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The holiday season always resurrects one of my favorite Dickens novels, *A Christmas Carol*, and I can usually find the time to watch the classic 1951 black and white movie version of the story. As I survey the field of arboriculture at year end and look toward trends in the new year, however, another Dickens novel comes more immediately to mind – *A Tale of Two Cities*. Written during an era of economic and social upheaval in Europe, the novel has perhaps the most unforgettable opening sentence of any novel, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness …”

I can’t help but think that this sentence is an apt description of the tree care industry at the end of 2010. It should be the best of times for professional arborists, as researchers educate the industry about better, more effective ways to care for trees. It should be the best of times to own a tree care company or work in the industry, with Accreditation serving as a model for best business practices, Certified Arborists and Board Certified Master Arborists leading the way in scientific and knowledgeable tree care, and Certified Treecare Safety Professionals learning new ways to train arborists to work more safely. Then why does it also seem like the worst of times?

Has there ever been a wider gap between companies doing it right – with safe, educated, credentialed and well-paid employees – and those who put the health of their employees and the health of the urban forest at risk? Has there ever been such a chasm between honorable arborists and hackers?

In this age of wisdom, why does so much foolishness persist? How could any employer send a climber into a tree near an energized line with a pole saw and virtually no training? How can anyone work 50 feet up in a bucket with no fall protection?

Maybe we just learn about accidents and fatalities nationwide more often because of the Internet. Twenty years ago, we knew there were fatalities and injuries, often talked about at industry gatherings, but we didn’t always have the details.

Maybe we still see the worst of times because of the economy, which has drawn unskilled amateurs into an industry that requires careful training and hazard awareness. That trend, in turn, has loaded a downward force on prices, squeezing margins and putting pressure on those who should know better than to cut corners in order to stay in business.

For 2011 to truly usher in the best of times and the age of wisdom, we all need to remember how far we have come, what we need to do to keep the momentum moving forward and, yes, how easily we could slip backward into the worst of times and foolishness. Each of us has to be willing to think beyond, “Bah, humbug!” and work for the betterment of the industry – even if that includes the foolish folks down the street.

Mark Garvin
Publisher
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Subcontractors bidding on jobs that pay prevailing wage may find it an attractive piece of business, but newcomers should be aware that determining prevailing wage may feel like they’re picking oranges from an apple tree.

As anyone who works with federal, county or state governments can tell you, it can get very confusing. Get too confused, and it can also hurt. Take the subject of prevailing wage as it pertains to tree care companies working as sub-contractors on government-funded projects.

“I avoid it,” explains Lauren Lanphear, president of the Forest City Tree Protection Co., Inc., based in South Euclid, Ohio. After a bad experience two decades ago, he decided it was better to avoid that portion of the market.

While his case took place in the late 1980s, it remains a cautionary tale.

Back then, Forest City Tree Protection Co. successfully bid on a state-funded job in an Ohio city. As advertised, it did not require workers to be paid prevailing wage. After the job was awarded, one of the other bidders complained that prevailing wage should have been a requirement, and the state pressured the municipality to redraw the terms.

With the subcontractors already selected, doing so would have cost his company a lot of money, particularly when the government official assigned to the case tried to determine what the prevailing wage should be for the Forest City Tree Protection Co. crews.

Simply put, there was no apples-to-apples comparison.

“The experience then was that (the government doesn’t) have a particular code for arborists, so they ask you some questions about what you do, and try to assign you to a classification that they think is close to what they think you are doing,” explains Lanphear, a former TCIA (then NAA) Board member who once wrote about the experience for the director’s column of the Reporter member newsletter. “Also, they try to get the highest wage possible because public projects can provide lucrative contracts for tree work, but the federal wage determination guidelines can be difficult to figure out.”
they get more taxes out of it. At least the person from Ohio was pretty up front about that.”

Because his company used equipment, Lanphear was told that his workers fell into the category of highway equipment operating engineer, a position that “was three times what we would be paying anyone.”

To further the sting, he learned that – at least at that time – the prevailing wage standard would not apply to a company whose workers were in a union. It was ironic, he says, because while his company paid better than the company that had complained, the latter company was unionized and therefore would have been paying significantly less than the prevailing wage set by the government.

The case wound up in court (the state sued the city), where Forest City Tree Protection Co. gained “Friend of the Court” status and prevailed on the grounds that the contract had already been signed. The state wound up rewriting some of its regulations, but the company was left with both legal fees and a distaste for the process.

“After that experience, whenever I get a request for anything that says prevailing wage, it goes in the round file,” he says. The company no longer bids for state- or federally funded work.

“For most of them, they’re dealing with low-bid, low-profit margin work to begin with, so to have the hassle of prevailing wage on top of it just isn’t worth it,” Lanphear says.

Others have found subcontracting for government jobs to be an attractive addition to their business, but many of those who have dipped their toes into this particular pool have found their experience to be similar to Lanphear’s.

“(Government agencies) don’t understand the kind of work we do, and are just trying to shove a square peg into a round hole,” says Andy LaVelle, chief operating officer for Arborwell in Hayward, California. “They leave it for us to do the interpretation, but if we’re wrong, we pay the consequences.”

For those who do get involved with government contracts, determining prevailing wage is often a matter of picking the wage option that you think most closely fits the job, and then being able to defend it.

U.S. Department of Labor spokeswoman Dolline Hatchett explains that for companies working on a Davis-Bacon Act (construction) project, the general wage determination that applies to the project will determine the rate paid to these workers. In some cases, she explains by e-mail, the wage determination can vary based on the main type of construction for the overall project.

“For example, a building project that has incidental landscaping including tree work would have a building determination, and tree work incidental to a highway project would have a highway determination,” she explains. “If tree work/landscaping work were the only construction on the project, it would be heavy construction.

“Many of the wage determinations do have landscaping occupations and most of this work is considered in the laborer category. However, if there is not a classification on the wage determination that describes the work performed, then a request for an additional classification is appropriate.”

Peter Gerstenberger, senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association, has talked with several members with expertise in federal contracting. He’s found that a company needs to be able to make a reasoned decision on where to put their employees, and be ready to defend it.

“They say that as long as you can defend the category in which you place your employees, there are a number of different rates and categories that you can use, that are defensible,” Gerstenberger says. “It depends on what you’re doing on the job.”

The problem for most is that the regulations are not specific when it comes to tree workers.

“There’s nothing to suggest a real close fit to what we are,” Gerstenberger says. “You just have to look at the description of each of the categories and find the one that seems most relevant.”

Often, the best information comes from networking with non-competing colleagues, or general contractors with knowledge of previous, similar jobs.

“There is no right or wrong, there is no black and white,” Gerstenberger says. “It’s what works, and what doesn’t work. Often the best indicator of that is past experience.”

A tough determination

LaVelle estimates that his company does in excess of $1 million a year in jobs that require prevailing wage. Still, the process for determining prevailing wage can be confusing, he admits.

“It’s confusing because it’s not spelled out exactly where my people qualify on the (wage) schedule,” LaVelle says. “For example, if I was just looking up a tree climber, there isn’t a tree climber specified, generally. They’ll usually have it under tree worker. The most confusing thing to me is that the way we normally figure out our prevailing wage, our tree climbers and tree workers will be paid better than a line clearance specialist. And as far as I’m concerned, a line clearance specialist has a much more hazardous job.”

Trying to figure out how the payment schedule will be interpreted by different agencies is very confusing, LaVelle says. What Arborwell does is to work closely with the general contractor, or review the pay schedules from jobs of similar size and scope, to determine what other tree care companies paid their workers on that job, and whether they qualified.

“The agencies that you contract with will never tell you outright ‘this is the one you have to use,’” he says. “Even in the bidding process they won’t do that.”

Like a lot of other companies, LaVelle says, Arborwell has made mistakes in determining prevailing wage. The consequences can be unpleasant.

“You don’t discover your mistake until the very end. Someone who is a wage specialist rears their head – (someone) who has never been on the job before, who has never introduced themselves to any of the parties involved before. They step forward and say,
‘You all along have been paying your people the wrong amount. And this was the right amount, and now you need to pay back wages.’ That’s very frustrating, because they could have come forward at the beginning of the contract and simply told us, ‘This is what we expect you to pay your people,’ and we would have done that.”

Left without a more direct method of determining prevailing wage, a company might find itself losing money on a job, or possibly being hit with back wages and even penalties that could cost the company significantly.

One strategy for those bidding on the jobs, with different wages to choose from, is to be sure that the bidding works even if the company is paying the highest wages possible. “We have a much better handle on it because we work with general contractors who do this kind of work all the time and they’ve shepherded us through the process,” LaVelle says.

Online guidelines
Jeannette Ramirez, president of Treesmith Enterprises, Inc. of Anaheim, California, narrowly escaped a trap after successfully bidding for a state-funded job requiring her company to pay prevailing wage. In that case, it was a union representative who came to the rescue.

Her company was not union in spring 2009 when it successfully bid for the job – in part because the company was not aware of the prevailing wage requirement, and came in, therefore, with a much lower bid.

At that point, a representative from the Laborers International Union of North America telephoned and pointed out the discrepancy in their wage structure, and the potential pitfalls that awaited them.

“That’s how we found out about it,” says Ramirez. Because her company caught it early enough in the process, she was able to modify the bid with the general contractor. The company made no profit, but dodged the bullet that would have come had the prevailing wage been adjusted retroactively.

“Had we done the job, then we would have been in trouble,” she says, noting that sometimes companies are forced to not only pay the back wages but also to pay penalties. “We were made aware of it before we got into any trouble.”

“(The union representative) was the good guy who informed us, and held our hand on the best way to do this,” Ramirez says. (He was also rewarded. The May 2009 conversation with the union representative was the start of a very brief negotiation, and a decision by the company to join the union in June 2009.)

The representative steered Ramirez to the U.S. Department of Labor-sponsored website, Wage Determinations Online (www.wdol.gov), which provides prevailing wage information to potential bidders, based on Davis-Bacon Act wage decisions. In her area, tree climbers, fallers and chain saw operators fall into one laborer category, and landscape laborers fall into another.

“Nobody tells you about this,” she says. “You need to look for it on your own.” The site lists every state and county, although a cursory check of the site found that tree care workers are not included in many.

Some general contractors will include prevailing wage information as part of a package included with the sub-contract, Ramirez says. “It would be to the advantage of any sub-contractor to ask,” she says.

While things worked out for Treesmith Enterprises, the confusion over wages could be very costly for any company bidding on a prevailing wage job.

“Since none of us really know how to do it properly and guys are extremely hungry for work right now, they make really bad choices when they’re bidding the work,” LaVelle says. If their bids undercut the competition, they run the risk of winning jobs that will ultimately become big losers, he says, adding, “They could be on a million-dollar job that puts their company under.”

If he was going to re-vamp the process, LaVelle would recommend that the government put together a simple educational program aimed at the contractors and subs interested in these types of jobs.

“What’s really needed is to give a 1-2-3 step class or session, or class to teach contractors how to bid these jobs properly,” he says. “I’ve been to (Department of Transportation) informational sessions about how to bid work, and they were anything but helpful. They were more confusing than anything. If the industry was educated generally on how to bid these jobs, everyone would do better.”

For those who want to bid for jobs like that, he recommends doing research.

“I would say investigate what people have paid, in terms of their wages,” he says. “I’d also tell them they should contact the general contractor for the job, or if they can find the wage manager as the bid process starts, they can steer them in the right direction.”
Veteran trimmer injured in struck-by

An 18-year veteran tree-trimmer for Chicago’s Bureau of Forestry was critically injured November 1, 2010, after he was hit in the head while removing a tree on the city’s south side, according to The Sun Times. No further details were given.

Man injured in trimming accident

A tree care company employee suffered serious head and internal injuries November 1, 2010, in a hydraulic lift accident as he was trimming branches from a pine tree in Detroit, Michigan. Police did not immediately release the name of the man, who was transported to University Hospital in Ann Arbor.

The man was injured after the hydraulic extension failed, causing the lift to drop about 50 to 60 feet, according to The Detroit News.

Man killed by falling tree

A 55-year-old Hyde Park, Vermont, man was killed November 2, 2010, in Morristown, Vt., when he was apparently pulling down one tree and another tree unexpectedly fell on top of him. The name of the victim was not immediately released, according to a WCAX News report.

Trimmer killed by rope pulled into chipper

A local tree care company employee was killed November 15, 2010, in Concord, California, when a climbing rope in use by another worker became caught in a wood chipper and he was thrown, striking his head. The victim was identified as 33-year-old Antonio Barajas.

Barajas was working in a team of about six workers. He was one of the crew feeding trees into the chipper. It appears he got caught in a rope that got caught in the machine and was thrown through the air at high velocity and struck his head on the safety bar of the chipper.

Barajas had worked for the company for more than seven years. He has an 8-month-old son and a wife, according to the company owner, as reported in the Contra Costa Times and McClatchy-Tribune.

Climber injured when tree fails

A 13-year tree care company employee was injured November 12, 2010, in the Roslindale section of Boston when the tree he was felling failed, taking him to the ground with it.

The single stem ash was alive but declining. The crew could have taken the tree in one piece but did not have room to put it down. Using a crane, they took the top and the victim remained tied into the remaining trunk section. The piece came off clean with little or no shock load or excess movement.

The tree had a slight lean, so the climber was on the opposite side. As soon as the piece was cut, the tree started moving toward the lean and when it broke at the base, the climber free fell with the trunk to a concrete patio. He slammed into the trunk on impact. He had all his PPE on and in this case the hard hat prevented a fatal head injury, according to the company owner.

The employee suffered a fractured pelvis, fractured shoulder, sternum, skull, nose and a gash on his head that was cleaned up by a plastic surgeon.

Man shocked after touching power line

A Richmond, Rhode Island, man was shocked November 28, 2010, after coming in contact with a 7,200 volt power line while on a lift, cutting down tree limbs. Part of Mark Bragger’s face touched the power line, sending the current through the 59-year-old-man’s body.

Bragger suffered burns to about 35 percent of his body. He was alert and conscious before being taken by med-flight to Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was subsequently listed in fair condition, according to The Providence Journal.

The man’s daughter, who is in her 20s, was on the aerial lift with him at the time of the incident, but she was not hurt. Neighbors said they felt the shock in their nearby homes.

Bragger, a homeowner, apparently rented a fairly sizeable, non-insulated lift to prune pine trees in his yard.

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bright future for our industry tomorrow.
You Need the Employees, but Do You Need the Extra Work and Responsibility?

By William J. Lynott

Chances are that you still remember the administrative burden and paperwork shock that resulted when you hired your first employee. For starters, there was the nightmare of payroll management, withholding taxes and additional accounting and reporting responsibilities. Less obvious, but more onerous were concerns about risk management in such areas as compliance with human resource laws and workers’ compensation.

These essential responsibilities can be a distraction from the core business of developing sales and controlling expenses. For some small business owners, co-employment (employee leasing) has proven to be a workable solution to this perennial problem. Scott Colson, of Clinton, Mississippi, whose business has been using co-employment for about 10 years, agrees.

“I wouldn’t handle my employment any other way,” Colso says.

Whether you have a large staff or are just a handful of employees, you should know how employee leasing might help you to remain focused on running your tree care business.

How does co-employment work?

First, it’s important to understand that an employee leasing company is not a temporary staffing agency or payroll service. A temporary staffing service hires their own employees and assigns them to clients as supplements to the client’s workforce to compensate for such things as employee absences, temporary shortages or seasonal workloads. These temporary workers remain employees of the staffing service.

An employee leasing company becomes a co-employer of all or part of a client’s workforce. Employee leasing companies, more correctly known as Professional Employer Organizations (PEOs), serve as co-employers with their clients. The PEO assumes such administrative responsibilities as payroll management, health care benefits and retirement plans, disability insurance, workers’ compensation coverage and claim resolution, assistance with termination, and supervisory training.

You, as co-employer, retain full hiring/firing authority, day-to-day management of your employees, and the normal operation of your business. You schedule employees’ time, assign work duties, and maintain the same personal relationship that you would under the conventional employee arrangement.

For a fee, the PEO assumes responsibility and liability for the business aspects of employment such as risk management, personnel management, human resource compliance, and payroll and employee tax compliance (workers’ compensation).

What would employee leasing do for you and your business?

“You may not have the time and the necessary interviewing skills to recruit employees,” says Bob Kustka, president of CHR Partners, human relations consultants. “Even hiring a salesperson can be a time-consuming job, and hiring the wrong person can be a costly mistake. The right PEO will have the necessary recruiting and assessment experience to take that responsibility off your hands.”

Of course, if you prefer, you may continue to do your own interviewing and hiring of new personnel.

Once you enter into a co-employment agreement with a PEO for one or more employees, that firm takes over the full responsibility of payroll administration, including preparation and timely delivery of payroll checks. Most PEOs allow employees to choose between direct deposit and delivery of a paper check on payday. They will do all of the computations and make the payments of state and federal payroll taxes, even provide a full slate of healthcare and other employee benefits.

Terminating an employee is one of the most dreaded tasks for many business owners. When the employee is part of a lease arrangement, some leasing companies will handle that difficult responsibility, or work with you to make certain that all applicable human resource laws are carefully observed.

According to Jasen A. Burcham, national sales director with PML Worldwide, one of the country’s oldest PEOs, their sheer size gives them the advantage of buying power not available to smaller employers.
“This is especially true in areas such as worker’s compensation and health insurance,” he says. “We employ professionals in these specialties and they are able to administer benefits more skillfully and negotiate better deals than small employers would be able to do on their own.”

“The ability of our PEO to handle workers’ comp for our out-of-state business was the main reason we looked to employee leasing in the first place,” says Henry Wheeler, of Dothan, Alabama.

**What’s in it for your employees?**

While benefits to employees will vary somewhat among PEOs, most will provide a benefit package superior to what can be offered by the typical small business owner (even the owners can enjoy the advantages of a strong benefit package if they choose to do so).

The PEO takes responsibility for timely and accurate payroll delivery and the provision of such employee benefits as health insurance, retirement programs, even stand-alone dental and vision plans. In short, your workers gain benefits similar to those they would have as employees of a large corporation while enjoying the advantages of working for a local business.

“Our co-employment arrangement has allowed us to provide our employees with a package of benefits that we could not have afforded on our own,” says Colson, “and our costs for workers’ compensation are lower because our PEO is part of a huge network. In addition, they provide a human resources manual that is a big help in working with our employees.”

“That’s a great benefit of leasing,” says Megan Jones at Celebration Party Rentals in Flemington, New Jersey. “HR laws are complex and keeping up is a tough job. With the help of our PEO and the HR manual they provide, I’ve learned things I never would have known about.”

**Are there disadvantages of leasing employees?**

“I can’t think of any major disadvantages,” says Colson. “We write one check every two weeks and everything is taken care of for us.”

Wheeler agrees. “I love this arrangement,” he says. “I wouldn’t do it any other way. In my small company, I’d have to hire a full-time secretary if I wasn’t using a PEO.”

Still, it’s important to understand that...
there is a cost to leasing employees. The leasing company serves as your human resources department, fulfilling all of the responsibilities that you would have to shoulder and pay for if you were doing the work yourself. Thus, the cost for this service will be reflected in the fee charged by the PEO.

Most PEOs set their fees as a percentage of the payroll they administer. “This is a legitimate charge when you take into consideration the amount of work and expense taken over by the leasing company,” says Colson.

“Charges among PEOs will vary,” says Burcham. “That’s why it’s important to shop carefully if you are considering leasing. The greater the risk factor for such things as workers’ compensation, the higher the markup for leasing. Also, the employer’s history of workers’ compensation cases will affect the markup.”

“There are definite differences among PEOs,” says Debbie Vandenberg, practice manager for Edward Domina, DDS, in Orland Park, Illinois. “We worked briefly with two other companies before we finally settled on the one we use now. The first two required us to do too much paperwork and were more expensive than our present company. That’s why I suggest that anyone considering co-employment should shop carefully and review the contract thoroughly before signing up.”

Of course, no one knows the work culture and environment of your business as well as you do. One of the things you have to be careful about in working with a PEO is that you don’t allow the impression that there is a middleman between you and your employees.

“That hasn’t been a problem for us,” says Wheeler. “Our employees seem quite happy with the arrangement. We take great pains to make sure that we keep the lines of communication open between management and employees and don’t rely on someone else to do that for us.”

Co-employment, obviously, won’t be right for every tree care business. However, the degree of satisfaction evident with the business owners interviewed for this article suggests that it is an alternative worth investigating.

William J. Lynott is a veteran freelance writer who specializes in business management as well as personal and business finance.
Terex Indiana facility to service aerial equipment

The Terex Roadbuilding manufacturing location in Fort Wayne, Indiana, will now provide Genie 360 aftermarket support services for Genie aerial and Terex branded products, as well as competitive brands in the market.

“The Terex Fort Wayne facility will serve as a convenient service location for our customers based in the Midwest, including the markets of Chicago, Detroit and Indianapolis,” said Thor Wickstrom, director of sales for Terex Aerial Work Platforms, a TCIA member company.

Today there are 17 Terex Service Centers and more than 200 field and service technicians located throughout the United States equipped to provide maintenance repair and reconditioning services for various makes and models of aerial lifts, cranes and other equipment.

Joshua Tree gets Stihl training on safe saw use

Stihl’s Carlos Mejias, product applications specialist, performed a three-hour safety and maintenance session on proper chain saw use for Joshua Tree tree experts in Stockertown, Pennsylvania, in November.

“We started the day with safety videos, moved onto maintenance and repair, and performed safe use practice in the field,” says Joshua Malik, company owner. “All and all it was a great mini seminar for my staff members here at Joshua Tree. While my arborists use these tools every day, we all gained additional knowledge that will be helpful to avoid accidents, keep our tools in great operating condition, and just keep a more watchful eye to all hazards that come along in our industry. In addition, it helped build more morale among my team.”

“I would encourage and advise other firms out there, even with some of the most experienced arborists, that continuing education is important – extending our knowledge can be beneficial to the entire industry.”

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Donald Solosky, using the saw, demonstrates the way he uses a chain saw during a training session run by Stihl at TCIA-member Joshua Tree tree experts in November. Solosky has been with Joshua Tree for six months. Stihl’s Carlos Mejias discussed proper posture and standing off to one side while operating the chain saw, and the fact many operators are over top of the saw while cutting, which leaves them open to injury if a kickback occurs. Photo courtesy of Joshua Tree.
Husqvarna’s 562 XP chain saw

Husqvarna’s new 562 XP chain saw is loaded with many of the same features that made its 576 XP so popular, but they slimmed down the height and width of the saw chassis making it easier to handle in almost any application. The 562 XP showcases the latest breakthrough feature from Husqvarna – Revboost. This feature allows for acceleration in chain speed over short periods to increase efficiency during cutting, specifically in de-limbing applications. Revboost is controlled by the ignition and enables users to increase to maximum RPMs for about two seconds. It is designed to provide an optimum ratio of power to RPMs without having the engine run wide open for extended periods of time. Also, Husqvarna’s reduced gyro force technology reduces the weight of the saws’ key moving parts – fly wheel, crank shaft and piston – so there is less interior movement in the engine, which creates less gyration. The 562 XP will be available in April 2011.

Circle 190 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org

Supersonic Air Knife XL-Multi Liquid Injection tool

Supersonic Air Knife’s new XL-Multi liquid injection tool is an air excavator with low-pressure liquid injection capability. It is a smaller, lighter version of Supersonic’s X-HFL liquid injection tool released last year, and at only 8 pounds, gives more flexibility on the job without a lot of extra weight or cost. The L-Multi is designed after Supersonic’s standard air knife, calibrated for a 100 PSI/185 CFM compressor. The liquid source can be a municipal water supply via standard garden hose, a tank mounted on a truck or trailer, or it can even draw from a stream or pond. This allows you to introduce water or other liquid materials to a targeted location in the soil rather than via a surface application. Liquid is atomized by the air stream as it leaves the Air Knife nozzle, maintaining the gentle digging that an Air Knife is known for. In addition to applying specific treatments to root systems, water can be used to increase digging efficiency and for dust control in dry conditions. Turn the water off and use it as you would a standard Supersonic Air Knife.

Circle 191 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org

Dynamic’s CH465 Cone drum chipper

Dynamic Manufacturing’s newest ConeHead design takes on-ground labor out of chipping. The mechanically fed CH465 does not use an on-ground operator or feed labor. Instead, the loader operator runs the chipper using wireless control. The CH465 has a long (6-foot 8-inch), wide live-chain feed-bed and a throat opening 23 inches wide by 15 inches tall. A folding bed extension adds 20 inches to the in-feed bed length. With a standard 180 hp diesel, the CH465 handles a variety of materials, including sawmill slabs and energy crops. The adjustable height, 360 degree rotation discharge blows into piles or large trucks, and folds down for easy transport. Cone drums direct chips to large blades on the drum ends for superior throw, and pack tighter than flat drums, minimizing trips to dump. Cone drum knives slice material instead of slamming it, using less energy and with less noise and vibration. Dynaminc is a Norco Equipment company.

Circle 192 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org
Knapheide Forestry Body

Knapheide Manufacturing Company’s new Forestry Body is available in body lengths of 10, 11, 12, 14 and 16 feet, and in a straight or notched body style, and options include newly designed L and I packs. The 14-gauge galvanneal, smooth side panels are excellent for advertising company graphics, and 16-gauge galvanneal roof panels are reinforced with roof bow bracing. Features include punched vents in the upper side panels, and a full-length ladder box with pole pruner shelf and lockable access door. A 24-inch-tall, 14-gauge galvanneal, double-panel tailgate swings open 270 degrees and latches in the open position on the curb side for operator safety. Recessed LED lights meet DOT standards, and the floor is comprised of 6-inch structural long sills, 10-gauge formed cross sills, and a 10-gauge floor plate. The body is fully protected with Knapheide’s water based self-healing undercoat, and complete immersion in Knapheide’s electro-deposition prime paint system provides superior corrosion resistance.

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Jonsered CS 2172 Pro Saw

Following in the long tradition of Jonsered’s highly regarded 70cc saws, the new model CS 2172 was engineered to deliver the kind of performance and reliability that made its forerunners widely popular with professional loggers. Available from Tilton Equipment Company, the new saw’s design and appearance is very similar to the model CS 2171 it replaces. “Under the hood,” however, is a remarkable difference, including a new engine that delivers more power, yet provides up to 20 percent better fuel economy. Its flatter torque curve provides better low-end power in felling and bucking cuts, without sacrificing the fast chain speed and acceleration required for efficient limbing. The Clean Power™ engine meets emission standards everywhere in the world. Additional features include a decompression valve, side-access chain tension adjuster, steel coil spring anti-vibration, inertia-activated chain brake and Jonsered’s Turbo air pre-cleaning filtration system. A deluxe version with heated handles will also be offered.

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Circle 16 on RS Card or visit www.tcia.org
Events & Seminars

January 5-7, 2011*
Northern Green Expo
Minneapolis Convention Center; Minneapolis, MN
Contact: www.NorthernGreenExpo.org; 1-888-886-6652

January 9-10, 2011
National Green Centre/Former WESTERN annual show
St. Louis, MO
Contact: www.wnla.org; 1-888-233-1876

January 11-13, 2011
2011 Empire State Green Industry Show
Rochester Riverside Convention Ctr, Rochester, NY
Contact: 1-800-873-8873; www.nysta.org

January 18-19, 2011*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) Workshop
Rainbow Treecare Scientific Advancements
St Louis Park, MN
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; ctsp@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

January 18-20, 2011
Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference
Marriott Inn, Indianapolis, IN
Contact:(317) 225-5161; www.indiana-arborist.org

January 20, 2011*
Connecticut Tree Protective Assoc Annual Meeting
Plantsville, CT
Contact: www.ctpa.org

January 25-26, 2011
NJ Plants trade show
New Jersey Convention Center, Edison, NJ
Contact: NNILA 1-800-332-3976; Kevin@NJIPlantShow.com

January 26-28, 2011*
Midwest Chapter ISA (MWISA) annual conference
LaVista-Omaha Embassy Suites, La Vista, NE
Contact: mnorris@oppd.com; (402) 552-5473; www.mwisa.org

January 29-30, 2011
Western Chapter Tree Climbing Championship
Balboa Park, San Diego, CA
Contact: www.wcisa.net

February 1-2, 2011
ASM Winter Arboriculture Conference
Lansing Center, Lansing, MI
Contact: ASM/Mich. Chapter ISA asm@acd.net; www.asm-isaa.org; (517) 337-4999

February 2-4, 2011*
New England Grows!
Boston, MA
Contact: (508) 653-3009; www.NewEnglandGrows.org

February 6-10, 2011*
Winter Management Conference 2011
Grand Cayman
Contact: Deb Cyr cyr@tcia.org; 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

February 13-15, 2011
Ohio Tree Care Conference & Trade Show
Hyatt Regency Columbus, Columbus, OH
Contact: (614) 771-7494; info@ohiotorchchapter.org; www.ohiochapterisa.org

February 19-20, 2011
North American Tree Climbing Championship
Savannah, GA (in conjunction w/ No. Amer. Tree Conf.)
Contact: www.northamericantcc.com

February 25-March 1, 2011
Great Plains Tree Conference
Embassy Suites, Lincoln, NE
Contact: (402) 476-3865; www.NEArborists.org

March 2, 2011
Maine Arborist Association Annual Meeting
Portland, ME
Contact: (207) 703-3600; www.mainechapterisa.org

March 5, 2011
Maine Arborist Association Annual Meeting
Portland, ME
Contact: (207) 703-3600; www.mainechapterisa.org

March 10, 2011
3rd Annual Sustainable Urban Landscape Conf.
Cuyamaca College, El Cajon, CA
Contact: www.cuyamaca.edu/OHWeb; (619) 660-4023

March 17, 2011
NJARIS Garden State Tree Conference
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.njaris.org

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance

Upcoming TCIA webinars

Jan. 6  Dr. John Ball
Tree Worker Accidents. What happened in 2010 and why

Jan. 12  Wally Hauck
Employee Performance - The CPIP Way
(Complete Performance Improvement Process)

Jan. 13  Brian Kraff, Market Hardware
Getting #1 on Google – Grow without the Yellow Pages

Jan. 18  Steve Kenyon, CTSP
Effects of Weather on Equipment, Gear & Crew

Jan. 20  Dave Hineline, CTSP
70 Degree, Walk Away Tree Felling

Jan. 21  Bob Rousse & John Iurka
Business Boot Camp: Regulatory Compliance

Jan. 25  Sam Kear, CTSP
Company Best Practices for Emergency Response/Aerial Rescue Training

Jan. 27  Anthony Tresselt, CTSP
Chainsaw Techniques for Spring Poles, Hung-Up Trees & Other Oddball Cutting Scenarios

Feb. 17  Wally Hauck, Ph.D., CSP
Why the Typical Performance Appraisal Fails and What To Do To improve Performance

Feb. 22  Tom Dunlap, CTSP
SRT: Half the Rope, Twice as Easy

Feb. 25  Bob Rousse & Randy McDonald, CTSP
Business Boot Camp Series: Sales and Marketing

January 20, 2011
EHAP training
Bingham Center, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

January 20, 2011*
Connecticut Tree Protective Assoc Annual Meeting
Plantsville, CT
Contact: www.ctpa.org

January 25-26, 2011
NJ Plants trade show
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January 29-30, 2011
Western Chapter Tree Climbing Championship
Balboa Park, San Diego, CA
Contact: www.wcisa.net

January 30-February 1, 2011*
PennDel Shade Tree Symposium
Lancaster, PA
Contact: penndelisa05@comcast.net; www.penndelisa.org

February 1-2, 2011
ASM Winter Arboriculture Conference
Lansing Center, Lansing, MI
Contact: ASM/Mich. Chapter ISA asm@acd.net; www.asm-isaa.org; (517) 337-4999

February 2-4, 2011*
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Grand Cayman
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Contact: www.northamericantcc.com

Feb. 19-22, 2011
North American Tree Conference
Savannah, GA
Contact: www.isasouthern.org

February 28-March 1, 2011
Great Plains Tree Conference
Embassy Suites, Lincoln, NE
Contact: (402) 476-3865; www.NEArborists.org

March 2, 2011
New Jersey Landscape Trade Show & Conference 2011
Meadowlands Exposition Center, Secaucus, NJ
Contact: (201) 703-3600; www.njica.org; info@njica.org

March 5, 2011
Maine Arborist Association Annual Meeting
Portland, ME
Contact: (207) 703-3600; www.mainechapterisa.org

March 10, 2011
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tcia.org
By Michael J. Raupp

The genus *Ilex*, holly, plays a significant role in the beliefs and traditions of the festive holiday season. To the Romans, hollies were the trees of the god Saturn and wreaths of holly were gifts during his holiday, Saturnalia. In Celtic legends, evergreen hollies with their beautiful red berries, announced the ascension of the Holly King, lord of the winter, over the Oak King who ruled the forest with his green leaves in summer. For Christians, the pointed leaves of the holly are associated with the crown of thorns worn by Jesus and the bright red holly berries symbolize drops of his blood.

For arborists and plant health care technicians, hollies are among the most important landscape plants and they require special attention due to the presence of a few egregious scale insect pests.

**Tales of soft scales**

Two of the more pernicious pests of holly are members of the soft scale clan formally known as Coccidae. These strange insects insert thin stylets into the vascular system of the plant. With pinpoint accuracy, their mouthparts find nutrient rich cells in the phloem. After tapping into the cells, a muscular pump in the scale’s head sucks sap from the plant into the digestive system of the insect. One of the hallmarks of scale insects in general and soft scales in particular is the habit of producing large quantities of wax and it is the type of wax and the selection of feeding location that helps us differentiate between two soft scales commonly found on holly.

The first, cottony camellia scale, *Pulvinaria floccifera*, produces fluffy white wax and this scale usually frequents holly leaves. As the name implies, it favors camellia, but a fondness for yew spawns another common name, cotone taxus scale. In addition to hollies and yews, rhododendron, beautyberry, jasmine, maple, hydrangea, English ivy, mulberry and euonymus are also on the menu.

Specialized glands lining the margin of the insect produce flocculent white wax that forms a protective case, an ovisac, which houses hundreds of eggs laid by the female scale in spring and summer. The scale itself is brown or tan and appears as a slightly elevated shield at one end of the ovisac. When scales are abundant during the growing season, ovisacs festoon leaves of hollies. Eggs hatch into remarkably flat translucent nymphs that wander the surface of the leaf before finding a spot to settle down.

Throughout summer, fall and winter, nymphs feed and molt. In spring and early summer, they complete development and become sexually mature. Male scales are small insects with a single pair of wings used in their search to find mates. Females forego wings and remain leaf-bound their entire life. Cottony camellia scale ranges from Massachusetts to Florida and coast to coast, east to west.

A second ensemble of soft scales attacking hollies belong to the genus *Ceroplastes*, commonly known as wax scales. Unlike cottony camellia scale, wax scales typically reside on woody tissues rather than on leaves of hollies. Another distinguishing trait is their wax. Female wax scales do not produce oviscas, but, instead, deposit eggs directly beneath their bodies. The gummy wax you see when observing *Ceroplastes* cloaks the body of the subtending insect.

Although more than a dozen species of wax scales occur in the United States, one of the most widely distributed is the Indian wax scale, *Ceroplastes ceriferous*. Indian wax scale is a perennial pest in southern states where temperate climes suite their lifestyle. In recent years with warmer winters farther north, we have seen wax scales creep into higher latitudes and Indian wax scale frequents states as far north as New York.

Large wax scales on holly during winter months are adult scales, which endure the winter dormancy period. This waxy larva looks like a scale or mealybug, but it is a juvenile lady beetle that eats soft scales.

Honeydew excreted by soft scales supports the growth of unsightly sooty mold. Photos by Michael Raupp, unless otherwise noted.
chilly winter on the bark of the tree or shrub. In spring, these largely sessile creatures resume feeding and, as females mature, they deposit as many as 5,000 eggs in the late spring. In the wild, males of this species are quite rare. The females have found a way to bypass romance and get straight to the business of laying eggs. This interesting reproductive strategy, called parthenogenesis, is relatively common in insects. Eggs hatch and tiny mobile crawlers move along branches and find new places to hunker down and insert their long sucking mouthparts into the bark of the tree to imbibe nutritious sap. They soon produce a small ring of wax around their bodies. The pointed filaments of wax resemble Victorian jewelry, thus earning nymphs the name “cameos.” As they develop, wax accumulates on the dorsal surface of their body, ultimately producing the visage of a white waxy dunce cap.

Indian wax scale has a broader host range than its cousin the cottony scale. In addition to holly, it consumes the sap of at least 50 other species, the more common of which include euonymus, firethorn, spirea, barberry, quince, boxwood and hemlock.

Soft scales injure hollies in two ways. First, by removing the vital products of photosynthesis, soft scales rob hollies of nutrients. In heavy infestations, leaves become chlorotic and sometimes drop prematurely. Chronic infestations can result in dieback of branches. Second, to obtain adequate nutrients for development and reproduction, these scales imbibe large volumes of sap. Processed sap is excreted in the form of a sugar-laden liquid called honeydew.

As honeydew accumulates on leaves beneath the scale, a black fungus called sooty mold colonizes the sticky liquid and uses the sugars as a substrate for growth. Sooty mold does not harm the holly directly, that is, it is not pathogenic. However, sooty mold’s grumpy appearance is disagreeable and one can imagine that enough sooty mold might cut down on the plant’s ability to gather energy from sunlight. Fortunately, once the scales are controlled, sooty mold is easily removed with a vigorous plant wash.

Managing soft scales on holly

As with all pest and abiotic problems, early detection is the key to effective management. During the regular inspection of hollies, make note of discolored leaves or branches with dieback. Carefully inspect the lower surface of leaves for signs of soft scale nymphs or white waxy ovisacs. The presence of honeydew and ants, wasps and bees that forage on honeydew are good indicators of soft scale infestations. Accumulating sooty mold is another dead giveaway of the presence of these pests.

Fortunately, Mother Nature provides a modicum of relief when it comes to soft scales. Several species of lady beetles, including wax look-alikes in the genus Hyperaspis, attack and kill soft scales including cottony camellia scale. Small parasitic wasps such as those in the genus Metaphycus also annihilate these pests. Although lady beetles and parasitic wasps take their toll on soft scales and species of both types of natural enemies are commercially available, data on their effectiveness against cottony camellia scale and Indian wax scale in landscapes are lacking.

A very simple non-chemical solution for dealing with wax scales in the winter is to simply pluck them from the plant and toss them to the ground. On the soil, a ravenous horde of ground dwelling meat-eaters will devour them. Hand-destruction of wax scales is a very simple non-chemical solution for dealing with wax scales in the winter is to simply pluck them from the plant and toss them to the ground.
scales during the holiday season is a snap on easily accessible species such as inkberry, Ilex glabra, but hollies with dense thorny canopies, such as Ilex aquifolium, will present more of a challenge.

Due to its propensity to occupy leaves instead of branches, hand removal of cottony camellia scale is not a good option. A diverse array of insecticides control soft scales and different options are available to match the needs of the client and situation. By late spring and summer, crawlers of cottony scales and wax scales will be present on leaves or stems. Well-timed applications of horticultural oils and soaps during the growing season can provide relief, but multiple applications may be necessary. Contact with the scales is necessary for soaps and oils to work and this is sometimes difficult through the dense foliage of many hollies.

Fortunately, several of the new neonicotinoid insecticides including dinotefuron, imidacloprid, acetamiprid and clothianidin have proven effective in controlling soft scales including Indian wax scale. Following application to the soil, they are absorbed by roots and transported to the canopy where they kill scales feeding on branches and leaves. This is an attractive option, especially where dense canopies hinder penetration by foliar sprays.

So, if you decked your halls with boughs of holly, remember ‘tis now the season to look for soft scales, fa la la la la, la la la la.

Michael J. Raupp, Ph.D., is a professor of entomology and extension specialist in the Department of Entomology at the University of Maryland, in College Park, Maryland.

References
A change in the Administration in our nation’s Capital shifted OSHA’s focus. In April, 2010, TCIA was informed that the OSHA separate arborist standard, initiated during the waning days of the Bush administration, had been dropped from the regulatory agenda indefinitely.

Recently, TCIA’s Washington lobbyist, Josh Ulman, was able to obtain a bipartisan letter from members of Congress asking OSHA to have another look at its decision to remove us from the regulatory agenda. With Democrats being hesitant to criticize the Obama administration, Josh had to remind them that Republicans were willing to do the right thing when they signed a previous letter criticizing the Bush administration for inaction.

The letter can be found on the TCIA website under Government/OSHA.

Even in this stalemate the industry comes out ahead. We may still be passed over for a new rule-making by OSHA in the short term, but this letter and our continued work in Washington help keep our issues in the forefront of OSHA’s thinking and will make it harder for OSHA to ignore us as the agency works through its regulatory agenda and finally adds new initiatives.

While we wait for movement out of federal OSHA, we are making strides in several “State Plan OSHA” states.

As of November 30, Virginia’s proposed Tree Trimming Regulation (16 VAC 25-73) had cleared every significant hurdle of internal review and was under review in the Governor’s office. We expect the final adoption of this regulation any day now.

On October 26, TCIA was informed of a proposed rulemaking in Maryland that would write a separate safety standard for arboriculture. TCIA was invited to a hearing on November 15. As was the case in Virginia, we were invited into a process that had already begun.

TCIA drafted comments to Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) that were generally supportive but also substantive and critical as to specific content of the MOSH proposal. TCIA’s Peter Gerstenberger testified at the hearing and engaged in dialogue with other members as well as MOSH officials present. He was subsequently invited and attended a working group meeting on December 7 to re-work the proposed regulation.

The Michigan Department of Labor & Industries’ (MIOSHA) Green Industry Alliance, begun almost three years ago, is due to expire in February. In the most recent quarterly Alliance partner meeting, there was unanimous agreement that the Alliance had accomplished a lot of good for green industry professionals in Michigan and that we should continue the relationship. The stated purpose of this MIOSHA Alliance is to partner with Green Industry organizations in Michigan to establish a collaborative relationship to work together to reduce and prevent injuries and illnesses in the green industry. The Alliance will promote dialogue, develop resources, promote access to training, and share information with workers.

Through all of this work, TCIA strives to create a regulatory climate that complements rather than conflicts with your business’ efforts to create a safer work environment; and one that imposes only reasonable restraints on trade. It is important work, and it is what trade associations do. But it offers no silver bullet for safety, and in fact there is no such thing.

The hard work of safety is also something that this trade association engages in, but – significantly – with its members, not for them.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
Best Practices for Rigging in Arboriculture, a much-needed, updated version of the Rigging for Removal workbook, is one of TCIA’s newest products for 2011. This new manual features photos and detailed illustrations with simplified explanations as well as scientific numbers and specifications to further explain the often complicated mechanics of rigging methods.

Best Practices for Rigging in Arboriculture denotes information that clarifies how to perform certain rigging methods with easy-to-follow steps. Sample lists of acceptable rigging equipment will assist qualified arborists with their equipment choices for individual tree removal sites.

The new guide should be available for purchase from TCIA (www.tcia.org) in mid to late January.

Following is a short excerpt on load transfer and redirects from the Best Practices for Rigging in Arboriculture manual, Chapter 6: “Approaches to Safe Rigging.”

Load Transfer Line
A load transfer line transfers part or all of a load to a second lowering line, which reduces the strain on the primary system. It also allows for more choice in landing zone selection. The entire area directly between the two lowering points becomes the potential landing zone. The overhead rigging points can be in the same tree, or in two separate trees. The two load-transfer lines are usually controlled by two ground operators. (Figure 1: load transfer)

Load transfer line set up
From the ground, set a throwline into a suitable branch crotch in the tree being removed. Install an arborist block or pulley, with a line threaded through it, and secure the running end through a friction device at the base of the tree. The block should be about the same height as the wood being removed. Select a suitable crotch in the same tree or another tree on the other side of the landing zone. Install another block, and thread the line through it as well. Then run the line through a second friction device at the base of the tree the second block is in.

The lowering lines on both blocks must be long enough to reach from the pieces to be lowered all the way to the intended landing zone by the rope handler. The
function of this method is to swing the load out from the removal tree during lowering and relocate it anywhere that is required between the two rigging points. A second line also helps decelerate the piece and reduce the load on the main rigging point. Helpful hint – Minimize the load size: The smaller the piece, the smaller the force. The less stress that you put on the tree, the less chance there is for it, or a portion of it, to fail.

Mechanical Advantage in Lifting Techniques

- Loads being lifted are usually under much greater control than falling loads.
- Mechanical advantage is described as the practice of using additional ropes, fiddle blocks and/or pulleys to increase an input force, or pulling power, into a greater output force. This process is often useful in pulling over trees in felling applications, adding tension to slide lines or lifting pieces within a range of rigging systems/scenarios. The ability to lift is a great thing. With the right tools and methods, the load can be lifted and steered away from targets and hazards. This rigging method is useful for tight drop zones or when loads need to be lifted around obstacles and targets.

- With new rigging methods and ratcheting bollards that make lifting easier, lifting heavier loads is possible. Be mindful of the anchor and rigging points when lifting. Friction increases the load in a lifting operation, because more force has to be applied to lift a load. Do not overload the anchor and rigging points.
- Do not use a vehicle to put mechanical advantage on a tree.
- Build a balanced system with all components strong enough to handle the load. Calculate the different legs and components to assure that the system can handle the loads.

Lowering Line Redirects

Rigging redirects can be natural crotches, or pulleys and blocks attached by slings to anchor points, above or below the work, to control the swing of a lowered piece. Redirects can also be used to increase the angle at the pulley, reducing the forces at the anchor. The higher the rope angle, the lower the forces. Redirects can also direct the piece being lowered to a particular landing spot. (Figure 2: clove hitch with two half hitches)

Being able to relocate a redirect in the tree can improve the rigging point. This is useful when the natural anchor point is not above the landing zone. Redirects can put the work above the landing area most preferable, and can also add more rope into the system to reduce the forces in rigging. However, be aware that when redirect rigging points are applied, the relative forces in the tree are changed.

Make a Redirect

A lowering line redirect can be formed with a sling (or section of rope) and a steel locking carabiner. The redirect will hold the lowering line parallel to the tree, keeping it from hanging up in canopy branches. The use of screw locks or carabiners should be applied to lighter loads only. For heavier loads, use a second block or steel shackle rated for the heavier load.

Redirect the rigging to bring the force to the center of the tree as much as possible. This also allows the rope handler to change position while lowering without tangling the line.

Keep in mind both the load on the main anchor point and the load on the redirect anchor. All components must be considered for their working load limits in the rigging system.

To find out when the complete Best Practices for Rigging in Arboriculture manual will be available, contact TCIA at 1-800-733-2622 or visit our online store at www.tcia.org.

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Every year, the Voice for Trees political action committee holds a gala fundraiser at Winter Management Conference to raise funds to support TCIA’s lobbying activities in Washington.

Last year, the Townsend Corporation made a generous donation – an elk hunt in Colorado. This is the second time Gary Townsend offered the trip. It’s on a 3,000 acre private ranch that adjoins federal land and sits 8,500 feet up in the Sangre de Cristo mountain range. The Townsend Elk Camp is a rustic camp with an outfitter’s tent for sleeping quarters, and a cowboy line shack for cooking, eating and camaraderie.

When the bidding for the trip started, I had some serious competition, including multiple bids from Peter Sortwell, CEO of Arborwell Professional Tree Management in California. As a young boy growing up in rural Michigan who always read Field & Stream magazine, I dreamed of hunting in the Rocky Mountains. I was the lucky winner, and it was a dream come true.

I headed out to Colorado in late October. This is an over-the-counter elk hunting license purchase. I met with Kevin Koc, the general manager of N. G. Gilbert, one of the Townsend Corporation companies, at a store in Cannon City, Colorado, to buy our supplies and elk hunting license. Then we were off to camp, where we set up tents for sleeping quarters. The weather forecast showed a snow storm was coming, and for the higher mountain elevations we were warned there could be major snow accumulations. For once, the forecasters were right. The camp was at the snow line, so we only got 2 to 3 inches, but more snow fell up the mountain. The winds were the major problem, with 20 to 50 mile per hour gusts for the first four to five days of the trip. We had to retie the tent down a few times.

On the first day our hunting party glassed a few elk. I think I saw a legal bull elk, and tried a stalk but the winds were wrong. I was not able to find the herd again. On the third morning, I was sitting in the meadow where I had seen the elk herd on the first day when a lone bull elk appeared. It was a young 5 x 5 bull elk, and I was able to harvest him. Two days later, Kevin and I hiked up into the mountains. During a day-long trek we crossed huge fresh bear and elk tracks in the new snow.

The trip was a great experience, harvesting a bull elk and hiking in the Rocky Mountains. The trip itself was the ending to a great annual fundraiser.

The event, held last February during TCIA’s Winter Management Conference at the Hilton Waikoloa in Hawaii, is the highlight of the conference. I wouldn’t miss the chance for dinner, cocktails and mingling with our industry friends and peers. There is an array of items at auction, from football packages, to custom made jewelry, to vacation trips and hunting trips. Ron Keith, CEO of Arbor Masters Tree & Landscape in Kansas, is a lively, entertaining auctioneer for the event. The audience has many laughs during the evening. Ron is able to get a premium from the buyers. Thank you, Ron, for helping raise these needed funds and making this event, lively and entertaining; what a great service you do for our industry.

The 2011 gala will be held at the Westin Grand Cayman, also during Winter Management Conference. I urge you to attend or, if you can’t, to consider donating money or auction items. All proceeds go toward lobbying on behalf of your business in Washington. The agenda has changed in Washington, and TCIA needs to be more active than ever.

TCIA is still looking for great auction items for this year’s Voice for Trees PAC Dinner and Auction: A craft item you make, a service you can provide, your mountain, lake or shore-front cottage, a time-share, or transferable awards points for airline tickets. No item is too big or small to offer.

Contact Deborah Johnson at 1-800-733-2622 or e-mail Johnson@tcia.org. For more on the auction, or on the WMC itself, visit www.tcia.org.

Randy Owen is president of Owen Tree Service, Inc. in Attica, Michigan, and Chair of the TCIA Board of Directors.

Kevin Koc, left, and Randy Owen with Randy’s bull elk. Worth the bid? Going by that smile, we think so.
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Ten Principles for Safety Leadership

By Steve Roberts, Ph.D.

Steve Roberts will speak on this same topic at Winter Management Conference in Grand Cayman next month. Visit www.tcia.org for details.

This article offers 10 principles for effective safety leadership that can enrich a work culture and bring the best out of a talented workforce. Most of these principles are relevant for people at all levels of an organization as people at all levels have opportunities to lead others in either a formal or informal capacity.

1. Leaders provide appropriate resources

Developing a Total Safety Culture requires providing appropriate resources. These resources must go beyond simply providing the proper tools and equipment. Supportive leaders demonstrate safety as a value and allow, encourage and recognize people’s contributions. Effective organizational systems support and reward safe behaviors. Also leaders ensure people are provided opportunities to develop competence in the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to work safely.

2. Leaders focus on process

Managers are typically held accountable for outcome numbers, and they in turn use these outcome numbers to motivate others. The focus is on the quantity and quality of production, with the bottom line being net profits. The outcome numbers in occupational safety are based on the relatively rare occurrence of an injury.

Leaders hold people accountable for accomplishing proactive process activities that contribute to eventual group and organizational success in productivity, quality and/or safety. And when people see improvement in the process numbers, they feel rewarded for their efforts and develop a sense of personal responsibility for continued contributions and never-ending improvement. Thus, by focusing on the process, leaders help people perceive the power they have over the frequent, intrinsic consequences of their jobs.

A process orientation asks “How did they do it?” instead of “What did they do?” It is not “What are our net profits?” but “What are the steps needed to accomplish and/or improve our team’s contributions to quality production?” It is not about an organization’s total recordable injury rate, but what can be done each day to keep people injury free.

3. Leaders understand the role of consequences

Extrinsic consequences are extra consequences (rewards or penalties) added to the situation to support or redirect a target behavior. For example, when an employee is given a Wal-Mart gift certificate for submitting a suggestion or for meeting their goal of conducting a certain number of behavioral observations, they are being motivated by extrinsic consequences.

While some are quick to motivate with the extrinsic consequences, leaders focus first on consequences intrinsic to a task and under the participants’ control. Sometimes people do not see the intrinsic positive consequences of their job; or if they do, they might not appreciate them.

Leaders help people believe their particular job assignment is important, which makes intrinsic consequences invaluable as indicators of personal success or directives for beneficial change. Leaders also show the direct connection of safety activities to improvements in safer behavior, safer systems and a safer work environment.

4. Leaders listen

People often speak first and then listen to concerns or complaints. This is a reasonable strategy for efficient action. However, leaders take time to learn another person’s perspective before offering direction, advice or support. Active listening is key to diagnosing a situation before promoting change or continuous improvement. However, this is not always the most efficient approach to getting a job done. It requires patience and a communication approach that asks many questions before giving advice. In this way an individual or work team can personalize an action plan or process for achieving a particular consequence.

For example, in one organization several people regularly failed to use a face shield while grinding, even though the face shield was hanging beside the grinder. The convenient location of this face shield made it seem those who failed to use it had a “bad attitude” regarding safety. However, after much discussion, someone finally admitted they were not using the shield because one individual with allergies often sneezed into it and no one wanted to use it afterward. Therefore, the reason for this problem was not the “bad attitude” of the workers, and actively listening to discover the real reason allowed for the most appropriate solution.

5. Leaders promote ownership

When managers direct by edict, they might get efficient transfer of an action plan, but they might also stifle internal motivation or self-persuasion. Behaviors performed to comply with a prescribed standard, policy or mandate are other-directed. Such behaviors are accomplished to satisfy someone else, and they are likely to cease when compliance cannot be mon-
When the development of an action plan involves the people expected to carry out that plan, ownership for both the process and the outcome is likely to develop. In other words, when leaders give a reason-able rationale for a desired outcome and then offer opportunities for others to customize methods for achieving that outcome, they facilitate a special kind of motivation. This motivation comes from inside people, and is commonly referred to as internal or self-directed motivation (Geller, 2001). In this state, people participate because they want to, not because they have to. They feel empowered to do the best they can for their work team and organization.

6. Leaders encourage choice

Having more opportunities for personal choice increases both motivation and a sense of personal control. And the greater people’s personal control, the more likely they are to participate in efforts to improve the welfare of others. In other words, people who perceive personal control are more likely to actively care (Geller, 2001).

Besides actually giving people more choices, leaders can help people become more aware of how they already shape their days. This can increase their perception of personal control and thus their self-motivation. Helping people see their options can also give them pause to consider other alternatives that could be more useful, productive or effective. Hence, when leaders help others become more observant of their everyday choices, they not only increase people’s awareness of personal control, they also set the occasion for more effective decision making.

7. Leaders set expectations

Most voluntary behavior at a work site starts as other-directed, meaning it is performed because someone asked for it. An important issue is whether the behavior remains other-directed or advances to self-directed or self-motivated (Geller, 2001). This depends to some extent on the method of asking. A behavioral request that comes across as a mandate or an absolute is likely to stay other-directed. This is often the management approach to occupational safety, as illustrated by regulatory compliance issues and the common slogan, “Safety is a condition of employment.”

Leadership can facilitate a shift from other-directed to self-directed motivation by initiating a process or action plan with expectations rather than mandates. What’s the difference? Both approaches specify desirable outcomes and establish the need for certain behaviors as process activities. However, expectations imply choice. While a certain outcome is anticipated, there is room for individual and group decision-making regarding procedures and methods. When people realize what’s expected of them, but perceive some personal control in how to reach specific goals, they are more likely to own the process and transition from an other-directed to a self-directed mindset.

8. Leaders provide feedback

Most people want to know what is expected of them and they want feedback on their progress toward meeting those expectations. Feedback is a critical component for continuous improvement. However, how do you feel when someone asks, “Can I give you some feedback?” Do you really expect a positive experience?

Leaders understand the importance of the context of a feedback conversation. The nature of the conversation or group discussion surrounding a feedback session determines whether such a process is appreciated, supported and sustained. Leaders also consider that many people will not look forward to their initial feedback meeting because they expect to be corrected, perhaps even criticized. Therefore, leaders try hard to make the first feedback session positive and constructive. They often give only rewarding feedback, without any reference to a behavioral deficiency or need for improvement. Creating a history of rewarding feedback will allow greater acceptance of corrective feedback when warranted.

9. Leaders look beyond the numbers

Outcome numbers are important, and in safety that means injury records and compensation costs. Leaders certainly appreciate the need to hold people accountable with numbers, but they also understand you can’t measure everything. There are some things you do and ask others to do because it’s the right thing to do. Leaders believe, for example, it’s important to increase self-esteem, self-efficacy, personal control, optimism and a sense of belonging throughout a work culture. They have faith in the intuitive and research-supported theory that promoting these person states is important (Geller, 2001).

For example, genuine one-to-one recognition increases trust and feelings of importance, behavior-based goal setting builds feelings of empowerment, and group celebrations facilitate a sense of belonging. Leaders perform and support these sorts of activities without expecting to see an immediate change in profits, production or workplace injuries. And, they don’t need a monitoring scheme to motivate their attempts to help people feel valuable and part of an important team effort.

10. Leaders understand system influences

Reducing injuries requires a comprehensive view of safety as an interaction of the physical environment/conditions, leadership, organizational systems, the behaviors of all people in the organization, employee engagement, and people (their knowledge, skills, and abilities, but also how people feel about what they are doing). Only by treating safety as multidimensional will we continue to see sustainable and continuous improvement in this critical area of organizational and human performance.

References


Steve Roberts, Ph.D., is senior partner with Safety Performance Solutions, Inc. in Blacksburg, Virginia.
Small Business Strategies for Managing Workers’ Compensation Claims

By Bob Rush

Workers’ compensation insurance costs are a burden for employers of all size but can have an especially significant impact for the small business owner. One might wonder, if famous small business owner Benjamin Franklin was still alive, what he might recommend with regard to strategies for addressing workers’ compensation claims. Here are some of his more famous quotes that provide us with insight into this topic.

“A penny saved is a penny earned.”

Safety first

Certainly the best way to keep your workers’ compensation premiums as low as possible is to never have a claim. Remember, the cheapest claim you will have is the one that never happens. Admittedly, small business owners do not have the same resources available as larger employers to implement safety programs. However, the good news is that small companies have fewer employees to train and document. The following steps can help you make a positive impact at your business — and ultimately reduce workers’ comp costs:

- Make safety an integral part of that training process. Make sure each new employee understands how to perform the job in a safe manner.
- Stress safety at every employee meeting. Make sure your employees know that workers’ compensation is a direct cost to your business and not a government program. It is important that they appreciate the potential impact of these costs to your company.
- Seek assistance from your insurance company. Most carriers will offer some type of loss prevention or safety inspection resource to help identify potential hazards specific to your operation. Your insurance agent can assist you with obtaining this support, which will help you focus your safety efforts. (TCIA offers a loss control audit designed exactly for this purpose.)
- Seek assistance from industry organizations. TCIA offers a model Injury & Illness Prevention Program to help you set up a safety program, the CTSP (Certified Treecare Safety Professional) program to train you or an employee to be a tree care safety officer at your company, and Accreditation to help you get your whole company on board with safety (and earn a company credential to recognize the fact).

“Take time for all things: great haste makes great waste.”

Employer investigation

As a small business owner, it is very important that you instruct your employees to immediately report any work-related injuries. If immediate medical treatment is required, make sure the injured employee receives this treatment.

Once the injured employee’s medical needs are addressed, you or someone specifically designated in your organization needs to complete an investigation of the incident. Most states require that you complete a First Report of Injury form. You should have these available and one should be completed. In the absence of a state form, you should complete some type of accident form. Many of these forms are easily obtained online or through your insurance agent.

Complete one of these forms, make sure you obtain witness information and take photos of the scene; and if the incident involves a piece of equipment, the equipment should be secured for possible inspection by your carrier. If a defect in the equipment caused the injury, your insurance carrier can receive a reimbursement from the equipment manufacturer, which in turn reduces your claim costs.

“Time is money.”

Timely reporting of claims

Once a claim is reported to you, you need to report the claim to your insurance carrier immediately. There is overwhelming industry evidence that shows a direct relationship between the amount of time it takes to report a claim and the ultimate cost of the claim. In fact, studies have shown that claims reported within five days of the injury cost more than 100 percent less than claims reported 21-30 days after the injury.

This is an area where a business owner can make an impact that requires no additional cost or expense to the business. Make sure you prepare in advance for reporting a claim. Keep your workers’ compensation policy in a place where you can find it. All insurance carriers offer a telephone number for reporting claims 24 hours, seven days a week. Most also offer options for reporting claims via their website. Make sure you keep these instructions with your policy in a convenient location for easy access should a claim occur.

Every claim, regardless of the severity needs to be reported immediately.

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

Communicate with your claims adjuster

Once a claim is reported, you will be contacted by a claims adjuster to verify the facts of the incident as well as to obtain specific information with regard to wages, etc. for the injured employee. Make sure you cooperate with the adjuster and provide the information they need as quickly as possible. The sooner the adjuster can determine if a claim is compensable and provide the injured employee with the benefits to which they are entitled, the less likely a claim will end up in litigation. Litigation adds significant expense to your claim.

“A little neglect may breed great mischief.”

Communicate with an injured employee

As a business owner, you should stay in contact with your injured employee and show an interest and concern for his or her well being. The employee should be made to understand they are valued and missed. This type of attention often reduces the likelihood of litigation significantly and
motivates the employee to return to work as soon as they are medically able to do so.

“Absence sharpens love, presence strengthens it.”

Return to work/transitional duties

Industry statistics clearly indicate a relationship between the amount of time an injured employee is absent from the workplace and the cost of the injury to the employer. In addition to the direct costs associated with workers’ compensation, the employer also incurs costs associated with the absence of an employee, including lost productivity, cost for overtime or for a temporary employee to cover the injured worker’s job assignments, and the cost to hire and train a replacement.

Smaller businesses admittedly have fewer opportunities to offer light duty or transitional work for injured employees. This is, however, one of the most important activities in the workers’ compensation claims process. As the business owner, you should make every effort to identify opportunities to get your employee back on the job, engaged with their co-workers and back in the habit of going to work every day. Use your claims adjuster as a resource to assist you. The adjusters have access to professional resources that can assist you in identifying transitional work opportunities as well as understand just exactly how the employee’s medical condition limits their ability to perform their regular job duties. Again, every effort should be made to accommodate an injured employee and return them to the work environment.

“Three can keep a secret if two are dead.”

Fraud

According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), 10 percent or more of all insurance claims are fraudulent. Unfortunately that is a simple fact of life. Although most workers’ compensation claims are legitimate, there are instances where an injured employee may be engaged in some type of fraudulent activity. It is very common for an employer to hear the “word on the street” regarding an injured employee.

You may become aware that an injured employee is working at another job while receiving disability payments from your insurance carrier. You may also learn that they are engaged in some type of activity that is contrary to the disability claimed. For example, they may be participating in softball, skiing or another type of physical activity that would be inconsistent for the injury claimed. Most often, the best source of this information is your own workforce. Keep your ear to the ground.

If you learn about any fraudulent activity, communicate with your adjuster. They have access to resources that can provide further investigation of these issues and determine if the activities impact the cost of your claim.

“All is well that ends well.”

Actually that quote is by Shakespeare, but it summarizes the outcomes that you can have if you take the time to implement these simple strategies for dealing with a workers’ compensation claim.

Bob Rush is assistant vice president of alternative risk at Avizent, a national claims and risk management service provider offering solutions in claims management, managed care, alternative risk and risk management information systems.

Lost Workday Accident Rates for TCIA Member Companies per 100 workers in a year.

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<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTSP Companies</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Companies NOT enrolled in the CTSP Program</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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The results are in.

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

The numbers don’t lie...*

safety-conscious tree care companies that get involved with the CTSP program experience fewer accidents, fewer injuries, and less lost time — PERIOD.

*for the full survey results, click on the CTSP tab at www.tcia.org.
CIA wrapped up another successful TCI EXPO this year at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The three-day industry trade show and conference, November 11-13, offered more than 2,000 attendees a series of workshops, seminars and demonstrations focused on their work – the tree care industry.

Attendees from across the world descended on Pittsburgh to take part in the various business, safety and arboriculture workshops and forums, watch professional tree climbers ascend the demo tree in the center of the trade show floor, network with other tree care professionals and compare equipment and evaluate products.

“EXPO was fantastic this year,” said TCIA member Jim Clark, owner of The Tree Machine, Inc. in Indianapolis, Indiana. “I don’t know how you could have done it better.”

The biggest providers of products and services in the industry – 170 of them – exhibited, sharing their latest offerings on the 190,000-square-foot trade show floor. Companies such as Bandit Industries, Inc. connected with customers and friends from all over and showed off some of their most popular products. “I think that this was the best TCI show we’ve had in at least five years,” says Jerry Morey, Bandit president.

Thanks to everyone who made TCI EXPO 2010 in Pittsburgh a great success! And a big thanks to our Crown PACT partners, Altec Industries, Bandit, Husqvarna, Morbark and Vermeer; Root partners, George Fern and West Coast Shoe (WESCO); and Seed partners Buckingham Manufacturing, Fanno Saw, HMI, Mauget Company, Weaver Leather, Wright Tree Service, and Liberty Financial Group.

Visit www.tcia.org for everything post-TCI EXPO 2010! See what people are saying, check out photos, view some of what took place at the world’s largest tree care industry trade show and conference, and start gearing up for this November’s TCI EXPO in Hartford, Connecticut.
Tree demos were given all three days that the trade show was open and included innovative training for rigging applications, tree climbing ascent, safe chain saw handling and much more. Attendees earned CEUs for free.

Meeting new people and catching up with old friends – an extra bonus of the “worlds largest tree care industry trade show and conference”!

Kicking the tires was definitely allowed and even encouraged on the show floor.

And these tires were made for traveling!

Patrick George, fourth from right, owner of Heartwood Tree Service, LLC in Charlotte, North Carolina, brought 23 employees to the show and bought them all Gold Cards so they could take advantage of all the education and training.

Shaddrick Smith, owner of All Seasons Tree Care in Wauseon, Ohio, is presented with $200 in Arborbucks winnings by Sue Blanchette, TCIA associate member services coordinator.
Vermeer chippers now have an electronic controller that operates the Smart Feed system, the bottom feed stop bar and a button that allows an operator to override the bottom bar temporarily for up to 30 seconds, while standing off to the side, during difficult feeding conditions.

By Rick Howland

Picture this. A chipper goes back to the factory. It seems the machine is not running right. Plus, it’s got a major crack in the in-feed table. It’s definitely a very dangerous situation; in fact, it is on the verge of catastrophic failure with the potential for significant injury or loss of life if it is ever run again in this condition. Is this a result of manufacturing or materials defect? Hardly. It turns out to be a matter of virtually zero maintenance.

This is a true and very extreme case, and it illustrates that chipper maintenance and safety go hand-in-hand.

In the tree care industry, safety needs to be taken as a serious business, and when it comes to chipper maintenance and safety, you’d be hard-pressed to find anyone more serious about the subject than Gene Bridges, national accounts manager at Bandit Industries.

“If you look at chipper accident reports, most of the issues revolve around unsafe acts, often related to lack of maintenance,” says Bridges.

Those incidents are largely avoidable. To alleviate most, Bridges suggests a regular and simple daily inspection routine starting at the front of the machine and then working back to the cutting devices.

“Start by keeping in mind that all manufacturers do the same thing; they get engines from their manufacturers or distributors, engines that provide the best RPMs for the chipper’s engineered running range. Then they adjust or build the chipper to that spec. As a user, you have to make sure in the field that the chipper engine is running at the right RPM. Whether manually or electronically controlled, it needs to run at its highest RPM,” he explains, “in order to get the correct disk or drum speed and complementary hydraulic in-feed. You don’t want the hydraulic feed working too fast for the drum or disk to cut.”

The importance of ensuring the correct and optimum engine speed is to ensure optimum cutting operation, which prevents bogging and clogging and often resulting in, due to human nature, the operator’s tendency to push the machine far beyond its capability or to try to clear it improperly while it’s running. That causes or sets up more problems. Just think of what could happen if a bogging machine all of a sudden comes up to speed again while an operator is fussing with it.
Even if the engine is running at the specified speed, “The next thing most guys do not do is tighten the drive belts. That can cause the engine to be running at the correct RPM, but the slipping belts will not run the rest of the machine at the right RPM.”

“Similarly, the third thing can be the clutch, if it is not properly adjusted to run the machine at a correct ratio,” says Bridges. “It will cause the same problem as incorrect RPMs or a slipping belt.”

“Fourth is running with a dull disk or drum knives or an anvil that is dull or misadjusted. The engine may be running the machine correctly, but it will not process wood properly. Then you start having clogging issues and all too often people doing things they should not, perhaps not feeding material properly, resulting in unsafe acts,” Bridges says.

To illustrate his point, Bridges says that with most chippers today, with live hydraulic pumps that kick in when the engine starts, the machine can keep feeding and clogging, and this can cause operators to want to stand on the feed table trying to kick the brush in. “And it’s all maintenance related,” he says.

What’s the most common dangerous practice?

“Opening the machine to expose the disk while the machine is running, which causes plenty of potential for injury and fatalities,” stresses Bridges.

Another bad but all too common practice, according to Bridges and others, is trying to unclog the machine while it is still running – possibly even using a pry bar – rather than following the manufacturer’s instructions and shutting the machine down. Not only is trying to free it while the machine is running unsafe, he explains, it also puts undue and unnecessary strain on the machine. “Just two months ago I heard of two accidents related to the attempt to unclog a chipper using the crank-start.” Again, regular maintenance would have avoided the problem and the temptation to use the starter to alleviate it.

“On all Bandit chippers we do not want anyone to move their hand past an imaginary plane at the back end of the in-feed; so, in the situation where you have smaller, hard-to-feed brush, we provide a push paddle supplied with every control feed. It’s made of wood, so if it goes through the machine, so be it – buy another; you just don’t have to put your hands in harm’s way.”

Bridges also notes other safety features, such as lock pins being in position on the feed table and distinct forward-neutral-reverse position detents, or locking mechanisms, on the control bar to prevent the machine from slipping into another position inadvertently. “These are easy to check on a regular basis – every day.”

Speaking of the control bar, Bridges warns never to position one’s whole body inside the control bar, which on Bandit machines goes all around the feed table. “If you are feeding brush and are standing inside, you cannot hit the control bar to stop the machine. If at least half your body is outside the control bar and you fall, your body will hit the control bar and throw the chipper into reverse.”

A chipper is safer when running properly. Morbark’s 25/36 whole tree chipper comes standard with their Integrated Control System, a diagnostic system that monitors hydraulic pressures, temperatures, clutch systems and engine efficiency while automatically adjusting to maximize performance.

Bandit’s Knife Saver, at right, is an inexpensive hand-held knife-sharpening device that easily touches up chipper knives while they are still in the machine. The consensus seems to be that the easier the maintenance, the more chance it will get done. The Bandit Model 990XP shown is a compact, 12-inch-diameter-capacity drum chipper.
He added that on all control-fed Bandit chippers, there are also “last-chance” control cables, an extra safety measure if one gets pulled in past the control bar.

At Morbark, we spoke to Mark Rau, dealer support director in the tree care products division. “When it comes to safety, maintenance becomes a huge part of the equation,” says Rau. “We recently had a chipper come back to the factory with an amazing level of destruction encountered, mainly due to pure neglect, which we can attribute to dull knives – which then beat the daylight out the machine and put unnecessary stress on welds and other components by transmitting vibrations through the machine.”

“This situation all began with something as simple as not keeping knives sharp. Because of the vibration, the machine began cracking at the in-feed, and the situation was allowed to go to near-catastrophic failure and possible injury.”

“Maintenance and safety are all about common sense. Money and time are big culprits. What I see happening is that the guy who owns the machine and pays for it is probably not the guy who runs it, and vice versa. It’s a simple lack of communication. Safety and maintenance begin with getting the chipper in the shop for periodic inspections. Grease. Adjust – one thing leads to another,” says Rau.

Rau also warned that hydraulic systems are a big safety deal. “Hydraulic hoses over time can develop cracks and pinholes that can lead to high-pressure, pinhole leaks, leading to injection of hydraulic fluid into the skin, which can be potentially fatal.”

He suggested a daily, super-critical check of the big three: clutch/PTO, belts and knives, and hydraulics.

J. R. Bowling, vice president of sales at Rayco, says his take on best practices is to install the safety devices at the factory, then check them regularly.

“Our 12-inch and upcoming 18-inch chippers have some new safety items. Probably the most significant is a switch that will prevent the engine from being started with feed wheels engaged or with clutch or cutter drum engaged. This safety feature is so that no one can inadvertently turn the key and start the chipper while someone else has the cutter door open to access the drum or to check a knife or anvil gap.”

From a maintenance perspective, safety gear such as this is easy to test, he explains. “Just turn the key on with the wheels engaged.”

“The 8-inch Rayco RC814 also has a safety mechanism at the lower in-feed stop bar along the bottom of the in-feed table to protect the operator when using the machine and also in the event he or she is leaning over the machine to check the chipping gap,” Bowling says.

As with other manufacturers, Rayco has some simple but potent safety systems in place, such as bolts on the 12-inch chipper that hold the drum compartment shut, versus a pin. The drum will come to a stop by the time an operator can undo the bolts. It’s a simple daily self-check to see that the bolts are in place.

As Bowling was talking, outside his office...
office the first snow of the season began to fall, which prompted him to think about some maintenance things people don’t think about. While ensuring the correct mix and amount of coolant may not impact safety of the operator, they certainly impact operation of the machine. “In a pinch, especially in the summer, an operator may add water, and then come winter not think about the mix. Chippers sit out over night, and if the coolant freezes, that can blow the cooling system.”

Similarly, it’s important, Bowling says, to run the proper weight hydraulic fluid for summer and winter. “With cold temperatures,” he notes, “summer fluid can get too thick to flow and can run the hydraulic pump dry, resulting in failure.”

Todd Roorda, environmental specialist at Vermeer, addressed the modern world of electronics and maintenance in the new world of chippers.

“As far as safety features and electronics go on our chippers, we run what’s called a brain box, an electronic controller, which does a variety of things. One is to operate the Smart Feed (which automatically feeds branches while monitoring and adjusting RPM settings for maximum chipping efficiency and minimum engine stress) and also controls the bottom feed stop bar.”

The brain box also controls the 30-second “hold-to-run button.” This feature, on the side of the in-feed, can be depressed for up to 30 seconds to over ride the bottom bar temporarily during difficult feeding conditions. “Say you are chipping an evergreen with a lot of 90-degree branches that can trigger the bottom feed safety bar. The operator can now stand safely along side the machine and out of the way. Once the feed has started, he can hold down the button for up to 30 seconds so the 90-degree branches will not trigger the bottom in-feed stop bar.”

As far as brain box maintenance, there is virtually none needed, Roorda notes, adding that it is said to be a maintenance-free safety feature. “That doesn’t mean you can skip the daily and weekly maintenance, such as keeping knives sharp and torqued. And don’t forget to keep the chute clear!”

Getting back to electronics, Roorda also mentioned a feature on chipper winches that have an interlock preventing the winch cable and locking end from being pulled into the machine via in-feed roller if still attached to a branch. The winch has to be in the stowed position while the machine chips. “There really are not too many electronics in chippers, but the ones we have help with safety and product innovation,” says Roorda.

Jean-Alain Tibbaut, marketing manager at Eliet USA, Inc., says all of the Eliet brand machines share a patented, splitting and shredding technology far different from traditional chippers. It’s called the Chopping Principle, in which blades split then cut with the wood’s grain. This results in lighter machines, up to half the weight of chippers in the same class, and requires less power to get the job done, he explains. “Where on regular chippers dull blades can be dangerous, with the Eliet machines, the only concern is not safety but the drop in efficiency, up to 30 to 50 percent, depending on how dull the blades are,” he says.
Furthermore, the construction of the Eliet machines make it easier to check for clogs and for blade wear, less than 30 seconds, Tibbaut explains. “On regular chippers, you have to take blades off and sharpen them, then reinstall them. With ours, you can access the blades with no tools, then sharpen them while still in place with a grinder or a file. Other than checking switches, there really is not cause for safety concern with respect to our machines and maintenance,” he says.

“Because it is easier to do maintenance, crews will check more often and do maintenance more often. That alone provides greater safety,” Tibbaut says.

Joe Prince is sales director with Great Northern Equipment, the national sales agent for Dosko Manufactured Equipment, maker of 6- to 10-inch brush chippers featuring Kohler, Kubota or Duetz engines.

“Tree care professionals and rental centers expect reliability, durability and ease of maintenance,” Prince says. “The way a machine is designed and constructed is important. Dosko chippers are designed toward providing all three of those expectations at an affordable price. There are many well made chippers in the industry, but are they easy to service and maintain?”

“When you look at chippers, in general, most chippers run the same way, but there are many differences in design that contribute to performance and maintenance,” Prince says. “For instance, Dosko has a slide roller feature that makes for quick and easy access to clean/maintain feed rollers and knives. Why is that so important? We find that the less time it takes for maintenance, the more often maintenance actually gets done.”

On Eliet chippers, blades are accessed without tools, and sharpened while still in place.

Eliet chippers, which have up to 6-inch capacity, use a splitting and shredding technology in which blades split then cut with the wood’s grain.

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“If it’s easy to maintain, the machine will get maintained,” Prince says, echoing what Jean-Alain Tibbaut’s comment above. “The longer it takes, the less likely and less often the chipper will get maintenance, which with any chipper could result in more wear, costly repair and potential safety issues.”

John Bird at J.P. Carlton agrees that proper chipper maintenance is a key component of any safety program. “A properly maintained chipper will have all warning decals in place and legible, all safety interlocks tested and working, and all chipper functions verified,” says Bird. “Not only is it key to have the safety specific components in compliance, it is also important to have the rest of the chipper maintained to factory specifications to aid the ease of use, which will further reduce the chance of injury. When workers are fighting a poorly performing chipper the chance of injury increases.”

By implementing a proper maintenance program by qualified personnel, the occurrence of field adjustments by untrained workers is reduced. These improper field repairs by workers not trained for that function is often a cause of injury,” says Bird. “A proper chipper maintenance program boosts productivity while lowering overall operating costs, increasing resale value, and improving the company image, all while increasing the safety of all who are exposed to the machine.”

The bottom line, it seems, is that chipper maintenance is about far more than fast, efficient and economical cutting; it is also the first line of defense in safe operation. The two go hand in hand.
It’s no secret there have been a lot of financial challenges in the world recently. Commercial companies, municipalities and utilities have witnessed everything from revenue losses to staff cutbacks to entire programs/companies closing their doors. Budget cuts and economic woes also take a less obvious but no less important toll. They risk delaying much-needed advancements that arise from industry research.

Improvements in our techniques, knowledge, operations and technical innovations will ensure all forms of arboriculture have greater relevance in society. It is not wise to put progress on hold.

The number of research proposals submitted to the TREE (Tree Research and Education Endowment) Fund each year far outstrips the funds available to implement them. For example, research grant requests over the past year totaled more than $815,000 and the TREE Fund was only able to support about 18 percent of that. Business and academic researchers are not at a loss for problems to solve or questions that need an answer. The voices of the industry that communicate these needs to researchers are definitely being heard.

As a trustee of the TREE Fund, I am troubled that we’re not to be able to fund more projects. I’m concerned that arborist safety and tree health are suffering for lack of current scientific answers. I worry about researchers losing heart and potential leaders of our industry moving to other disciplines.

The bottom line is that we could do more if we had more. If it has been a while since you could make an investment in the future of our industry, this is an excellent time to renew that commitment. You’ll not only get a tax deduction for a charitable donation, but the return on your investment in research could help your business, clients and constituents in the long run. Just visit www.treefund.org to make an online donation or mail a check to the TREE Fund at 552 S. Washington St., Suite 109, Naperville, IL 60540.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the TREE Fund over the past year. I know these are difficult times for many, and your donations are all the more valuable because of this. Special thanks as well to the Utility Arborist Association and Arizona Public Service for the creation and pursuit of a $1 million dollar goal for a Utility Arborist Research Fund! This is an inspiring objective and one that will return dividends for many years to come.

Jim Zwack is director of technical services for The Davey Institute and a trustee of The TREE Fund.
By Janet Aird

“I grew a company from zero to two and a half million dollars in a very short period of time,” says Kevin Caldwell, president and owner of Caldwell Tree Care in Roswell, Georgia. An ISA-certified arborist, a CTSP from TCIA’s first workshop, and a TCIA Board member, Caldwell focuses on the three ‘E’s – education, experience and adept execution of the work.

Caldwell founded the company as Caldwell Landscape in 1993, but discovered he had more true love for trees than for shrubs and grass, he says. He moved to tree care in 1997, and started doing business as Caldwell Tree Care in 2005.

“We’re very adept at execution,” he says. “We have skilled climbers and well-trained pruners. In the truest sense, what distinguishes us from other tree care companies is that we look at pruning as an art form, with a biological backdrop.”

Caldwell Tree specializes in large trees. They have regular maintenance programs to promote plant health and vigor, and they diagnose and treat pest and disease problems. Much of the staff’s time is spent educating clients about their trees. Still, removals have grown to about 45 percent of their work.

“In the Atlanta area, I think people have become a little less cognizant about tree care,” he says. “They’re more likely to remove trees. That could be driven by the economic climate. It’s unfortunate. If the trees were maintained, it would yield fewer removals.”

They also survey trees prior to construction. “Oftentimes, great efforts are made to preserve trees on these sites whether the tree is healthy or not,” he says. “We can identify the trees worth saving before the site is developed and put our efforts into saving them. If clients want to try to save other trees, we can do remedial work to increase their opportunity for survival.”

They follow the tree ordinances of every municipality in their area and have helped write some local ordinances. They’ve been expert witnesses in court cases, although they prefer to help bring about compromises. They also do appraisals, casualty losses for insurance and tree inventories.

Caldwell Tree has 16 to 17 employees, five in the office and 11 to 12 in the field, with 16 vehicles, from chip trucks to spray rigs to a bucket truck. Five employees are certified arborists and three are CTSPs. Two more are working on their ISA certification and another two are just starting on TCIA’s EHAP (Electrical Hazards Awareness Program), which meets ANSI safety requirements and helps companies meet OSHA safety requirements.

“I pay people more for each credential they get,” Caldwell says. “It’s all about the education.”

New employees have a great deal of on-the-job training, shadowing and opportunities to increase their education at conferences. Most employees have several years with the company, which gives them the experience and maturity to let the arborist on the job know if they see a problem or a hazard while they’re working.

Caldwell’s own education never stops. “ISA certification is a great baseline qualification,” he says, “but it’s important to take continuing ed workshops, too. I’ve had the good fortune to attend quite a few tree care workshops, and they’ve given me a more profound understanding of how trees fail. Part of the arborist’s charge is to have some forensic tools; actually touching the trees and recognizing telltale signs of decay.”

The environment at the company is very open, he says. “Some employees might be stronger in some areas than others: entomology, dendrology, the latest, greatest treatment. We try to combine all our experiences and share our knowledge.”

About 65 percent of their work is residential and 35 percent commercial. Their clients include property managers and commercial institutions as well as larger landscape companies, which subcontract some residential work, especially pruning.

“I operate the business with honesty and integrity,” Caldwell says. “Ours is really about knowledge-driven work backed by arboriculture.”

He refuses to be “commoditized” – to succumb to pricing pressures. “When you do that, what you create is monstrous. We shouldn’t be put into a position where we can’t pay people decently and make a modest living, and where we negatively impact the ecosystem.”

Although the bulk of their work is based
on the reputation they’ve built up during the past 25 years, they’ve begun to do outside marketing, he says. Their logo has become very recognizable, and they’re located on a road where 80,000 vehicles pass by every day.

They’re also using technology, including Facebook and a blog. “Marketing has changed as technology becomes more important,” he says. “Even the website isn’t enough. It has to be easy for people to find you at the push of a button and talk to you immediately. It’s a fast-moving target.”

Web-based marketing figures strongly into Caldwell’s plans for the future. “We had some contraction in 2008. My objective is to get back to building until another business unit becomes inevitable. There are markets that are overlooked; my attention is on finding that next opportunity to catapult us into that next growth spurt.”

The company became accredited in 2007. Accreditation begins to validate that a company, not just an individual, has the capacity to perform arboriculture services as a whole, Caldwell says, in a manner that follows all regulatory requirements across the board.

The company was already in compliance with the federal Department of Transportation regs, and their safety procedures were in place, but Caldwell wanted to make an impact on the culture that already existed in his company, so they spent a lot of time discussing whether or not to adopt the TCIA templates or develop their own.

“If you were starting a company from scratch, you could take the TCIA template and do a beautiful job,” he says. “They hand you everything you need except the business plan.”

Writing the business plan was a hurdle. After discussing it with both his accountant and his banker, he essentially wrote it around increasing the mechanization of productivity to bring costs down. The only other modifications were changing some of the terminology they used and the way some employees kept their files.

“Accreditation is a reminder for me and my company managers that we have to be careful to document regulatory and compliance issues,” Caldwell says. “We’re always checking that we’re doing things right. By doing that, we become better managers, better business people and more professional.”

The company’s three-year Accreditation renewal is coming up and they’re preparing for a high grade in the audit, Caldwell says.

“Part of what we’re doing is going back and looking at our systems, procedures and record-keeping. It’s as much of a challenge to keep Accreditation as to get it, but it’s such a matter of pride that you don’t want to let it go. I’m actually looking forward to doing a business plan tune up.

“I can’t imagine I’d be where I am if I wasn’t participating in TCIA,” he says. “I would have experienced some level of fulfillment, but without the peer influence this group provides, I don’t know if I would have things in so much order. You begin to self-actualize. I’m pretty fortunate that I put myself in this position.”

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Circle 10 for more information on Business For Sale.
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Student Career Days 2010 – Not Your Ordinary Field Trip!

The 14th Annual Tree Care Industry Association Foundation Student Career Days (SCD) wrapped up another successful competition this year in Pittsburgh, Pa. The three-day event, November 11-13, offered students enrolled in horticulture, forestry and related programs an inside look at the field they’re studying.

Held in conjunction with TCI EXPO, SCD attracted 147 students. Representing 18 colleges and universities from across the country, the students took full advantage of the opportunity to test their knowledge and participate in a variety of skills competitions.

The climbing skills portion of the events took place this year in Pittsburgh’s Allegheny Commons West Park, which was located just across the river from the EXPO Conference Center and is home to specimen trees of many varieties.

Mark Chisholm, three time ISA tree climbing champion with TCIA member Aspen Tree Expert Co., was on site to demonstrate climbing competition tips.

“It’s great to see the students’ enthusiasm and passion for the tree care industry,” says Chisholm, who is also a Stihl spokesperson for tree care. “With this type of leadership and commitment from the student competitors, the industry has a bright future.”

Top finishers in each event received gift certificates for Stihl merchandise, compliments of Stihl, the title event sponsor. A full list of winners, and their scores, can be viewed at www.tcia.org, under Meetings/TCIAF Student Career Days.

Students also took part in the popular SCD Job & Internship Fair, featuring some of the biggest companies in tree care, including Bartlett, Davey and SaveATree to name a few, and gave students and the tree care company representatives the opportunity to meet and discuss potential job opportunities.

“We had a great experience, and the students made many great connections, several internship offers, and one job offer,” says Max Darrington, the student advisor from Brigham Young University.


Student Career Days is hosted by the Tree Care Industry Association Foundation, whose mission is to advance education and professional development in the green industry, improve safety and reduce accident rates in the tree care industry and to disseminate information key to practitioners and consumers about proper tree care.

As participants in the ideal recruitment platform, SCD Partners receive many rewards for welcoming collegiate and vocational students to the annual Student Career Days event. To learn more about becoming a sponsor of Student Career Days, contact TCIA’s Director of Development Deborah Johnson at 603-314-5380 x123 or Johnson@tcia.org.
Liberty Financial Group, Inc. has become TCIA’s newest PACT partner, at the Seed level.

Partners Advancing Commercial Treecare (PACT) program partners provide financial support for many of TCIA’s education and training efforts and programs, and through those, TCIA’s mission for the Transformation of the Industry.

Liberty provides commercial financing solutions to the tree care industry for purchasing new and/or used equipment, so helping support the PACT program seemed a good fit for the TCIA associate member company, according to Philip McClurkin, sales representative.


The different levels of financial support PACT partners provide are identified by their PACT identity, starting off with Seed Partners, then Root Partners, moving up the tree to Branch Partners, and finally the highest level, our Crown Partners. Please let our PACT Partners know that you support their efforts on your behalf and that of the entire industry.

For more information, contact TCIA’s Deborah Johnson at 1-800-733-2622 or johnson@tcia.org.
CTSP CEU Quiz #2011-1: January, 2011

1. The most effective organizational systems for safety support and reward …
   a. no accidents
   b. safe behaviors
   c. effective discipline
   d. no injuries

2. Most chipper accidents revolve around …
   a. improper maintenance
   b. malfunctioning chippers
   c. unsafe acts, often related to lack of maintenance
   d. the inherent hazards of the machine itself

3. Extrinsic consequences are the natural good or bad consequences of a target behavior. Example: If you touch a hot stove you get burned.
   a. True
   b. False

4. Brush chipper bogging/clogging is typically caused by …
   a. improper engine rpm
   b. slipping belts
   c. slipping clutch
   d. any of the above

5. Behaviors performed to comply with a prescribed standard, policy or mandate are …
   a. other-directed
   b. self-directed
   c. both a) and b)
   d. not as likely to continue without supervision and correction

6. Stretch question (short answer):
   How could you apply the principles of behavioral safety to reduce the likelihood of chipper accidents? What would chipper maintenance people have to do differently? What would crew members have to do differently? What would management have to do differently?

CTSP CeUs: __________________________

To obtain CEU credit, you may either copy this page, answer the questions and fax the answer sheet to TCIA at (603) 314-5386, mail to TCIA - CTSP, 136 Harvey Road - Ste 101, Londonderry, NH 03053, or you may go to www.tcia.org, click on the Safety tab, and click on the CTSP page to complete the answer sheet online.

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’ssafety articles for training and may wish to use this quiz to test comprehension.

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Tree News Almanac

Wi-Fi is not killing trees


A few days ago, PC World published a story claiming that Wi-Fi networks damage trees. The article quotes an alarming Dutch study whose researchers say afflicted trees take on a metallic appearance:

“Trees placed closest to the Wi-Fi radio demonstrated a “lead-like shine” on their leaves that was caused by the drying of the upper and lower epidermis of the leaves. This would eventually result in the death of parts of the leaves.”

Days later, Weekly World News – that staid paper of record – published results of an American study claiming that a mass tree-extinction may be on the way:

The study (was) conducted by Nobel Prize winning Professor Gunnar Hofverberg – the leading Wi-Fi expert in the United States, and a world-renowned arborist. Hofverberg concluded that 97 percent of trees in urban areas will die from Wi-Fi exposure.

Finally today, now that the story’s festered and spread for a week, the whole thing’s been exposed as malarkey. Too bad several high-profile news sources jumped on the story without fact-checking.

For the last 15 years, electro-magnetic fields have routinely come under the unscientific scrutiny of concerned, skittish citizens. In that time, a lucrative snake-oil market’s opened up, offering paranoiacs “protection” from EMF while diminishing attention for legitimate side-effects of tech-proliferation.

Read more at VBS.

Send your Tree news Almanac items to: editor@tcia.org

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Take part in the TCI Magazine Fleet Equipment Survey!

In order to better understand exactly how big the tree care industry is, TCI Magazine is surveying tree care companies to find out the size of the fleet of the entire industry. This will allow us to know a bit more about how much money our industry spends and how we spend it, as well as to be able to tell you where you fit in. Visit www.tcia.org to complete the survey online, e-mail editor@tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622 for a survey form.

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Hunter Safety System carabiners recalled

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with Hunter Safety System of Danville, Ala., have announced a voluntary recall of about 16,000 Hunter HSS Ultra-Lite carabiners that were supplied with the HSS-300 Ultra-Lite full body climbing safety harness. The pins in the carabiners can detach, causing a climbing strap to break free from the harness. The company is aware of two reports of the carabiner pins detaching. No falls or injuries have been reported.

Made in China, the carabiners are black with a pin sticking out of the gate. They have “CB20101” stamped on the side opposite the gate. They were sold from about June through September 2010. Consumers should stop using them immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Contact Hunter Safety System at (877) 296-3528 or visit www.hsswest.com.

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Letters, E-mails & Tweets

My picture on the cover...

I just got my December TCI and was surprised to see myself on the cover of the magazine, in a picture that was taken at last month’s crane workshop (in Ipswich, Massachusetts). I feel very honored to be on the cover and I just wanted to say thank you to TCIA and also say thank you for the coverage that you gave us for this workshop. We are hoping to be able to make this an annual event, so we can continue to spread the word about crane safety while doing tree care work.

Please extend my thanks to everyone down at TCIA.

Chris Girard, CTSP
ISA Certified Arborist
Girard Tree Service
Gilmanton, New Hampshire

Please help us help you keep enjoying TCI Magazine!

TCIA exists to help tree care businesses, you, do business better. TCI Magazine is one of the ways we do that.

Q. What can you do to help us maintain our position as the best magazine in the tree care industry?
A. Fill out a subscription card for your FREE subscription every year. (in every issue, and on this issue’s cover wrap for some of you!) Or renew/subscribe online at www.tcia.org.

Q. Why?
A. It costs money to publish a high-quality magazine. Advertising support enables us to provide you the highest quality educational, scientific, business and safety articles.

Q. How does filling out a subscription card help?
A. Advertisers look at the number of subscribers who request the magazine by filling out a card or who subscribe online. To them, it means people are reading it.

Q. What if you don’t fill it out or renew online?
A. We don’t look as attractive to advertisers and they may not support the magazine, and the quality of the magazine suffers. Also, after three years you’ll be automatically dropped from the subscription list.

Q. How often should you fill out the card or renew online?
A. Once a year would be best. Directly requesting the magazine is the best way you can show advertisers that you are actually reading the magazine. Doing so every year shows them that you are reading it regularly. We show them those numbers.

Q. So, will filling out the card once a year help TCIA keep you informed in countless ways that will benefit your career and your business?
A. Yes.

Q. Can we make it any clearer?
A. You tell us.

Subscribe or renew online at www.tcia.org
Nothing lasts forever. He’s had a good long life and so have I.”

So said Frank Knight, Yarmouth’s 101-year-old tree warden as he stood by the fallen trunk of “Herbie,” the largest American elm in New England, shortly after it was taken down on January 19, 2010. Frank had been watching over the tree for 50 years.

The air was suddenly rent by the sound of a chain saw as Matt Jackson started cutting the notch, which would decide Herbie’s fate. He was using a Husqvarna 395, with a 54-inch bar, which he had bought specifically for this job. The tree was 6½ feet DBH and had stood 110 feet tall in its prime. When the notch was to his satisfaction, he moved around to make the backcut.

The tree was very close to a major trunk of electric wires, so the Whitney’s crew had attached a stout line to the top of the tree and were using a logging truck to pull the tree in the opposite direction. Matt completed the backcut and signaled for the truck to take up the strain. When they had put as much tension as they dared on the rope and the tree hadn’t budged, they attached a second rope to the top and pulled that one with a boom truck. Still no movement. Matt revved the big saw and cut a little deeper into the hinge. He shut off the saw and stepped back and again signaled for both trucks to pull. There was a loud crack and light appeared in the saw kerf and Herbie teetered and then came thundering to the ground.

We all gathered around the stump and Pete Lammert, then of the Maine Forest Service, brought out a whisk broom and cleared the sawdust away so we could count the rings. He counted the rings on the fallen section while I counted the rings on the stump. I started in the middle and worked my way out using a penknife to prick each annual ring. I was amazed at how far apart the rings were when the tree was young, indicating rapid growth, but after the first 100 years, the growth slowed down and by the time I neared the outer rim the rings were no further apart than a millimeter. Pete came up with 212 years and I counted 215. Pete said that was OK for a rough count and that we would do it again when it was warm and not snowing and we could sand the wood smooth.

Phil Norris is the tree warden for the Town of Blue Hill, Maine.

For more pictures or to buy a piece of Herbie, visit www.yarmouthcommunityservices.org/herbie/.
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