines became self-feeding over the years. Now a hydraulic feed means laying the brush on the feed table and letting the machine take over. Much safer,” he says.

Altec, too, can lay claim to some early chipper history.

Dennis Beam III, now a vice president and sales manager for the arbor group at Altec, says he was born into the chipper business. (He was former owner and president of Wood/Chuck, having purchased the company along with his brother, Drew, from their father, Dennis Beam Jr., in 1995. The company was later sold to...
Altec.)

“I grew up going to shows as a kid,” he says. “There were a lot of chippers on the market, a lot of players in the 1960s.”

“My dad was an Asplundh equipment distributor and eventually contracted to build Asplundh chippers in the mid 1960s. About the same time Pitman, a Missouri company, contracted with an engineer named Hall who had designed a chipper, one that used serrated knives. They contracted with Wood/Chuck to build those. Eventually Wood/Chuck purchased the patents and associated designs from Pitman in ’68.”

In time, Beam says, “Wood/Chuck became the only chipper we built. We aggressively went after utility line business. During my tenure at Wood/Chuck, other than Asplundh, we became the major supplier to utility line contractors, building 40,000 Wood/Chucks from the ’60s to 2007,” he says.

“In ’92, when the Asplundh line was acquired by Altec, we started selling chippers to Asplundh. From 1993 to 2007 Wood/Chuck had about 70 to 80 percent of the line clearing (chipper) business and did not go after private tree or municipality work.”

In 2007, Altec also purchased certain assets of Wood/Chuck, Beam explains, observing that Altec had wound up purchasing two of the chipper pioneers: Asplundh, which had made only drum chippers, and Wood/Chuck, which made the original drum-style then introduced its disk chippers in the early 1980s.

Looking back on his career at Wood/Chuck, Beam is proud to say that, “In the late ’90s, I patented the panic bar safety device. That’s what really grew Wood/Chuck exponentially. It was critical for Altec to have,” he adds. “It is interesting to me that a safety device could make that kind of impact.”

Jerry Morey, president of Bandit Industries, notes that until about 1980, all chippers were the “chuck-and-duck” type.

“In 1979, my partner at Morbark designed the first Eeger Beever disk chipper. This was a significant departure,” he says. “Up to that time, machines were pretty much all high-speed rotary-drum types with no feed system; throw in the material and turn away. Material process rate was about 200 feet per minute. The first disk machines did about 70 feet per minute, so there was a lot of hesitance to adopt the new chipper. The difference was that it could process larger diameter material and chip constantly. It took time for operators to catch on,” he adds. “In ’83 we introduced the Bandit 12-inch unit,” he says, adding that the company’s edge was that it was “quicker to come up with other models.”

“We developed a 9-inch model on the same principles, then 12-inch with a larger...
opening and then an 18-inch with hydraulic feed. We and Vermeer came out with hydraulic chippers with feed systems in the 1996-97 period,” Morey adds.

“From that came a whole variety of sizes of hydraulic feed drum systems made by virtually all manufacturers. That concept of hydraulic feed drum has expanded dramatically and is now used even by whole-tree chipper machines for biomass production,” he says.

The evolution of hydraulic feed represented a major departure from the early Asplundh Whisper Chipper and Wood/Chuck machines. “Bandit still manufactures a few of those old-school chuck-and-duck machines to accommodate maintenance contracts written around those chippers. They are usually for utility line maintenance and account for about 1 percent of our business,” Morey notes.

“We were first to put on additional knives for a faster cut,” he adds.

Looking back on some of the early names, Morey recalls brands such as Mitts and Merrill, Wood/Chuck, Wayne and Vermeer. The disk types and hydraulic feed he claims were pioneered by Morbark in 1979 and Bandit by 1983, and with Wood/Chuck and Vermeer by the late ’80s.

“Hydraulic feed drums came about in the mid to late 1990s and are the most common types now,” he concludes.

“Morbark started in the late 1970s and into the 1980s with the traditional drum chipper,” says Jason Showers, marketing director for Morbark, “and in ’79 launched the Eeger Beever, which was the patented first hydraulic-feed disk chipper. This revolutionized how brush chippers were seen versus direct-to-drum.”

“Before that, it was all...
As we look back on 30 years of success, we are extremely grateful to all the hard working professionals in the tree care industry that have—and continue—to make us the company we are today. The first Bandit chipper was built in 1983 by just six people in a small mid-Michigan shop; today that shop is part of 240,000 square feet of manufacturing space, staffed by a workforce of over 400 to produce nearly 50 innovative wood processing machines sold all around the world.

We’ve stayed close to the professionals who use our equipment, asking for your input into making these machines even better. As a result you’ve helped us grow through the years, from hand-fed chippers to whole tree chippers, horizontal grinders, stump grinders, forestry mowers, and the expansion continues for 2013.

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We couldn’t be more proud of this industry and the dedicated people who show up every day to suit up, rope in, climb, cut, chip, grind, then get up early the next morning to do it all again. It’s a tough job, and we thank you for trusting us to help you do it. From everyone at Bandit Industries, thank you for 30 great years. Trust us when we say the best is yet to come.

Bandit Industries, Inc. Celebrating 30 Years

Visit us online and see Bandit’s 50,000th Chipper!
drum-style. At first they (disk chippers) were not widely accepted, but once they started to get out, guys realized the feed wheels were a huge improvement in operator safety and overall,” Showers says. “In the late 1980s we developed the hydraulically fed drum chipper,” Showers says. “Then came further improvements in design and safety, and integration of the auto-feed systems, including the reversing auto-feed system,” says Showers. “Three of these are big improvements: Bandit has a patented dual, safety pull-cable system, which we have a license agreement on. There is the bottom bump-bar by Vermeer. Finally, there have been a lot of technological improvements such as electronically controlled engines, which provide further advantages in performance and efficiency,” he adds.

Todd Roorda, tree care sales manager for Vermeer, notes that the company got its start in ‘48, then involved in agricultural equipment. “Our first venture in tree care was 1957 when we invented the stump cutter, then in ’67 the tree spade. Those saved a lot of backs,” he says. “1977 was our first venture into brush chippers.”

“As such, like others of the day, they were chuck-and-duck. We had one or two models of that style, but evolved into the hydraulically fed chippers with infeed rollers.” The difference, he explains, was the hydraulics that control the infeed of material to the rollers, which takes it to the drum. With chuck-and-duck, material goes right to the cutter drum. With a drum rotating at 2,800 to 3,000 rpm, the branch is gone at that rate of speed. Hydraulic rollers, on the other hand, feed material to the drum for a consistent cut, which helps control material going through, not zap-it’s-gone. This is also far easier on the machine and provides a consistent cut with safer operation.”

“Vermeer was one of the first chipper manufacturers with end-feed tables. They help keep operators further away from pinch points, such as the inner workings of the drum and rollers.”

“In early 2000, we went to a bottom feed-stop bar. This is a device that, if tripped, stops the end-feed rollers. For example, in the case of an emergency, if an operator is snagged and goes in the direction of the machine, he can trip the bar with his leg or the bar will get tripped automatically if he is being drawn in,” Roorda explains.

Regarding the gas-versus-diesel engine debate, Roorda notes that in the early days most machines were gasoline, then diesel gained favor. He notes that when gas-pow-
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ered machines went to clean air technology they became a bit more expensive than diesel at the time. “With the conversion to Tier 4 diesel, we’re going through similar EPA regulations. What we are starting to see with Tier 4 (diesel) emissions standards is that we’ve come full circle, where gas engines appear to be less expensive than diesel. Initial acquisition costs are less expensive, but over the life of the two, overall costs remain to be seen,” he maintains.

“Certainly with the price of diesel fuels these days, the cost of fuel will be part of the initial acquisition decision. Also, as far as longevity is concerned, we obviously do not know. Tier 4 technology is relatively new. If you look at cars, there was a day in the 1970s and ’80s where you’d put 100,000 miles on a car and look to get rid of it. Same for 1,000 to 1,500 hours on a gas chipper engine, it would be time to replace the engine. Nowadays we drive cars 200,000 miles on gas. We feel that in chipper, similar longevity of gas engines will be proven.”

“Right now we have a lot of things in the hopper. Lots to go to the TCI EXPO in November, but I do not want to discuss them until they’re unveiled,” he says, adding that there will be some new generation equipment and some upgrades of existing technology.

That seems to be the mantra for chipper since their introduction… something new and improved in terms of production and safety.

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Vermeer was one of the first chipper manufacturers with end-feed tables, designed to help keep operators further away from pinch points, such as the inner workings of the drum and rollers.

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A house drop, or service drop, is what the power company calls the overhead electric line to a single home. Everyone in the tree business knows what they are because most customers’ homes have them.

The Washington, D.C., metro area also has more than seven different power supply companies and four different states, each with their own set of regulations. However, none of these power companies will perform tree work for a single family home. They tell homeowners to call a tree company.

When an arborist visits a customer’s yard the one thing that gets noticed during every consultation is if trees are growing near the house drop. This is because the customer wants to keep his life, family, refrigerator, and computers running. The electric line running to his house is probably more important (to him/her) than the most complex removal or rigging work the arborist has ever done. However, the arborist knows that workers in the tree industry have been getting killed on a monthly basis since the early 1920s due to electricity. The general public doesn’t recognize the very real risks associated with tree work around electricity. This is an inconvenient truth (#1).

What the customer wants appears to be a very easy thing for an arborist to accomplish. Practically speaking, it’s just a little thinning, clipping or pruning to clear the electric line. To add to the apparent simplicity of the work, it is generally only 15-30 feet off the ground, clearly visible, and very accessible to pole clips and ladders. Like many overly-inviting things in nature, there is a lethal consequence if this scenario is performed incorrectly. The arborist is supposed to stay 10 feet away from all electric, telephone, cable and telecommunications lines, and guy wires. They should be treated as though they are energized and could cause an electrocution. This is an inconvenient truth (#2).

Next, performing a line disconnect for a single home is a huge inconvenience for a power company because they have millions of users and are generally concerned with the largest amount of users they can keep supplied. In short, they don’t want a relationship with each individual customer, or a tree company. A power company’s main concern is to keep the power flowing to as many homes as possible (the grid). This is an inconvenient truth (#3).

So now we have three conflicting scenarios where each party wants something from the other, but it conflicts with the goals of the third party. This dilemma can only be advanced by safety or urgency. Whichever one is chosen means the other will be sacrificed.

When our company has a problem we drill into it. We understand all of the critical components, and then arrange them in the correct sequence to match our priorities (safety, quality and production). So this is a story about how we solved this problem.

During a very active storm season I noticed a power company crew working on a house drop that had been hit by a tree. Their bucket truck was insulated, the outrigger pads were insulated, the pole the linesman was using was insulated, and he also had an orange rubber insulated upper body covering, and orange rubber gloves on. His personal protective equipment (PPE) was heavy duty and tools were all fiberglass. I was struck by the huge difference of tools and PPE a lineman typically uses versus a residential arborist.

At our next safety committee meeting, we started developing a formal protocol that could be used for any and all jobs that involve energized lines. The result was a flow chart of information and actions that need to be taken for any situation that involves trees and energized lines. Success with this protocol requires involvement from our company’s administration, sales and production departments, the utility and the customer. If this protocol is followed, it practically eliminates the possibility of being electrocuted.

The first step is “recon.” Correct and accurate information must be captured at the site. This information will be vitally important to the success of the initiative. It includes addresses of surrounding homes, electric pole numbers, and the approximate time it will take to accomplish the work.
Next, we need to understand the technical language and terms that our local power companies use, and try to use the same terms, since we are going to need their help. We learned the power companies’ terms so we could differentiate and communicate the desired service: a power disconnect (cut the power but leave the line up), a line-drop (physical disconnection of the line from the house), or a simple de-energize (pull the fuse).

We also had to understand their policies. This paid off when a power company field supervisor once tried to say that, since we were removing a broken limb from the left side of a tree that was 50 feet from a high-voltage (12kV) line, he wasn’t going to de-energize the line. However, the right side of the tree was four inches from the wire (close enough for the wind to cause contact). Was this just an oversight, a mistake – or did he just not really care? We don’t know, but our extra vigilance paid off. We walked away from this work because the power company representative would not make the arrangements necessary to keep our crews safe and compliant.

We have had numerous examples of the power company employees telling us wrong information, and asserting that we were making their job harder. When we respond with, “isn’t this a safer way to go,” they quickly respond with the company line that, “safety is always our priority.” While that may be true, I contend that it’s just not always arborist safety that’s on the top of their minds.

Our salesmen knew making these changes was going to add a huge challenge to their workload. However they rose to the challenge. We work in high-density areas that are often webbed with overhead lines. Coordinating with customers, power companies, and the weather is hard work. We soon began to apply a line-disconnect fee that gets billed to these jobs. We were surprised that most customers actually appreciated the fact that we were doing the right thing and had no issue with paying for this service. Some customers have even come out, disconnected the line from the house, performed the work, and upon completion the crew called the linesman directly to perform the reconnect. The sales arborist drove by later in the day to do visual check on the completed work and noticed that the electric company was replacing the line. He stopped to inquire why. The linesman showed him where the old house drop had rubbed so much on the maple limbs that it had worn through the plastic coating. The tree would have been energized had we not called for the utility disconnect.

Our production force appreciates the fact the so many people and so much effort is being put into their safety. However, they need to be vigilant, too. They must understand the entire process and ensure that it doesn’t break down.

On one occasion after requesting a line-drop (complete disconnect from the house), our crew called in and said the power company employee wasn’t going to take the line down. He thought that since the power line was “only running through a holly” he would just perform the reconnect. The linesman showed him where the old house drop had rubbed so much on the plastic coating. The tree would have been energized had we not called for the utility disconnect. This one moment gave us the tangible and absolute proof that this protocol works.

I encourage you ALL to develop a similar Line Disconnect Protocol, if you don’t already have one. I will make ours available through our website: www.rtectreecare.com.

Andrew Ross, CTSP, is president of RTEC Treecare, an accredited TCIA member company located in Falls Church, Virginia, and a member of TCIA’s Board of Directors.

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Andrew Ross, CTSP, is president of RTEC Treecare, an accredited TCIA member company located in Falls Church, Virginia, and a member of TCIA’s Board of Directors.
The last week of July, TCIA members traveled to Washington for our biennial Legislative Day on the Hill. Held in conjunction with PLANET, TCIA members fanned out across the capital to meet with legislators on key industry issues, including: OSHA safety standards; funding for tree planting; seasonal worker visas; and reducing regulatory burdens, especially with regard to the Clean Water Act.

In all, members met with 18 senators, representatives and their staffers on behalf of the tree care industry.

"It was great to see people from so many perspectives come together around improving tree care industry safety and regulation," says Michael Galvin, director with SavATree Consulting Group.

Through grassroots efforts in the states and through direct action by TCIA's lobbyists, staff and members, your industry's trade association works to promote the interests of commercial and utility arboriculture. We lobby for two primary reasons: 1) to protect and expand your markets, and 2) to reduce your cost of doing business.

"Meeting key legislators who can make a positive difference in our livelihoods was a powerful experience," noted Andy Felix, president of Tree Tech Inc. and a TCIA Board member.

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One tree for each of the 620,000 soldiers killed in the Civil War. That is the mission of The Living Legacy Tree Planting Project to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, currently being celebrated.

The result will be the biggest grande allee of trees in the world, stretching 180 miles on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway, which crosses the Mason Dixon line. It starts at Thomas Jefferson’s homestead in Charlottesville, Virginia, and ends at the small town in Pennsylvania that changed the course of the war.

“As you turn out of Monticello’s drive-way, you turn onto the National Scenic Byway, and travel 180 miles north to Gettysburg, along which most of the boys traveled and died. Why not recognize that we could plant one tree for each of the 620,000 soldiers killed, almost as if they were soldiers marching up from Monticello?” says Cate Magennis Wyatt, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, a non-profit four-state partnership that has created the LLTPP.

Each tree will be geotagged with information about the individual soldier represented by the tree.

“I am so excited about this project,” says Peter Hart, owner of TCIA member Hart Tree Preservation in Clear Brook, Va., and a certified arborist.

Hart’s 20-year-old company has 12 employees and specializes in tree preservation and hazardous tree removal for the Virginia Department of Transportation as well as hundreds of residential customers.

“Here’s the thing, with TCIA over the years, one repeating goal you’ll hear is how do we get the public involved in trees? And when I started learning about this project, I thought this is right up our alley. We’re the tree people,” says Hart, long-time TCIA member and an arborist since age 19. “TCIA’s membership needs to know about this. This is the largest memorial planting of trees ever, and who should be involved with this but the tree people?” adds Hart.

Hart lives near Route 15, the scenic byway that traverses north/south right by many of the Civil War’s most famous battlefields – Harpers Ferry, Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Appomattox. The byway also includes 30 historic communities. Many of the soldiers who died in
the Civil War did so on this corridor.

“We’ve already planted trees, and we have a ways to go. With 620,000 trees, it is very doable. But when you think of a $100 donation per tree, it’s not that much to give, and I think if we break it down through different groups and organizations, it will work,” he says.

He notes by contrast that in the 1930s the federal government planted 220 million trees over seven years as part of the Great Plains Shelterbelt to control soil erosion and drought in response to the Dust Bowl. “That is 355 times bigger than this project,” Hart notes.

Individuals, businesses, schools and community groups from around the world can contribute to this project, from a $100 online tree donation to a corporate sponsorship.

Organizers will geo-tag each tree to allow smartphone users to access information about the fallen soldier it was planted to commemorate. Also available via the tag is access to data about the type of tree, its source, age, and any disease history, soil requirements, etc.

“These landscape companies are working on an overall design. These aren’t just trees stuck on the side of the road, they are groups of trees. They’ve picked wonderful trees that are indigenous to the country. You’re almost going to be entering a 180-mile park. All of these counties have agreed to be completely behind this, so this isn’t just one little group doing it on its own. I’m really amazed at the synergy coming out of this,” Hart says.

Hart personally will dedicate trees in memory of his two great grandfathers, both of whom fought at Gettysburg in the 20th Infantry of Maine at Little Roundtop.

In a “witness tree” project, Hart has also identified and is keen to help preserve trees that were alive during the war in the years 1861-65.

The protocol for preservation is to redirect foot traffic, do soil aeration, root growth stimulus, and mulching to “help ensure the tree will be here in a 100 years. Trees can live a lot longer if they’re not subject to artificial impact of man being around,” he says.

Hart likes to quote John Muir: “We all travel the Milky Way together, trees and men,” and notes enthusiastically that with the Living Legacy Tree Planting Project, “we are actually doing this.”

The original vision behind LLTPP belongs to Wyatt, former Secretary of Commerce and Trade for the state of Virginia. It was Wyatt’s brainstorm to plant trees for the commemorative project to create a truly living legacy project on hallowed ground.

“Sadly, there’s still quite a lot of healing that has to happen,” she says, “in an area that houses the greatest concentration of Civil War battlefields in the country. Communities and families still need additional healing for the Civil War to be brought to a close.” Trees will be dedicated to Union, Confederate and African-American soldiers.

Response has been overwhelmingly enthusiastic, she says. All the mayors and county commissioners and others who have been invited to create the Living Legacy Project all responded with, “We don’t want another flagpole, we don’t want another monument. Can we do something bigger than any one of us together could do alone and truly create a legacy project?” says Wyatt.

“Every town council voted to be part of this,” she adds. The project raised funds, and brought in top
landscape architects, arborists and transportation engineers to do the hard part of designing and (planning) actual planting scenarios,” she says. Estimated completion cost is $65 million.

Rhodeside & Hartwell Company, a planning, urban design, and landscape architecture firm based in Alexandria, Va., won the national competition to create the master plan. Virginia’s Department of Forestry’s Terry Lasher helped select the right trees and soils, and Virginia’s Department of Transportation’s Bill Cutler oversaw transportation and tree safety concerns on the Route 15 corridor.

“While in theory it sounds like an elegant and appropriate way to commemorate those young boys, in practice this is a road that changes – from heavily forested rural roads, to historic streets, to four lanes, to six lanes – so what are the plant materials? What is the plant design so, as you pass along this corridor, you can recognize growth of the plantings for the significance for which they represent?” says Wyatt.

“If you do the math, 620,000 trees means a tree every 10 feet. We realized from the very beginning, that we were not going to be taking down trees, that we would be planting groves. Our pilot project planting has done that, where people can sit and enjoy the beauty of the trees and contemplate what they represent,” she says.

Phase One kicked off in November 2012 with 3,312 trees planted from Oatlands Historic House and Gardens, near Leesburg, Va., to Gilbert’s Corner, Va., five miles south. Officials dedicated the first tree planted, a 15-foot red October glory maple, in a pasture at Oatlands to an unknown soldier. Some 50 percent of those who died in the Civil War remain unknown. A brass disc hung from the trunk honored the soldier with Tree A-0001. Two other pilot programs are also underway, one in Gettysburg, and one in the town of Haymarket, Va., in Prince William County.

LLTPP also lends itself to a service learning project, Wyatt points out, where students can research those in their community who fought and died, and plant a tree in their honor. JTHG piloted a program in Hartford, Vermont, where students study the stories of boys and men from Hartford and throughout Vermont, who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg. Last May, the students went down to Gettysburg and visited Seminary Ridge where so many died and actually saw what is termed a “witness tree,” in this case an elm, that was alive during the Civil War.

Wyatt notes the immensity of the project, but gives a great deal of credit to Denise Harris, director of the JTHG National Scenic Byway. Harris has more than 20 years of planning experience and is a certified planner with the Virginia Planning Association, and works with state foresters, arborists, etc.

“We are in a planning process where we’re getting the master plan in place, pilot projects where planting is occurring, and working with special sites that keep popping up along the corridor. Each site is unique,” says Harris.

Plantings will take place in a “context sensitive way,” determined by site location and ownership.

Harris gives several examples. The overall idea is for travelers to be guided by a red color palette in each of the four seasons: redbud for spring, red oak for summer, red maple for fall, and red cedar and red twig dogwood for winter. A secondary palette, including canopy and understory trees, evergreens, shrubs, and ground coverings, will also feature red as a predominant color, with plantings including black gum trees, sassafras, and winterberry.

One project, in which LLTPP is working with the department of transportation, is...
located where the National Scenic Byway crosses over the interstate, according to Harris. Another is in an area of historical significance, at Oatlands, where organizers planted trees to help shield the historical landscape from encroaching development. Streetscaping in historic downtown Leesburg, Va., is another example. Also, as part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, all four partner states are required by the EPA to participate in nitrogen reduction, and planting trees is one way for states to receive credit for doing that, according to Harris.

“Some areas will have plantings all along the right of way, some will be allees, or in groves or copses, with a variation of plantings along the national scenic byway. Each location will have significance to a general area, but be specific to the individuals. It’s really about trying to honor each individual,” says Harris.

Another aim of the project is to restore a sense of a rural landscape to the increasing commercialization of the area.

“We would welcome the support of the tree care industry in any form that would be possible, helping us with planting, securing the trees, planning,” says Wyatt, and she urges TCIA companies to contact her office.

“A lot of healing has to happen, 50 percent died anonymously, and the family had no way of grieving or honoring them,” she adds. “This has to be done, and in doing this we beautify this historic area while we appropriately honor those people who gave ‘the last full measure’ without judgment. It’s a very tragic part of our history; we haven’t appropriately honored those people who have died,” she says, adding, “The tree is a healing way of moving forward for so many.”

LLTPP hopes to complete the plantings within the next few years. The 150th Civil War commemoration runs through 2015.

“It’s very ambitious, I know,” Wyatt says. “But those boys fighting didn’t have a choice, they didn’t get to draw things out and reschedule, and I think we have to do this now.”

For more information, visit www.HallowedGround.org or call (540) 882-4929. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership and the Living Legacy Tree Planting Project will also have a booth on the show floor of this year’s TCI EXPO in Charlotte, North Carolina.
Peter Gerstenberger was like a lot of young tree workers in the late 1970s. He had gone to college with the idea of being a forest ranger, and taken a summer job with a small, family-owned tree care company, where he learned that he enjoyed the work.

“At the time I was introduced to arboriculture, I had no idea that such a profession existed,” he recalls. “I saw a classified ad that said I could work outside and work on trees. I had no idea what I was getting into.”

He entered the profession after college, and went back to graduate school in 1981-1983 for a master of science degree in plant pathology at Iowa State University.

“I saw the disconnect between the ivory towers and the people working in the field, and decided to get more education and ultimately to get myself into an education position,” says Gerstenberger, who soon became staff arborist for the National Arborist Association, now TCIA, and 29 years later is senior advisor for safety compliance and standards for the association.

These were reflective of several trends happening in the tree care industry in the early 1980s. The decades-long fight against Dutch elm disease had created more tree-removal work, and illustrated both the need for more study and an appreciation of trees in urban and semi-urban environments. That created more educational opportunities, and more grant money to fund it.

“On one side, it sparked the growth of an industry in general, but on the other side, it fueled a lot of research into arboriculture,” Gerstenberger recalls. “So it served as a catalyst for research at the university level. Thirdly, it galvanized public attention and appreciation for the urban forest and for trees in general. Before that, I think people tended to take trees for granted, and then all of a sudden we lost a huge resource and it made a drastic difference. There was a lot more social, public support for the care of individual trees, and also increased concern for the urban forest.”

Before the days of Google, most tree care companies existed on their own, with limited to no interaction and sharing of information with other professionals. But the public concern over losing the resource provided the opportunity for more professional forums and the exchange of information. Gerstenberger shifted his focus with the intention of transmitting more knowledge to the people who needed it.

In 1985, he joined the NAA, which itself was undergoing changes. When Gerstenberger joined,
there was a four-person staff and the membership was approximately 400. That was a small increase from the 338 total members (287 active, 28 associate, 23 privileged) in the decade’s first year, but by the end of the decade, that number had boomed; membership grew to 1,043 (930 active, 80 associate, 33 privileged) and it would continue to grow into the ‘90s.

By that time, the association had moved its office from Long Island, New York, to the Bedford-Amherst area of New Hampshire, near Manchester, the largest city in the state. Starting in 1980, it would outgrow its office space a couple of times.

“First we were over a dentist, then we were over a bank, then we replaced a drug store,” recalls Pat Felix, wife of Robert Felix (NAA executive secretary from 1974 until his death in 1996) and NAA administrative assistant. “We kept growing and growing. In the ’80s, we were moving a lot.”

The association was growing in other ways as well, expanding its programs, gaining influence, and facing major challenges from its own government. The latter came in the form of increased federal regulation and oversight from different agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, and others. By the end of the decade, the NAA had solidified its position as a leader of, and champion for, the tree care industry.

**Big things**

The 1980s was a decade of big hair and thick shoulder pads. Cable television became more accessible, MTV launched in 1981, and the keyboard synthesizer and drum machine became to music what the bucket truck and chipper were to the tree care industry. *Thriller* became the most popular album of all time, and Michael Jackson became the decade’s most popular icon – more popular even than the Rubik’s Cube or the Members Only jacket.

There were other big things happening in the decade. Seizing on the gains of the previous decades, women would take a greater role in the workplace. It was an era of political correctness, the start of the AIDS pandemic, and growing concerns about nuclear power – spurred by a near meltdown at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania in 1979 and the catastrophic accident in Chernobyl in 1986. Wrestlemania made its debut, the Boston Celtics’ Larry Bird and Los Angeles Lakers’ Magic Johnson were at the center of an East Coast-West Coast rivalry that helped make the NBA even more popular, Edmonton’s Wayne Gretsky re-wrote the NHL record books, and a 20-year-old named Mike Tyson became the world’s youngest heavyweight champ.

The trend of movie blockbusters that started with *Jaws* in 1975 continued with *E.T.* the Extra Terrestrial, *Star Wars*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Back to the Future*, *Batman*, and several others. At the end of the decade, in 1989, a television show called *Seinfeld* made its debut, and became one of the most popular ever.

In short, there were a lot of things happening.

In 1980, the U.S. Forest Service was celebrating its 75th birthday by asking the public to plant a tree to mark special events such as birthdays or other milestones. The economy was weak, but commercial tree care was gaining a reputation for being recession proof. A May 1980 article in “NAA Arbor Action,” the association’s newsletter of the day, reported that a telephone survey of members found that while companies in some regions were struggling, the state of the industry was generally good “from Maine to Florida and west to the Pacific.”

Association literature from early in the
decade dealt with business conditions, concerns over government regulation, and a new practice called “Integrated Pest Management,” which would become standard.

In his February 1980 report to membership, Robert Felix called 1979 “one of the most productive years that the National Arborist Association has ever experienced,” with more programming, more participation, and greater interest in association activities. “In summary,” he wrote, “it is quite evident that the National Arborist Association is the leading influence in arboriculture today.”

One area of concern early in the decade was the development of membership, which Felix termed “very disappointing” in an “NAA Arbor Action” report reviewing the decade’s first year. Only 28 applications for membership were received in 1980, nine fewer than the year before, and the total membership of the association was 238 – the same as it had been in 1979.

“This minimal growth is countered by the strength and support of the membership,” Felix wrote. “Over 30 member firms voluntarily raised their dues last year and almost every resignation is from a firm that is going out of business. However, it would seem that we should receive more applications.”

One issue identified by Felix was a membership approval process that he termed “very discriminatory.” It would be dealt with and changed later in the decade, paving the way for more growth.

### Education and advocacy

For many association members, the ability to share information at annual meetings and seminars was a valuable way to develop strategy and knowledge.

“I can remember being a sponge from people like Art Batson, and Bob Bartlett, and John Hendrickson, and Robbie Nelson,” says Rusty Girouard, business manager and co-owner of Madison Tree Care & Landscaping, Inc. of Milford, Ohio (then called Madison Tree Service), naming off some of the heads of top companies of that era. Girouard, who had a corporate business background when she joined her family tree business, was one of a handful of women making inroads in the male-dominated industry.

“The NAA was really the premier organization for arborists, and at that point I thought it would be beneficial to join and learn from others,” says Arthur Batson, Jr., president of Lucas Tree in Falmouth, Maine, who joined the association in 1980. “People were always a little more secretive if you were talking to somebody who was a close competitor, but if you were talking to somebody who was several states away or the other side of the country, it was easy to talk and feel comfortable. So, people were willing to exchange their views and ideas, and things that were going well for them, and you could learn from them.”

NAA’s educational programming was expanded, with a revised “home study program,” slide/cassette programs, and more field training programs that focused on topics ranging from pruning methods to climbing to safety violations. Ed Irish, chairman of the education committee, noted that the sales of 300 revised home study programs in 1980 brought in 50 percent more income than in any previous year, and that over 11 years, gross sales totaled $326,000. That trend would continue through the decade.

“There were slide/cassette programs, and (late in the decade) videos,” says Pat Felix, who notes that the Electrical Hazard Awareness Program (EHAP) was particularly popular. There was an emphasis on teaching not just the tree care side, but also the business side. “One of the things Bob always said was that he wanted to make tree men (into) businessmen, because they were good tree men, but lousy businessmen.”

“By today’s standards, things were really quite primitive,” admits Dennis Ryan, a professor at University of Massachusetts, which includes the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, and who rewrote the 900-page home study program during 1979-1980. “We did that whole home study program on an IBM Selectric typewriter.”

Ryan ran seminars all over the country. “A local company would supply a truck and a chipper and a foreman, and I would fly in on a Monday night, and we would run programs Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, usually, and I’d fly home Friday night,” says Ryan. “A lot of guys who are now managers of companies went through those programs 30, 35 years ago. That was
really when the NAA took off in the education area.”

In the late 1980s, the association began making training videos, filmed in New Hampshire.

“If you look at those old videos, Bob Felix shows up in every one,” Ryan says. “He kind of thought of himself as Alfred Hitchcock. If you watch, he’ll be in the car driving by (or in some other background shot). We gave him a director’s chair with ‘Cecil B. DeFelix’ stenciled on the back.”

One focus of the education was the result of something that also kept the association busy on the advocacy front, representing its industry with the federal government, which was regulating many aspects of tree work. Members also had to also deal with state regulations that changed the way they did business, with environmental concerns that eliminated the large-scale spraying that had been the norm since the late 1940s. Integrated Pest Management called on the arborist to use a variety of alternative treatments intended to deal with specific issues, with minimal environmental impact.

Education led to innovation, and it also led to sales. There was more call for seminars, NAA-sponsored and otherwise, and those educational presentations also benefited companies selling products or services. California-based arborist Donald F. Blair was a leading trainer, and he recalls that as the economy boomed, so did demand all over the world.

One innovative company to benefit from more arborist education, and from the tenor of the times, was the Mauget Company of Arcadia, California, which had developed an injection system that was uniquely effective at delivering pesticide or other treatments through the tree’s vascular system.

“If you couldn’t attack the tree from the outside, you could use something like Mauget or some other injection system to attack it from inside,” recalls Blair. The NAA hosted symposiums where the method was explained, and studied the results of injection use.

“Our hallmark of marketing our products was through education,” says Nate Dodds, Mauget president and whose father, Dale, co-founded the company. Business-boomed during the 1980s, as “our name was becoming more associated with qualified research, and qualified researchers,” says Dodds, whose company collaborated with the U.S. Forest Service on a study of the impact of the technique on trees, which concluded that it was a viable treatment option.

Other beneficiaries of seminars were the lowering device and rigging block manufactured by Ed Hobbs’ Bry-Dan Corporation and distributed by Don Blair’s Sierra Moreno Mercantile Company, Inc.

“It completely revolutionized the way we took trees down,” Blair says. “We had a lot more control, precise control, over what we had before.”

Another piece of equipment also became hugely popular. Morbark introduced the self-feeding disk brush chipper in 1979, and by the ’80s the disk chipper became one of the most popular tools in commercial tree care.

“Let’s say you had an efficient threeman crew with a drum chipper,” Blair says. “When the disk chipper came along, because it was self-feeding – that once you stuck a log in it, it took care of it while you went and got another piece – a lot of companies were able to maintain the same output by putting only two people on.”

A court challenge

The association was also busy with government advocacy, including challenging OSHA in court in 1983. Partnering with the Forging Industry, the NAA sued OSHA, arguing against a change in regulations requiring employers to provide annual hearing tests and training to employees, as well as participating in noise-monitoring and record-keeping. It was intended to amend a regulation requiring hearing protection for employees exposed to noise at or above 90 decibels.

The U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals decided in the association’s favor in 1984, but the case was reversed on reconsideration by the full U.S. Court of Appeals in 1985.
“The thing we felt was appropriate was, ‘OK, if employees are exposed to noise, just provide them hearing protection so they’re no longer exposed,’” Gerstenberger says. “So, there are aspects of the requirements that we took exception to. We were just looking for responsible regulation.”

The NAA also made its members’ voices heard on issues such as anti-pesticide legislation, and vertical standards for the electric utility industry. Persuasive input by the association helped the government experts revise regulations to keep workers safe while still allowing them to do their jobs.

An anniversary and membership change

Public relations has always been part of the mission for the association and the industry, and the 200th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1987 provided a great opportunity. In the book Arboriculture: History and Development in North America (1999, Michigan State University Press) author Richard J. Campana described a tree care initiative in Philadelphia, where workers from 13 companies pruned and fertilized trees at Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell Pavilion. “With 50 workers, seven trucks and chippers, plus three fertilization trucks, more than 100 trees were treated,” Campana wrote.

The decade held another important anniversary. In 1986 the nation celebrated the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the Statue of Liberty. Preparatory to the celebrations, in November 1985 and again in April 1986, more than 100 tree care workers from 23 association firms plus 20 arboriculture students from UMass pruned trees on Ellis Island and nearby Liberty Island (location of the Statue of Liberty) to prepare Lady Liberty for thousands of visitors.

From 1987 to 1991, the association continued the bicentennial tree theme, with a campaign that included placing bronze plaques next to historic trees, including a for huge banyan tree in Banyan Tree Park, Lahaina, Maui, as part of a late 1980s Winter Management Conference on Maui.

There was another big moment for the industry in 1987, when the association revised its requirements for new members. Prior to that time, acceptance required peer review that included written support from two other members. Proponents said that the mechanism allowed the association to maintain standards, while critics charged it could be used by member companies to block out or “blackball” a competitor.

“It was much more a good-old-boys organization at the time, but it definitely evolved in the late ’80s,” Girouard says. “That’s when the philosophy of upgrading the whole industry [through inclusiveness] started.”

The association also lowered the introductory dues rates, and membership skyrocketed.

“There was a huge period of membership growth from 1987 through the next three or four years,” Gerstenberger says. “We totally changed our philosophy from trying to keep it limited to the ‘best’ companies out there, to getting everybody through the door. They still had to meet minimum requirements of providing certificates of insurance and so forth, but we adopted an open arms policy.”

As someone who had started his career with a small company that could have benefited from the knowledge an association could provide, Gerstenberger welcomed the change.

“I could empathize with those wanting to be better, but being excluded from joining and receiving that sort of information.”

The growth of the association was impressive, but it was just the start. The momentum gained in the 1980s would carry over into the 1990s, a decade that would see record growth and the birth of two new ventures: the world’s largest tree care exposition and a new magazine.

I remember that!

IDs for the images on page 42 are, from top left, a boom box and Madonna-inspired fashion, Miami Vice, fall of the Berlin Wall, Sting, AIDS ribbon, Rubik's Cube, IBM computer; bottom, from left, Ronald Reagan, early cell phones, Space Invader video game, eruption of Mt. St. Helens, DeLorean, Nintendo control, and Michael Jackson.

Erik Haupt Sr., left, NAA president in 1982, and Walt Money, NAA president in 1981.
Sure, tree guys were cool back then, but 75 years later…

we’re a lot safer and successful. And yes, we’re still cool.

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Photo courtesy of McLenahan Tree Service, circa 1938; yes, it is cool!
The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is the landscape where human development merges with outlying natural ecosystems. In the southeastern U.S., the WUI is growing larger as land development expands to accommodate an influx of residents from other regions of the country and beyond. The predominant natural ecosystem in the southeastern U.S. is forestland. As such, the southern WUI is typified by developments surrounded by and immersed in forests. While retaining a forested character in these developed lands is desirable from an ecological and amenity standpoint, there are several potential risks that exist when forests and people are in close proximity.

One of the greatest risks that communities face is forestland wildfire. While wildfires can be unpredictable and devastating, there are numerous practices that can be utilized to minimize the risk. Chief among these practices is managing trees and remnant forests in developed landscapes. In this article, I will briefly discuss the basic concepts of wildfire threats to developed landscapes and the opportunities for arborists and commercial tree care companies to expand their businesses by helping clients safeguard their properties against wildfire.

Wildfires erupt when there is an ignition source, combustible materials, and conducive environmental conditions. In the southeastern U.S., a common cause of wildfire is dry lightning – that is, lightning in the absence of precipitation – but other accidental and intentional causes are numerous. Combustible materials include built structures, live vegetation, and coarse woody debris. The type, amount, density, and proximity of vegetation and debris are major determinants of how easily the material will ignite, burn, and spread to adjacent areas. Intuitively, wildfires are most likely to ignite and spread uncontrollably under conditions of prolonged drought, low humidity, and high winds. The prevailing topography and connectivity of the forestlands can also dictate the intensity of wildfire spread. Steep terrain and expansive tracks of forestland unbroken by roads or other open spaces contribute to wildfire spreading quickly and uncontrollably.

Although a comprehensive wildfire suppression strategy requires addressing all three of the above factors, arborists and
Tree care companies are most qualified to plan and manage the vegetation and coarse woody debris component. With that said, arborists may need additional training or self-education on wildfire management to thoroughly understand the principles and practices of safeguarding dwellings and other property against wildfire.

There are numerous resources that arborists can use for their education on wildfire. One of the best is Firewise Communities (www.firewise.org), which is a nationwide program lead by the National Fire Protection Association and co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters. Another good resource is the Fire Adapted Communities Coalition (www.fireadapted.org). Its mission is to help people and communities in the WUI adapt to living with wildfire and reduce their risk for damage, without compromising firefighter or civilian safety. The websites of both of these organizations have numerous news stories, informational resources, and announcements about upcoming workshops and webinars.

Before discussing the services that an arborist or tree care company might offer in the realm of landscape wildfire defense, some business and liability considerations are worth briefly mentioning. As alluded to in the previous paragraph, an arborist will likely require some additional education, training, or certification to become qualified to provide wildfire suppression services. This will obviously require an investment of time and money. Moreover, specialized equipment may need to be purchased or production employees may require specific training to provide services. These investments must obviously be made with a positive notion that there will be a return on the investment through new business opportunities. Thus a company should carefully consider the demand and prevailing market price of wildfire suppression services within their operating area. Preliminary market research might be possible through discussions with existing clients, state agency foresters, local extension agents, municipal emergency planning officials, or companies that insure homes and other real estate.

Finally, arborists should be aware of any liabilities that they may expose themselves to in providing services that might be outside the scope of their routine arboriculture business. A discussion with a lawyer and/or insurance agent might help clarify how service contracts should be written and/or whether additional insurance is needed to minimize liability in the event of a destructive wildfire on a client’s property.

There are two main areas where arborists or tree care companies might develop their service line for landscape wildfire defense: planning the landscape and maintaining the landscape. As the WUI expands, development typically creeps into forestlands. In many cases, land owners and developers retain native trees and forest stands on parcels because it increases the curb appeal of the properties. However, in wildfire prone areas, poor choices on tree and stand retention could possibly elevate the wildfire risk on developed parcels. This is an opportunity for arborists.

Acting as a consultant, an arborist might work with land owners and developers to identify trees and delineate stands that are suitable for preservation and flag others for culling that represent a wildfire risk. At the individual tree level, this might entail identifying trees that are highly flammable species or that are situated too close to dwellings or other buildings and could spark a structure fire if they were engulfed by an encroaching wildfire. At the stand level, the arborist might help identify risk factors such as high stem density, pure stands of flammable species, accumulation of standing dead trees or fallen woody debris due to weather or pests or historical...
fire suppression, and stands on dry or steep ridges. In these cases, the arborist might help the land owner choose a location for construction away from high-risk stands or might recommend fuel-reduction practices in high-risk stands.

Apart from the existing forest, the arborist might also assist the land owner with designing what is known as a "fire-wise" landscape. The main tenants of these designs are selecting appropriate woody plant species, situating them carefully in the landscape, and utilizing appropriate landscape groundcovers. Assisting with land development planning for wildfire defense can be done at multiple scales, from an individual parcel to an entire community. However, these plans are generally most effective when they are developed at a larger scale, so arborists should seek to work with developers designing entire subdivisions or commercial parks.

There are many existing developments in the WUI that were not designed with wildfire defense in mind. Thus arborists may be called upon to maintain trees and forests around existing homes at risk of wildfire. Even in these cases, a vegetation and fuel maintenance plan should be written to prioritize and implement services through time. Services that might be included in this plan are removing excessive trees to create defensible space around structures, pruning trees back that overhang structures, clearing excessive underbrush, thinning forest stands to remove dead trees and create canopy gaps, and chipping downed woody debris. The arborist might also monitor forest stands periodically for invasive pests that could kill trees and lead to an accumulation of fuel wood.

Continued population growth in the southern WUI will put more people and property at wildfire risk. Although the presence of trees and forests increase the risk of wildfire, there are many effective practices that can be used in planning and maintaining vegetation such that forests can be enjoyed while not creating an undue hazard. If the frequency and severity of forestland fires continues to grow, there may be new opportunities for arborists and tree care companies to likewise grow their business and to help keep this serious threat in check.

Eric Wiseman is associate professor of urban forestry and arboriculture in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va. This article is based on the presentation he will make on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2013 this November in Charlotte, North Carolina. For a complete EXPO schedule or to register, visit www.expo.tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622.
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Accident Briefs

Taken from published reports or reported directly to TCIA staff, as noted.

Ground worker shocked near truck
A tree service ground worker was critically injured July 3, 2013, when he was shocked while helping remove a tree near an electrical line in Tully, New York.

Robert Lee, 20, of Cortland, N.Y., was standing near a truck — possibly touching it — when the truck’s boom hit a power line. The electricity traveled through Lee’s body on its way to the ground. He was reportedly not breathing when first responders arrived. He was listed in critical condition at Upstate University Hospital, according to The Post-Standard report.

Contributed by Brian C. Skinner, senior arborist with National Grid in Syracuse, N.Y.

Man hurt in fall from tree
A day laborer trimming a tree July 4, 2013, in Huntington, New York, was injured after he fell 10 to 15 feet.

The unidentified man, 42, had been hired by a homeowner to trim a tree, but other workers at the site said he was working without safety equipment. He was treated on the scene for cuts to the head, and head, neck and chest injuries. The victim was taken to Huntington Hospital in serious but stable condition, according to the Huntington Patch.

Worker injured by chain saw
A tree service worker was injured July 5, 2013, in a chain saw accident in White Pine, Tennessee. Lucas Hartman, 24, who owns a tree service business, was clearing branches from a tree at the private property when the accident occurred, according to a report in The Standard Banner.

Homeowner killed by cut tree
A man was killed July 6, 2013, in front of his New Bedford, Massachusetts, home after being crushed by a tree he was attempting to remove from his property.

Olimpio Tavares, 54, was working to cut down the dead tree, which was over a foot in diameter. He was using cables to brace the tree as he cut it down with a chain saw, and it appears that as it was falling the bottom quickly shot up and struck him to the ground. Tavares was pronounced dead at the scene, according to a WPRI Channel 12 report.

Trimmer electrocuted
A man trimming trees was electrocuted in Bittinger, Maryland, July 8, 2013.

Brian K. DeBerry Jr., 28, of Oakland, Md., was working for a tree-trimming company cutting trees on private property and had climbed a tree to cut limbs when he came in contact with a live electrical line. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to an Associated Press report.

Tree trimmer burned by power lines
A man apparently trimming trees in a backyard suffered serious burns and was left dangling after he had become tangled in high-voltage power lines July 8, 2013, in Bellbrook, Ohio.

The tree service worker managed to right himself in his harness, but had to wait until rescuers were sure the power lines had been de-energized before they could get to him. The man’s body was burning when emergency personnel arrived at the home. Unable to get to the man because of concerns about the wires, emergency workers worked to keep him calm.

Dayton Power & Light de-energized the lines, and the man was able to use his safety harness and attached ropes to pull himself right-side up onto the tree so the rescue could occur. Once he was upright, crews were able to help him down a ladder. He was then taken by CareFlight to Miami Valley Hospital, according to a WHIO-TV report.

Man rescued from tree
A homeowner had to be rescued July 8, 2013, after he climbed 65 feet into a tree in his Fenton, Michigan, backyard to trim it and injured himself.

Ulvert Jackson, 70, was cutting a limb above his head but lost control of it. The limb went the wrong way, and the rope he was using, apparently on the limb, got caught on his foot and broke it. He couldn’t get down without assistance.

Jackson’s brother called 911 for help and the Fenton Fire Department safely lowered him to the ground about 45 minutes after the call. He was then transported to Genesys Health Park in Grand Blanc Township, where he was told his ankle...
CTSP CEU Quiz #2013-5 September 2013

1. It might be a good idea to NOT:
   a. disregard or discredit others who choose to follow innovation
   b. use two hands while operating a chainsaw
   c. purchase a smartphone
   d. apply DdRT climbing systems

2. Single rope technique systems:
   a. describes just one system of climbing
   b. employ methods only for ascent into and descent out of the tree

3. Kernmantle ropes that work well for SRT tree work:
   a. include all kernmantle types
   b. do not include all kernmantle types
   c. are not available in the tree care industry
   d. should only be static

4. Two factors of rope that affect hitch-based SRT systems are:
   a. overall rope length
   b. knotability
   c. memory
   d. both b and c

5. Multi-directional SRT tools:
   a. must be used with kernmantle rope
   b. must be used with double-braid rope
   c. must be used with two additional points of attachment
   d. can be used with any commonly-used arborist rope

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 bimonthly feature in TCI. This quiz is based upon information in the article: “More Thoughts on This SRT Thing...,” page 56.

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

1. Only current CTSPs in good standing who qualify for professional development CEUs may obtain CEUs for this quiz. Other readers are encouraged to use TCI’s safety articles for training and may wish to use this quiz to test comprehension.

CALL 1-800-733-2622 OR VISIT WWW.TCIA.ORG TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CTSP OR TO ENROLL IN THE PROGRAM.
required surgery, though he is scheduled to make a full recovery, according to the Tri-County Times report.

Tree worker dies in fall from bucket

Burgess was trimming the final portion of the tree when he fell. The homeowner did not see the fall, but found the victim lying on the concrete when she came outside. She said another worker already had called 911, according to a WKBN-TV report.

Trimmer rescued from palm fronds
A tree trimmer was rescued July 13, 2013, after spending 90 minutes in a palm in Las Vegas, Nevada. (See photo at left) The man became stuck when several dead palm fronds slid down the tree trapping him inside. The man was working alone when he notified his wife by cellphone.

Firefighters found the man inside the frond skirt about 35 feet up the tree. The man had climbed up the tree using spikes attached to his boots and was tied into the tree so he would not fall. With the weight of the fronds pushing down and being tied into the tree, he was trapped.

Firefighters from Las Vegas Fire & Rescue’s Technical Rescue Team used extension ladders to get to the man and checked his medical condition. At the same time they cut the fronds away so they had accessibility, then brought the man down. The man was taken to the hospital for observation, according to a KSNV-TV NBC News 3 report.

Man killed in struck-by
A man died July 20, 2013, when he was struck by a falling limb while cutting a tree down in Mt. Carmel, Illinois.

Andrew James Pinard, 42, of Fort Branch, Ill., was standing on the ground when the limb from the tree fell to the ground, striking him. He was taken to Wabash General Hospital, where he was pronounced dead, according to the Princeton Daily Clarion report.

Tree worker dies in fall from tree
A climber died July 22, 2013, while cutting sections of a tree at in Columbus, Georgia.

Cleveland Wayne Moore Jr., 54, an independent contractor from Dothan, Ala., was trimming trees in the backyard of the residence when the accident occurred. Moore had just cut a three-foot section of the tree.
when his safety strap reportedly broke and he fell 100 feet to the ground. He was pronounced dead from blunt force trauma a short time later, according to the Columbus Ledger-Enquirer report.

Worker hurt by cut palm top
A contractor was injured July 22, 2013, when a 25-foot section of palm fell on his head in Novato, California.

A four-member crew was working, two of whom were cutting down the palm when the contractor walked out of the home to place some debris in a waste bin, and the top section of the palm fell on his head.

The victim, 56, suffered neck pain but did not lose consciousness. He was taken to Marin General Hospital for treatment, according to the Marin Independent Journal article.

Woman killed by fallen tree branch
Barbara McWhorter, 57, was checking the backyard of her Columbus, Georgia, home for storm damage July 24, 2013, when she was killed by a falling tree limb, according to a WTVM report. A tree limb had fallen on the home and it appeared she was outside checking on it when another limb broke free and struck her in the head, according to an Associated Press report.

Contributed by Eric Gansauer, forestry administrator for the city of Columbus, Georgia.

Homeowner dies cutting tree
A homeowner died July 24, 2013, in Logan, Ohio, when a tree branch fell from a tree he was sawing at his home and struck him on the head. Arthur Nutt, 72, was found by a neighbor. A sheriff’s officer located a hand saw next to the tree.

It’s believed that when Nutt was sawing or possibly shaking the branch that struck him, its weight gave way, causing it to fall from a suspended location and strike him. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to a Logan Daily News report.

Homeowner knocked from ladder dies
A man died July 26, 2013, after falling from a ladder while trimming a tree outside his Penfield, New York, home.

Frederick C. Venor, 56, was on a ladder when a branch fell on the ladder, knocking Venor and the ladder to the ground. Venor fell about 20 feet. He was taken to Strong Memorial Hospital, where he died from his injuries a short time later, according to a report on www.democratandchronicle.com.

Line trimmer electrocuted
A line clearance worker was electrocut-ed July 27, 2013, while trimming trees in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Robert Rogers III, 42, of Orefield, Pa., was using a bucket truck as part of a crew for a tree service contractor trimming trees to clear distribution lines for PPL Utilities when he contacted a 12-kilovolt line. The contact sparked a fire that destroyed one tree truck and damaged two others. It also knocked out power to about 1,000 PPL customers, according to a report in The Morning Call.

(Continued on page 69)
More Thoughts on this SRT Thing...

Magazine articles are usually intended to be informative, and to entertain somewhat. This article is no exception, so let us start with the disclaimer that reading this or any other article on climbing should not be considered a reliable replacement for hands-on, side-by-side instruction with a qualified trainer in a non-critical setting.

SRT climbing systems have been around tree care for a long time. A misconception that SRT systems and techniques are new to tree climbers may stem from the fact they are not as widely practiced as other techniques at this time. As with all things that are unknown, tendencies arise to disregard or distrust methods that have a bit of a learning curve. Sometimes it is just easier to stay where you are rather than explore new possibilities.

Remember how you felt when you first saw a smartphone? Perhaps you saw a demo on TV or in a mall, and initially you either thought, “That’s really cool!” or “who needs that?” Maybe you jumped right into smartphone use without ever looking back. Maybe you took the standard: “wait-and-see” approach, taking a while to watch the rest of the smartphone users while slowly building your trust of the new idea of these new devices. Or maybe you were in the very small group of people who have completely refused to acknowledge the existence of smartphones and the advantages they bring to our world.

You’ve probably even dealt with customers like that, who cannot even receive voice messages on their rotary-dialed landlines let alone own a smartphone to ignore them on.

While it is an individual’s choice to use newer technology, or not, perhaps it may still be good practice not to disregard or discredit others who choose to follow the path of innovation. The tree care leaders of yesterday gave us the safety and convenience we experience today. Tomorrow’s up-and-coming arborists will also need leaders, and those leaders are being forged right now in the growing realm of SRT tree climbers.

The tree care leaders of yesterday gave us the safety and convenience we experience today. Tomorrow’s up-and-coming arborists will also need leaders, and those leaders are being forged right now in the growing realm of SRT tree climbers.

Here’s some SRT food for thought:

SRT is not meant to describe just one system of climbing. There are ascent-only systems, descent-only systems, and hybrid systems allowing the climber to go up, down and sideways); and there are new multi-directional-capable tools developed specifically for SRT use in tree care.

The use of SRT ascent-only systems has a long track record within the tree industry, with known requirements. Technically, DdRT is also a single rope system, deployed in a mechanical advantage configuration; i.e., doubled to the climber.

Kernmantle is not the only rope type used in SRT systems, and not all kernmantle ropes are equal. There are dynamic, semi-static and static kerns, each for different climbing applications/disciplines. Some kernmantles work well for SRT tree work, and other kerns should never be used. Depending on your climbing gear, many times a double-braid climbing rope is perfect for SRT work.

Whatever rope is used for SRT climbing, it should be “knot-able.” Knot-ability and memory are two things that seriously affect hitch-based SRT systems intended for up/down/lateral movement. In general, 24-strand ropes are very supple compared to their kernmantle cousins. Sure, there are some exceptions out there, but how high do you need to be climbing to require all the static qualities of kernmantle?

SRT systems don’t require stronger rope than DdRT systems. Arborist rope strength is tested and rated on a single length, not a doubled length. The ropes rated for DdRT use in trees are just as sufficient for SRT systems.

“Static” in the context of SRT systems refers to the stationary anchored rope, not its elongation characteristics.

Beyond slack-tending during certain maneuvers, there is no need to “pull” rope through SRT systems, since the system moves on a stationary rope.

Of the three multi-directional SRT tools – Unicender, Hitch Hiker, and Rope Wrench – any commonly used arborist rope and currently available saddle may be used. The only specific gear required is the primary device itself. The two systems, DdRT and SRT, are so similar, the only change required to switch from DdRT to SRT is a change of the rope attachment point.

While speed may be enhanced, it is not the primary reason for using SRT in production tree care. Safety, efficiency, less wear and tear on the climber and productivity are.

The safe use of SRT systems should not be in question. The unsafe or untrained uses of SRT and DdRT systems should be. Anyone who has safety concerns regarding SRT systems has no more – and no less – to worry about than with the safety surrounding DdRT systems, aerial lifts, or crane work. Safety and training surround us in all aspects of tree work. SRT climbing is not inherently less safe for the climber properly trained on its techniques.

This article was a collaborative effort of Eric Whipple, CTSP; Chris Girard, CTSP; and Tchukki Andersen, CTSP.
Knowledge of fruit tree science is not a requirement for all tree care companies, but is a niche market for plant health care (PHC) providers who want to cater to a high-end clientele, or to offer additional services to current customers. If your company chooses this lucrative money-maker, then a high-quality reference book on backyard fruit tree management will come in handy.

Growing Fruit Trees: Novel Concepts and Practices for Successful Care and Management, edited by Jean-Marie Lespinasse and Évelyne Leterme, both fruit tree specialists in France, is a worthy tutorial for the aspiring backyard orchardist. Informative material covers conditions and growth requirements for 15 different types of trees for on-the-spot reference, including: Almond, apple, apricot, chestnut, fig, grapes, hazelnut, kiwi, olive, peach, pear, plum, and walnut.

There's a very detailed section on grapevine management, most likely influenced by French wine grape production. The chapter on hazelnut trees explains a little about calculating optimal yield from observing flower phenology, so the backyard tree can offer the most nut density. All tree species are given thorough treatments that detail important aspects of that species.

- botanical and taxonomic description of the tree
- climatic limitations and adaptations
- cultivating
- cutting
- harvesting methods
- history and geographic origins
- mastering fertilization techniques
- planting
- pollination
- principles of training, pruning and reconditioning (young and mature trees)
- species and rootstock varieties

This book can be used by professional tree care technicians as well as the enthusiastic homeowner. The reader should take the time to read between the lines to find the prized “Rules of Thumb” peppered throughout:

- Respect and follow the tree's natural characteristics and architecture for strong, healthy fruit tree development.
- Let the trees do their own work and guide them as best as you can.
- Educate and restrain the customer from their desired pruning reflexes.

Here is an excerpt that shows how the book brings up little tidbits of lesser known information, yet provides it in adequate context:

**Summer Pruning**

This promotes branch development and health. The two basic goals of summer pruning are to obtain optimal thinning and to enhance the tree's branching potential.

Keep in mind the following points:

- Suppressing poorly lit branches and secondary branches around the base of the tree as well as excess scaffolds should always be comprehensive, “all or nothing.”
- Renovating the scaffolds, if there is reason to, involves cutting back shoots that are two or three years old. It is essential to “anticipate” how the scaffold will be renovated by preserving an epicormic branch (a new, vigorous shoot breaking from a location other than a leaf axil and growing mainly upright) two to three seasons prior to removal of the older scaffold.
- Removing fruiting organs, especially excess flowering shoots or spurs (because of lack of light or scraping of fruit by shoots), is the last phase of summer pruning.
- Branch selection will depend on their position within the tree and the quality of their floral buds.
- Recently strengthened scaffold branches may be bent if necessary, while the tree is producing sap (that is, actively growing).

As colossal and overwhelming as this paperback appears to be at 352 pages, it is an appreciated guide to help arborists, horticulturists, and serious gardeners observe and understand the world of fruits and trees.


Tchukki Andersen, BCMA, CTSP, is staff arborist with the Tree Care Industry Association.
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**Part-Time Regional Outreach Coordinators — West Coast area**

TCIA’s newly created outreach coordinator position will concentrate on creating groups of tree care business owners who meet and interact regularly (face-to-face and online) and facilitating increased participation in TCIA programs via regional workshops that address both owner and employee needs (EHAP, CTSP, etc.). A regional coordinator will live and work in their assigned region to organize member gatherings (breakfasts, after-hour’s gatherings, etc.) where current members interact prospective members are invited to see what they are missing. Coordinator will work to strengthen the visibility of professional tree care through consumer awareness opportunities at events, via social media, and traditional press. Target areas for coordinators; one based in Southern California and one based in Northern California, however other locations will be considered depending on strength of the candidate, local industry, location and TCIA strategic plans. For complete job description, requirements and application details, visit www.jobs.tcia.org. Resume and cover letter to: Bob Rouse, Rouse@tcia.org.

**Tree Climber/Crew Leader, Illinois**

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Effectively Handling Problem Employees

By Patrick McGuinness

Do you have an employee who used to be a great worker, but for whatever reason has become unreliable or hard to work with? Or maybe, you hired somebody without really vetting them first because you really needed the additional labor. Now you have an employee who does not buy into your company mission, is lowering morale, and might be a safety risk. How do you give that employee the opportunity to turn things around without being too soft? How do you terminate their employment in a legal and safe way? Managing problem employees in an effective manner is important for keeping your business running efficiently and protecting your rights as a business owner.

Have an employee handbook for YOUR business

How are employees supposed to know what is expected of them at work, and what behavior is not allowed at work? Employee handbooks are the best way to give employees a guide to how your company works and how they can expect to be treated when they mess up. Make sure the handbook you have for your business does not just sit on the shelf. Go over the policies with employees so you can answer their questions and ensure they understand where to find answers to their questions.

Employee Handbooks should cover some behavioral expectations such as your company’s regular work hours, work week, vacation time and holiday time. It should also explain procedures for requesting time off, clocking in and out, and how to raise concerns with management. Finally, handbooks should thoroughly and clearly explain what disciplinary process your company uses. Not every problem behavior or employee action can be anticipated, so don’t try to cram every possible problem scenario into the handbook.

All of these items are only helpful if they actually apply to your business methods. Having a handbook that represents what your company actually does is important for providing clarity and consistency for all of your employees. Purchasing an employee handbook template online can be a good starting place; however, you need to carefully edit the handbook so that it fits your business.

Address problems as they arise

If you notice an employee having problems, address it right away. Letting problem behavior persist and hoping it goes away on its own is a recipe for disaster. When you let problem behavior continue, it sends the wrong message to the problem employee as well as to the other employees. They will all believe that the behavior is acceptable because you have not said otherwise.

Once you have identified a problem behavior, try and document it and collect information that can substantiate the problem for the employee. The severity of the issue determines how much investigation you need to perform. If the employee was late to work, a simple printout of their time card may be enough. If the employee has been accused of harassing another employee, you will want to interview others that may have witnessed the behavior.

Before pulling the employee aside to discuss the behavior, make sure you organize your thoughts and what you want to cover during the talk. Bring copies of any documentation for the employee so he or she can look at things on their own once you have talked to them.

Give useful, actionable feedback

When you actually sit down and talk to the employee, your goal should be to help the employee improve his or her performance. Don’t go into the meeting planning to yell and intimidate the employee so that he or she will reform their behavior out of fear. Instead, explain to them why their behavior is bad for the company, why it disrupts other employees, or is a safety concern. Let them know why it is important for them to change their behavior, not just so they can keep their job.

Don’t embarrass the employee by calling him or her out in front of other employees. Pull them aside at a time and place that will minimize distractions for both of you and will also respect their privacy. Embarrassing an employee in front of others can turn a fixable situation into further problems.

You don’t have to do all of the talking. People like to be heard, and tend to feel a sense of fairness when they are. Once you have explained the problem and showed the employee your documentation, allow them to suggest actions he or she can take to correct the situation and prevent it in the future. Using the employees own ideas will increase future compliance.

Provide some of your own suggestions and come to an agreement with the employee on what actions will be taken. Also, figure out what the time frame will be for implementing the agreed upon changes. Make sure you agree on consequences for the employee’s failure to comply with the changes you have agreed upon. Have the employee provide ideas for consequences, too, but don’t be a pushover and accept consequence ideas that are clearly too weak to encourage compliance.

Paperwork galore

Keeping up with paperwork is hard, especially when you could be doing other
things you think are more important. Resist the urge to issue verbal warnings, or not document the conclusions you reach when meeting with an employee. Write down what you ultimately agree to and give a copy to the employee so they understand the importance of the conversation you had with them.

Put a copy of the agreement into the employee’s file and let the employee know you will be doing so. It is hard to keep up with all of the distracting paperwork, but it is important to do so. Having excellent documentation of employee behavioral problems will protect your business in the future should you terminate the employee.

Follow up

Document instances of future misconduct as well. Although you and the employee have already discussed the problem, a verbal reminder or warning is not enough. You want to create documentation and evidence for any future proceedings that may be necessary if you terminate the employee. Every time you meet with an employee to discuss a problem, you should create a document for their file, which might be needed in the future to support you.

Check on employee behavior regularly and be sure to compliment or reward compliance with the agreement you came to. If the situation is proper, you can arrange a mentoring situation between employees so that you are giving the employee every opportunity to improve and continue working with your company.

It is important to follow the plan you agreed to with the employee. Failing to do so will cause the employee to believe that the agreement isn’t important and that future issues and violations will not have consequences. It is also important that other employees see you follow through with what you say you will do. This will build confidence and trust in your leadership and show other employees that you are committed to a certain degree of order and discipline within your company.

Sometimes things don’t work

No matter how much brainstorming, counseling and mentoring takes place, sometimes a problem employee is not able to overcome the behavioral obstacles they face. It does not matter whether this is due to an unwillingness to change or other things going on in the employee’s life – sometimes you have to fire people.

If the problem behavior is the same thing every time, choose a time to give the employee a final warning and let them know that termination will be the next step. Put this warning in writing as well and clearly explain why the employee must figure out how to change.

Once you know for sure that you need to terminate an employee, set up a plan and stick with it. It is bad for the efficiency of your company to drag out the termination process.

Your fired!

However you decide to have the termination meeting, don’t use the infamous “Your Fired!” Donald Trump line. Even though the employee being terminated has caused you all sorts of headaches and problems, still treat them with respect and dignity. Perhaps try to have the meeting at a time when other employees won’t be around.

Prepare for the meeting and make a checklist of things you need to cover. If the employee borrowed tools, make sure you get them back before you schedule the meeting. Also, if the employee has access to confidential information or materials, make sure that is accounted for as well. Have the final paycheck ready to hand over at the meeting, and a written letter stating that they are terminated. It is also a good idea to have another employee sit in on the meeting as a witness. If you have a human resources person, it would ideally be them.

Terminations are emotionally charged, and no matter how deserved, the termination can result in a variety of behaviors. Most people will ask for an explanation, but this is really an attempt to engage you in further conversation. Some people cry, others may yell. Often, the employee will want to bargain with you so that you give them another chance. It is best not to engage in this type of discussion. Do not go into detail but instead tell them that they are no longer a good fit for the company and are no longer needed. Depending on the type of position and the circumstances of the termination, you may want to consider a severance agreement for the employee.

Consider how the employee will exit company property and be prepared to walk with them to their vehicle to ensure they do not vandalize anything or remove any company property. If the employee has a desk or locker, be sure to have a few empty boxes around so that they can take all of their personal belongings with them and not need to return later.

Think about any additional security issues which may need to be addressed once the employee leaves. Things such as lock combinations, passwords, and extra key hiding spots are often overlooked after a termination; make sure to change things up a bit.

Move on

Once the termination has taken place, move on and encourage other employees to move on as well. Do not engage in conversation with other employees about the terminated employee. Do not fuel the rumors that may already be circulating. If you plan to fill the employee’s position, take care to have a procedure in place to ensure good hiring practices.

From initially addressing employee problems, to termination, it is important to follow these guidelines. Many times employees are able and willing to fix their behavior right away when a problem is pointed out. Sometimes an employee just isn’t a good fit for your company. Either way, your company’s rights, culture, and reputation are at stake so be sure to have a plan for every step.

This article provides general information on employment law matters and should not be relied upon as legal advice. A qualified attorney must analyze all relevant facts and apply the applicable law to any matter before legal advice can be given.

Patrick McGuiness is an attorney specializing in employment law for Zlimen & McGuiness, PLLC in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This article is based on the presentation he will make on the same subject at TCI EXPO 2013 this November in Charlotte, North Carolina. For a complete EXPO schedule or to register, visit wwwexpo.tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622.
Choosing rope for SRT

Hollywood publicists have said that there’s no such thing as bad publicity. That sentiment fits the bill when it comes to single rope technique (SRT) as far as I’m concerned.

SRT is nothing new to me. My first endeavors to incorporate SRT into tree climbing started about 20 years ago. In 2001, I gave my first public presentation about SRT at the Minnesota Shade Tree Short Course. In September 2002, an article I wrote was published in the ISA publication Arborist News. In the years since then, I found that there were other tree climbers who had climbing experiences outside of tree work who were also incorporating SRT in trees. A tagline I started using years ago is now coming true: SRT is the Future of Tree Climbing.

In the past few years there have been rope-climbing tools that allow climbers to move up, down and laterally in trees. Before these tools were invented tree climbers were hampered because there were only ascenders and descenders. These new tools, transenders might be a possible name, invented by tree climbers fit our special requirements.

In order for tree climbers to use some tools safely and efficiently we’ve been somewhat limited by ropes that are compatible with access tools and our needs. In the recent article: “Use SRT? Double Down on Your Choice of Rope,” (TCI Magazine, August 2013) there are some things that I’d like to address.

First of all, the impression is given that kernmantle rope is the solution for SRT in tree climbing. Some arborist ropes are made using rope-in-rope construction, which might qualify them as kernmantle, by some definitions. The choice of construction must consider the requirements of industry standards, rope manufacturers’ suitability recommendations, and compatibility with rope-climbing tools and techniques. Arborists have used toothed ascenders incorrectly for many years on incompatible ropes. Some ropes can be dangerously damaged if a climber falls while using incompatible ropes with certain rope tools. It is imperative that climbers choose ropes that are deemed compatible with the tools they’re using.

When SRT is discussed in the tree care industry, we need to learn new words, come up with additional definitions of words or be clear as to which definition is being used. The word “static” is a challenge for tree climbers. In the past the word has been taken to follow the definition of a rope’s strength/stretch characteristics. In SRT tree climbing the word is used to define the key difference between DdRT and SRT. In DdRT, the rope moves with the climber; when using SRT, the rope doesn’t move – hence, “static” – but the climber does. Until a new word is accepted, I’m trying to not use “static” when talking about SRT. This leads to confusion.

Since SRT climbers aren’t lifting the rope while they climb, the weight of the rope becomes much less important. When I set my rope, I leave at least 20 feet extra on the ground, more if I plan on making some redirects, before ascending. On many climbs, that extra 20 of rope never even leaves the ground. Not having to yard-up the rope to clear the tail of a DdRT system saves energy and speeds up production.

Learning how to take advantage of SRT requires climbers to learn that all of the components used in DdRT aren’t compatible with SRT. Since TCIA has published “Best Practices for SRT in Arboriculture,” there’s really no reason for climbers to not be able to make good choices. In addition, there are plenty of online resources available. The catch is that the climber might not be able to understand what pieces of online advice are correct.

Rope strength is an issue that has become a long discussion. For me, the ropes that I use are plenty strong enough to rely on. This might be based on when I started climbing. That was in the early ‘70s, when I climbed on natural fiber ropes. Now, we have such amazing ropes to use, I know that they will support me sufficiently. Since the ropes are made to ANSI Z133 requirements, they’re suitable for tree climbing.

There is no need to give the impression that kernmantle rope construction is the only rope solution for SRT. If the gear or rope tool manufacturer requires a rope to meet a certain construction specification, then the climber had better know which rope to choose. Not using the right rope with some tools can be dangerous. There doesn’t seem to be compatibility issues with the “transenders” that are currently being used. But there are issues with some ascenders and descenders.

Tom Dunlap
arborist crew leader
Biltmore Estate, Asheville, North Carolina
Another take on use of SRT

The article “Use SRT? Double Down on Your Choice of Rope (TCI, August 2013), on proper rope choice for SRT, had many obscure references to fears and perceived dangers in SRT. I would like to address a couple of the more misleading statements made.

Too many people regard the term SRT in a very narrow sense. There are many types of SRT: ascent only, descent only, ascent/descent, plus tools able to perform off-angle work positioning. Even our commonly use doubled rope system, DdRT, is a single rope technique: it uses one rope.

This statement, “A misconception is that SRT is simply a style to be used with any type of equipment and any type of rope,” does not take into consideration the diversity of what SRT encompasses. There are SRT work-positioning tools specifically designed for tree work that allow ascent, descent and off-angle work positioning: the Hitch Hike, Rope Wrench and Unicender.

For years, in an effort to become more efficient, we have borrowed tools from other industries. They have specific design criteria that need to be met. However, simply applying the recommendation of the manufacturer’s rope type for a particular component does not automatically make that choice of tool safe within a tree climbing system. Most of these components are used within a specific system and if parts of that specific system are not used, the test criteria designed for developing the safety within the systems could be out of whack.

Although there is always going to be a need and desire for improvement in design for performance and safety in ropes, the tree tools mentioned above were specifically designed to be used with arborist climbing lines, already commonly in use in our tree work environment.

Another statement was made that somehow SRT can lure “less experienced users to take shortcuts and try the technique hastily without laying the groundwork for a successful climb.” This is not a problem specific to SRT. Just take a look around and you will see this happens in all aspects of not only tree work but life in general. It is wrong to blame a climbing system for people failing to become educated and trained in it.

SRT work-positioning is here; it is being, and has been, used worldwide in tree care for quite some time. I think it is time people without understanding and experience stop putting on the brakes and start learning the ins and outs of these very efficient systems.

David McNeill
owner and climber
McNeill’s Tree Service
Corvallis, Montana

Kudos to Bob and Pat Felix and other NAA leadership

I just finished reading Don Blair’s 75th Anniversary article (“The ’70s: A Time of Change for the Science of Tree Care, the Equipment, the Country and the NAA,” in the August Issue of Tree Care Industry Magazine. I was particularly interested in reading about Bob and Pat Felix.

Don was spot on with his historical assessment. I visited Bob and Pat at their Long Island home shortly after Bob assumed the leadership role of the NAA (National Arborist Association, now TCIA). They did indeed work from the kitchen table and Bob worked tirelessly for the NAA and arboriculture in general.

The 1974 picture of the Board of Directors also brings back fond memories as I personally knew each and every member of the board. They were a most dedicated group of men who, if still living, can be very proud of the Tree Care Industry Association today.

Congratulations to all.

J. Roger Finn, president
Antietam Tree Service, Inc.
TCIA member since 1972

Call back…

In the article “When OSHA Comes to Call. . .,” in the August 2013 issue of TCI, it was stated that Owen Tree Service was the first company in Michigan to earn TCIA Accreditation and the second in the U.S. In fact, Owen was the first in Michigan and one of the first two companies accredited in the U.S. Owen and C.L. Frank and Co. of Massachusetts became the first two companies accredited on May 20, 2004, which was the date of the Accreditation Council meeting when the program was approved. Technically, Owen and C.L. Frank can both claim first-in-the-nation status. Today, 368 companies and company branches are accredited nationwide.
EAB spreads in U.S., Canada

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has added the following counties in Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina and Tennessee to the emerald ash borer (Agrilus planipennis) regulated areas: Whitley County, KY; Bollinger and Pulaski Counties, MO; Granville, Person, and Vance Counties, NC, and Hamilton County, TN.

APHIS was responding to the confirmation of EAB in these counties during May and June of this year. The interstate movement of EAB-host wood and wood products from these areas is regulated, including firewood of all hardwood species, nursery stock, green lumber, waste, compost, and chips of ash species.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has confirmed the presence of EAB in Kawartha Lakes, and in Grey County, Ontario, after the beetle was discovered in both areas. Similar restrictions exist in Canada as in the U.S. The presence of EAB has now been confirmed in 32 Ontario counties, and in seven areas in the province of Québec.

HWA found and eradicated in Ontario

On May 30, 2013, one hemlock tree at Niagara Glen Park (on the Niagara River), Ontario, was confirmed infested with hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) by the CFIA. The delimitation surveys conducted covered a 500 meter radius around the infestation and no additional infestations were found. The infested tree was removed and incinerated.

Follow-up surveys for HWA will resume this fall and again in 2014 to verify that these eradication efforts were successful and to ensure the continued pest-free status of Eastern Canada. Under IPPC standards, HWA is considered present only in British Columbia and is subject to official control in Canada.

Government book sale

The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) is having a sale on some older items that may be of interest to those in the tree care industry, including the following:

- How To Recognize Hazardous Defects in Trees (Revised 2012)
  Description: Created to help home owners and land managers in recognizing hazardous defects in trees. Suggests possible corrective actions. Agriculture Dept., Forest Service.
  Price: Sale: $1.75/Display International Price: $2.45
  GPO Stock Number: 001-000-04756-6
  ISBN: 9780160913778; order online at: bookstore.gpo.gov/products/sku/001-000-04756-6

- How to Prune Trees (Revised 2012)
  Description: Teaches how to prune trees to produce strong, healthy, attractive plants. Describes how, when and why to prune. Agriculture Dept., Forest Service, Northeastern Area.
  Price: Sale: $2/Display International Price: $2.80
  GPO Stock Number: 001-000-04755-8
  ISBN: 9780160913761; order online at: bookstore.gpo.gov/products/sku/001-000-04755-8

Order online via the link provided above, or: fax the GPO Contact Center at (202) 512-2104; Phone: (866) 512-1800;
**Urban trees conference in Great Britain**

The Institute of Chartered Foresters in Great Britain has issued a call for papers for Trees, People and the Built Environment II, an international urban trees conference that will take place in 2014. Those who may be interested in submitting papers for consideration or participating in the event can visit [www.charteredforesters.org/conference2014](http://www.charteredforesters.org/conference2014).

**Accident Briefs**

*(Continued from page 55)*

**Tree worker injured by cut tree**

A man working on a tree cutting crew July 29, 2013, in the town of Montrose, Wisconsin, was seriously injured when a tree section fell on him.

Forrester Berry, 25, of Madison, Wis., was working with the crew when a large section of the tree fell on him, trapping him underneath. The crew cut sections of the tree away, which allowed them to free Berry. Berry was taken to UW Hospital by helicopter with serious but non-life-threatening injuries, according to a report on [www.madison.com](http://www.madison.com).

**Man killed by cut section of tree**

A man was killed July 30, 2013, in Martinsville, Virginia, when he was struck by a large section of a tree that was being cut down.

James “Jody” Manuel Carter Jr. was struck by part of the large oak that was being cut down by several men at a neighbor’s residence. A group was removing a large oak tree, and they had already climbed it and cut some limbs out of it. They attempted to cut the trunk of the tree into sections, and a piece that was about 12 inches in diameter fell into another tree and became wedged. Carter was among those trying to pull the stuck piece free. The section dislodged, striking Carter in the head, according to the Martinsville Bulletin report.
By Donald Towers

I had finished dropping three maples, about 24-inches diameter each, for a friend and was in the process of cutting them up for firewood. I had started from the top and worked my way down. I was on the last tree, with three chunks left to cut, when my saw stopped cutting. It was running, but not cutting.

Thinking that I might have hit a stone in the bark, but not really believing it, I got my other saw out, moved to another spot and proceeded to cut. Just about the same distance in, the second saw stopped cutting.

That was my last saw, but I still wanted to know what was going on. I had two splitting wedges with me so I split the trunk open. I found the center full of cement. (See photo)

I had heard about fixing trees this way, filling them with cement, but had never seen it before. I still have the piece of cement as a reminder.

Donald Towers,
Retired moonlighter
Queensbury, New York

TCI will pay $100 for published “From the Field” articles. Submissions become the property of TCI and are subject to editing for grammar, style and length. Entries must include the name of a company and a contact person. Send to: Tree Care Industry, 136 Harvey Road, Suite 101, Londonderry, NH 03053, or editor@tcia.org.
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