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Sharing Wisdom ...

One of the benefits of being a part of the association world is that I get a chance to learn from others who are at the top of their game – from industries, professions and charities around the world. One colleague is the president & CEO of the Center for Association Leadership. Susan Sarfati, CAE, had the chance to attend a meeting, at Tom Peters’ invitation, with about 40 business gurus and leaders from the many worlds of business. Susan collected the group’s wisdom and has given me permission to extract from an article she wrote for Executive Update Online.

So here is some of what those who are tops in the business world are saying. Some of it you will recognize, which is like being reminded to eat all your veggies. Other bits are nudges in the right direction that we know we should be paying attention to and just haven’t taken the time. Then, there are the bits that are new learning moments – the “OOOOOOOhhhhhhh” moments – that require a little more time to think about.

Leadership
- CEOs should focus on people 100 percent of the time and hire strategists to do the rest.
- The essence of leadership is inspiring your team to go to places they wouldn’t have thought of going.
- Realize that management has a lot to do with answers, while leadership is a function of questions.
- Meet with people under 25 years old regularly.
- Eat, sleep, breathe – ooze – integrity.
- “I don’t know” is the most important phrase for a leader.
- Trust your gut – not the focus group.

Management
- Find, encourage and promote strong-willed, independent people.
- Don’t think you can change people and gain converts. Hire for attitude, train for skill.
- Fire the merchants of doom and gloom. One person can pollute the environment.
- Only the constant pursuit of innovation can ensure long-term success.
- Internal politics are all about nothing.

Strategy
- The more you give away, the more you get back.
- Stretching your ability is routine; never bite off less than you can chew.
- Life is too short to work with jerks.
- Corporate culture matters; there are no excuses for not working with only the best.
- Your calendar doesn’t lie. It shows what matters to you.
- Some people look for things that went wrong and try to fix them. It is better to look for things that went right and build off them.

Marketing and Branding
- Three questions to figure out brand: Who are we? What is our story? What is the dream?
- Thirty-year-old copywriters writing marketing copy for 50 year olds doesn’t work.
- CEOs/business owners must be 100 percent involved in marketing and branding. CEOs must think like a chief marketing officer.

Your opportunity? – Think about how these apply to you as an individual, your company, and those around you; extract a few, and apply. See how your world changes.

Cynthia Mills, CAE
Publisher

TCI’s mission is to engage and enlighten readers with the latest industry news and information on regulations, standards, practices, safety, innovations, products and equipment. We strive to serve as the definitive resource for commercial, residential, municipal and utility arborists, as well as for others involved in the care and maintenance of trees. The official publication of the non-profit Tree Care Industry Association, we vow to sustain the same uncompromising standards of excellence as our members in the field, who adhere to the highest professional practices worldwide.
What’s your next major business decision? Expand your business or market share? Reduce cost? Increase profits? Enhance safety? Whatever your challenges, Morbark can help analyze your current situation and reach your goals. Got Wood? Join the Morbark Family. We’ve got Solutions. Call us today!

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Creating a Structured Training Program
By Dane Buell

What Do You Look For in a Chain Saw?
By Rick Howland

Starting a Portable Sawmill Business
By George Tremblay

Technical Rigging for Removal
Excerpted from TCIA’s Rigging for Removal Workbook

Outlook
By Cynthia Mills
Check out what those who are tops in the business world are saying and find a few pointers to apply to your business or your life.

Cutting Edge
New products and services, and news in the tree care industry.

Letters

Training
By Timothy Walsh
The FACE program aims to prevent work-related deaths by identifying high risk situations and publicizing possible prevention strategies.

(Continued on page 6)
87 HP

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JULY

Safety
By Richard K. Doyle
We have all been told about the importance of wearing hearing protection, but there are important things that have been omitted.

Washington in Review
TCIA members will descend on Washington, D.C., July 18-20, 2005, for our first joint Green Industry Legislative Conference.

The Profession
By Edward Kennedy
Moving an osprey nest from a cell tower to a tree is all in a day’s work.

Industry Almanac
Important regional and national meetings and activities.

Classified Advertising

TCIA Reporter
Safety and training products, news, commentary and benefits of membership with the Tree Care Industry Association.

Member Forum
By Robert Appelbaum
Communicating with customers can be tricky when “class III canopy reduction” doesn’t seem to satisfy their need to know.

Tree News

Advertiser Listing

From the Field
By Christian Lindsay
Learning to love the competition.
Big Shot Throwline Launcher

The Big Shot is used to launch a weighted bag (with line attached) over a tree’s branch to tow working lines into position. This very simple, oversized slingshot allows the operator to launch nearly straight up into the highest canopies, avoiding adjacent brush and limbs. Hand-throwing straight up is nearly impossible, and at best requires a great deal of practice. Other mechanical launchers have limited ability. With just a little practice using your Big Shot, you’ll be able to shoot a bing high or low with pinpoint accuracy.

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Big Shot with two 16 ft poles, Line Reel (left) with 200’ of monofilament, 100’ of slick line, 8 and 16 oz throw bags, Canvas Line Bag, Plastic Carrying Case (50” x 7” x 6”) and replacement tubing.
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Sherrill’s TREE FROG Climbing System

Single rope ascent techniques are most often used in tree climbing to conserve energy over distances greater than about 60 feet. The Tree Frog is by definition a hybrid of other SRT climbing systems available at Sherrill. It’s not only simple to attach, adjust, and operate but it’s also as compact to store as anything available—and that’s important. The Pantin (foot ascender) and Croll (chest ascender) can be worn throughout the climb without discomfort or interference with your D-Ring system, leaving only the handled ascender (with foot strap and cow’s tail attached) to be stored away, and a small pouch is adequate for that purpose. You’ll be able to engage the Tree Frog as needed, and securely position yourself in the tree to disengage and switch over to D-Ring faster than some systems can be applied and adjusted. And if you find it necessary to ascend farther later, you can be back on line in only seconds. The large CMI Expedition is comfortable for even big hands and has a broad, rounded top for comfortable two-hand use. The Tree Frog keeps your body in a comfortable upright position and, best of all, your legs operate independently like climbing a ladder for maximum upward progress. So, if you’re in need of conserving energy for the workday ahead, hop along little froggy! 3 carabiners or locking links, harness, PPE required (but not included). Total system weight 33.6 oz.

Complete Tree Frog System 30749 $246.

Sherrill Tree Frog components
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• Croll chest ascender
• Petzl Secu suspenders
• Pantin foot ascender (right foot)

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Why does your organization want to create a structured training program and what results would you like to see? Obviously, quality is one benefit from changing people’s behavior in the workplace. Productivity improvement, employee retention, and loss control are additional benefits. And a structured training program is a recruiting tool – people love working within learning organizations. Finally, of course, is the goal of regulatory compliance.

Selling a safety program is almost like selling tree work. Anybody can sell on fear. Anybody can go into a landscape and tell a person that a tree is going to fall on the house if they don’t take it down. It takes a lot more talent to talk to a person about why a tree should be preserved and educating the property owner about the value of the tree and the enhancement it gives the property. It is the same with training and safety programs. They shouldn’t be structured simply as a compliance element of your company, because you can’t get people excited about regulatory compliance. That approach fails.

What is a structured training program?

Sending employees to a seminar is not a structured training program. Nor is having them watch a training video or holding weekly tailgate meetings. Alone, these are not a structured, organized, methodical approach to tree care training. When I started with SavATree five years ago, I was given the responsibility to create a program. However, I wasn’t given a lot of goals or challenges. I planned to teach guys this trick and that trick and see what happened. At the end of the day there were no results because there was no plan or direction for the program.

Tom Peters, an author of leadership and management training books, says you can’t infuse experience into people. You can’t sit someone in front of a video and think he or she is trained. You have to create an environment in which people can learn, and you have to demonstrate what you expect from them. Those lessons need positive reinforcement over time. Through experience, a person will become proficient at a skill.

To create an instructional training program in your organization, develop some measurable program goals. Some areas that are easily measured include:

- quality;
- loss reduction;
- accident frequency;
- productivity.

How do we measure quality? Was it a good job? Was it ANSI compliant? These are very hard area to quantify. The only way is through your clients.

The next things to measure are loss reduction and accident frequency. Good risk management and training programs focus on accident frequency. If you control your frequency, which is very measurable, then you reduce your losses. Risk management professionals who work with different industries talk about the risk pyramid, where at the bottom companies have a lot of near misses and as you move up the pyramid there are fewer accidents. At the very top are the catastrophic events. The only way to stop catastrophic events is to reduce your frequency of near misses and common accidents. This is something you can measure to see if the outcome or the goal is being incorporated into your training programs.
In your organization, if you were to become $1 an hour more efficient on all the work that you produced, how many dollars is that at the end of the year? You are selling labor – time, really – and the biggest cost in the tree care industry is labor. If you become $1 more efficient, more productive, as a result of your training program, think of the result. Explore productivity improvement and management. Improved efficiency in revenue for each hour worked is a good measurement for that.

We have created criteria for the branches to compete against one another. Basically, every hour lost to an injury is tracked and compared to how many hours are worked in that branch. Branches are compared against each other.

This type of statistical measurement really helped our people embrace a reduction in accidents. It also helped management take a more active role, because no one wants to be at the bottom of the list. It has become a big communication component in our organization, and I think that it has had an enormous effect on reducing our losses.

Another measurement area might be tracking responses to customer complaints about property damage or repairing a job that wasn’t done correctly. These are things that are easily measured and very specific. Again, you can’t have measurements that are subjective.

Tracking loss control and accident frequency can result in long-term reduction in workers’ compensation, liability and vehicle losses. But be patient. You could start a program today, put a lot of energy into it, put measurements in place, get everybody to embrace the idea, and not see the benefits for three years. Mistakes that happened three years ago are going to affect you over a long period of time. Be careful in your expectations because you have to affect these changes long term; you can’t change those costs short term. Develop program goals, and understand where you would like to see your program in one year, two years and three years.

Involve everyone

In order to have a clear understanding of what you expect of people in your organization you need accurate job descriptions. If you don’t start at the very beginning, then you won’t be successful in integrating new hires or inspiring people to grow because they don’t know where they are growing toward. You can’t treat people honestly and fairly if you don’t set an advancement structure with progressive tiers.

What do you call a new hire with no skills? A ground man right? That’s wrong, because a new hire with no experience has no skills. A new hire who starts learning the skills involved in becoming a ground man should be classified as an apprentice. It is important for structure to exist so people want to participate in their growth and understand what is required of them at different levels.

Attach salary guidelines to individual position descriptions. Even at the lowest levels you can give people clear expectations of where and how they can grow, and what you expect from them along the way.

Be consistent when you introduce somebody new to your organization. Anybody who wants to join our organization and work with us in the field comes in for an audition. Experience in the field isn’t the
same as competency in the field. Experience does not always teach skills, so pay new people based on skills, not the number of years they have been in the industry.

It is very important in any training that you put together that you cover more than just technical skill sets. Your training program should stress your objectives in business. If you want to be the lowest cost tree removal company, then your training goals should reflect that. If the focus of your company is to be customer driven, then don’t limit training to chain saw operation or climbing. Include a focus on customer service.

For everything you do, document, document, document. Get a receipt of acknowledgment of training from the employee for your regulatory compliance. Include dates and signatures and, most importantly, field verifications. It is one thing to take an employee and show him how to start a chain saw. Have him read the documentation and get a receipt that he has read the information and tested well on the subject. But that is not enough! He still may not be able to run the chain saw. You need to be able to tack training as well as actual field skills to track the fact that you have seen somebody incorporate training into skill sets and habits.

Train them, then document that you have seen them doing the task. It is amazing sometimes what you see when employees take what you think is perfectly clear training out into the field.

If you hire a new employee and hand him the keys to a truck – without knowing if he can drive, it is negligent entrustment. He may have a driver’s license, but you don’t know if he can drive. You may find bad driving habits that require retraining to change skill sets. Retraining even very experienced people to correct bad driving habits will bring measurable results to your program.

Finding assistance

The Tree Care Industry Association has a variety of programs, including its Model Company Safety Program, which can help you set up your safety program. It will help you determine what you want to get out of a program, your goals and what your job descriptions might look like. You can tailor these to your needs. TCIA packaged the Model Company Safety Program in way to help you develop a written program for your employees. Not everybody will read, so just having a training manual may not get across what you want to do.

The TCIA Tailgate Safety program is tai-
From coverages such as pesticide and herbicide application to workmanship errors, our experience and knowledge of the arborist industry enables us to offer you the tailored, comprehensive coverage you need. To find out more, contact your local Hartford Agent or visit mb.thehartford.com/treecare.
lored so that it follows all of the key areas, and we make sure that we retrain. A word of caution with the program though: if you start at session 1 and go to 64 in order, you may find that the types of services happening in your business in those time frames do not always match the season. You might be talking about heat stress in the middle of winter, depending on when you start the program. Try to make sure the topic is timely by looking at the jobs ahead and going to the appropriate session.

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) has a demo on their Web site that is an interesting modality to provide training for those not excited about reading. It is important to structure a program around different modalities. You need to know the type of people receiving this training and what they will best respond to. Just because we have created a manual doesn’t mean that everybody can read it.

Tailgate Safety is just one part of a structured training program. Urban Tree Service in Rochester, N.H. is a 15-year TCIA member.

**QUESTION:**
What do these tools have in common?

**ANSWER:**
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Samurai’s dual purpose blade comes in two styles. The ultra smooth high performance Ichiban Series or the Heavy Duty 4X4 Series. Contact your local Samurai distributor for more information. To find a distributor near you call 562.945.8049 or email samurai@bishco.com.

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There are learning disabilities and language barriers. We have translated all of our in-house training materials into Spanish.

Some advice from the field

Get into the habit of holding weekly meetings. Weekly meetings give you the opportunity to reinforce some basic skills and adjust your program where needed. The more you talk about something, the more you can affect change. We assumed back injuries were the most common injury for our company at one point – they weren’t; slipping was the most common. If we had continued in our training programs without tracking injuries, at the end of the day we would not have made anybody safer, more productive, or improved quality for our clients.
In the real world, one requirement that never changes is finding ways to help your crews work more safely. That's why Altec tree care equipment is rugged, reliable and designed with integral safety features. Our complete line of aerial devices and wood chippers is highlighted by our newest machine — the Altec LRV60-E70. It will help your crews work smarter and more efficiently. This unit combines 75 feet of working height and smooth maneuverability with the lowest cost of equipment ownership in the industry and unmatched financing options.

For tree care units that help you work "Safer and Smarter®", call the company that builds them — Altec.
Allow for open dialogue and feedback in your company. Think back to the injury pyramid. If you don’t encourage employees to talk about near misses and what happened in the field, then you are not going to change the practices that led to the accident. Expand your meeting beyond the topic of a week. It gets pretty boring just to come in and sit through a poorly conducted safety meeting. Have some coffee and talk about exciting things. Talk about the goals of your program and how your guys are moving toward your goals or where you need to redirect your organization to accomplish those goals.

We have been involved in TCIA Accreditation for four of our locations and this has been a really exciting process. I encourage you to consider this Accreditation because I think it is going to change the face of the tree care industry. Some neat things that are related to training programs came out of these experiences. We have had many insurance company audits review our programs. Even after all those audits, the Accreditation process found some things that required adjustment. They were simple, subtle corrections but they had to be made. Accreditation has been very valid for our organization.

One was to keep our safety program alive has been by putting everyone’s training level on a board. We list all of the employees and along the top we list the various training levels in the organization that they can accomplish. We track it with sticker dots. It is amazing how many employees want their dot and want to achieve more. They want recognition for their accomplishments. Training, again, is all about people. They can’t get excited about notes in a file folder but they get excited when you put their achievements on a wall. There is some peer pressure involved in this as well.

Nothing great ever happens without some enthusiasm. Your conversations and your weekly meetings are key as you start to bring a training program to life. Be careful how you describe what your goals are. Frame and phrase everything in a way that people are going to rally behind them and take them to heart and move them along.

Dane Buell is responsible for safety and training at SavATree, a tree care provider with the most TCIA Accredited branches in the country. One result of his safety initiatives was a 50 percent reduction in workplace injuries during a time of significant growth.
Stability and Staying Power
There’s more than one tree care firm with the mix of services and personnel that could satisfy this owner’s needs. In fact, there are many talented employees working under very knowledgeable managers in the urban areas where his properties are located.

But not all of these firms will qualify to win his contracts. That’s because he looks beyond the required individual skills and expertise to the core businesses behind them.

He does this because there’s too much at stake to contract with the wrong outfit. It’s all about reducing risk. He wants his contractors to have stability and staying power so they can grow alongside his own company. That’s why he’ll spend the time to look for service firms that he considers well managed.

If you want to do business with the hotelier — and the scores of owners and managers who preside over well-run businesses in your area — show them that you run your business well.

Get Accredited. Call 1-800-783-2622 or visit www.treecareindustry.org

Special thanks to PACT Partner, Morbark, Inc. for supporting TCIA Accreditation.
Soil Moist products aide plant growth

JRM Chemical’s Soil Moist Flower and Garden Plus is one of the three new mycorrhizal products available retail that are designed to increase plant growth and establishment with less waterings and plant loss. Soil Moist Flower and Garden Plus contains a diverse seven-species mix of endomycorrhizal fungi, more than 50 strains of beneficial bacteria, Soil Moist water storing polymers and a 8-9 month timed release 3-3-3 fertilizer. Each one pound container will treat 100 square feet of bedding area or 40 one gallon pots. Other formulations include Transplant and Container Mix Plus 3-3-3. Contact JRM Chemical, Inc. at 1-800-962-4010 or via www.soilmoist.com.

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Safeguard’s Centurion chain saw safety guard

Safeguard Ventures, LLC’s the Centurion chain saw safety guard is an ultra-light, solid-steel accessory that helps protect against chain saw kickback injuries. Kickbacks can result in loss of limb, or even life, to the chain saw operator. The Centurion, constructed of a solid-steel alloy, provides a barrier between the operator and the cutting chain. The spring-loaded guard lies naturally against the log, pivoting up and down as the cuts are being made. This allows the operator to undercut logs and handle routine cutting without fear of kickback and with greater peace of mind. Available in two lengths (long 18-22 inches and short 14-16 inches) the Centurion attaches in minutes to most popular makes and models of chain saw. It weighs approximately one pound, and includes the spring-loaded guard, mounting hardware, and User Guide. A lifetime warranty is available. The Centurion was first developed and marketed over 10 years ago but has been re-engineered to be more compatible with today’s lighter, more powerful chain saws. Among the innovations are: handle grip lever for safer, easier operation; spring-loaded movement for changing the guard’s position in various applications; lightweight powder-coated steel alloy for durability and longevity, and; angled, rubberized tip for easier undercutting and better visibility of the end of the bar. Contact Safeguard Ventures via www.safeguardventures.com or at 1-888-531-9502.

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Cutting Edge - Products

Thinx Extendable Pole Sprayer

The new Thinx Extendable Pole Sprayer will fit to most standard or extendable poles and the universal design will accept any standard aerosol spray can. Apply sealants, paints or bug sprays 20 feet high or more – depending on the pole – (pole and rope sold separately) without your feet leaving the ground. The Extendable Pole Sprayer helps you avoid carrying too many tools up a ladder, which can be cumbersome and dangerous. It saves time and reduce equipment requirements and costs. And, it is easy to use – just connect a pole, attach a rope, insert the can and you’re in business. Protecting trees has never been easier. Contact Thinx at (512) 273-1233 or via www.thinxld.com.

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Nesco Portable Wheel Wash System

National Environmental Service Company’s (Nesco) DirtSquirt is a wheel wash system that keeps mud, dirt and other debris off streets and highways. By simply washing the tires of trucks and equipment before they enter the roadway, contractors can prevent tracking, eliminate potential fines and keep neighbors happy. The DirtSquirt is great for any high dirt or mud jobsites where it's essential to make sure that materials do not make their way onto the road, where they can cause liability issues, environmental problems and fines. The DirtSquirt is available in portable or stationary models. The system is completely automated to clean tires quickly and easily onsite. Truck and equipment operators don't even have to leave their cabs. All they have to do is simply drive up - the DirtSquirt will automatically turn itself on, wash the mud and dirt away from the tires, then pull away. It includes a 20 hp, 160 gpm high pressure pump, 200 psi pump module, dual spray bars, a utility bump, all-weather infrared motion sensor detector, connecting hoses, easy-to-replace spray nozzles and even a stop sign. For portable applications, the system may be quickly and easily removed and re-installed at another site. Contact Nesco at 1-800-237-3878 or via www.drdust.com.

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Crysteel Profit Maximizer Super Dump

The Profit Maximizer Super Dump from Crysteel, featuring an air-suspension trailing axle from Silent Drive, offers greater capacity, excellent stability and easy operation. The trailing axle does not interfere with dumping operations and raises and lowers with standard power take off (PTO). Clean out is enhanced by an optional hydraulic tailgate. Crysteel’s patented high-lift hydraulic tailgate extends a normal tailgate a full 15 inches, allowing up to 6 feet of clearance when dumping. Large debris and bulky items exit quickly and completely. This combination of increased capacity and improved dumping capability is available on Crysteel’s Select elliptical or square body styles. The Profit Maximizer Super Dump is manufactured through a partnership between Silent Drive and Crysteel Manufacturing. Contact Crysteel at 1-800-533-0494 or via www.crysteel.com.

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All Gear Tech Cord

It is imperative that your Prusik cord be able to handle an emergency descent. All Gear Inc.’s new Tech Cord, comprised of 100 percent 16-strand Technora hollow braid, gives you that safety assurance. With a melting point of 932 degrees Fahrenheit, it is “Husky coated” in red to prevent abrasion from dirt, bark and sand, resulting in less wear and tear on the rope for the climber. It has a breaking strength of 6,200 pounds. Tech Cord comes in 32-inch assembled Prusik loops or 250 foot bulk reels. Contact All Gear Inc. at (847) 564-9016 or www.allgearinc.com.

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Morbark 2600 Wood Hog has remote diagnostics

The Morbark 2600 Wood Hog is compact enough for easy transport and set-up, yet heavy enough to handle wood waste recycling. Best suited for green waste and light demolition debris, the 2600, with production rates up to 14 tons per hour, depending on material, is well suited for tree care companies and smaller municipalities that would like to expand into the grinding market. Weighing in at 24,200 pounds, it can easily meet weight and width requirements everywhere. The 2600 is equipped with the Morbark Iqan System, a truly variable system that automatically adjusts feed rates, pressures and feed wheel positions to optimize production and engine efficiency. A satellite modem option – a wireless link between a service center and a piece of equipment – allows diagnostics and technical adjustments via a satellite link. Morbark technicians can diagnose a problem via satellite and have parts on the way, or even fix a problem from its Winn, Mich., facility. Standard on the 2600 is a combination fifth wheel/pintle hitch towing arrangement, allowing for ease of movement on the road and on site. Easily accessible work areas around the engine and fuel/hydraulic tanks make maintenance simple. The two screens on this machine are also easy to change. In addition, an optional full breakaway torque limiter system, built into the unit’s sheave, provides catastrophic damage protection for the engine, clutch, drive train and hammermill. Contact Morbark at 1-800-831-0042 or via www.morbark.com.

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Mat-3’s co-owner and president Tom Biddle dies

Donald Thomas “Tom” Biddle of Dousman, Wisc., died Sunday, May 22, 2005, at Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital in Oconomowoc, Wisc., after a brief illness. He was 67.

Co-owner and president of MAT-3 Inc., an aerial device manufacturer located in Ixonia, Wisc., Tom was a long-time supporter of TCI Expo and a regular exhibited at TCI Expo. He always came to the show with his wife, Dessie.

Born April 29, 1938, in Anderson, Ind., he was the son of the late Ernest Vehgen and Donna (Summer) Biddle. He was a 1956 graduate of Anderson High School in Anderson, Ind., and a graduate of Arkansas A&M. Prior to his work at Mat-3 he worked at Mobile Aerial Towers. He was a member of the Elks Club in Tipton, president of MADDCC and a member of Ixonia Business Association.

In addition to his wife, survivors include three children, Brad Biddle of Dousman, Wisc., who worked with him at Mat-3. Mark Biddle of Noblesville, and Donna Dinninger of Hendersonville, N.C.; two sisters, Nancy Norton of Anderson, Ind., and Myrna Isaacs of Woodstock, Ga.; six grandchildren and four nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his stepmother, Maxine Biddle.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or the American Heart Association.

SilkyUSA Announcement

UM: Kogyo Inc. of Japan opened their new distribution company, SilkyUSA, LLC. This company exclusively distributes the complete range of Silky saw products to the U.S. market. Hiroshi Nakanishi, director of export sales, UM: Kogyo Inc., says that to meet the rapidly growing global demand for Silky saw products to and accommodate the quickly expanding U.S. customer base more effectively, a long-term strategic business plan had to be developed and implemented.

Director Nakanishi states that the strategically located SilkyUSA distribution facilities will support their aggressive, high-growth North America business model. He confirms that business relations with U.S. customers have constantly improved and increased over the past several years. He is confident that the creation of SilkyUSA will provide superior service and support to all U.S. dealers.

The initial SilkyUSA distribution center is located at 511-B Pitts School Road, Concord, N.C. 28027. For more information, visit www.SilkyUSA.com.

Clark joins Oregon Cutting Systems as VP of Finance

Oregon Cutting Systems Group of Blount, Inc., the world leader in chain saw bar and chains, hired Matt Clark as the company’s new vice president of finance. Clark, an Oregon native, brings with him a strong background in finance combined with experience in the timber industry.

Clark joins Oregon Cutting Systems from Adventist Health System West in Bakersfield, Calif., where he was the chief financial officer of San Joaquin Community Hospital for the past three and a half years. From 1992 to 2001, Clark worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers in Portland, Ore., and through his tenure there advanced to senior manager. Throughout high school and while at the University of Oregon, Clark also worked in the timber industry.

“I’m excited to be joining a quality, world-wide organization like Oregon Cutting Systems,” says Clark, “especially at a time when the company is showing such strong growth.”

Lewis Tree named ’05 ESOP Company of the Year

Lewis Tree Service Inc., an employee-owned company based in Rochester, N.Y., has been selected by The ESOP Association as the 2005 ESOP Company of the Year. The ESOP Association is the national trade association for companies with employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) and the leading voice in America for employee ownership.

Founded in 1938, Lewis Tree Service, Inc. became a 100 percent employee-owned company in October 2000 and today is a leader in providing vegetative management services to utilities and governments up and down the Atlantic coast. Lewis currently has 600 employee owners through its ESOP.

“Lewis Tree Service is on the cutting edge, looking for innovative ways to involve employee owners, which they know are the company’s greatest assets,” says J. Michael Keeling, president of The ESOP Association.

“This company is always looking for ways to instill the value of the ESOP within the company and on top of that task has the extra challenge of reaching out to employees in multiple locations in several different states,” says Keeling. “And, most amazingly, ever since the ESOP creation in 1998, Lewis Tree Service has received recognition after recognition from the ESOP community with consecutive AACE Awards, and with its 2004 winning poster design.”

Founded in 1978, the ESOP Association represents more than 1,300 ESOP companies and 750,000 employee owners. For more information, visit www.esopassociation.org.

Matt Clark
The revision of the American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations – Safety Requirements, known in the trade as the ANSI Z133.1 or “The Z,” is nearing completion. If all goes as planned, will be available for public comment sometime this summer.

There have been two primary focuses of this revision: the first, a reorganization of the text into a more logical sequence to improve the readability of the document and make it a more useful tool for the industry. For example, a more detailed table of contents will assist the reader in locating specific sections of the standard, and the standard will also be published with a complete index and glossary.

The second improvement is an update to the standard to reflect changes in technology and work practices within the industry. Definitions have been updated, and sections on rigging and winching operations have been added.

Along with minor changes throughout the standard, there has been some major reworking of the crane section, because cranes have become a more regularly used piece of equipment in modern arboricultural practice. The changes to the crane section have been coordinated by TCIA through their alliance with OSHA.

If you are interested in reviewing and commenting on the revision, it will be available online at ISA’s and TCIA’s Web sites. The document is tentatively expected to be released for public comment July 1.

The comment period will run for 60 days following the initial posting. The committee will meet in October to respond to public comments, and the revision is currently scheduled to be available in January 2006.

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Today’s Chain Saws Can Cut Trees and Costs
What Do You Look For in a Chain Saw?

By Rick Howland

If you were about to put together a Late Show with David Letterman list of the top 10 tools of the arborists’ trade, high up if not number one would have to be the power saw, regardless of what part of the country you’re working in.

Guys like David Byrnes, “That Tree Guy” as he calls himself, located in Fortuna, Calif. (north of San Francisco), know the kind of impact the right chain saw for the job can have on the bottom line. To these guys, the right saw means not only efficiency and safety; it also can be proven to translate to a happier (and more productive) employee.

Byrnes, a TCIA member, has been in the tree care business for the better part of 15 years, starting, like so many others, as a climber. Along the way, he’s become a certified arborist and began his own business three years ago. That Tree Guy serves the picturesque Humboldt and Mendocino county areas in California. Because the company specializes in pruning and large technical removals (trees in that part of the country get to be as statuesque as they are picturesque), Byrnes knows his saws.

“There’s only one other arborist up here,” Byrnes says. “We do removals of trees up to 200 feet. They either need to look good, or these giants need to be removed right from over people’s houses.”

He runs crews comprised of four full-timers and two part-timers. The chain saw of choice for the climbers is typically a high rpm, top handle (Stihl 200T). “A climber needs high power cutting speeds. Take for example the many occasions where we have to take out a top and need it to come straight down like a spear.”

In his neck of the woods there is often no room to lay out and let a top or limb fall. “I need a saw that has immense cutting power – high cutting speed for clean-off and (resulting in a fall that’s straight down). Some saws can slow down just a bit – enough to let a branch lay flat and strike an obstacle or maybe hang up. A climbing saw needs to have high rpm and to be able to hold it when the chain hits wood,” he says.

On the ground, he and the crew may favor one of two units of a different brand (Husqvarna 346) with 20-inch bars that they find best for clearing light brush, fire clearance and bucking. In a situation like those, Byrnes he wants high power, light weight and a high cutting speed. For bigger jobs, he may look to the (Husky 372 with a) 32-inch bar unit primarily dedicated to big wood takedown. This kind of unit is great for residential logging and to buck the sides off.
The biggest unit in more or less regular use (Stihl 066) features a 42-inch bar, while the biggest in the “fleet” is a 6-footer that so far has been used only once or twice.

In keeping with the philosophy that he’s got a favorite for any application, the Echo 346 is a unit the teams use as a small climbing saw. The 12-inch and 14-inch bar versions are “great little pop guns, great for suckers and dead wood because they are lightweight and very fast,” he says.

“All the saws we use have to pass crew muster, not only by the climbers and cutters but also by our mechanic. I always ask what he likes and doesn’t. We beat the heck out of our saws and run them to the limit, so we want the crews and the mechanics to know they will hold up,” Byrnes says.

Regarding the general evolution of the chain saw, Byrnes still has a soft spot for some of the old “mag”-type (magnesium) casings which, unlike the lighter-weight plastics, may have been heavier but didn’t crack in rough use.

Overall, he loves the new light weight and power output of today’s saws over the older ones, especially in a bucket environment at altitude. But even with so many recent advancements, at least in Byrnes’ opinion, the vibration suppression challenge has some room to go.

“For me vibration from so much cutting leaves me with a major feeling in my hands pretty much all the time. I’m only 29, but my hands always feel like I’m wearing gloves. I know there has been a lot of improvement since I started, but with ergonomics, there’s always room for a bit more.”

As quickly as he offered that challenge to manufacturers, he was quick to point out, again from experience, that on a pure safety level, there have been great strides in recent years, pointing specifically to a saw (Stihl) that has a great kickback system that turns on the chain brake instantly.

Moving east, Mark Malmstrom, owner of Total Tree Care in Providence, Utah, is an 11-year arborist with five of those years having been logged in business for himself. He describes Total Tree Care as specializing in pruning, tree removal and stump grinding, especially in situations with large and difficult removal challenges.

“I look for four things,” says Malmstrom, a TCIA member for the past 5 years, “power, quality, ease-of-use and maintenance. If a saw turns out to be difficult or not reliable, I’m not interested. We currently have 13 saws with different functions, from logging to climbing.” Category-wise they range from 35 cc to 119 cc and bars up to 50 inches.

“The newer ones have a lot more plastic, and of course they’re lighter so they reduce vibration and operator fatigue.” In terms of obvious advancements, Malmstrom says, “The one BIG thing for sure is ease of maintenance, especially with replacement of the air filters. Many maintenance steps and simple field repairs or adjustments don’t need tools or just a few tools. Side chain adjustment is a big help, too. It’s a lot easier having a single wrench in your pocket when you’re high up a tree. Easier maintenance has improved the bottom line because the job can get done faster with far less hassle. When I buy a new saw, I just want to be able to get things done more efficiently.”

Malmstrom is adamant about one other thing. That after all these improvements, support is critical. The best situation would

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**What to look for in a chain saw**

The following top five criteria for purchasing a pro-quality chain saw was compiled from interviews with TCIA members and reviews of features and benefits of products available from major manufacturers.

1. **Safety**
   - Safety, safety and more safety. That includes features such as an anti-kickback mechanism and chain brake, balance, control, vibration and weight. Check the chain and bar system.

2. **Efficiency**
   - What job is the saw being purchased for? Is speed, power, weight or agility the most important? How important is it for speed, power and torque to remain constant throughout the cut? Check for cooling, airflow, vibration, etc. (Vibration can tire out an operator and reduce efficiency.) How easy is it to climb with a particular unit? How easy is it to start – hot or cold? What kind of chain lubrication system is offered? How noisy is it?

3. **Ergonomics**
   - More than just the position of the handle, protruding parts and easy-to-operate controls, ergonomics—or the design functions as they relate to ease of operator use—also includes the overall control and fatigue factor. How easy is it to operate switches and make adjustments in a typical field situation, which is a lot different than in the dealer’s showroom or at the shop? Check for a heated handle for use in cold environments. (Yes, they’re available.)

4. **Maintenance**
   - How is the saw to be used, and under what conditions? Check for ease and efficiency of air filtration, chain adjustment and oiling. How much maintenance and repair are you capable of performing, and at what level does the manufacturer recommend maintenance and repair be accomplished by the owner, versus the dealer? Ask about parts and service support, especially in rural or remote regions.

5. **Operating cost**
   - Check the fuel consumption. What is the life expectancy with manufacturer recommended maintenance? What is the expected cost of maintenance, repairs and replacement parts?
be a nearby stocking dealer, part of a dealer support network where you can get just about any part you need the same day. In smaller areas that are less citified, as in Malmstrom’s market, mail order is much easier when dealing with an established brand, he adds.

A lot has been made out of new chain saw technologies being stingy on fuel, but in the scheme of things, day-to-day, “fuel consumption is a relatively small issue. Rather, I look for air filtration and whether filters tend to plug. Some brands we have to blow out every day, some can go a week or more.”

The new designs are more natural to work with and more ergonomic to operate, especially switches. Malmstrom says he’s also a fan of the new saws that are easier to start, noting that most of the pro-quality saws have a decompression valve that makes starting – and life – a lot easier.

Heading further east we found Colin Milde, owner of Ramapo Tree and Shrub Care in Mahwah, N.J., a certified tree expert in the state of New Jersey with more than 25 years in the business, five at the helm of Ramapo.

“What’s categorized power saws recently are two things, more power and lighter weight,” says Milde, adding that he is a one-brand chain saw buyer, and he always buys from the same dealer. That, he says, is a matter of brand reliability and a longstanding service relationship that he can rely on.

The new saws are a lot easier to start, Milde says, agreeing with Malmstrom. But regarding maintenance, while it may be much easier to perform, Milde says it prob-
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ably takes about the same time as it ever has in his experience. “But I’m seeing saws lasting 20 to 30 times longer – with proper maintenance.”

That may or may not sound like a lot, given the category and price of the chain saw, but consider that most of the professional arborists we spoke with indicated that they had upwards of a dozen or more saws in operation at any one time. The savings mount up in terms of reliability in the field and savings when it comes to purchasing capital equipment.

Combine those savings with efficiencies such as air filters that are faster to get to and swap out, and higher revving saws that cut faster, smoother and safer, and its only logical that the evolution of the chain saw can make it a factor on the bottom line, regardless of whether you’re a one-person operation or a multi-national.

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Jonserd’s CS 3156C turbo chain saw’s rapid acceleration 56.5 cc engine, high power, low weight and excellent balance in a compact and streamlined housing make it both extremely easy to handle and effective. Features include turbo air cleaning, anti-vibration carburetor, side-mounted chain tensioner, decompression valve, quick-release cylinder cover and a special low temperature catalytic converter.

At 6.8 pounds, the MS 192 T is the lightest gasoline-powered chain saw made by STIHL. Features include: Quad Power™ engine; Intelligar™ compensating carburetor; high-tech ignition module for maximum power output; toolless air filter access; toolless fuel and oil caps with retainers; translucent fuel and oil tank; purge pump primer; built-in retractable lanyard ring; and side access chain tensioner.
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Starting a **Portable Sawmill Business**

*By George Tremblay*

I was nearing retirement and looking forward to a change from working at a desk to working with my hands, preferably out-of-doors. A few years earlier, I had taken custody of my son’s woodworking tools while he went off on a new venture. At his offhand suggestion that I might learn to do something with wood other than split and burn it, I took up woodworking as a hobby. It was the woodworking that got me interested in owning a sawmill.

Access to boards with matching grains and wood from native species not usually harvested for lumber should offer a greater range of design opportunities. Also, owning a portable sawmill would break up shop work with outside work. With a little luck, I might even supplement my retirement income. It seemed an idyllic arrangement, mainly because I knew so little about either enterprise.

**Finding the right sawmill**

At the urging of a prospective sawmilling partner, also nearing retirement and eager to try something new, I took the plunge. With no sawmill experience between us, we watched videos provided by manufacturers. It took two of us to be sure someone was awake throughout each presentation; a monologue accompanied by elevator music and the background hum of a sawmill making repeated runs through a log makes for a minimalist action film.

We grew partial to the Wood-Mizer mills, in part because of name recognition, or as likely because of their bright orange color. We anticipated spending about $7,000 for a bottom-of-the-line mill, but within seconds after watching a strapping young fellow manually coax a log up a ramp onto the mill, we opted for a fully hydraulic $23,000 Wood-Mizer Model LT40HD25 band mill with a 25-hp twin-cylinder Kohler gas engine, computer setworks, and debarker (was Tim Allen on the soundtrack?).

We were lucky, given how little we knew at the time of purchase. After 2,100 hours on the machine over six years, I am grateful to be able to say that the mill is very well engineered for both function and safety, has required little in the way of repair beyond routine maintenance, and that customer support service has been excellent.

**Given what I know now …**

I would begin my selection of a sawmill by attending a good-sized trade show where manufacturers demonstrate their machines. Major manufacturers will advise you of the next trade show in your area. Watch how the mills operate to learn how well they are suited to the work you intend to do. Take advantage of the eagerness of the demonstrators to strut their stuff. If you’re a beginner, let the demonstrators know that, tell them how you intend to use the mill, and ask them what makes their mill particularly suited to the task. I’ve found that these folks like their work and like being helpful.

If you anticipate sawing mostly high-end hardwoods for the best possible grades of lumber, pay particular attention to mills that allow frequent turning of the log, have adjustable shims (toe boards) to raise the narrow end of the log to allow the blade to cut parallel to the bark, and use thin blades to minimize loss to sawdust. Band mills with log turners and toe boards are well suited to this job. If you expect to be manufacturing primarily timbers, structural lumber, and sheathing, a swing-blade circular sawmill might well meet your needs.
for half the initial investment. If you plan to market your services as a traveling sawyer, you will need a sawmill suited to all of the above tasks, which in my opinion would be the portable band mill with the log-turner and toe boards not available on the portable swing-blade mills.

The bed of band mills equipped with log turners and toe boards is about 32 inches off the ground with fairly unrestricted access, which facilitates removal of slabs and lumber, without bending over. Portable swing-blade mills are operated in a cage set over the log sitting on or near the ground, requiring a bit more effort to remove slabs and lumber. Blades for the portable band mill cost about $20 compared with $150 for blades for common portable swing-blade mills, but those for the swing-blade mill are easily sharpened in place in minutes, a convenience and saving on sharpening worth considering. Also, band-blades tend to wander in woods that resist sawing, whereas the circular saw blades of swing-blade mills do not. I’ve used both types of mill, and enjoy the challenge resulting from the different milling strategies required by each. Working alone, I achieve significantly greater production rates with the band mill, but I also have much more experience with the band mill.

A word of caution

You don’t need a mill that works faster than you can (or wish to), and you shouldn’t be overly impressed with production rates achieved at sawmill contests. These rates are generated during short bursts of milling by teams of highly skilled sawyers under conditions you are not likely to encounter at a job site. Also note that production rates published in the literature provided by manufacturers are generally a measure of the upper limitations of the machine, not the output of the operator. If production rates are important to you, specify whether you plan to have a one- or two-person operation, and ask the demonstrator what a reasonable expectation for routine production rates under those conditions might be. I think you’ll get an honest answer.

Who and what to ask

As your interest gravitates toward a particular mill, ask about customer service. Is there a representative you can turn to for advice and technical support in your area, or via toll-free telephone communication? Available technical support was critical to me in learning how to adjust and maintain my sawmill (those support folks at Wood-Mizer must feel like they just got another kid to raise every time the company sells a new machine).

Also ask about sharpening services. Many experienced sawyers running band mills sharpen their own blades according to the species of tree they are milling, but I’m not there yet. I use a generic profile for hardwoods and another for softwoods, and I happily ship my band blades back to the manufacturer for resharpening. This, for my business, is a terrific service at a bargain price. I don’t want to drag my aching (and aging) bones home at the end of the day, only to face a backlog of blades in need of sharpening. I keep an adequate inventory to avoid running out of blades. For me, that’s 30 to 45 blades of each profile, 60 to 90 blades in all. Dulled blades are shipped in boxes of 15 to Wood-Mizer’s Resharp service, which sharpens the blades with a 7 to 10 day turnaround time at about $7.50 each, including shipping, and replaces rejects with new blades at a 10 percent discount (currently $17.55 each). Most often, blades are rejected because of damage from hitting hardware, or because they have been resharpened so often that too little cutting metal remains. By automatically replacing rejects, the service helps me maintain my inventory.

People often ask how long a blade lasts, and that is a question for which there is no single answer. A dulled band saw blade is easy enough to detect. It cuts noticeably more slowly, the cut surface might start to resemble a washboard, blade tension drops and is more difficult to maintain, and sighting down the edge shows the board to be wavy. In my experience, blade life is shortened by cutting extremely hard woods, frozen wood, exceptionally wide boards, wood with large knots or spiral grain, and logs with bits of gravel or ice in the bark. Excluding such conditions, I am happy to get 700 board feet of 1-inch pine or red oak
boards from a single blade. By way of comparison, I recently milled a couple of large walnut logs by making a series of parallel cuts from top to bottom (through-and-through cutting, also called “live sawing,” which produces log-wide lumber), and had to change the blade after generating only 350 board feet of lumber.

There is no economy in running a dull blade, especially through a high-grade log.

Finally, there is the question of an appropriate vehicle to transport the sawmill. Swing-blade mills are relatively light in weight (about 1,000 pounds) and dismantle for easy transport in the bed of a small pickup truck. My band mill weighs around 3,600 pounds, has a single-axle towing package, and requires a wiring hookup for lights and electric brakes.

On the advice of a mechanic I respect, I traded in my F-150 for an F-350. It is also worth considering that you might be hauling green lumber. I had my truck weighed before and after loading 422 board feet of freshly cut black walnut to learn that the wood weighed 2,560 pounds, or a little over 6 pounds per board foot. It’s good to know how much wood your vehicle can carry. With such figures in mind (mill weight and configuration as well as anticipated load weights), it might be wise to consult a truck dealer for a recommendation on an appropriate vehicle and drive train.

Buying your sawmill

Once you’ve decided on the mill you want to buy, call the manufacturer for an invitation to visit a nearby sawyer who has volunteered to demonstrate that particular sawmill. This may seem to be a duplication of what you’ve already accomplished at the trade show, but it’s not. Watching a mill in production is quite different from watching it at a trade show. Be prepared to observe how logs are fed to the mill, how slabs and sawdust are disposed of, how lumber is edged, off-loaded, and stacked, and how these various activities are mapped around the mill for efficiency of...
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operation.

You should watch (and ask) how well the mill is suited for a one-person operation, or whether it really requires a second pair of hands. The need for a second pair of hands has a big impact on costs that must be offset by higher production rates. There is much to be gained from seeking out a volunteer demonstrator sawyer in your area before you buy a sawmill. My contact was kind enough to provide his pricing structure, to review and comment on my first attempts at drawing up a pricing list, and to show me how to save time and reduce costs for a particular milling operation. I haven’t met a sawyer yet who won’t share information.

Certainly worth considering is the option of purchasing a used sawmill. Some manufacturers take used sawmills in trade and recondition them for resale. There are also Internet sites for retailing used sawmills (for example, www.sawmillexchange.com). Sawmills tend to hold their value, which makes it less certain that buying used is a bargain. I was recently advised by the sales department at Wood-Mizer that the retail value of my 6-year-old sawmill with 2,100 hours on it is 62 percent to 75 percent of its original purchase price. On the other hand, there are somewhat older mills advertised in the same price range with very few hours on them that might be a great bargain. Obviously, the buyer inadequately prepared to judge the condition of a used machine is at greater risk in estimating its value. If you decide to buy new, you might buy at a discount by arranging transfer of ownership after the mill is used as a demonstrator at a nearby trade show. It’s always wise to call the manufacturer to inquire.

Learning to operate your sawmill

Once you have a sawmill, how do you learn to use it? Start where everyone hates to start: Read the manual. Take all shrouds and shields off the mill, identify the parts described in the manual, and try to figure out how they work. If you don’t see yourself as a mechanic, you will soon enough.

When you’re ready for a road test, move the sawmill to as secluded a location as you can find and put a fairly decent 8-foot-long log in place (you don’t need to contend with the large knots and sweeping shape of a low-grade log yet). Load the log with the smaller end facing you. The smaller end limits what you can get out of the log, and it is easier to plan your cutting strategy with the smaller end facing you at the start of the cut. Take off a light slab, and then a 1/2-inch-thick flitch or two, simply to get the feel of the machine. Next, use a lumber crayon to mark out the cuts you intend to make to get the most out of the rest of the log.
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log, and proceed to try to achieve your cutting strategy. This is a useful exercise to employ until you can see your options without the crayon markings. After you’ve milled a few logs and feel comfortable operating the mill, move on to cutting strategies that achieve high quality as well as high yield. Study source materials on what constitutes a quality product (minimal slope-of-grain, symmetrical annual rings on end-grain, minimal knots on edges, wane restrictions, when and how to avoid spike knots, distinctions between weak vs. strong structural lumber, recognizing reaction wood and its limitations, and more). In the absence of an apprenticeship, reading becomes your essential source of knowledge and training.

For me, helpful source materials included the instructional guide that came with my sawmill as well as several publications by Fine Woodworking (The Taunton Press), including Wood, Wood and How to Dry It, and Understanding Wood by Bruce Hoadley (one day, I hope to have learned enough to write a book titled Understanding Hoadley). But most helpful to me have been the many articles on various aspects of the small sawmill operation that have appeared in Sawmill & Woodlot magazine, and I owe special thanks to the “wood doctor,” Gene Wengert, for his regular contributions on milling and drying lumber. I feel fortunate to have discovered this resource shortly after purchasing my sawmill.

The nature of a portable sawmill business

Large stationary sawmills are production-oriented enterprises occupied with lumber sales as well as lumber manufacture. In my experience, the typical customer for the portable sawmill operator is the “do-it-yourself” type who has harvested a few logs from his property and wants to do something creative with the wood. Large sawmills won’t take yard trees because of the risk of buried hardware and the high costs of blade damage. On the other hand, blades for portable band mills are relatively inexpensive, and customers readily agree to pay the costs for damage.
caused by hardware in the log (my worse finds include electrical insulators and an entire clothesline reel buried deep within the log; you know when you’ve hit them).

In addition, customers for the portable sawmill are often looking for a service as well as a product. Not only do we bring our sawmill to the customer, we are often asked for advice on the best use of logs (boards or dimensional lumber? firewood or timbers?) and of the lumber produced (post or beam?). As an example, I was asked to walk the property of a customer to identify oak trees suitable for construction of a timber-frame home. His oaks were of very poor quality, but he had a spectacular stand of what we refer to locally as “monkey pine” (northern ridge pine, Pinus rigida). He ignored these trees because he knew they were of no commercial value. I turned to sourcebooks and learned that this is a species of hard pine that was widely used for construction in colonial times, and that its strength compares favorably with the strength of southern yellow pines. It is of no present commercial value as a distinct species because of its scarcity. This information persuaded the customer to abandon oak and build with monkey pine. When I asked to visit to see his home a couple of years later, he proudly showed the posts and beams to have performed well, and to have added a beautiful deep honey color to the interior. Providing such services builds goodwill (and referrals), and adds satisfaction to the work.

These services indicate a niche for the portable sawmill business quite apart from that of the large volume stationary mills. But both are in competition when it comes to retailing lumber, which is a distinctly different activity. When we started, we logged and milled lumber for sale. Small-scale logging was fun for awhile, though we didn’t manage minimum wage, and the better part of the lumber we generated some four years ago is still sitting under the weather. In time, it became obvious we were not among the gifted when it came to marketing lumber, so I turned my attention to building the sawmilling service. I would advise the beginning sawyer also interested in selling lumber to start by locating a logger to provide logs as you need them, and to mill lumber for sale only on order. Let your market drive expansion. A standing inventory of lumber is perishable, to both the elements and the process of air drying. Also, be wary about buying logs more cheaply from landscapers and yard services; yard trees often have metal in the wood, and blade damage can eat up your profits.

Getting started

After learning to avoid sending the blade into a metal dog, or lifting a log up onto one side of the saw bed only to have it roll off the opposite side because I forgot to raise the stops, I imagined we had sufficiently stemmed the fear of embarrassment to emerge from our secluded training place.
and go public. By then, word was out that we had a sawmill and we got started by milling pine logs into 1-inch boards on weekends (we were still employed elsewhere full-time; I retired in 2001). Milling logs to boards demands less of the sawyer’s skills than grade-sawing someone’s prized walnut log, and is a good way to start, but the work was sporadic and, after about a year, started to thin out, which brought us to the task of finding work.

Over the long haul, customer satisfaction provides the best advertising. But we needed a broader customer base to make that work. We did find work by advertising on the placemats used in local diners. We tried three diners, and one paid off. We learned not to advertise in diners frequented by lawyers, commercial fishermen, or college students. A diner in a rural area 20 miles northwest of the other two did the trick, with its mixed clientele of farmers, equestrians, tradesmen, and retired rural folks. In fact, I recently got a call from someone who had saved the placemat over the two years since we stopped advertising!

In another effective strategy for bringing attention to our business, I would hook up the sawmill to my truck and tow it to a popular rural business site, such as a diner at lunchtime, or a package store at the end of the workday. A portable sawmill draws gawkers like a steam calliope at a circus, and I was asked for business cards every time I used this tactic.

But it was the magnetic sign on my truck that brought the job that occupies me most. A timber-framer saw the sign and followed my truck into a parking lot to offer work. I have been milling primarily for his construction business ever since. I should add that, in my area, large stationary sawmills sometimes hire portable sawmills to cut their inventory of undersized logs, which affords another opportunity for employment.

End of Part I. Next month, Part II: Setting Prices.

George Tremblay taught biochemistry and was active in biomedical research at the University of Rhode Island for 34 years before retiring as professor of biochemistry in December 2000. He lives with his wife and two dogs on 28 acres of woodlot in Charlestown, R.I., near enough to the ocean to dig his own clams and satisfy the family’s penchant for fresh seafood.

This article originally appeared in the Aug/Sept 2004 issue of Independent Sawmill & Woodlot Management magazine.
### Specialized Trucks

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- **2000 FORD F800**: Cummins 215 hp, 8 spd +lo, +lo/lo, 33,000 lb GVW, with 6 TON IMT 725 crane, picks 2,950 lb at 25 ft max reach, 17 ft steel flat / dump. **$16,900.**

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- **98 VOLVO WG64**: CAT 320B, 300 hp, 8 speed +lo, +lo/lo, 64,000 lb GVW, with 20 ft steel flatbed / dump. **$39,500.**

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- **99 FORD F800**: 429 gas engine, 8 spd, 48,000 lb GVW, with 12½ ton JLG 1250BT crane, picks 3,000 lb at 25 ft max reach. **$24,500.**

- **99 FORD F800**: Cummins 215 hp, 8 spd, 33,000 lb GVW, with 6 TON PALFINGER PK5000 crane, picks 1,260 lb at 23'2" max reach, 9 ft utility body. **$24,500.**

- **96 MACK RD688SX**: E7-350 diesel, 350 hp, 8 spd +lo, +lo/lo, 80,000 lb GVW, with 21 ton NATIONAL 800C crane, 90 ft hook ht, cap alert / shutdown, roofers pkg, 20½ ft steel flatbed. **$79,500.**

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Consulting Can be Dangerous for Salespeople

I’ve just received the June 2005 TCI magazine. I have a comment you may want to pass on to staff. “Grow Your Business Through Consulting” (Management Exchange, June, 2005 TCI) by Steven Austin Stovall offers some useful tips on business building. The article appears to suggest that a marketing campaign, including unsolicited sales calls, might be characterized as “consulting.” While it may seem that business development or customer retention visits could be called “consulting,” since they are not directly intended to sell services, or that calling sales calls “consulting” is a softer sell, TCI readers need to be aware that consulting is a specific type of service, offering an opinion rather than a physical service or task. This is not simply a semantic difference.

Tree care companies typically carry General Liability (GL) insurance to cover their operations. Professional consultants typically also carry Professional Liability (PL) or Errors & Omissions (E&O) insurance to cover consulting opinions. A GL policy will not cover a consulting opinion, that is, one that is not connected with proposing or performing a physical service.

Say that a tree care company decides that it seems desirable to call it’s marketing visits “consultations.” A company arborist visits a prospective or current customer just to “consult.” The arborist suggests that the trees seem healthy and safe and that the company will check back next season. No work is proposed or performed. Soon afterwards one of the customer’s trees fails and the failure results in extensive property damage or serious bodily injury. The tree care company is sued. The company might be very surprised to learn that its GL policy does not cover either the value of the loss or the defense. The GL policy does not cover “consulting.”

Tree care companies should check with their own insurance providers to confirm what activities are or are not covered by their GL policies. A seemingly innocuous business practice like labeling business building or sales visits as “consulting” can have serious and potentially devastating financial consequences. Similarly, tree care companies that want to consider true consulting as a service line should determine exactly the form of insurance required.

Scott Cullen
Registered Consulting Arborist
Greenwich, Conn.

Getting a lift from top notch customer service

In September 2004 we had a 1992 International bucket truck that was involved in an accident. Our crews were parked on the right-a-way with outriggers out and secure, safety cones in place on the roadway, flagger and ground man on the ground. Our tree foreman was in the air preparing to trim, when the truck was hit from the rear. The impact of the hit moved the out-riggers 11 inches. The chipper attached to the rear of the truck was totally destroyed and the chip box and bed on the truck were also destroyed. No one was seriously injured in this accident. Our crews observed and followed all safety precautions and were at no fault in this accident.

Our company uses Lift All Corporation in Fort Wayne, Ind., for all of our purchases of bucket trucks and repairs to current trucks. This International was taken to Lift All to have major repairs completed after the accident.

In December 2004 Lift All notified us that there was a fire in the bay where our

(Continued on page 70)
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Over 60 years of tree care business and safety education is only a phone call away! Throughout the evolution of TCIA (formerly known as National Arborist Association), we have compiled a vast number of Business Management and Safety resources to help your company grow and keep your employees safe.

For a limited time only, Tree Care companies who have never been a member of TCIA are eligible for a $100 discount. Your TCI Magazine subscription is not an indication of TCIA membership. In fact, you might be missing out on all the other great benefits that TCIA has to offer.

For a $259 investment, your company will receive a comprehensive package of business management and safety resources (valued at over $360). Your colleagues have been part of TCIA’s past – now is the time to become part of TCIA’s future.

To learn more, call TCIA today at 1-800-733-2622 or visit www.tcia.org.
All across the country, the headlines are sobering: each day, on average, 16 workers die as a result of a traumatic injury on the job. The Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program was created to track and investigate such workplace fatalities in order to help prevent them. The program is funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NIOSH was created as part of the OSHAct in 1970, to provide research on occupational illnesses and accidents.

“The goal of the FACE program is to prevent occupational fatalities across the nation by identifying and investigating work situations at high risk for injury and then formulating and disseminating prevention strategies to those who can intervene in the workplace,” reads a program brochure.

FACE investigators do not enforce compliance with state or federal occupational safety and health standards and do not determine fault or blame. Written reports describe the accident and provide possible prevention strategies and are distributed to those who can intervene in the workplace.

National fatality data are reviewed and specific types of fatalities are targeted for investigation if there is more that needs to be learned about a certain type of accident. In the past, national targets have included falls from elevation, electrocutions, logging and confined spaces. The current focus is on fatalities that are machine-related, occur in a street or highway work zone, or involve workers that are Hispanic or under 18 years of age. Since 1992, there have been 36 FACE investigations and seven educational materials written about incidents involving tree trimmers (see links at end of article). One case, from California program began in 1989. The in-house program operates by having participating states voluntarily notify NIOSH about certain types of workplace fatalities. There are currently six states that participate in the in-house program: Ohio, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. There are an additional 24 states and Puerto Rico where FACE inves-
tigations were previously conducted. There are currently 15 states that have FACE programs, mainly run through state health or labor departments. The state programs focus on targets that are set by NIOSH, but also may focus on regional issues. The following have state FACE Programs: Alaska, California, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

A FACE investigation begins

In general, the FACE process starts when a FACE office is notified, or becomes aware of a work-related fatality that meets their criteria. Reports of accidents can come from local media, police, OSHA compliance officers, coroner’s offices, friends and family, etc. Once the FACE investigator chooses a case to investigate, they contact the employer by phone. The phone call is followed up by a letter that explains in detail the FACE program and the intent of the investigation. A date is set for the investigation at this point.

Usually, the FACE investigator will begin to do background research almost as soon as they hear about the fatality. This is done by reading police and OSHA reports, death certificates, Coroner’s reports, and Internet searches on related topics. The investigator wants to gain as much information as possible before the actual investigation begins. The investigator visits the worksite or place of employment to gather the data necessary for the report. They interview the employer, witnesses, and other co-workers, and take pictures of the worksite and machinery involved. The investigator may try to create a reenactment of the accident. All interviews are conducted in private – the names of employers, victims, and/or witnesses are not used in written investigative reports or included in the FACE database.

Information that is collected during the on-site investigation varies with the investigator, the company, the site, and the nature of the accident. In addition to delays in hearing about the fatality, there are several other challenges that an investigator faces at the worksite; sometimes the employer may not share information, co-workers are often traumatized by the accident and have a hard time recalling what they witnessed, and safety materials must be interpreted and translated into a language that is easy to understand for the target audience.

The primary goal of all of the research is to create prevention strategies (through recommendations) to reduce the likelihood of the accident recurring. The recommendations are created as a result of research and collaboration between all of the involved groups. Employers are often asked how they think the accident could have been avoided, and similar cases will often be reviewed for comparisons. The investigators presents possible strategies based on their experience and the research. Sometimes there are difficulties in creating prevention strategies. A variety of backgrounds and experience levels of all of those who participate in the process, and a lack of information or unsubstantiated information can impede the process. If a witness points to a particular cause, but the information can’t be confirmed, the information has to be omitted from the prevention strategy. Once the initial investigation is complete, the FACE investigator will create a preliminary report and review it with co-workers, industry experts, NIOSH, and sometimes OSHA officials as well. Additional site visits and interviews may be necessary to answer additional questions or clear up any issues from the initial report. The reports are reviewed many times before the final report is complete.

Spreading the word

The information gathered by the investigator would be useless if it wasn’t shared, so the FACE program disseminates materials once they are available. The information obtained from the process is distributed in two main forms; the “FACE FACTS” fact sheets and the investigative reports. FACE FACTS are single page summaries of specific accidents that list recommendations and resources. The information is shared with employers, workers, trade associations, unions and other safety and health professionals. The reports and fact sheets are also available on the state and national FACE Web sites. The FACE program’s goal is clear: they will continue to highlight high-risk work situations and prevent workers from being killed on the job.

Tim Walsh is a graduate student working on his doctorate in ergonomics and safety from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell. He has been an arborist for 16 years, served two years as arborist for TCIA, owned and operated his own business, worked and taught around the world.

For more about the FACE program, go to www.dhs.ca.gov/ohb/ohsep/face or www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/. For Web links to FACE investigations, by state, since 1992, go to: www.treecareindustry.org/content/safety/chipper_accidents.htm

Additional related links:


Alert’s


www.cdc.gov/niosh/92-106.html

www.public-health.uiowa.edu/face/Alerts/Cherry%20Picker.html

www.chm.msu.edu/oem/MIFACE Alerts/Alerts_Arborists.pdf
Severe hearing loss forced me to leave the tree care industry after nearly 19 years in the business. Whether we are using a chain saw in a tree, chipping brush or grinding stumps, the noise is literally ear-shattering. Although it is too late for my hearing, perhaps my experiences will help others.

We have all been told about the importance of wearing hearing protection, but there are important things that have been omitted. As an example, hearing protection literature tells us that we must wear our hearing protection properly in order for it to work correctly.

However, whether we are working in a tree or on the ground, our head is constantly moving. Muff style protectors are quickly thrown out of position. Inserts may seem like a better idea, but they also have problems. Most of us tend to sweat when climbing trees or working on the ground, especially in the summer. When moisture soaks into our inserts or helps to break the seal between our head and our muffs, our hearing protection is significantly reduced.

A short explanation of how hearing and hearing protection work will make it clear that we can make our hearing protection work better.

What is sound?

Sound is a disturbance in the air or in other mediums that is caused by a vibration that our ears perceive as sound. As an example, running a chain saw creates pulsating vibrations that push against air molecules, which in turn push against other air molecules. This creates a wave effect that travels in all directions.

The number of sound waves our ears perceive in a given period of time depends on the kind of disturbance and is referred to as wavelength or frequency. Frequency is measured by hertz, which is the number of vibrations per second in a sound wave. Musicians refer to frequency as pitch. A higher number of vibrations per second is perceived by our ears as a higher pitch. Healthy ears can usually interpret (hear) sounds between 20 and 20,000 vibrations per second.

Sound waves are also measured by amplitude, which is the height of the sound wave. The higher the amplitude, the louder our ears perceive the sound. Decibels are used to measure amplitude.

How does hearing work?

Both our outer ear canal and our middle ear are air chambers. When sound waves reach our ears, they enter our outer ear canal and vibrate against our ear drum. Our middle ear, which is on the other side of our ear drum, contains the ossicles (often referred to as anvil, hammer and stirrup). The middle ear also contains the eustachian tube leading to the top of our throat.
which allows the middle ear to equalize air pressure. The anvil, hammer and stirrup in the middle ear transfer our ear drum’s vibration to the inner ear, which contains a liquid chamber, called the cochlea. The cochlea contains sensory “hair cells,” which have hair-like structures that interpret the liquid wave motions and change them into electrical impulses that our brain interprets as sound.

**Measuring loudness**

The amplitude, or height, of the sound wave is what our ears perceive as loudness and is measured by a logarithmic scale called decibels. The decibel scale is also used in electronics. Logarithmic scales are used when there are very large differences between the lowest and highest possible measurements. As an example, earthquake measurement uses a logarithmic scale because of the vast difference between the smallest earth tremblers and the greatest earthquakes.

Logarithmic scales are different from linear scales. A linear scale, such as a 12-inch ruler, is additive (3 inches equals 1 inch + 1 inch + 1 inch). On the other hand, a logarithmic scale uses multiplication (A decibel of 20 is 10 times as large as a decibel of 10 and a decibel of 30 is 100 times as large as a decibel of 10).

Decibels are used to measure loudness because the range of sounds that a healthy human ear can perceive is absolutely huge. If we used a linear scale to measure hearing, the threshold of sensation for our ears would be 1 and the threshold of pain would be in the trillions. By using the decibel scale, our threshold of sensation would be 0.1 decibels and the threshold of pain would be about 120 decibels. When measuring loudness, a decibel scale is much easier to work with than a linear scale.

**Hearing protection regulations**

OSHA regulations (Standards – 29 CFR) provide detailed instructions on allowable noise exposure, noise measurement, and hearing protection in its Occupational noise exposure. - 1910.95. We should all become familiar with these regulations.

When employees are exposed to 85 decibels or more during an 8-hour period, the employer is supposed to begin a monitoring program. Although monitoring requirements are very explicit, employers such as tree care companies, because they are very mobile and have significant variations in sound level, can use representative samplings to comply with the monitoring requirements.

It’s fortunate that OSHA provides sound level limits, but OSHA standards are far from perfect. Some of us are more affected by sound than others. As an example, adults who have had severe ear infections as children are often affected more by loud noises than adults who had healthier childhoods.

When we are young, we tend to think that our hearing is okay and that we don’t need to worry about it. When we grow
older, we often find that it is too late – our hearing has already been damaged. We need to protect our hearing right now.

Hearing protection is far from 100 percent reliable, but we can improve its efficiency.

Measuring hearing protection

Sound level meters are used to measure sound, but hearing protection is measured by its noise reduction rating (NRR). NRR ratings tell us how much hearing protection has reduced the overall noise level when it actually gets to our ears. As an example, if we are in a 100 decibel environment and have hearing protection with an NRR rating of 20, then our ears perceive 80 decibels.

Hearing Protection manufacturers must follow OSHA rules when making NRR ratings. NRR ratings are made in a controlled environment and work fairly well for employers that have a consistent noise environment and employees that don’t move around too much, but they aren’t very helpful on job sites that have varying noise levels and lots of movement.

All hearing protection manufacturers warn us that their hearing protection must be worn correctly to work properly. Since we all do a lot of moving and sweating when working in and around trees, our hearing protection won’t provide the protection we expect.

Companies that make hearing protection devices usually leave themselves an out. As an example, even my favorite Peltor H10 Extreme Performance Series Earmuffs, which are made by Aearo and have an NRR rating of 30, have a small paragraph on the box that the muffs came in that says:

“The EPA has selected the NRR as the measure of hearing protector’s noise reduction reducing capabilities. Aearo Company makes no warranties as to the suitability of the NRR as a measure of actual workplace protection since such protection is highly dependent on user training, motivation, and utilization. A better estimate of workplace protection can be obtained by derating the labeled NRR of this, or any other hearing protector, by 50 percent.”

If you haven’t noticed what sweat or rain does to the effectiveness of your hearing protection, begin paying attention. You will soon notice that moisture...
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reduces the effectiveness of your hearing protection considerably. You will probably also notice how easily your muffs move out of position when you are working, especially when they are wet from sweat or rain.

**Improving hearing protection**

Experiment! Experiment! Experiment!

Experimenting helped me to save the little bit of my hearing that remains. Some of us find that our ears are sensitive when we use inserts. I didn’t like inserts for that reason, but gave in to necessity. It didn’t take long for my ears to become accustomed to inserts. My experiments included a wide variety of hearing devices, including electronic muffs.

My solution was to use hearing protection with highest NRR rating available. I have found that inserts with an NRR rating of 33 are much better when working with a chain saw in a tree than inserts with lower NRR ratings. Believe it or not, even with my poor hearing, I could usually carry on a conversation with the ground crew. Hi pitched sounds seemed to be reduced, but low pitched sounds seemed to get through. Replacing inserts two or three times a day during warm weather is expensive, but has helped to slow down my hearing impairment.

While working on the ground, my preference was NRR 33 inserts, along with ear muffs that have an NRR rating of 30. That combination worked especially well for grinding stumps. The combination theoretically provides an NRR of 63. In other words, if the noise level is 110 decibels, my ears would only perceive 47 decibels. In reality, my real protection was probably much less than that. Wearing inserts plus muffs protected my hearing, but made it hard to hear conversations, so I only wore the combination when alone.

It’s important to try different combinations and find out what works for you. It’s also important to be safe. You need to be able to hear others around you and you need to be able to move around.

Although there are more 30 to 33 NRR inserts available today than a few years ago, experimenting with hearing protection can be expensive and time consuming. High-quality hearing protection can be expensive for employers, but employees tend to work harder when they know that their employer really cares about their welfare.

If you take care of your hearing now, you will be able to really enjoy hearing your grandchildren in your later years.

*Richard K. Dole was a tree service contractor for 18 years before leaving the industry due to his hearing loss. He is currently a freelance writer living in San Jose, Calif.*
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Join us in Washington ... for your business future

CIA members will descend on Washington, D.C., July 18-20, 2005, for our first joint green industry Legislative Conference.

Make sure you mark your calendars to attend this important event. You'll learn about the latest legislative activity in Washington, hear from key policy makers, and have an opportunity to visit Capitol Hill and meet with your elected representatives.

This will be the first legislative conference for the entire green industry, bringing together representatives from Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), American Nursery & Landscape Association (ANLA) and Professional Landcare Network (PLANET), which is the new organization formed by the merger of Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).

That's a lot of initials, but the important thing to remember is that this will be the first legislative conference for all of the green industry's trade associations. It is important for TCIA to have broad participation from across the United States.

As you know, Congress and the Administration are discussing proposals that will affect you. The conference is your chance to hear about these proposals personally and give your feedback. It's important that every TCIA member make plans to attend.

TCIA representatives will brief attendees before your visits on Capitol Hill and provide "leave behind" materials. After the briefings, TCIA members will join other green industry representatives for meetings with their congressional representatives. TCIA will coordinate all meetings with your U.S. Senators and Representatives. Meetings will take place on Tuesday, July 19, and Wednesday, July 20. The Legislative Conference is an important part of our efforts to bring your voice, your concerns, to Washington. Forbes magazine has written that the most effective groups in Washington are those who spend time talking to their representatives about their industry and the role public policy can play. This Legislative Conference is your opportunity to educate federal policymakers about the tree care industry.

Criminal Penalties for Willful Safety Violations

U.S. Senator Jon S. Corzine (D-N.J.) recently introduced legislation that would increase criminal penalties for employers who willfully violate workplace safety laws. Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) co-sponsored the bill. The bill – the Workplace Wrongful Death Accountability Act – was introduced on Workers Memorial Day, a day that marks the anniversary of the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and recognizes workers who were killed or injured on their jobs in the last year.

Under current law, employers who violate safety laws are subject to fines and six months imprisonment. This bill would increase the maximum penalty to ten years. It would also increase from six months to two years the penalty for giving advance notice of a safety investigation, and would increase from six months to one year the penalty for intentionally misleading a safety investigator.

"Causing the death of an employee on the job through willful violation of worker safety standards should not be treated as a trivial federal offense," Senator Corzine said.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, non-fatal injuries and illnesses in private industry totaled more than 4.3 million in 2003 and 5,575 people died in all sectors as a result of workplace injuries.

Of course, Washington is a fabulous family destination, too. From its celebrated symbols of patriotism to its undiscovered neighborhoods, the sights and sounds of the nation's capital inspire millions of visitors every year. The city is packed with free attractions, an endless calendar of special events, and famous sights – such as the Smithsonian. You may wish to arrive early or stay an extra few days. For the conference, plan to arrive in time for our opening luncheon on Monday, July 18, and note that visits to Senators may be scheduled until 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 20.

Join us and grow tree care's voice in Washington. To register, call (202) 789-2900 or download the conference brochure at www.treecareindustry.org/content/mtgs/legislativeconf.htm.
Riding for Research Along the Historic Natchez Trace
Jackson to Nashville • August 1-6, 2005

A cyclist’s dream . . . imagine yourself on a shaded, curved rural highway that is green with thick, lush grass and plenty of hardwood trees, with occasional glimpse of small farms and quaint villages through the foliage. No billboards, neon lights, traffic jams, or commercial traffic—but plenty of rolling hills and an abundance of breathtaking scenery along a national natural treasure.

Welcome to Tour des Trees 2005!

Hello fellow cyclists, volunteers, sponsors, and each and every one that supports the Tour and the cause that is so important to us all. My name is Paul Wood with Black Bear Adventures Bicycle Tours and I am honored to have been chosen to coordinate the 2005 Tour des Trees. On August 1, I encourage you to leave your worries and stresses behind and join us for an unforgettable journey along the scenic roads of the Historic Natchez Trace.

The Natchez Trace, operated by the National Park System, follows an enchanted 8,000 year old route through lush forests and into the heart of America’s past. Well known for its breathtaking panoramas, the Trace was first used by Native Americans thousands of years ago and later as a major trade route during frontier days. History will come alive as riders travel along the Trace, following the pathways of the Indians, boatmen, traders, soldiers, and settlers who helped shape America.

Our journey to raise much-needed funds and public awareness will take us through the winding roads of northern Mississippi, Alabama, and Tennessee, offering a gradual contrast in terrain from relatively flat land to gently rolling hills and into the steeper peaks of the lower Appalachian region. We’ll have opportunities to reach out to communities in all three states, building awareness of the need for research and its impact on people, trees, and the environment.

Over the past fourteen years, riders of all ages and abilities have joined together to create the event that is called Tour des Trees. They started with a common purpose and ended with a shared experience that has changed many lives. Dozens will join together again this year, traveling almost 500 miles from Jackson Mississippi to Nashville. Will you be one of them? We certainly hope so! The challenges, which are significant, will surely be matched by the warm glow of satisfaction that accompanies the accomplishment of difficult but meaningful goals.

A Sample of the Scenic and Historic Treasures You’ll Experience Along the Natchez Trace

• Stop for a break at the Tupelo Bald Cypress Swamp, with board walkways leading across yellow-green algae-covered water so smooth it looks like a chartreuse mirror that you could walk on.
• Visit Pharr Mounds, a complex of eight ancient burial mounds built from about 1,800 to 2,000 years ago.
• Travel just one mile off the route to the Tupelo National Battlefield, site of a major Civil War battle in 1864. Just a few more miles down the road and you’re at the Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum.
• Walk the nature trails that display plants used in daily life for food and Indian tribal medicines at the Chickasaw Village site.
• Walk along the Old Trace to the graves of 13 unknown Confederate soldiers, or explore a grove of dogwood trees in Dogwood Valley.

Special Thanks To Our Platinum and Gold Leaf Tour Sponsors!

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For more information or to sign up for the adventure, please visit the Tour des Trees web site at www.tourdestrees.org, or contact Tour coordinator Paul Wood at Paul@blackbearadventures.com.
What is Technical Rigging?

When the limbs get heavier, the quarters get tighter and the targets get closer, or the trees themselves become less forgiving, rigging becomes more technical. More knowledge – and often more equipment – must be employed to do the job safely and efficiently.

More equipment, when used properly, reduces wear on all components of the rigging system and makes the arborists life a little easier, too.

This chapter looks at speedlining, blocking down larger wood, using lowering devices, and using multiple lines to share or transfer the load.

Section A. The speedline

The speedline is a method for moving brush or limbs from the tree to a staging area some distance away using the force of gravity and a minimum amount of human energy. In other words, the speedline can save a lot of time dragging brush. It can also prevent damage to understory plants and structures.

Speedlining can be the most glamorous and dramatic rigging technique and one that can greatly increase the efficiency of an operation. In reality, you probably won't need to use it very often. It is also one of the most complex rigging systems to install. Forces, distances and angles must be carefully calculated.

The simplest speedline consists of a tensioned line, angling from the top of the removal tree to a suitable anchor just beyond the landing zone. The arborist places a sling around the branch to be cut, connects the sling to the speedline with a carabiner or screwlink and cuts the branch. The branch’s descent could be slowed or stopped by giving more slack to the speedline. This most basic rig is known as a “Simple Direct” speedline or “Freeline.” One advantage is its simplicity. Potential disadvantages include: not being able to rig multiple pieces out without carrying a lot of slings and carabiners into the tree, lack of control over the speed of the descent, and damage to lawn areas in the landing zone because of the force of the impact.

Section B. The crossline speedline

When a suitable anchor isn’t available where you’d like the brush to land, an

block to overcome the weight of the controlled descent line. The longer the run, the heavier the line, and greater the need for counterweight. The ballast is also helpful in keeping the traveling block from bouncing on the line. When that happens, the controlled descent line can be flipped over the speedline, causing a twist in the rigging.

3. Tension Control

You can use comealongs or sheer muscle to tighten the speedline, but there is frequently the need to take up more slack than is humanly possible. It isn’t easy and can even be hazardous to try to manage line tension with a vehicle and line can’t always be attached to a winch.

There are other options for managing tension on the speedline. A 4:1 block and tackle and Münter hitch can be used for gaining and holding tension respectively. Another way to gain and hold tension is with a ratcheting lowering device mounted to the anchor tree. If you use a lowering device, you must rig a fairlead or guide block – a pulley to guide the speedline into the device. Lowering devices shall never be side loaded – lines must always enter from a vertical point.

Section B. The crossline speedline

When a suitable anchor isn’t available where you’d like the brush to land, an
anchor can be created using a line rigged horizontally at ground level – the crossline.

(In the following,) When we are specific about the equipment used in a cross-line speedline setup, it is because a substitution could make a big difference in performance! For instance, although the specific choice of controlled descent line is not critical, the speedline rope is. The components’ suitability to their task, their service life and your need for the rigging should be your main concerns.

Section C. Getting started

Starting with the basics and building up in complexity to the cross-line speedline, here are the components you’ll need to build a working system:

Speedline. This line needs to be single braid, 12-strand line if you are using the Münter hitch to control tension. Coated, double braid lines simply will not feed smoothly through the HMS carabiner.

Blocks. In the video, we show the use of ⅛ inch (16mm) stainless steel rescue pulleys with 2 ⅜-inch (63mm) sheaves for the traveling block as well as the guide blocks. By standardizing to one pulley, you never have to worry about which pulley goes where! Stainless-steel rescue pulleys are recommended. They are stronger and more durable than lighter-weight, less expensive aluminum pulleys.

To set up a successful rig, observe the following pulley precautions. The traveling block must run freely on the speedline without binding at any angle of inclination or pull. Many pulleys may ride the speedline down, under load, well enough, but will cause the cheek plates to pinch the speedline severely on the haul-back.

The controlled descent line must pull in line with the sheave. A side pull can create such a bind that, once again, the pulley will not run back up the line to the climber.

Controlled descent line. This rope is attached to the traveling block and provides the braking control to the load being managed. The controlled descent line must be long enough to go from the ground to the guideblock in the tree and back down the speedline to the landing zone. This can often require a rope that is 240 feet long (73m) or longer, but one that does not have to bear a considerable load.

Connections. As a rule, screw links should be used for static connections, meaning those that don’t have to be opened or closed frequently. Carabiners connect slings to the traveling block. Instead of a Rigging Plate™, you can use a large screw pin anchor shackle on the traveling block to gain enough ballast to make your system run smoothly.

Aluminum HMS-style carabiners are necessary for use of the Münter hitch.

Crossline. The specific rope selected is not too important, but single braids are a little easier to work with than coated double braids. In keeping with the weak link rule, remember to make sure that the weakest link in your rigging system is the load line and not the anchors or supporting hardware.

Slings. Endless slings are ideal for securing the traveling block to the load. The cross-line can be anchored with deadeye slings or Whoopee slings, or the line can be tied directly to the anchor points and tensioned with a trucker’s hitch. Just make sure that the length and rating of the slings selected is appropriate to the loading.

Figure-8. The figure-8 makes a great rigging point when set into the crossline with a double pass hitch. You may use either a steel or an aluminum figure-8 here, but it should be a rescue type with ears. A ⅛ inch (19mm) rope capacity and two rigging holes are features that are desirable.

Gibbs Ascenders. You may need attachment points along the crossline and the speedline to anchor an HMS carabiner or block and tackle, respectively. The ⅛ inch (19mm) stainless-steel Gibbs ascenders accomplish this task very well.

Block and Tackle. The block and tackle shown in the video was a 4:1 ratio fiddle block with a cam that holds the line under tension. A 4:1 ratio means that 100 pounds (45kg) of muscle are converted into 400 pounds (180kg) of pull. The cam is essential to hold your gains firmly. If you use a block and tackle, make sure its strength rating meets or exceeds the other components in your system.

Section D. Setting it all up

Up in the tree, the speedline can be tied off to the stem of the tree with a double clove hitch (or clove hitch and half hitch keeper) leaving the tail long enough to secure the guide block with a bowline. The guide block is necessary to keep the controlled descent line in alignment with the speedline. The speedline anchor – the tree – as well as the speedline itself, have to handle forces well in excess of the weight of the limbs being lowered because in addition to holding the load, the “legs” of the speedline pull against one another. Make sure you anchor the speedline to a main leader of the tree that is sound.

The controlled descent line runs down the tree trunk to the ground where it is belayed.
by spiral wraps or a lowering device.

The figure-8 is set into the crossline, the ends of the line are anchored, and the line is cinched taut. The guide block attached to the figure-8 leads the speedline to either a Münter hitch set onto the crossline or a ratcheting lowering device mounted on one of the anchor trees. A screw-link connects the guide block to the figure-8.

With the Münter hitch setup, a 4:1 block is anchored to the figure-8 and attached to the speedline with a Gibbs Ascender. Note that the rigging is designed to keep all lines parallel without tangling.

### Two important tips:

1. As you are tailing the slack in the speedline through the Münter hitch, be sure to reverse direction on the hitch before you place the line under load. Remember that the Münter rotates in the carabiner as it adjusts to taking in or letting out. If you don't let out just enough slack to rotate the Münter into the “letting out” attitude, you may find it locked under load.

2. Slack the fiddle blocks after you’ve secured the speedline to the Münter and before you place the system under load. The blocks are not designed to bear the shock load of dropping limbs into the system.

Once you have the speedline rigged, there are various ways to attach branches to be removed. Small branches may be “free-lined” (sent down the speedline on a carabiner and sling without a delay). Alternately, you can attach them with the tail of the controlled descent line, or on a carabiner and sling attached to the traveling block. With a long branch, you can butt tie the controlled descent line, attach a sling to the brush end, then attach the sling directly to the speedline with a carabiner. Review the video to see the various ways limbs were speedlined out.

You need to experiment with the speedline in non-critical removal situations before you attempt to speedline wood over a house or other target. You should become accustomed to how the speedline operates with various sizes and shapes of brush hanging from it. You must be able to anticipate the amount of sag in the speedline created by the load to be able to clear structures under the rigging. Speedlining of larger wood should be avoided due to vector forces, unless you are sure you have "bomb proof" anchor points!

#### 1. Lowering Devices

Especially when you get into heavier wood and more critical rigging situations, tree-mounted lowering devices offer some real advantages over simple trunk wraps. The main ones include:

- A predictable amount of friction can be produced from tree to tree.
- Wear on the line from abrasion on the tree surface is eliminated, extending rope life.
- Time between setups is significantly reduced.
- The crew will generally have more ability to take slack out of the lowering line, and slack can be critical. With a ratcheting device, limbs can even be lifted.

Here are some general lowering device precautions:

- Make sure the device is firmly secured to the tree. The simpler friction devices — carabiners, figure-8s, brake tubes and Porta-Wraps™ — are attached with a sling. The larger fixed drums and ratcheting drums attach with webbing. Make sure that these devices seat firmly against the trunk. The webbing should be drum tight. Test to make sure it is secure before loading it, and test the tension after loading it once or twice.
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Ed Langel — Affordable Tree Service, Fort Pierce, Florida

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<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
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<td>BC1000</td>
<td>KCH20109</td>
<td>Double Edge 9&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 5/8&quot;</td>
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<td>DC1800XL</td>
<td>KCH20112</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
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<td>100XP-250XP</td>
<td>KCH10003</td>
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<td>250XP, 254XP after '01</td>
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#### Asplundh

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<td>16&quot; Drum</td>
<td>KCH30002</td>
<td>Single Edge 16&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
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Lowering devices should be mounted plumb (level) and in line with the rigging. If they cannot be mounted in vertical alignment with the rigging above, you must use a guide block to bring the lowering line into the device vertically.

- The line handler should stay well clear of the device immediately before and during the lowering operation to avoid getting a hand pinched. The handler should stay back from the work being performed overhead.
- Using a ratcheting device is a two person operation: one to turn the ratchet and one to tend the line. The only time it can safely be operated by one person is when the load line is being tensioned prior to cutting.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for their use, inspect lowering devices frequently and lubricate moving parts as required.
- If you are unfamiliar with a device, practice with it in non-critical situations until you are comfortable with its use.

Section E. Blocking down heavy wood

Once the brush is removed, you are left with a vertical trunk section, or spar. Two fairly straightforward options for further removal include lowering the trunk on itself in sections, or lowering sections off of another nearby tree or spar, referred to as a gin pole.

Here is the basic equipment needed for blocking down heavy wood:

- An arborist block designed for false crotch rigging and handling heavy loads
- A sling of suitable size and length to attach the block to the trunk section
- A lowering line matched to the other components of the rigging
- A friction, or belay, device at the base of the tree for the lowering line
- A tagline to help pull the pieces over

Section F. Load transfer

The load transfer line allows two things. First, as the name implies, it transfers part or all of a load to a second lowering line, reducing the strain on the primary system. Second, it allows a lot more choice of landing zones. Basically, the entire area directly between the two lowering points becomes the potential landing zone.

This is how a transfer line can be set up from the ground. First, a throw line is placed in a suitable crotch that is more or less the same height as the wood you are rigging out, and in a tree that is on the opposite side of the intended landing zone from the removal tree.

The throw line is used to set a suitable pulley line. One end of this line will be secured at the tree base. The other end will be tied to a suitable block which has been threaded with a suitable second lowering line that is the same construction as the first lowering line. The pulley and line are then pulled up to the tree crotch.

The second lowering line must be long enough to reach from the pieces to be lowering, over to the transfer line false crotch, down to a belay device, and out to the rope handler.

The transfer line may be used to catch some, but not all, of the initial load dumped into the rigging. Its main function is to swing the load out from the removal tree during lowering. It can also keep the wood from slamming into the trunk as happens when butt-hitching.

Safety Note: Industrial ratings of equipment are commonly 5:1. Arborist equipment should have ratings that range from 10:1 to 20:1. That is why you must know the ratings of the equipment that you are going use and make your adjustments accordingly.

The Rigging for Removal Workbook is designed for use with an accompanying video. Several references to the video have been excluded here.
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Everything is subject to change, and this is as true of our industry as it is of society in general. With this existing reality, I was not at all surprised to receive a call from a large telecommunications concern to estimate some work that appeared to lie outside the scope of our job description. The problem involved ospreys, commonly known as fish hawks, that build nests in communications towers. Some types of wildlife have adapted to and utilized various creations of humanity, and the osprey is no exception. In some situations, however, this dual utilization can compromise the intended function of the relay towers and communications equipment.

Bell Canada, the client, has taken a conservation approach to such situations and they required that the nest be removed with as little bother as possible to its builder. The client decided that mitigation would best include a reassembly of the nest in a tree close to the original location in the hope that the bird would return in spring, see the new nest and take up habitation there with little fuss.

The osprey originally built its nest at the very top of a tower. A rigger had removed it in pieces, packed it in a large “back-sack,” and lowered it to the ground. My directive from the client included choosing the closest and tallest tree, preparing the upper level for osprey habitation, assembling a framework in the treetop, and weaving into that framework the contents of the backpack, which were primarily sticks of every size and shape.

The site was in an isolated area, requiring the access road to be plowed. The depth of the snow, at two feet, required a tractor to clear the road. When we arrived, four-wheel drive vehicles were necessary to travel to the tower site. Three vehicles drove in without incident (though getting out later was another story).

Arriving at the tower, a pre-job safety meeting was called, hazard identification accomplished, emergency procedures reviewed, and action plans in the event of an accident established. With that done, an appropriate tree was chosen, the highest on client property, an eastern white pine. I climbed to the top, set my line, crown reduced to a place where four branches joined the main trunk, and hoisted the various components to be assembled at the position.

My son, acting as ground man that day, had pre-built a proper size framework, which I anchored in position, weaving into the assembly the assortment of sticks to provide a nesting site for the osprey. To protect the nest from predators such as raccoons, a sheet metal wrap secured by wire was located around the trunk four feet from the ground to stop any climbing predators. All work to prepare the tree was done to established industry standard.

The osprey returns in the spring. Until then, we will have no idea whether or not the new nest will be accepted.

Our work is not without reward and, in the changing scheme of things, is not defined solely as tree work. That day, I thoroughly enjoyed the pleasure of having a bird’s eye view of the panorama before me, the sight of the endless forest, the lake just a stone’s throw away, and the sublimity of a setting where the sound of silence reigned unbroken except by conversations between me, the ground worker, the rigger, and the client representative. Too often we fail to appreciate such things that are part and parcel of our profession and that many would love to be able to experience. Working to earn a living is one thing; enjoying one’s work is another. But to be able to combine these with the fulfilled feeling of benefiting nature simultaneously is priceless, and that was exactly what we were doing.
While office work is safe, and shelter in the warmth, safety and security of that work environment appears to be a big advantage, I would not trade my work with anyone. On that day, while breathing fresh northern air, enjoying the warm caress of the sun on my face, looking out over the ever-changing beauty of nature, and experiencing the emotional lift that is embodied by such circumstances, I fully appreciated yet again what it means to live life to the fullest – mind, soul, body and spirit. While some of you may be wondering at my long winded expose of my feelings, I know that more than a few of you climbers reading this, and some of you nature lovers, fully comprehend what I am trying to communicate, and that you can feel the same depth of life as I am trying to describe, without gilded words or complicated verbosity.

I am aware of others in our profession who have been retained to rescue cats, replace fallen fledglings back into nests, and hang Christmas lights in the winter from evergreens. To these out-of-the-ordinary tasks, I amenably add the rebuilding/replacement of nests of birds of prey who have located their residences in towers, causing problems. There is no reason why these birds and humans cannot co-exist in the same airspace without either side causing consequential damage or inconvenience to the existence of the other.

The bottom line is that the climbing skills required to do our regular tree work also qualify us to do numerous specialized tasks safely, efficiently and competently.

I am pleased the client has added me to their “system” and I will always respond eagerly and favorably to further solicitations of employment in this specific application.

Edward Kennedy is owner/operator of Meadow Green Tree Experts & Certified Arborists in Harrowsmith, Ontario, Can., and writes about issues affecting the tree care industry.
Industry Almanac

Events & Seminars

July 15, 2005
2005 Woody Plant Conference
Scott Arboretum, Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA
Contact: (610) 388-1000 x 507; www.longwoodgardens.org

July 18-21, 2005
TCIA Legislative Conference
Washington D.C.
Contact: Mark Garvin 1-800-733-2622; Ext. 108
garvin@treecareindustry.org; or www.tcia.org

July 26-28, 2005
Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show
Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA
Contact: 1-800-898-3331; www.pantshow.com

July 30-August 1, 2005
2005 New York ReLeaf State Conference
“Urban Forestry: Changes and Challenges”
Syracuse, NY
Contact: Elizabeth Shimo (315) 732-6720; ilovegreatdanese@yahoo.com

August 4, 2005
Summer Plant Identification -Trees & Shrubs
Matthaei Botanical Gardens
Ann Arbor, MI
Contact: MGIA, (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

August 6-10, 2005
ISA’s 81st Annual Int. Conference & Tradeshow
Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN
Contact: Jessica Marx, 1-888-472-8743, jmarx@isa-arbor.com; www.isaarbor.com/conference.aspx

August 19-21, 2005
Nursery/Landscape Expo 2005
Texas Nursery & Landscape Association
Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, TX
Contact: www.txnla.org; 1-(800) 880-0834

August 25, 2005
Farwest Show – Oregon Association of Nurseriesmen
Portland, OR
(503) 682-5089; www.farwestshow.com

September 8-10, 2005
Lake States Logging Congress
Marquette, MI
Contact: (715) 282-5828; www.timberpa.com

September 12, 2005 (week of)
Location TBA
Contact: mfpa@acd.net or call (571) 337-4999

September 14, 2005
ISA Cert. Exam & NJ Arborists/
ISA Gen. Member Mtg., Midland Park, NJ
Contact: Matt Simons (609) 625-6021;
www.NJArboristsISA.com

September 15-16, 2005
Michigan Forestry and Park Association Arboriculture Conference
Midland Center for the Arts
Midland, MI
Registration Deadline: August 15
Contact: www.mfpa-is.org; mfpa@acd.net; (517) 337-4999

September 17, 2005
Michigan Tree Climbing Championship & Kids Climb
Emerson Park, Midland, MI
Registration Deadline: August 15
Contact: www.mfpa-is.org; mfpa@acd.net; (517) 337-4999

September 25-28, 2005
ISA Pacific Northwest Annual Conference
Victoria, BC
Contact: ISA (503) 874-8263, or Brian Fisher (250) 755-4722; brian.fisher@bchydro.com

September 29, 2005
Southwest Ohio Urban Forestry Seminar
Ohio Chapter ISA & ODNR Division of Forestry
Winton Centre, Cincinnati, OH
Contact: (216) 544-4737; ohiochapterisa.org

September 29, 2005
2005 MGIA Snow Management Conference and Expo
Northville Hills Golf Club, Northville, MI
Contact MGIA at (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

September 29-Oct.1, 2005
ISA/RMC Annual Conference and Workshop
University Park Hilton,
Fort Collins, CO
Contact: ISA Office 303) 756-1815

October 6, 2005
Solving Ornamental Plant Problems (not caused by pathogens and insects)
MGIA Office, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact MGIA at (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 13, 2005
Compliance 2005!
Cannon Equipment, Shelby Twp., MI
Contact MGIA at (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 13-14, 2005
Tenn. Urban Forestry Council 14th Annual Conference
Germantown Center, Germantown TN
Contact: Jennifer Smith (615) 352-8985; tufc@comcast.net

October 14, 2005
2005 Perennial Plant Conference
Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA
Contact: (610) 388-1000 Ext. 507; www.longwoodgardens.org

October 14-16, 2005
International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo
Louisville, KY
Contact: 1-800-558-8767 or (812) 949-9200; expo.mow.org

October 15, 2005
Tennessee Urban Forestry Council 7th Annual Tree Climbing Championship
Memphis Botanic Garden, Memphis, TN
Contact: Jennifer Smith (615) 352-8985; tufc@comcast.net

Oct. 18-19, 2005
Illinois Arborist Association/ISA 23rd Annual Conference & Tradeshow
Holiday Inn, Tinley Park, IL
Contact: April Toney (877) 617-8887; iaa@wi.rr.com

October 20-21, 2005
Autopsy & Dissection Lab with Dr. Alex Shigo
Portsmouth, NH
Contact: Kathy Brickley, Northeast Shade Tree (603) 436-4904, 1-800-841-2498.

October 21-22, 2005
Plant Biology Workshop
Frogmore, SC
Contact: Don Marx 1-888-290-2640; dmarx@planthealthcare.com

October 21-23, 2005
NJ Shade Tree Fed. 80th Annual Meeting
Hilton Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, Cherry Hills, NJ
Contact: Bill Porter (732) 246-3210; njshadetreefederation@worldnet.att.net

More almanac online!

For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.treecareindustry.org ⇔ news ⇔ industry calendar
October 27, 2005
Plant Diagnostics: Case Studies and Timely Updates
Bingham Center, Bingham Farms, MI
Contact: MGIA, (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

November 9-11, 2005
TCI EXPO
Tree Care Industry Association
Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622, Ext. 106;
cyr@treecareindustry.org; or www.tcia.org

November 15-17, 2005
Empire State Green Industry Show
(formerly NYSTA Turf & Grounds Expo)
Rochester Riverside Convention Center,
Rochester, NY
Contact: Jill Cyr, (518) 783-1229, 1-800-873-9973;
nysta@nysta.org; www.nysta.org

December 4-7, 2005
2005 ASCA Annual Conference
Palm Springs, CA
Contact: Angela Corio, ASCA (301) 947-0483

December 7, 2005
ISA Cert. Exam & General Membership Meeting
Frelinghyzen Arboretum, Morristown, NJ
Contact: Matt Simons (609) 625-6021;
www.NJArboristsISA.com

December 8-9, 2005
Autopsy & Dissection Lab with Dr. Alex Shigo
Portsmouth, NH
Contact: Kathy Brickley, Northeast Shade Tree (603) 436-4804; 1-800-841-2498.

January 9-11, 2006
2006 GLTE Expo & MFPA Winter Conference
Devoss Place, Grand Rapids, MI
Contact: mfpa@acd.net or call (571) 337-4999

January 11, 2006
ISA Cert. Arborist, Utility Specialist, Tree Worker,
Municipal exams
During the ISA Winter Conference
Devoss Place, Grand Rapids MI
Contact: (571) 337-4999; mfpa@acd.net; or (217) 355-9411; cert@isa-arbor.com; www.isa-arbor.com

January 29-31, 2006
41st Annual Penn-Del ISA
Shade Tree Symposium & Trade Show
Lancaster Host Resort,
Lancaster, PA
Contact: E. Wertz. (215) 795-0411;
penndelisa05@comcast.net; www.penndelisa.org

February 12-16
2006 Winter Management Conference
Tree Care Industry Association
St. Kitts, West Indies
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622, Ext. 106;
cyr@treecareindustry.org; or www.tcia.org

February 21-24, 2006
2006 ASCA Consulting Academy
Atlanta, GA
Contact: Angela Corio, ASCA (301) 947-0483

Send your event information to:
Tree Care Industry,
3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1,
Manchester, NH 03103
or staruk@treecareindustry.org

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Then a few discoveries (and a lot of money spent learning) changed my life. They can change your life, too. In fact, if you order my special report...

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I nearly went broke copying the ways everybody else seemed to get customers… plus… wasting money on all kinds of dumb advertising… plus… automatically make more money.

Call it out to you immediately.

Easier Than You Can Imagine… And… You Will Even Start To Enjoy Being In The Tree Service Business!

Simply fax, call or e-mail me your name, company name, mailing address, and phone number, ask for my FREE REPORT and I will rush it to you immediately.

Get Your FREE Report Today

“Double Your Tree Service’s Profits In Six Months Or Less” Even in a Tough Economy”!

Introducing one of the ONLY Truly PROVEN SYSTEMS For Turning Your Tree Service Business Into A Mega-Profit Money Machine If you intend to stay in the Tree Service business, this will be the most important Report you will ever read.

Listen: There is a “dirty little secret” about making good money in the Tree Care Service business… and… it doesn’t have a whole lot to do with how good of a job you do. You can be technically, the very best Tree Care Service in your area, use only the highest quality products, know more about tree removal and pruning than anybody else, always do a super job… and still starve to death! You’re busy one week and lonely the next, and always worrying about where your next job is coming from. DREADING YOUR BILLS! I know… because… at one time, I nearly starved myself right out of the business by stubbornly believing that… being good ought to be good enough; that by getting better and better at the technical aspects, I’d automatically make more money. Wrong!

I nearly went broke copying the ways everybody else seemed to get customers… plus… wasting money on all kinds of dumb advertising… plus… trying the “cheapest price approach”… which is actually the worst thing you can do. The only way I was able to survive was by begging for jobs from just about anyone… plus… doing cold call prospecting which I literally hate!

Then a few discoveries (and a lot of money spent learning) changed my life. They can change your life, too. In fact, if you order my special report… you’re going to learn, too…

How To Make More Profit Each Week Than You Now Struggle To Earn In Your Best Month… And… Do It Easier Than You Can Imagine… And… You Will Even Start To Enjoy Being In The Tree Service Business!

Why should you respond and ask for this report? Hopefully, for these six very important and brutally honest reasons:

1. You are sick and tired of all the so-called advertising experts that sell advertising to tree services that never work.
2. You detest “cheapest price competition” and would prefer to promote your tree service differently.
3. You do an outstanding job of operating a tree service, but you know you lack the knowledge, skills, savvy, and experience to properly market your tree service.
4. You would be thrilled to do LESS work, especially LESS hard work but make more money.
5. You are sick and tired of all the so-called advertising experts that sell advertising to tree services that never work.
6. The thought of another “slow time” with no work makes you sick to your stomach.

If you know in your heart you should be making more money, I’ve got the PROVEN, very different, marketing secrets that can blow the lid off your income almost overnight.

P.S. It doesn’t matter if you’re a “little guy” dragging a trailer around (that used to be me), working from a pickup… a one-man or one-crew operation… or a good-sized company. These systems have helped mom-and-pop operations as much as triple their incomes in just a couple of months. It’s also worked with many big companies to dramatically improve profits. My system is valuable even if you’re a franchise. It works anytime, anywhere, for anybody. Period. It’s proven, and I’ll send you the PROOF with my Free Report. Simply fax, call or e-mail me your name, company name, mailing address, and phone number, ask for my FREE REPORT and I will rush it out to you immediately.

Call (817)222-9494 ask for Cindy, or Fax 817-222-2174 or e-mail jpdavis@flash.net Thanks, John P. Davis

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Also looking for PHC technicians, foreman and climbers. Fax resumes to the following: Telephone: (214) 544-TREE (8733) Fax: (972) 569-8370 Mail: Advanced Tree Care, 590 N. Meandering Way, Fairview, TX 75069

Kinnucan Tree Experts & Landscaping Company located in Lake Bluff, IL, is searching for a Tree Care Sales Territory Manager. Qualified applicants must possess excellent oral and written communication skills, arborist certification, and minimum 3 years industry sales experience, degreed individual preferred. Must be driven to grow designated territory. Excellent base + commission. Benefit package includes medical, 401(k), tuition assistance, paid vacation and more. For immediate consideration, e-mail resume to kris@kinnucan.com or fax to 847-234-3260. View us at www.kinnucan.com

Four Seasons Tree Care is seeking a motivated individual with a minimum of 2 years’ climbing experience and a valid driver’s license to join our team of professionals. We are dedicated to quality workmanship and offer excellent wages, state-of-the-art equipment, incentives, benefits and a continuous learning environment. Your own transportation to our yard would be required. Forward resume to: Attention Ken Lund, Four Seasons Tree Care, 6282 Bloomington Rd., Stouffville, ON L4A 7X3 Fax: (416) 410-8770 8am-4pm. E-mail: ken@fourseasonstreecare.com

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Enjoy a wonderful lifestyle whilst working for New Zealand’s largest arboricultural service provider. Treescape Limited is seeking to fill a number of positions and requires true professionals to fill these roles:

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We require an experienced manager to ensure our company maintains its high compliance standards. Our operations are diverse, from grounds maintenance to general tree work, to large-scale land clearing. This position would suit a mature-minded individual with an understanding of all aspects of operational arboriculture and heavy machinery operations. Relevant qualifications and computer skills essential.

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This specialist position requires an experienced land-clearing manager with a working knowledge of heavy equipment in the clearing of trees and vegetation, predominantly on large construction sites. Requires excellent communication and relationship skills, experience in client negotiation at corporate level, an open strong personality and the ability to adapt to change.

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To fill a number of new, challenging roles, including residential, commercial, municipal and utility work. Genuine career prospects and exciting opportunities await the right persons.

We offer excellent terms and conditions for all positions, relocation packages and help with immigration. Don’t miss a great opportunity to join this dynamic company.

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Other Standards available include Pruning, Fertilization, Cabling & Bracing, Lightning Protection, and the newly released Management of Trees and Shrubs During Development.

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ment. Please call the Denver Office at (760) 727-3813 or fax (760) 727-3992. E-mail your resume to info@irawickes.com; fax (845) 354-3475, or snail mail us at Ira Wickes/Arborists, 11 McNamara Road, Spring Valley, NY 10977.

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Experienced tree climbers and plant health care tech needed. Top pay, full benefits and year-round employment. Please call the Denver Office at (303) 232-0666; fax (303) 232-0711 or Colorado Spring’s location at (719) 444-8800; fax (719) 630-3209 or apply online at mhttree@pcsyst.net and specify location.

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Growing mid-size San Diego-based tree service company hiring crew foremen, climbers and groundsmen; minimum 2 years’ experience, $15-$20 an hour, EOE. Certified Arborist and IPM/PHC. Benefits, drug screening. Must have valid driver’s license. Immediate openings, year-round work. Fax resume to (760) 727-3813 or call (760) 941-3992.

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If you are a results-oriented professional and looking for a career opportunity with a growing company, we want to talk to you! Visit our Web site at www.swingletree.com to submit an online application or send resume and salary history to Dave Vine at: Swingle Lawn, Tree and Landscape Care 8585 E. Warren Ave Denver, CO 80231. Phone: 888-266-6629, Fax (303)317-0157 E-mail: dvine@swingletree.com

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For career opportunity and confidential consideration, send or fax resume, including geographic preferences and willingness to relocate to: DeAngelo Brothers, Inc., Attention: Paul D. DeAngelo, 100 North Conahan Drive, Hazleton, PA 18201. Phone: 1-800-360-9333. Fax: (570) 459-2690. EOE/AAP M/F/D/DV

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Hand fed chippers — whole tree chippers — stump grinders — horizontal grinders (models from all major manufacturers) visit: www.banditchippers.com or call us at Bandit Industries, Inc., Remus, MI 49340. Ph: 1-800-952-0178 or (989) 561-2270

G & A Equipment, Inc. Knoxville, TN

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1984 Franklin skidder bucket with aerial lift 45 ft. Selling price $25,000. Call Mike at 1-800-858-0437 or (315) 323-2278.

Hardware and software by an arborist for the arborist. For more information about the industry’s best-selling package, call or write Arbor Computer Systems, PO Box 548, Westport, CT 06881-0548. Phone: (203) 226-4335; Web site: www.arborcomputer.com; e-mail: phannan@arborcomputer.com

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Letters

Customer service

(Continued from page 38)

The truck was in the final stages of repair. The truck was again destroyed. Jay Adams from Lift All worked with our company to secure a loaner truck from Lift All so that we could continue to work with DPL and Midwest Electric through the process of rebuilding a new truck. Now we were dealing with insurance companies and adjustors resulting from the accident and the fire. After many meetings, we were able to come to an agreement on the repair and purchase of a new truck. In April of this year, we took possession of a new 2005 bucket truck from Lift All.

We want to give credit to Lift All and especially Jay Adams for all his work, dedication and commitment to making this situation run smoothly and taking the time to meet personally with me, or take my phone calls; he certainly went above and beyond to make sure that my company was completely satisfied. He made sure we had a loaner truck at all times to take care of our customers and contracts. I will continue to take my business and refer my colleagues to Lift All, as they are committed to excellence in the bucket-truck business.

David P Furlong
Owner, Fitzwater Tree & Lawn Care
Greenville, Ohio

Better weather forecast

I enjoyed the article “Forecasting Work Using the Weather,” (May 2005 TCI) in which I was quoted.

One correction that your readers would probably appreciate – the Web address for finding recent reports of severe thunderstorm damage: www.spc.noaa.gov/climo (rather than the cpc site that was listed).

Greg Forbes
Severe Weather Expert
The Weather Channel

Free firewood?

I was back in Toronto for a visit with family. This day care centre in downtown Toronto had a parking lot with a maple tree. Notice the sign!

Could the photos be useful in your magazine? I found them humorous, sad and intriguing.

John P. Martyn, certified arborist, TCIA member since 1999, JPM Tree Service
North Vancouver, B.C., Can.

Treetop Soaring Web address

I saw an article in the March 2005 issue, Treetop Eco Tours Swing Into Colorado. I have tried the listed Web site in many combos and do not end up with the site. Could you forward to me a contact number, address or a site as I am an experienced climber and an avid railroad fan? This would be an experience to die for. Thanks.

James Rooney
via e-mail

Editor’s Note: Try www.soaringco.com.
Who’s telling your story?

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To make a contribution or find out more, call 877-758-4835 or visit www.projectevergreen.com.
In May, President Bush signed an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that included the Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act.

There seems to be a great deal of confusion about the details of the new law – and when members can actually count on seeing their workers.

At press time, the Department of Homeland Security has promised official guidance soon on when, where and how H-2B visa petitions can be filed.

Below are details you need to know about the H-2B visas for this year:

- You will be able to file new H-2B visa petitions with the Immigration Service starting on May 25.
- Any worker who has had an H-2B visa in any one of the prior three years is exempt from the H-2B cap. As the employer, you must certify that the employee is a repeat H-2B worker. “Certification” is not defined as yet.
- The Save Our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act applies for this year and next. Congress will need to act again next year for relief for future years.

Starting in federal fiscal year 2006 (H-2B visa petitions set to start on October 1, 2005 or later):

1.) The number of visas granted will be split seasonally, with 33,000 allotted for the first half of the year (10/1/2005 to 3/31/2006), and 33,000 for the second half of the year (4/1/2006 to 9/30/2006). This split does not apply to repeat H-2B workers.
2.) There will be a new “anti-fraud” fee of $150 per employer per petition.
3.) There will be new sanctions on employers for fraud and misrepresentation.

For details, TCIA members may wish to contact Foley Enterprises, a TCIA affinity partner that processes labor certification necessary to apply for H-2B work permits.

As a member of TCIA, anytime you purchase services from Foley Enterprises, 5 percent of your purchase is returned to the association. Half, 2.5 percent, is applied toward your next year’s membership dues. The other 2.5 percent helps offset development costs for new TCIA safety and education programs. To learn more about this member benefit, visit www.foleyenterprises.net or call 1-888-623-7285.

Don’t forget to mention that you are a TCIA member and would like to take advantage of this opportunity to reduce your future dues.
The future of the industry – the future of your business – is still in school.

If your tree care business is like most, probably your most immediate concern is where to find the employees to handle the workload you anticipate this season. As you find people to cope with short-term needs, you must also keep an eye on the future. That is why you will want to invest a few days out of your busy schedule this fall to participate at TCIA’s Student Career Days.

This year, Student Career Days and EXPO will be held Wednesday, Nov. 9 through Friday, Nov. 11, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in Columbus, Ohio. Due to the Wednesday-Friday schedule for his year’s EXPO, the Jobs & Internship Fair will be held on final day, Friday, rather than on the first day. This will enable collegiate students to participate without missing an extra day of classes.

Student Career Days is attended by more than 200 collegiate and vocational students from around the U.S. It is held in conjunction with TCI EXPO, the world’s largest conference and trade show for the tree care profession.

TCIA makes a pretty sizeable investment on your behalf to attract students to commercial arboriculture. Here are some of the major benefits of the EXPO experience that attract students from all over the U.S.

► Students can elect to compete in skills and knowledge events. Valuable prizes are awarded, and there is no cost to compete;
► Students and instructors may attend any of over 20 educational seminars for free;
► Students and their instructors may attend the three-day trade show and “tree demonstrations” for free;

The student field day, sponsored by Stihl Inc., is the competitive highlight of the show. The Job Fair is the only place where recruiting is allowed at TCI EXPO.

► Students attend the TCIA Jobs & Internship Fair to network and learn from some of the leading commercial tree companies in North America.

We know that as a busy owner or manager you stand to benefit a great deal from EXPO. While you are in Columbus, we invite your company to directly participate in the Jobs & Internship Fair. Buy a booth, bring your representatives and your promotional materials and hang out for half a day. You never know, it could help create a brighter future for your business.

Call 1-800-733-2622 for details on how to hire the next generation for your company.

EXPO

Columbus. Both properties are connected to the convention center. Book your hotel and travel arrangements now.

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Single/Double Occupancy: $89.99

(please reference the Tree Care Industry Association/TCI EXPO to ensure the preferred rate.)

Additional Hotel

The student field day, sponsored by Stihl Inc., is the competitive highlight of the show. The Job Fair is the only place where recruiting is allowed at TCI EXPO.

► Students and their instructors may attend any of over 20 educational seminars for free;

The future of the industry – the future of your business – is still in school.

Student Career Days and a Job Fair at TCI EXPO – engaging and hiring the next generation!

(tree care problem)

(tree care industry)

(tree care solution)
SAFETY COMMITTEE WORKING GROUPS DEVELOPING PLANS

TCIA’s Safety Committee met April 19 in Baltimore. Chairman Steve Chisholm welcomed 23 participants to the meeting, including five first-time attendees.

WORKING GROUP UPDATES

In the area of Standards & Best Work Practices, Andrew Salvadore said the group’s focus was on revision of TCIA’s Model Company Safety Program, and that it was concentrating on hazard tree assessment and rigging.

Member Dan Oberlies and others reported that new work site setup requirements are being implemented in a “patchwork quilt” fashion, state by state. The working group took action to make sure that MUTCD and ANSI/ISEA Z107 were adequately referenced in Z133 revision. Salvadore proposed publishing a list of links to provide members with access to state-by-state breakdown of requirements.

For Benchmarking, Peter Gerstenberger provided an update on staff efforts to move the revised survey to a web-based format. Joe Bones related that Bartlett had moved its entire accident reporting function to a Web-based (intranet) system using custom software developed with the assistance of a university. Mills explained the Voice for Trees political action committee’s efforts to enlist Sen. Judd Gregg’s assistance in obtaining data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Teaching/Mentoring group’s spokesperson, Peter Dubish, related that their activities will focus on two items, Associate Member involvement and a proposed Safety Mentor program. Gerstenberger related TCIA’s push to have more professional, safe work practices depicted in TCI Magazine’s advertising and among vendors at TCI EXPO and EXPO Spring. The committee was informed of efforts to improve the safety image at the Outdoor Demo Day in Long Beach. The group is still pushing forward with the Safety Mentor idea amid concerns over participant liability and the time commitment necessary to make the program effective.

Mobilizing Our Profession, led by Keith Sheriff, is attempting to get more companies to seek out information and/or membership from TCIA. Mills suggested that TCIA needs to provide a more comprehensive education on safety issues to companies that are encroaching on tree care and NOT getting this assistance from their trade associations. As an example, Gerstenberger cited a recent presentation he made to the Cape Cod Landscaper’s Association.

Member Paul
Markworth suggested as a strategy pushing the insurance industry to help contain landscaper’s incursion into tree care through audits and rate adjustments.

TCIA initiatives

Under the auspices of the OSHA Alliance, a jointly-developed Safety Trainer workshop is looking at a fall launch, probably at the OSHA Training Institute’s Arlington Heights, Ill., facility.

Gerstenberger explained that TCIA’s Products & Services department was focusing on revision of the EHAP program and its two videos, publishing the Crane Best Work Practices manual, and coming up with updated sessions for Tailgate to be released in “packages” of related topics. Members asked staff to be sure the Crane BWP addressed the California regulatory situation.

At the suggestion of Jim Pennefeather (Buckingham Mfg.), Oberlies and Gerstenberger attended an April 7 meeting of the Inter-Utility Overhead Trainer’s Association. It was hoped that TCIA might find some synergies and opportunities for collaboration between the organizations. They didn’t identify any tangible value in the short term.

For future consideration, members suggested “mechanized operations” and “tree felling” as possible areas to focus new Tailgate sessions.

Chisholm announced his intention of introducing the idea of harmonization of ANSI Z133 with ISO and HSE standards for chain saw operations. He emphasized to the group several times that he intended to promote this idea as an individual member of ASC Z133 and not as a representative of the TCIA Safety Committee nor as its chairman.

Conversation focused on perhaps the single most controversial issue in the harmonization agenda, the practice of one-handed chain saws. Members of the Committee overwhelmingly supported keeping the Z133 stance that one-handed chain saw use should not be allowed. Oberlies asserted that the employer already has the “greater hazard” defense to justify one-handed saw operation in certain circumstances. He and others felt that, “writing the exception into the standard” would encourage unsafe behaviors from operators reading the requirement out of context or in isolation. Chisholm asserted that making necessary one-handed use unlawful simply encouraged or accelerated non-compliance. The debate ended in an impasse.

Next Meeting

There will be a brief informational meeting scheduled in conjunction with the ISA Annual Conference in Nashville. The next full-day meeting will be Tuesday, October 18, again in Baltimore. Members should contact Peter Gerstenberger, peter@treecareindustry.org, if they wish to attend either or both of these meetings.
I have always been challenged with how to communicate to my customers exactly what I intend to do when I prune their trees. Somehow, throwing out the term, “class III canopy reduction” doesn’t seem to satisfy their need to know.

When they look into the tree, they are “blinded” by all the limbs and branches they see. They know that something needs to be done to get the trees off the roof, out of the gutters and away from the windows and walls. They can remember when the grass grew so much better underneath the tree than it does now, and they are tired of having to duck under low-hanging limbs and branches over the driveway or front walk.

I explain that I will elevate or raise the tree to let light through for the lawn and so that they won’t have to duck every time they mow or get out of the car. I explain that I will prune or remove the limbs encroaching on the house and garage. I make sure that they understand that we do not simply “hack them back” in a fashion similar to the look of war amputees; every cut will be at a clean crotch.

Still, I quite often have to be even more specific. I want the customer to be absolutely sure of what it is I am about to do to his or her tree and exactly how it will look when I am finished. After all, customers are the ones who have to write a check for my services and then live with the results. If my workmanship is excellent and the tree looks terrific, the tree as well as my customer will speak well of me for years to come.

I came up with a very fast way to communicate about the tree, even when I do it over the telephone. Here is what I say to them in some way, shape or form:

“Before I can go on, I have to draw an analogy between our bodies and the major parts of a tree. If the trunk of our bodies is analogous to the trunk of a tree and we stood on our heads, then the next biggest things sticking up in the air would be our legs. On a tree, the next smaller sized limbs growing off the legs could be called arms. Then you would have wrists, thumbs, fingers and “whiskers.”

I came up with a very fast way to communicate about the tree, even when I do it over the telephone. Here is what I say to them in some way, shape or form:

“For example, one itemized entry in my estimate might read something like this:

“Standing in front of house/facing from the street/red maple/left of driveway: Remove three low arms from right leg over the driveway to elevate and balance. Remove small leg encroaching on the front of the house, gutters and roof at main crotch at 6 feet. Remove two arms on house side of tree that are encroaching on bedroom windows, gutters and roof. One is on the major right leg at 8 feet. One is on the left leg at 12 feet. Remove all dangerous and unsightly deadwood, diseased wood and storm damage. Remove wrists, thumbs, fingers and whiskers crisscrossing back and forth in the upper canopy to reduce sway associated with wind resistance. Reduce the chances of snow and ice damage by alternate limb removal to reduce overall weight of limbs and help sunlight reach the turf below.”

When describing smaller ornamental trees, the same terms apply but everything is scaled down accordingly.

I use these same terms with my crew. They understand better what and where I want them to prune. It is also easier to communicate to non English-speaking crew members.

This technique allows me to write a “picture” of the tree and helps me with recall, even if the job comes in three months after I gave my estimate.

I hope this helps some of you “oak men” out there.

Robert Appelbaum, a six-year TCIA member, is president of Jackstraw, Inc. in Damascus, Maryland.
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Mass Arborists donate tree care on Arbor Day

On April 30 the Massachusetts Arborists Association (MAA) celebrated Arbor Day with their 26th annual volunteer project at World’s End in Hingham, Mass. The setting was spectacular, the hosts were appreciative, the weather cooperated, and the company was the best you’ll find.

More than 150 MAA members pruned, planted, transplanted, and removed an amazing array of mature shade trees throughout one of the nation’s most scenic & historic properties – all set against a dramatic view of Boston Harbor and the city’s skyline.

This year the MAA partnered with the Trustees of Reservations, who oversee the World’s End site. Since 1891, The Trustees’ conservation work has helped to protect more than 53,000 acres of open space across the state.

“The work contributed by the scores of volunteers [at Arbor Day] helped to preserve and make safe one of our most precious landscapes, which is visited and appreciated by tens of thousands of people each year,” said Steve Sloan, regional director of the Trustees of Reservations. “We are still awestruck by the quantity and quality of the work that was accomplished and know that it would have taken decades to accomplish the same without this amazing act of generosity,” he concluded.

Bob Maliby, MCA, of Matlby & Co., Inc. in Stoughton, Mass., and a 10-year TCIA member, served as chairman of the MAA’s 2005 Arbor Day committee. He was ably assisted by committee co-chair Dan Mayer, MCA, of Mayer Tree Service in Essex, Mass., a 12-year TCIA member, and other MAA leaders.

The MAA is a professional trade organization that serves the commercial arboriculture industry. The MAA advances the goals of its members through education, research support, certification, and promotion of the value of arboriculture to the public.
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I

It all began about 30 years ago when my dad started cutting and selling firewood on a part-time basis. Six or seven years ago we realized it was much more profitable to get paid for cutting the trees down instead of just selling the wood. In order to gain more knowledge in removing trees safely and trimming trees properly, we took classes, read books. And I received my arborist certification.

I was still in college at the time, so it was a part-time venture for us as the firewood had been for my dad. After I graduated I came home and began to climb full time. Six months later my dad quit his day job to work with me full time and a year later my brother came on. And everything was bliss, until ...

We had begun to advertise in a new way. We ordered signs to place in the front yard after each job. The problem was that our signs began disappearing and then reappearing at random places with an interesting design spray painted on them:

We would spend entire days plotting what we could do to get this particular competitor arrested or at least fined. The situation totally consumed us. We would continuously crack jokes about what kind of person would actually steal, paint and post competitors signs around the neighborhood. We were obsessed. Our families suffered, our sleep suffered and our peace of mind suffered. We were on edge.

Well this fired us up, especially my brother and I. As we thought about ways to retaliate, we lost sleep. We would spend entire days plotting what we could do to get this particular competitor arrested or at least fined. The situation totally consumed us. We would continuously crack jokes about what kind of person would actually steal, paint and post competitors signs around the neighborhood.

As Christians we knew this was not the right way to respond and after talking to older, wiser people we decided enough was enough. Someone needed to change and more than likely our competitor would not, so we did. We decided to try and love this guy instead of curse him in our hearts. When we see him driving around, which is probably once every couple of months, we wave. Our business is booming and we can barely keep up, which has also helped us deal with the whole situation in a positive way.

What is interesting is that when we finally did decide to love this guy he stopped taking our signs. He may continue the campaign in the future but if he does we’ll pray for grace to love him. We do not want to allow him to wreck us, our families or our business.

It may sound strange to say we loved him so let me clarify. We still don’t like him very much and we probably won’t send him a birthday present. As time goes on and we continue not responding negatively and being courteous we may actually begin to like him. Who knows, maybe there’s a gift certificate to the saw shop in store for him next year.

Christian Lindsay is an arborist and owner of Lindsay Tree Removal in Harleysville, Pa.
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