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Going Back and Coming Back...

The old sayings go that “you can’t go home again” or “you can’t go back,” and as the wise try to tell us, we can’t make the past the present. What we can do is to have the past inform the present, and carry what was meaningful to us into the present – if we invest in our people along the way.

I just got home from visiting my family and friends I made 24 years ago when I was a graduate student in England. I was blessed to have a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship for this experience and was charged to make speeches to clubs on both sides of the pond as the return for their investment in me. I spent many precious hours with incredible people who helped prepare me to be a professional.

What I gained was not only an education but relationships with people that have survived almost a quarter of a century – Rotary families who looked after me then and York Minster police and canons and vergers and nuns and students and university staff – people who still stop what they are doing to drive to another city and have lunch or dinner with me when I can get there. Is that going back? – perhaps in terms of trying to recapture a wonderful time – but more importantly, it’s bringing what was meaningful and treasured into the present – meeting these folks where they are now and relishing in the stories of their journeys, keeping meaningful relationships alive and continuing to learn and share together.

When we think about starting companies or starting to work for a tree care company, we often have shorter lived dreams than thinking about looking back 24 years later. We may simply need the money. We may want to be independent and work for ourselves. We may have the gleam in our eye of building something that can be passed on in our family, or we may want to be the next large force in the industry known across the nation or around the world. Whatever the thoughts at the beginning, the real recognition of what the journey is going to bring can only be seen from hindsight.

It’s those moments when we realize the person leading our sales team has been with us for 15 years, or the person who dragged brush 20 years ago is now managing the operation so and your family have more time together. It’s remembering when you first hired your second crew and the excitement that the first crew had that they were part of a growing enterprise now – and they’re still with you. It’s sitting down together at the company barbecue sharing stories that tie you together – the “Remember when…?” stories. Those moments together create bonds and forge an appreciation for the team that you and your family or the person who dragged brush 20 years ago is now managing the operation so and your family have more time together.

In order to have this perspective, recognizing from whence your company has come and what your people have and are doing to reach to the next level with you today, you have to step back. You have to make space in your life for something new – including new realizations – or life will cram every second full, and you simply cannot see. If you cannot see anymore, you cannot lead. There is a real difference between managing and leading. We can manage tasks and jobs and hires and insurance paperwork and bank relationships, but you can do those things every single day and not be leading your company and your people to new heights.

This is also true of the people that you have around you. If you don’t give them the opportunity to step away, rejuvenate, gain perspective and have some breathing room from the hectic pace of our work and personal lives, they will not be able to move from managers, minding the areas for which you have given them responsibility, to leaders.

So while we may not be able to go back to those special moments in the early days, or relive key moments when our companies have had watershed moments in their development, we can carry our people and our companies to new heights by stepping back. It’s then that we can truly come back with new insights to lead into a new day.

Cynthia Mills, CAE, CMC
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Chain saw operators have to be able to think on their feet (or in the saddle) and adjust to their surroundings. Accidents can be dramatically reduced, and productivity increased, when workers have the knowledge, training and the skill they need to operate a chain saw properly. The more they have developed the skills required to safely and productively carry out chain saw operations, the more successful and consistent the results will be. And as with any profession, it is vital that tree care workers be familiar with and abide by industry regulations, safety guidelines and best practices.

With today’s chain saw technology, safety, skill, productivity and compliance can be attained with a thorough understanding and ability to assess:
- A saw’s basic design and limitations
- Basic saw maintenance
- Reaction forces
- Wood fiber/hinge wood
- Tension, compression, torsion and potential spring poles
- Knowledge to formulate a felling/cutting plan
- The ability to skillfully work this plan

Chain saw operations
Operating a chain saw or attempting to fell a tree alone can be very dangerous. If it is an option, don’t work alone. Always wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, which includes a hard hat, eye protection, hearing protection and approved work boots.

Leg protection, such as chaps or chain saw pants, is required when running a chain saw on the ground and leg protection is strongly recommended when climbing with a chain saw and required in some jurisdictions/organizations.

Always be aware of the reaction forces that result when running a chain saw. When you cut with the bottom part of the bar, the saw tends to pull away from you and into the cut. When you cut with the top of the bar, the saw tends to push back toward you and out of the cut. When the lower front quadrant of the chain saw bar comes in contact with the wood, the reaction force is for the bar and the chain to be pulled into the wood. When the upper front quadrant (kickback quadrant) of the tip of the chain saw bar contacts an object, the chain saw reacts by rotating back toward you.

One reaction force can lead to another. For example:
When cutting with the top of the bar, the saw can be pushed back, exposing the kickback corner to the wood.

When cutting with the bottom of the bar, the saw can be pulled forward, pulling the kickback corner into the wood – in either case, causing a kickback.

Kickback occurs at a rate seven times faster than a human can react. Dodging the saw’s reaction is not an option. So, stay aware of the potential of reaction forces when you are cutting and always know where the kickback corner is.

When operating a chain saw, stand with your feet firmly planted. Always operate the chain saw with both hands on the saw. Your left hand should be on the upper han-
dle with your thumb wrapped around the handlebar. Use your body to brace the saw when practical and do not get into the habit of positioning yourself directly over the chain when you are cutting, in case of an unexpected kickback. Always engage the chain brake if you must take one hand off the saw to move a limb, or when taking more than two steps with the saw running.

Five-step felling plan
Daniel Webster defines an accident as an unplanned event. So, to avoid accidents, plan! When felling trees, it is vital to have and use a felling plan. A five-step felling plan that incorporates up-to-date cutting methods is widely used by professional chain saw operators worldwide. Using it will help you to achieve successful results consistently:

1. Identify height and hazards – Look for tree defects, decay, heavy lean, electrical conductors or any other characteristics of the tree that may affect the felling plan. Consider obstacles within the felling site, such as structures, pavement and outdoor furnishings. Some can be moved, if necessary; others will have to be avoided. Assess the strength and direction of the wind. Decide on the felling direction.

2. Assess the side lean – This often determines whether or not the hinge will hold and the “good” and “bad” sides of the tree on which the feller should stand when making the final cut.

3. Escape route – Always think about your escape route before you begin the felling operation. The escape route should be at a 45-degree angle opposite the felling direction. Be sure your escape route is clear of obstacles or hazards before beginning.

4. Hinge plan – The face-notch and hinge are critical to safe, accurate, consistent results. Plan the size, depth and placement of the notch. Determine the desired thickness and length of the hinge.

5. Back cut technique – The back cut is often taken for granted, yet is often the cause of felling accidents. Forward or back lean may determine what kind of back cut you will use: the straight forward back cut or the bore cut. The degree of forward or back lean will determine how many wedges and/or whether a pull rope will be necessary and how much power may be required to pull the tree over. Remember that if the tree is too thin, there may not be enough wood for a notch, hinge, bore cut and back/holding strap. In that case, it will be necessary to use “the straight forward back cut.”

Remember to finish the felling cut on the “good” side of the tree and use your escape route as soon as the tree begins to fall.

Equipment
Once you have worked through the planning process but before you begin cutting, decide on the equipment you will want to have on hand and make sure everything is in place and ready to go. What chain saw(s) will be best to use for this tree? Is it sharp, fueled and running properly? Do you have felling wedges on hand? Will you be using a pull rope and if so, is it properly set? Will you be using block and tackle for mechanical advantage?

Using a pull line
Using a pull line provides extra assurance that the tree will be felled in the desired direction. If a pull line is used, it must be set high enough in the tree to provide the needed leverage or mechanical advantage from the ground. Be sure that there are no significant defects in the tree below the pull line as pulling on the line could cause the top to break out when tension is applied.

Do not apply too much tension on the pull line and do not apply tension too soon. Using a truck to pull trees is a recipe for disaster because there is no way to know if you might break the rope (as many people have learned the hard way). Applying tension too soon can cause the tree to barber chair (split vertically) or cause the hinge to break rather than bend. Remember, the main function of the pull line is to pull the tree past center so that gravity will then bring it to the ground and the hinge will do the steering. Avoid creating a pull that can cause a twisting action on the tree causing the hinge to be twisted off the stump and
the tree to fall in the wrong direction.

It is possible to install the pull line without climbing the tree. Setting a throw line and then installing a larger pull rope can be readily accomplished with practice. A running bowline can be tied from the ground and then pulled into place. Or, many times it is easier and quicker to simply tie off one end of the rope just above the felling cut.

Estimating a tree’s height

A very important part of felling trees is the ability to estimate the height in order to determine the approximate position of the tree once it hits the ground. Accurate height estimation also allows you to avoid hitting obstacles and to determine if felling the whole tree is possible in a given situation. Remember that the height of the felling cut will affect the position of the tree when it reaches the ground.

There are various tools and instruments to help determine a tree’s height. One very handy field technique is the stick method. Hold a straight stick such that the distance from your eye to your hand equals the distance from your hand to the top of the stick. Hold your arm horizontally and the stick vertically. Walk forward or back until the distance from your hand to the top of the stick is proportional to the distance from the felling cut to the top of the tree. This will be the approximate point where the top of the tree will land. If the tree is not truly vertical and/or the ground is not level, adjustments need to be made. Adjustments need to be made for sloping grades and you must be able to see the true top of the tree.

Another similar measuring method takes place off to the side of the tree and back so you can see the top of the tree. Using the stick, held at arm’s length, measure the height of the tree and rotating the stick parallel to the ground, notice where the top of the tree will land.

No matter what method you use, you must use it regularly in order to learn how to use it well and correct for the variables, especially in tight situations.

The face notch

The traditional, 45-degree face notch was developed many years ago. It consists of a flat cut on the bottom and an angled cut down into it creating a 45-degree face notch. One limitation of this notch is that

Remember, clear, concise, complete communication is a key ingredient for team safety as well as productive work flow. Every worker on the job must have a clear understanding of his or her role.

the tree can only fall 45 degrees before the notch closes and the hinge breaks, causing a loss of control. The limitations were set years ago by the tools available, i.e. crosscut saws and axes. A crosscut saw (especially in those days) will only cut efficiently across the grain and 90 degrees to it. An axe (as some of us old timers know only too well) cut most efficiently at 45 degrees to the grain of the wood, resulting in a 45 degree opening that was known as a common notch or 45-degree face notch.

With today’s (chain saw) technology, the limitations have changed dramatically and it is now possible to significantly increase safety and productivity. The open face notch is defined as a face notch that is open 70 degrees or more. It allows the worker to take full advantage of the hinge (provided sound hinge wood exists) with a greater degree of control because the hinge does not break until the tree is almost on, or on, the ground, if at all.

Because of this greater degree of control, the back cut can be made level with the apex of the open face notch, unlike the back cut with a 45-degree/conventional notch, which requires a stepped back cut to help keep the tree on the stump when the face notch closes and breaks while tree is only about half way to the ground. The open face notch is a classic example of modifying technique in order to maximize technology, safety and productivity.

The traditional rule of thumb for the depth of the notch is one third the depth of the tree. Another technique to set the depth of the notch is the percent-of-diameter method. The length of the hinge should be approximately 80 percent of the tree’s diameter at the cut. This will vary depending on the felling direction because many trees are not really round or symmetric in cross section. The depth of the notch may influence the length of the hinge. When felling a full tree, avoid cutting the notch deeper than 33 percent of the diameter of the tree at the cut. Often it is not even necessary for the face notch to be made one-third, or 33 percent, deep to establish a hinge length that is 80 percent the diameter of the tree. On the other hand, some situations, such as notable side lean, may justify a longer hinge length.

Make the top cut first when making the face notch. Line up the top cut while bracing your body against the tree and facing the desired felling direction. Use the felling sites that are provided on today’s professional chain saws. Avoid placing the hinge where there are cracks, cavities, knots or decay as these factors can severely limit the amount of actual hinge wood or the ability of the wood fiber to provide a strong hinge. Use the upper cut as a sight through which you can line up the lower cut, and avoid sawing too far and creating a bypass. Bypassing cuts into the crucial fibers of the hinge must be avoided. Bypass cuts reduce the effectiveness of the hinge and will cause it to fail prematurely. Avoid bypass cuts by sighting through the top cut and checking both ends of the notch frequently while cutting. (Remember to use the chain brake any time you do not have both hands on the saw)
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The hinge

A proper hinge causes the tree to be directed on the stump by the hinge wood in the desired direction of fall. If the hinge is the proper thickness, the wood fibers will fail gradually and evenly under tension in the back of the hinge and under compression in the front of the hinge as the tree falls. The rule of thumb for hinge thickness when felling trees is 7 percent to 10 percent of the tree’s diameter at the cut depending on the flexibility of the wood fiber, moisture content, temperature (frozen wood) and the overall diameter of the tree. Hinge thickness is reduced for thicker trees and drier wood fiber.

A skilled operator will use the hinge to his or her advantage depending on the felling conditions. Do not cut into the predetermined hinge when making the back cut, as this can result in immediate loss of control.

Now, let us continue by more closely examining back cut methods, completing the hinge, the release and the escape:

Conventional back cut and 45-degree face notch

With a conventional back cut, the hinge is formed as the back cut approaches the apex of the face notch on both sides, though slightly higher. It can be especially difficult to establish a predetermined hinge with a forward leaning tree or limb as it may begin to fall before you can finish your back cut!

Position yourself and orient the chain saw bar to be level with the apex of the face notch on both sides and “stepped” slightly higher (typically 1-3 inches) than the apex of the notch, leaving a step to reduce the tendency of the tree to kick back off the stump toward the operator when the hinge breaks.

Remember, when using a 45-degree notch opening, the face notch will close and the hinge will break while the tree is only about half way over and hinge control is lost at that point.

Open face notch/70 degrees or greater

The open face notch is defined as “a face notch that is open to 70 degrees or more,” and it can allow the hinge to work longer (provided sound hinge wood exists) with a greater degree of control because the hinge does not break until we want it to – if at all.

Because of this extra control, the back cut can be made level with the apex of the open face notch – unlike the “stepped back cut” we must use with a 45-degree face notch.

Back cut: The bore cut

The bore cut is another way of making the back cut and establishing the hinge.

Have a felling plan

Having a carefully determined felling plan and skillfully working your plan will help assure a safe, efficient felling operation with precision results!

The 5 step felling plan can offer consistently predictable and measurable results:

1. Height and hazards (access and identify)
2. Lean assessment of the tree relative to the landing zone. (Side, forward or back lean)
3. Escape route (access, identify, clear in advance and use it!)
4. Hinge plan (hinge thickness, face notch opening and depth)
5. Back cut plan (Bore cut release: establish and complete the hinge, then release the tree)

Using the lower front quadrant of the bar and chain to “bore/plunge” the saw into the tree, the cutter/feller can establish the felling hinge before the release cut is made. Though it does require education, training and practice, it presents some clear and distinct advantages. One advantage is that it can virtually eliminate the possibility of “barber chairing,” a term for what can take place when a tree splits vertically upward from the back cut before the hinge is completed. The tree will typically pivot at some point up the split, causing the back section to kick back from the cut out and up toward the person felling the tree – then usually crashing to the ground in a very dangerous and uncontrolled way. Barber chairing is most likely to occur when felling a tree with heavy lean or where significant tension and compression forces exist in the marginal fibers of the tree trunk or section being cut. However structural defects (decay, cracks, etc.) and environmental factors (wind, vines, etc.) can contribute to the failure of a stem while it is being cut. So, during Step 1 of the felling plan – Hazards! – always inspect the tree carefully for structural defects, consider wind speed and direction, and inspect for and remove any vines or limbs that may be interlocked with other trees.

Another advantage of the bore cut tech-
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nique is that the predetermined hinge can be completely established to the desired thickness while the tree stays locked on the stump by the back strap. Thus the integrity and condition of the hinge can be assessed before releasing the tree, giving you the opportunity to make any final adjustments before actually felling the tree. Or possibly allowing you to change your mind and start over, if something is going wrong, right up until the moment of release.

Starting corner
Before practicing the bore cut, your chain saw, bar and chain must be serviced and cutting properly. You must understand the concept of the “starting corner.” The starting corner is the lower front quadrant of the tip of the bar and chain. When making a bore cut, always start cutting into the wood with the starting corner to avoid kickback.

Kickback corner
The kickback corner is the upper quadrant of the tip of the chain saw bar. Start cutting with the chain saw at full throttle and avoid contacting the tree with the kickback corner when beginning the cut and until the entire tip of the bar and chain have bored into the wood where it is unable to kick back.

Executing the bore cut
Bore into the tree (several inches) behind the apex of the notch. Be sure to start the cut at the starting corner of the chain saw bar. Start the cut well behind the desired position of the hinge! Then, once you have bored into the wood and through the tree, carefully cut to the desired thickness of hinge leaving a strap of wood that will continue to hold the tree in place.

Always finish your cutting on the “good side” of the tree. The side toward which the tree leans is considered the “bad” side of the tree. So, if you are cutting a tree that is thicker than the length of your bar, you will want to start your cut from the bad side first (no more than 50 percent to avoid pinching) so that you can finish the cut on the good side of the tree. It is not necessary for the back cuts to meet exactly in the center; as long as the cuts overlap, the wood fiber will separate vertically.

If the tree is larger in diameter than the length of your chain saw bar, bore cut only about 50 percent through from the bad side of the tree and establish your predetermined hinge thickness on that side. Then, bore cut the remainder of the way through from the good side of the tree and establish your predetermined hinge thickness on that side, slightly overlapping the first cut and out toward the back of the tree, leaving a “holding strap” of wood that will continue to hold the tree in place.

Now that you have established and completed the desired hinge thickness behind the apex of the face notch, and cut back from the hinge on both sides of the tree leaving a strap of wood at the back of the tree opposite the direction of fall, it is time to execute the final cut.

The final cut releases the holding strap of wood allowing the tree to fall. Turn off the saw and move away from the tree through your pre-established escape route – at a 45-degree angle opposite the felling direction – to a safe position as soon as you make the final cut! Remember to check and clear the path for your escape route ahead of time if necessary.

Felling wedges
An often-overlooked tool for felling trees is the felling wedge. It is a good idea to have a couple of good wedges available whenever felling trees. Placed appropriately, a wedge can prevent the chain saw bar from becoming pinched in the back cut, particularly if the tree has some back lean.

Lifting a tree one-inch with a wedge at the back cut can move the top of a tree several feet. The amount that the tree top can be moved depends on the height and girth of the tree.

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Summary

Using a planning process and a carefully determined felling plan is the foundation for a safe and efficient felling operation. It is important to plan the entire felling operation before beginning to cut. Always check for hazards and obstacles that may affect the felling operation. Consider the height, spread and lean of the tree when deciding how, when and where to fell a tree.

Keeping both hands on the saw at all times unless the chain break is engaged, walking with a running chain saw only when the chain break is engaged, and understanding the reactive forces of the bar and chain are important parts of handling a chain saw safely.

Using pull ropes and establishing a mechanical advantage can make the difference between a routine and a difficult felling operation. Many of the intricacies of installing ropes and setting up rigging for mechanical advantage were not within the scope of this article, but do merit more in-depth study.

Knowing how to estimate the height of a tree in order to determine whether or not it will fit into an acceptable drop zone without causing unwanted damage is a vital part of making the decision between a tree felling scenario or having to climb and dismantle a tree in sections.

The opening size, angle and placement of the felling notch are critical in determining the felling plan. The hinge controls the fall of the tree and the back cut sets up the hinge. If you have always used the common, 45-degree notch, give the open face notch a try. It has many advantages, primarily increasing control and safety in the felling operation. And, do not dismiss the bore cut as a logger’s technique. Once mastered, the bore cut’s many benefits will become evident.

As always, the overriding consideration when felling trees is safety. Although this is an operation that can be inherently dangerous, education, training, adherence to safety regulations and today’s precision tree felling methods and best practices can all but eliminate the risk. However, if a tree is storm damaged, has extremely heavy side lean or if a tree has been let stand dead for so long it is decayed beyond the point of any remaining wood fiber for a hinge, it may be necessary to dismantle the tree by other means.

An arborist is a tree care professional who is able to diagnose a tree problem or issue, prescribe the best treatment options and/or actions, and carry out or direct the correct treatment or action. As a professional, one of our first responsibilities is to safety and best practice. Knowing when to say no to a person with the wrong idea – co-worker, boss, client or whoever – and being able to prescribe and describe the correct treatment or action is what defines us as professional!

Please climb safe, cut safe and rig it right – and we’ll see you at the top!

Ken Palmer is president of ArborMaster, Inc. ArborMaster trainers will provide skills demonstrations at the tree in the center of the trade show floor during TCI EXPO 2008 in Milwaukee in November.
New benefit program for TCIA Members Only! NOW Enrolling!

NEW programs are now being offered to you because of your membership in TCIA. It is Open Enrollment time for the TCIA Limited Benefit Program! This is an exclusive offer for TCIA member companies. These plans are available to all active employees and their eligible dependents, but may not be available in all states.

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If you would like to offer these benefits to your employees, Call 800-733-2622 for more information.

Not a TCIA Member?
Call the Membership Department at the number above to see how you can start taking advantage of these and many more TCIA member benefits!
Shigo’s Little Yellow Book Now in Spanish

Pruning Trees Near Electric Utility Lines, known throughout the tree care industry as “the little yellow book,” started with a great idea from Dr. Alex Shigo; to provide a concise, compact guide to teach utility-line workers how to properly prune and care for trees near power lines. This widely popular booklet, which recently topped having more than one million copies in print, is now available as a Spanish/English side-by-side pocket guide. This version has the author’s familiar drawings with English text on the left page, and the same pictures but with Spanish text on the right. This new edition makes the information available to those who would prefer a Spanish language version of this industry-standard reference. An asset for line workers, trainers and safety instructors as well as city tree planners and even homeowners, Dr. Shigo’s booklet shows the proper pruning techniques to preserve the health and safety of the tree. Contact Shigo and Trees, Associates LLC at (360) 862-1869 or via www.shigoandtrees.com.

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Morbark’s new biomass chipper

Morbark’s new Model 40/36 Whole Tree Chipper is a compact, affordable and productive drum chipper specifically geared for the biomass industry. Equipped with the same internal drive as on Morbark horizontal grinders and an extra wide feed opening, the Model 40/36 easily handles brushy tops and limbs. At 8 feet, 6 inches wide, this unit is transportable and requires no permits to move. It also offers the lowest fuel consumption in the industry per ton of chips produced. The 36-inch-diameter by 40-inch-wide drum holds eight knives in a staggered configuration. Morbark’s IQAN system monitors engine parameters as well as hydraulic pressures and temperatures and also allows for utilization of remote diagnostics. Power options are available up to 700 hp CAT or John Deere. Wireless remote control and four hydraulic stabilizers complete the package. Contact Morbark at 1-800-831-0042 or via www.morbark.com.

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US Praxis Wood Chipper

US Praxis Inc.’s new wood chipper, aptly named The Wood Chipper, is small enough to fit through a standard 36-inch gate but has enough capacity to handle 6-inch limbs. Featuring heavy duty commercial grade components, this machine has the functionality of larger, more expensive 6-inch-capacity chippers at less cost. Painted with a high-quality powder coating for long lasting exterior durability, the exit chute rotates 180 degrees from the operator, and the flywheel will not engage unless the top cover is closed. Additional features include the easy maintenance of a gravity feeder, a 24 hp Honda V-Twin engine, an integrated six-gallon, steel gas tank, a 24-inch flywheel with two double-edged, 8-inch blades, a heavy-duty commercial centrifugal clutch, and a patent-pending cutter block and hopper (mulching-detangler) system that will not jamb. Contact U.S. Praxis at 1-888-316-8200 or (worldwide) 815-899-9700, or via www.uspraxis.com.

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Mobile Awareness

Mobile Awareness LLC’s new SenseStat Wired Obstacle Detection Sensor System is geared toward helping prevent costly backing accidents for commercial trucks with trailers and utility vehicles. Activated automatically when reverse gear is engaged, the driver is alerted to objects behind their vehicle with both an audible (active) and visual indicator (LED display). The waterproof sensors work in all weather conditions and provide the location of an obstacle (Zone Discrimination) within four (4) individual areas behind the vehicle, accurate to within one inch. Developed using a leading-edge sensor technology, the system is economical to install and maintain. The waterproof sensors and ECU (electronic control unit) mount easily on the rear of the truck or trailer. The dash mounted warning display unit (WDU) connects to the ECU via a single waterproof cable that installs under the vehicle. A single two-wire connection completes the installation. Contact Mobile Awareness at 1-866-653-5036 or via www.mobileawareness.com.

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Reading Truck Body hires Keith Barr as Director of Forestry Products

In a move that the company says signals its re-emergence into the tree care industry market, Reading Truck Body has hired Keith Barr as director of Forestry Products. The hiring signifies Reading’s recommitment to the manufacture of forestry bodies, a market segment in which it has participated in the past.

Barr, with more than 25 years of experience in the forestry body industry, is working with company engineers to refine the design of Reading’s chipper body, which it has manufactured for more than two decades. Last employed by Ohio-based Arbortech, Barr also will be responsible for sales and marketing of the new forestry body, which is expected to be introduced in November 2008.

“We are thrilled to have Keith as part of the Reading team,” says Jim Kraschinsky, executive vice president of Sales and Marketing. “He brings experience and knowledge in both the sales and the technical sides of this business, and he is well respected throughout the industry. His hiring is perfect timing as Reading re-emerges in the forestry body segment with a completely updated product.”

Barr, of Wooster, Ohio, also will participate in the Reading Truck Body’s Go Green initiative – an intensive company-wide move toward making both its products and manufacturing practices more environmentally friendly. The company’s reentry into the forestry body segment is part of a coordinated plan to increase its visibility as an environmentally oriented company.

Reading Truck Body, LLC is headquartered in Reading, Pa.

Scott Jamieson joins Bartlett Tree Experts

The F.A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company has hired Scott Jamieson, former president and CEO of The Care of Trees, Inc., as VP corporate partnerships and national recruiting. This role was previously held by Frank Heisinger, who passed away last year.

“Frank was an integral part of our company,” says Robert Bartlett Jr., chairman and CEO of Bartlett Tree Experts. “While no one can replace Frank, Scott will bring a new energy and vision to the role. His business experience as well as his existing industry connections will be valuable assets moving forward.”

“I’ve always respected Bartlett and been impressed with Bartlett people – people like Frank Heisinger, who treated me as a welcomed friend even as a competitor. To me, it’s all about people and that’s part of what attracted me to Bartlett,” says Jamieson.

In his new role, Jamieson will develop strategic relationships in the tree care and green industries and with other organizations that focus on landscape management. He will be an active participant in industry associations, maintaining a national presence for Bartlett while also facilitating interaction between these groups and Bartlett arborists on a local level. He will also be the face of Bartlett at industry trade shows and events.

Jamieson will also oversee Bartlett’s national recruiting efforts, establishing recruiting programs, teams and models and tracking development of recruited employees. He will also work closely with schools participating in the Bartlett Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by Bartlett Tree Experts to support the development of future arborists.

“I’ve known Scott for several years and he shares many values with Bartlett, one being a commitment to people” said Greg Daniels, president of Bartlett Tree Experts. “He believes that training and development are vital to a company’s growth. We’ve seen his expertise in this area benefit The Care of Trees over the past 20 years and now he’ll have an opportunity to put those skills to work at Bartlett.”

Jamieson worked his way up from an entry-level position at The Care of Trees in 1989 to CEO in 2002. He led the company to record sales growth and spearheaded efforts to expand into new markets. He’s been recognized for his work in leadership development as well as safety.

He is a board member of the Tree Care Industry Association and the National Safety Council and is a former board member for PLANET. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Urban Forestry from Purdue University, a master’s degree in urban forestry from Michigan State University and an MBA from DePaul University’s Kellstadt School of Business.

Jamieson will be based out of Bartlett’s office in Northbrook, Illinois. He resides with his wife and two children in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Vermeer enters distribution agreement with Gyro-Trac

Vermeer Corporation has entered into a distribution agreement with Gyro-Trac Manufacturing, located in Summerville, S.C., to distribute the flagship models of Gyro-Trac’s line of mulching machines.

Gyro-Trac, founded in 1995, manufactures purpose-built, tracked mulching machines that are used in all types of land-clearing, vegetation and forestry management applications.

“We are thrilled to be associated with Vermeer Corporation and its world-class global dealer network,” says Bruce Coy, president of Gyro-Trac. “This agreement will offer customers enhanced access to our technology, backed by the industry-leading Vermeer service support.”

The Vermeer network of independent dealers will have the option of adding the Gyro-Trac product line to their overall mix of products.

“Both companies recognized the mulching technology developed by Gyro Trac aligns well with the environmental and recycling initiatives of Vermeer,” says Mike Byram, senior director of environmental solutions with Vermeer Corporation.
Events & Seminars

October 6 - 10, 2008
Tree Climbing School
Penn State Cooperative Extension
Brandywine Battlefield Park, Chadds Ford, PA
Contact: Cheryl Bjornson; (610) 696-3500

October 7-8, 2008
Climbing Methods & Best Practice
Two-day Hands-On Training Module (Spanish speaking)
New York City, NY
Contact: (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

October 8, 2008
Tree Decay: Identification, Assessment and Mgt.
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156 or 125; jlm@pobox.upenn.edu

October 9, 2008
MGIA Test-n-Tune/Compliance 2008
Shelby Township, MI
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

October 12-14, 2008*
New England Chapter ISA 42nd Annual Conference
Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, ME
Contact: www.newenglandisa.org

October 14-16, 2008
Climbing Methods & Best Practice
Richmond, VA
Contact: info@arbormaster.com; (860) 429-5028; www.arbormaster.com

October 15, 2008
Oaks: Important Characteristics and Health Threats
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156 or 125; jlm@pobox.upenn.edu

October 23, 2008
Urban & Community Forestry in Connecticut Conf.
MountainRidge, Wallingford, CT
Contact: (860) 424-3178; www.CTUrbanforestcouncil.org

October 24-26, 2008*
NJ Shade Tree Federation 83rd Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ
Contact: Donna Massa (732) 246-3210; njshadetreefederation@worldnet.att.net; www.njstf.org

October 25, 2008
Protecting & Supporting Veteran Trees Workshop
Andersonville National Historic Site
Andersonville, GA
Contact: www.GeorgiaArborist.org

October 28, 2008
Pruning Deciduous Trees
Morris Arboretum, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156 or 125; jlm@pobox.upenn.edu

November 1, 2008
21st Annual Woodland Owners Conference
NJ Forestry Association
Hickman Hall, Cook Campus, Rutgers University,
New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: (908) 832-2400; info@njforestry.org

November 4-5, 2008
IL Arborist Assoc. Annual Conf. & Trade Show
 tínley Park, IL
Contact: www.ILArborist.org; (877) 617-8887; IAA@wi.ur.com

November 11-12, 2008*
Certified Treecare Safety Professional-CTSP Workshop
In conjunction with TCI EXPO 2008
Milwaukee, WI
Contact: 1-800-733-2622; www.tcia.org

November 13-15, 2008*
TCI EXPO 2008*
Milwaukee, WI
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org; www.tcia.org

November 19, 2008
Evaluating Trees for Hazards
Morris Arboretum,
Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156 or 125; jlm@pobox.upenn.edu

December 3, 2008
ISA Cert. Arborist, Utility & Municipal Spec. Exams
Hartshorn Arboretum,
Millburn, NJ
Contact: Matt (609) 625-6021; www.isa-arbor.com

December 6, 2008
NAISA Work Day:
Cross Estate Gardens, NJ Hist. Garden Foundation
Bernardsville, NJ
Contact: Trevor Hovecke (908) 581-9009; treedr@verizon.net

December 9, 2008
Maintaining Tree Health Morris Arboretum,
Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Jan McFarlan (215) 247-5777 x156 or 125; jlm@pobox.upenn.edu

For the most up to date calendar information, visit www.tcia.org → news → industry calendar
January 14-15, 2009
MD Arborist Assoc. Winter Recertification Seminars
14: Mgt. & Business; 15 Pesticide Recertification
Turf Valley Resort & Conf. Ctr., Ellicott City, MD
Contact: Vanessa Finney (410) 321-8082;
www.mdarborist.com

January 21, 2009*
Connecticut Tree Protective Assoc. Annual Meeting
Plantsville, CT
Contact: www.CTPA.org; cmdonnelly@aol.com

January 25-30, 2009
2009 Mid-Atlantic Horticulture Short Course
The Founders Inn,
Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: mahsc.org; (757) 523-4734

January 26-27, 2009*
44th Annual PennDel Shade Tree Symposium
Lancaster Host Resort, Lancaster, PA
Contact: www.penndelisa.org

February 1-3, 2009*
Wisconsin Arborist Assoc. Annual Conf.
Green Bay, WI
Contact: Josh DePouw www.waa-isa.org

February 4-6, 2009*
New England Grows
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center,
Boston, MA
Contact: Mary Simard mary@NEGrows.org;
(508) 653-3009; www.NEGrows.org

February 8-12, 2009*
Winter Management Conference 2009*
Westin & Sheraton Grand Bahama Island Our Lucaya
Resort, Bahamas
Contact: Deb Cyr 1-800-733-2622; cyr@tcia.org;
www.tcia.org

February 11-13, 2009*
ISA Ontario Annual Meeting
London, ON
Contact: www.ISAONTARIO.com; 1-888-463-2316;
info@isaontario.com

February 19-23, 2009
Advanced Landscape Plant IPM PHC Short Course
University of Maryland , College Park, MD
Contact: akeoiman@umd.edu
www.raupplab.umd.edu/conferences/AdvLandscape/

February 22-24, 2009*
Ohio Tree Care Conference
Columbus, OH
Contact: www.ohiochapterisa.org

March 3-4, 2009
MGIA’S 22nd Annual Trade Show & Convention
Rock Financial Showplace, Novi, Michigan
Contact: MGIA (248) 646-4992; www.landscape.org

March 19, 2009
Garden State Tree Conference Annual NJAISA
Conference and ISA Cert. Exam
Cook Campus Ctr, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ
Contact: www.isa-arbor.com

* Indicates that TCIA staff will be in attendance
Altec Environmental Products (AEP) offers an extensive line-up of high-quality wood chippers from 6" to 18" capacity that are rugged, innovative and designed to help crews work "Safer & Smarter". Each control-feed chipper comes standard with the exclusive and patented "Panic Bar". It's this type of innovation and years of experience that make AEP a leader in tree care equipment.

For more information on products, please call 1.800.269.5188 or email: chippersales@altec.com. For information on financing, please call 1.866.624.4093.
Every year since 1989 a German organization has been declaring a “Tree of the Year” to make the public aware of the ecological or symbolic significance of some tree that grows in Germany, and to publicize and lobby for the ones that are rare or threatened. The Tree of the Year 2008 is the English walnut (Juglans regia).

The guiding spirit behind the Baum des Jahres is Dr. Silvius Wodarz, 78, a retired forestry official and educator who is dedicated to environmental protection. The selection of the 2008 tree was announced in October 2007 at a ceremony at the Berlin Zoo. Dr. Wodarz opened the event by proclaiming, “We need to concern ourselves more with this typical house tree, our good old friend.”

Other events at the ceremony included the planting of a walnut tree on the zoo grounds, a message from the German President, a band concert, the appearance of “Santa” with a sackful of walnuts, and a sampling of some bread and soup containing walnuts.

Dr. Wodarz was inspired 20 years ago by a Bird of the Year program of other environmental organizations. He is chairman of the “Kuratorium,” a group supported by numerous forestry and environmental organizations. Previous trees of the year have included the beech, yew, Norway maple, mountain ash, juniper and horse chestnut.

The walnut tree is the last to bloom in the spring and doesn’t have attractive blossoms. It’s the first to shed its leaves in the fall and there is little of the colorful autumnal display one expects of a deciduous tree. So why choose it?

The answer is twofold: it produces just about the best lumber and the best nuts one could ask. The wood, being hard and tight-grained, can be beautifully polished and is prized for furniture and rifle stocks. Burls, a nuisance in most kinds of lumber, are prized with walnuts. They make nice bowls and other turned pieces, and are attractive as a veneer.

And the nut needs no introduction to most people. It’s a nice snack, makes a tasty liqueur and is an ingredient in cakes, pies, ice cream and lots of other goodies. The walnut husks are also useful; producing a dark brown dye that is used for coloring fabrics and other purposes. The husks will stain even if you just touch them, so always wear gloves when picking them and never put them in your pocket.

The English walnut originated in southeastern Europe and Asia. It was introduced to western and northern Europe at least by Roman times, and to the western hemisphere more than 200 years ago. It’s widely cultivated in the North Temperate Zone, in Europe, California and China, and has more recently spread to the South Temperate Zone, to Australia and New Zealand. The name English walnut is somewhat of a misnomer, deriving from the fact that the British merchant marine once controlled the distribution of it in Europe.

Outside of the United Kingdom and America it is more commonly called the
Persian walnut, since it is native to Persia (Iran). The English word walnut reflects the fact that the tree is not native to Britain. It stems from the Celtic weallhnutu, meaning “foreign nut.” The scientific name Juglans derives from its Latin name, jovis glans, or “Jupiter’s acorn,” meaning more or less a nut fit for a god.

Though there are some 20 species of walnut trees, the English walnut is overwhelmingly preferred for its nut, since it has a large kernel and a comparatively thin shell. Much of the lumber also comes from the English walnut, though the closely related black walnut (Juglans nigra), native to North America, also is good for lumber. The black walnut is the only other species that is cultivated extensively. Its nuts are edible, but are smaller and have a very hard shell. So most of the nuts consumed by Americans are English walnuts, though it is common to graft English walnuts onto the roots of black walnuts, which, being native, are more tolerant of the American soil and pests. Most of America’s nuts are grown in California.

The tree grows 40 to 60 feet in height and width and has a rounded to spreading shape to its canopy. When young it is vulnerable to spring frosts, but it can live 150 years. It was much more common in Germany 100 years ago, but its numbers have declined considerably because they haven’t been replanted. It is pollinated by the wind and needs lots of light, and so does best when standing alone. This is why it is referred to as a house tree, one that is nice to have in the yard. The fact that it has leaves only five months a year can be an asset around a house. It provides shade in the summer when it is wanted and lets the sunshine in during the spring and fall. In a letter to the Kuratorium Web site www.baum-des-jahres.de (German), one man said the presence of a walnut tree on the property was one of the main reasons he bought a house.

The walnut was probably mainly responsible for the development of the nutcracker, something that is very special in Germany. Classic wooden nutcrackers from the Erzgebirge region take the form of a brightly painted king, soldier or some other stern authority figure. He has huge painted teeth, an upward curling moustache and a nutcracking mouth that reaches to his waist when open. A “nutcracker” also visited the Berlin Zoo ceremony.

In connection with the Tree of the Year, the Kuratorium organization is selling a number of walnut wood souvenirs; a pendant, a pencil box containing two walnut-encased ballpoints, a desk basket and a wooden “badge” that declares the wearer to be a tree friend. All of the wooden items picture a walnut tree or its pinnate leaves, and the pendant pictures a squirrel about to attack a walnut. There have been a number of other walnut tree plantings throughout the country, and a competition to find the country’s thickest walnut tree.

And, there is a very large amount of walnut material on the kuratorium’s German-language Web site. It includes an opportunity to order the souvenirs and some brochures on the walnut tree, including one for children. There is also help for those who wish to plant a walnut tree; tips on how to do it (you can even start with a leftover nut from Christmas) and a list of dealers from whom you can buy a sapling. There are recipes for cakes and other foods containing walnuts, a fairy tale for the kids entitled The Princess From the Walnut Tree, and a great deal of scientific information on the tree, its leaves, blossoms, nuts and seeds. There are also some fan letters in praise of the tree.

The Tree of the Year for 2009 was slated to be announced at the Berlin Zoo this month, in October 2008. Candidates are the service tree (Sorbus domestica), sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and wild cherry (Prunus avium).

Ted Shoemaker is a writer/editor based in Germany.
Here are three big ideas that will change the way you market and grow your business.

You can grow your business, even in today’s economy, if you have enough people out there selling your services! The most cost effective way to increase your sales force is by growing the number of people who advocate for you.

The following ideas are what I call the big three fallacies about referrals; ideas that have become accepted as truth, that are holding companies back from more growth.

1. You can grow your company with 100 percent referrals.

This is not entirely true and it will hold you back. Consider the following:

Your basic marketing plan typically addresses four growth categories:

1. Referrals and customer relationships
2. Professional outside relationships
3. Branding your firm
4. Marketing for new leads

Customer referrals is only one of the four elements of your growth plan. There is immense synergy when you combine/integrate the different strategies, and there is trouble when you do not.

(Definition: Synergy means, 1 +1 + 1 = 5. In other words, when you focus your energy, like a laser, your performance jumps a level, from light that shines, to light that burns.)

I know one business owner who relies 100 percent on referrals, and they are only growing with inflation – and that was when the economy was doing well. They are a large business, but they are not in control of their fate. They are rising and falling with the tide.

There are numerous examples on how to create growth through synergy; one happened when I took over my family’s swimming pool and landscape (lawn and tree) maintenance and design/construction firm, about a decade ago.

$2 million in referrals – The year I took over, referrals from professionals brought in $50,000 per year. We created an integrated approach to generating referrals from professionals. It included the following:

- Focused direct mail – post cards, letters and a brochure every now and then.
- Office presentations and networking.
- Offering support services to the professionals – inspection and evaluation services.

This approach raised referral sales from professionals to over $2 million.

There are all kinds of ways to integrate marketing to boost referrals (advertising, Web sites, e-mails, presentations, videos, cable, etc).

**Action Step:** Make a list of your top 10 clients and go call on them personally! Make a personal connection, and do something for them. Do one a day for the next 10 days, and watch your sales rise, and your opportunity for referrals rise. (There are many important techniques to use when asking for referrals. We will cover them at the TCI EXPO.)

2. People advocate for you when your product is good.

This is not quite true. People will advocate for you when they like you personally (or their contact at your firm).

*If you want to increase the quality of your referrals, you have to increase the quality of your relationships.*

With this in mind, consider the following:

- How up to date are your relationships with your customers?
- What do you know personally about your top 10 customers? Top 20? Top 50?
- When was the last time they heard from you?
- Following the 20-80 rule, what have you done special for your top customers? (We will explore a good example a bit further down)

**Action Step:** Make a list of your top 10 clients and go call on them personally! Make a personal connection, and do something for them. Do one a day for the next 10 days, and watch your sales rise, and your opportunity for referrals rise.

3. Your customers will refer you as long as you get the end result they want.

This is also not true. You can’t ask for referrals, when the work “process” is sub par. Too many contractors make the process “painful” on the client. Does your “process” make your customers smile?

*They may love you, but they hate your process!*

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well are your processes delighting your customers? Look at all your processes:

- Initial contact
- Contract signing
- Billing
- Communication before and after jobs
Troubleshooting
Response to issues,
Etc, etc.

If you are not sure, involve your staff. I bet they can tell you places that your customers would like to see an improvement. Moreover, involve your customers. They will tell you, for sure.

Here is a great way to get client feedback. Ask them, on a scale of 1 to 10, “How likely are you to refer us to someone you care about?”

When they give you a score of less than 10, your job is to follow up with questions until you uncover all their issues. During this process, be prepared to ask questions about your processes. (By the way, if they score you a “10,” it is a good time to ask for referrals! We will also cover this at TCI EXPO.) This is a process your office staff can do on the phone, or you can do in person.

Action Step: Review your processes with your staff and close customers, and identify three ways to improve them.

The big example

Here is one example that tackles two-and-a-half of these three strategies above – in a crazy out-of-the-box way.

A friend of mine who runs a medium-sized firm in the mid west told me recently how he chartered a plane and flew his best clients to Canada for a fishing trip.

His friends thought he was crazy and told him so. But he made enough money to cover the trip. (How many of you can say that about your own vacation trips?!) He will make a lot of money with this venture in the coming 12 months – in referrals and in increased repeat work!

Imagine, from now on whenever he talks with these clients, they will reminisce on the trip that bonded them very tightly together. Wow! That is priceless, as you fight the competition, strive to create a way to separate yourself, and as you grow your base of advocates.

You can’t afford to do that, you say? If the idea makes you money over a 12-to 24-month period, then you can’t afford not to do it. Please, stop listening to people who only draw within the lines. Create your own practices when it comes to building relationships and marketing and branding your business.

But, listen to your customers when it comes to your processes. If not, all of your good ideas will go to waste; because they won’t love you until you make it easy to love you – through an easy process.

Do you want to bounce around some ideas for increased growth? Are you not sure where to turn for new ideas? Consider joining a peer group. Better yet, join us at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee in November and I’ll be glad to respond to your questions.

Jeffrey Scott is president of Landscape Success Systems, a business consulting firm specializing in the green industry. He will be presenting on this same topic, “Build Your Brand – Captivate the Right Client – Grow Your Business!” at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee in November. To learn more or to register, go to www.tcia.org.
Washington in Review

By Peter Gerstenberger

OSHA to up the ante for PPE...
DOT tightens rules on substance abusers

Federal OSHA announced in the Aug. 19 Federal Register that it is accepting public comments on a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and training standards. The proposal clarifies that when an OSHA standard requires an employer to provide PPE or related training to employees, the employer must do so for each employee subject to the requirement. Each employee not protected may be considered a separate violation for penalty purposes.

The proposed rule affects OSHA’s general industry, construction and maritime standards. The tree care industry is regulated by general industry (§1910) standards. Traditionally and in most cases, OSHA has combined separate violations of a single requirement into a single penalty. However, under the instance-by-instance penalty policy, OSHA may propose a separate penalty for each specific violation where the employer demonstrates a “... flagrant disregard for safety and health.”

The proposed rule makes clear that failure to provide appropriate PPE or training may result in per-instance penalties in appropriate cases. The proposed rule does not add new compliance obligations, nor are employers required to provide any new type of PPE or training.

...and DOT drops the hammer on substance abusers

With a final rule effective August 25, 2008, the Department of Transportation amended procedures for “specimen validity testing” under 49 CFR Part 40. While the main impact will be felt by the clinics and testing laboratories, the take-home message for employers to pass along to employees is that it just became much harder to fake the results of a urine test.

Other than warning subject employees, there is no specific employer action that TCIA recommends.

The DOT-amended drug/alcohol testing procedures change instructions to collectors, laboratories, medical review officers and employers regarding adulterated, substituted, diluted and invalid urine specimen results. These changes were intended to create consistency with specimen validity requirements established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Final Rule makes specimen validity testing mandatory within the regulated transportation industries.

Key changes to the DOT’s drug and alcohol testing procedures include:

- Drug testing facilities must now categorize non-negative drug tests as: positive for drugs/alcohol, positive (diluted), adulterated, substituted or invalid.
- For pre-employment and other drug tests that produce an invalid result (i.e., pH and other values outside of ranges for normal urine), a second test must take place under direct observation.
- Testing facilities must collect urine specimens under direct observation for employees subject to return-to-duty or follow-up drug tests.

The amended rule directly impacts CDL drivers operating commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). A CMV is defined as any vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross combination weight rating of 26,001 or more pounds; or vehicle of any size that is used to transport hazardous materials that require the vehicle to be placarded.

Update: In a late development, DOT decided to delay implementation of the “direct observation for follow-up and return-to-duty testing” provision until November 1, 2008, to allow for a 30-day comment period and DOT response.

Peter Gerstenberger is senior advisor for safety, compliance & standards for the Tree Care Industry Association.
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I have a small tree service in Willow Grove. I was up a big oak in a front, then saw into the neighbors backyard and almost fell out of my saddle. Thought I would share it with you guys.

I wouldn’t have wanted to watch how they did the tree removal. Thanks for all your help.

Anthony Romeo
Anthony’s Tree Service
Willow Grove, Pennsylvania

Editor’s note: The answer is, of course, “no,” this is not OSHA or ANSI approved!
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GSA
By Rebecca Fater

It was almost 7:30 p.m. when Karl Smith finally pulled into his driveway after a long day’s work. He looked up to see another car – an unfamiliar one – roll to a stop behind him.

“You’re the tree guy?” called the driver. “I just want you to know I found those beetles where I work.”

It was the latest in a series of bad news Smith had heard about the Asian longhorned beetle, or ALB for short, a shiny black and white-spotted insect that experts have dubbed one of the most destructive bugs ever to light upon North American soil. And this driver – one of Smith’s neighbors – had just found it approximately three miles from where the United States Department of Agriculture had positively identified its presence mere weeks earlier.

That, Smith realized, could mean only one thing.

“It’s going to be more widespread than originally thought,” says Smith ruefully. “It’s going to be real bad.”

Since the first week of August when a resident of Worcester, Mass., told city officials she had found an Asian longhorned beetle on her property, federal, state and municipal workers, as well as entomologists, arborists and journalists have descended upon the city. The U.S. Forest Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), both agencies of the USDA, are currently working with local employees to determine the scope of the infestation. Steps to eradicate the insect – which will likely include cutting down thousands of infested trees and treating...
susceptible trees with pesticides – will be decided upon at a later date.

“Every day I have a new story,” says Smith, owner of TCIA-member Trees Unlimited in Rutland, Mass., where his phone has since morphed into a pseudo-emergency hotline for nervous clients. “Every day my customers are calling me. They’re upset. They don’t want to lose their trees. I’m telling them not to panic yet.”

Panic, no. But worry, yes. While the government has plenty of experience battling ALB, going back to 1996 when the insect was first discovered in the U.S., experts say this infestation in Worcester is different – and substantially more threatening.

This time, the insects have settled in a region of the country that is equivalent to an ALB five-star hotel: an area lush with hardwood trees such as maple, elm, ash, willow, birch, poplar and more.

“In this area, 90 percent of the forest and adjoining forests are made up of this insect’s host tree species,” says Tchukki Andersen, staff arborist for TCIA. “It’s a very big red flag.”

On the positive side, the response from municipal, state and federal workers has been swift, she adds. Weeks ago, teams of inspectors laced up their sneakers, grabbed their binoculars and turned their eyes to the tree tops, searching for the smallest sign of infestation.

Mapping the area of the infestation is the first, most critical task workers must complete before beginning the eradication process, says Suzanne Bond, spokesperson for APHIS. After workers finish the survey – which was likely to take several more weeks – discussion would turn to fighting the beetle. While nothing had been decided by mid September, action will likely be similar to protocols used in the other three areas of infestation in the U.S. – New York, New Jersey and Illinois.

Those eradication programs included removal of infested trees, as well as
removal of some trees at high risk of becoming infested. In addition to removals, the insecticide imidacloprid may be administered to help kill the existing adult beetle population living in infested trees, as well as give uninfested trees a layer of protection.

The goal is complete eradication. However daunting that may seem, APHIS has claimed some victories since ALB invaded North America. An infestation discovered in 2002 in Hudson County, N.J., was declared eradicated this year, as was another infestation originally discovered in Chicago in 1998.

Others have proved more challenging: an infestation in N.Y. that covers 140 square miles was discovered in 1996, and the government is still fighting it.

“Asian longhorned beetle is really one of the most destructive, costly and invasive species ever to enter the U.S.,” Bond says. “It threatens urban and suburban shade trees, recreational and forest resources. And those are valued at hundreds of billions of dollars. If ALB were to become widely established… it could impact maple syrup production, hardwood lumber processing, nurseries and even tourism.”

Back in August, APHIS originally estimated that ALB had been in the Worcester region as long as seven years, judging from the level of infestation. But when local press reported that a Worcester man had come forward with an ALB sample in a bug collection he had assembled back in 1998, APHIS adjusted that estimate to at least 10 years.

“So that’s really a little bit disappointing,” Bond says.

The local man’s find did not surprise E. Richard Hoebeke, a research survey entomologist at Cornell University in New York, who was the first to identify ALB when it emerged in the U.S. in 1996, in the Green Point Section of Brooklyn, N.Y. Given that the U.S. took until 1998 to require the fumigation of wood pallets from China, from which ALB is suspected to have entered the country, he worries the insect had much more time to become established than anybody realizes.

“My biggest concern is that the ALB is probably in other U.S. cities and we just don’t know it,” he says. “I think a lot of the damage that’s taking place was from quite some time ago. Even when we found it in 1996 in New York, it probably had been in place since 1990, if not before.”

However long it has been here, the Massachusetts ALB Cooperative Eradication Program – the partnership of.
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federal, state and local workers cooperating to fight ALB in Worcester – is taking steps to halt its progress. Several weeks ago it established a regulated area of 33 square miles that includes parts of Worcester and the nearby towns of Boylston, West Boylston, Holden and Shrewsbury to which the infestation is believed to be limited. Removal of wood and wood products from the regulated area, or quarantine, is forbidden, unless it is chipped into pieces smaller than 1 inch. Before long, arborists who want to work in the regulated area will need to have passed a certification program to ensure they have been educated about ALB, its habits and how to handle potentially infested wood without assisting the beetle’s spread. There will not be a fee for arborists to participate in the certification program, says Bond.

And since APHIS cannot offer a timetable as to how long it will take to rid the region of ALB – the USDA has been in N.Y. since 1996, and it’s still there – Smith figures he’ll be participating in the certification program. And, though he stopped offering insecticide injections as part of his service at Trees Unlimited some years ago, he’s thinking he just may get back into that part of the business. Since ALB moved into town, his current business prospects have suddenly looked shaky. Some of his customers have already called to cancel scheduled tree removals, due to the possibility that the USDA will take the tree down as part of the eradication program – at no cost to the property owner.

“All of a sudden, that’s a $2,000 job we’re losing,” says Smith. “I also had a pruning canceled (for the same reason). I can see that I’m going to have to get back into (tree insecticide) injections. This is our livelihood.”

With the eradication process still in its early mapping stages, it is unclear whether the government will seek the assistance of private arborists and tree care companies through contract work, Bond says.

In the meantime, there is one critical job for which arborists and tree care companies...
are absolutely needed: remaining vigilant.

“Be aware that just because that insect hasn’t been reported in a particular area, doesn’t mean that (it’s not possible),” says Judy Antipin, a public affairs specialist for the U.S. Forest Service. “The tree care industry is particularly positioned to help with discoveries of new infestations of these pests.”

That doesn’t seem to be a problem for Smith, for whom the ALB stories just keep coming. At a barbeque on a recent Sunday, a friend approached him holding a container with a shiny, black and white-spotted beetle inside. The friend, who had plucked it from the windshield wiper of a truck, had no way of knowing how far that beetle had already traveled – and how many of its friends may have accompanied it for the ride.

“This is not looking good,” Smith says. “Every day, it’s just new findings.”

For more information and photos, go to www.TreeCareTips.org.

Not what it looks like – The male is guarding the female while she chews a pit, where she can lay an egg. Male antennae are much longer than those of females. Photo courtesy of Mollie Freilicher.
I am pleased to report that in July, the Board of the Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) approved the TCIA’s request for up to $20,000 to reimburse students’ travel expenses for the upcoming 2008 Student Career Days at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In addition, the board approved three Robert Felix Memorial Fund Scholarships, totaling $9,000. The combined amount of these education programs more than doubled last year’s $12,000 in scholarship and travel reimbursement dollars.

It’s great to know that the contributions of so many people in our industry are going directly to help students who truly are the future of arboriculture and urban forestry. I know all of us business owners are desperate to find hard-working, qualified, safety-conscious employees who are prepared to take on the responsibilities of proper professional tree care.

The three-day Student Career Days event has become one of the best opportunities for students and potential employers to network. Over 300 students attended last year. Due to the Midwest location this year, and with more travel reimbursement dollars available, TCIA expects even higher attendance. As the chair of the TREE Fund’s Education Committee, I am really proud that our foundation has chosen to help in this way to promote scholarship and careers in arboriculture and urban forestry.

The TREE Fund’s commitment of $20,000, through its Robert Felix Memorial Fund, will ensure that students who register for the Student Career Days through their school or professor will be able to receive a significant reimbursement of their travel expenses to TCI EXPO in Milwaukee. The college or university’s professor must register the student(s) for the reimbursement offer and the amount available is based on the distance traveled. Attendance will be verified at TCI EXPO, although substitutions are allowed if one student can’t make it and another goes in his/her place.

Contact TCIA at 1-800-733-2622 for further details.

Scholarship recipients

Congratulations to the following three students who will receive $3,000 each toward their 2008-2009 tuition. We applaud your personal drive and passion for an industry that is changing and becoming more professional each year!

**Ryan James Boston, Dayton, Ohio**
School: Columbus State Community College and Franklin University, Ohio
Pursued Degree: Landscape Design/Building
Expected to Graduate: Fall 2008
Extracurricular: Involved in ISA, PLAN-ET, Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association, Ohio Turf Grass Foundation, Columbus State Landscape Association, Illawara Landscape Contractors Association (Australia) and Habitat for Humanity Internship Oct. 2007-June 2008 with Craig’s Coastal Horticultural Services in the Greater Sydney area in New South Wales, Australia

**Andrew R. VanNatta, Lancaster, Wisconsin**
School: University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, Wisconsin
Pursued Degree: Urban Forestry and Forest Recreation
Expected to Graduate: May 2010
Extracurricular: UWSP Society of American Foresters UWSP Student Society of Arboriculture

**Logan Collier, West Linn, Oregon**
School: Mid-State Technical College, Wisconsin
Pursued Degree: Urban Forestry Technician
Expected to Graduate: Spring 2009
Extracurricular: MSTC Student Society of Arboriculture, Vice President; TREE Fund Tour des Trees Rider

Please keep your eyes open for promising student candidates and recommend that they apply for the TREE Fund’s RFMF scholarships. Up to four are awarded each year and the application deadline is May 1.

Be a TREE Fund donor and help us continue to make progress in advancing knowledge in the field of arboriculture and urban forestry. Visit www.treefund.org and donate today!

Tim Gamma is an owner of TCIA-member company Gamma’s Shield Shade Tree Inc. in St. Louis, Missouri, and a TREE Fund trustee.

**2008 Hyland R. Johns Grant Recipients Named**

Recipients of this year’s Hyland R. Johns Grants from the Tree Research and Education (TREE) Fund are as follows:

**Effects of root pruning newly planted large trees on decay, root regeneration, and stability - $23,500**
Edward F. Gilman, University of Florida
This project is designed to answer the questions: 1) does removing root defects formed in the nursery increase tree stabi-
tivity after planting, and 2) do roots of a certain diameter on large trees die back and decay instead of regenerating new roots?

The impacts of aerated compost teas on trees, soils, and the environment – $24,912
Bryant Scharenbroch, The Morton Arboretum, Illinois

The research will examine soil compaction and rates of Aerated Compost Tea (ACT) application, NPK fertilization, and a water control. It will assess above- and below-ground tree response and soil biological, chemical and physical properties. Nutrient losses to the atmosphere and hydrosphere will be measured.

Measuring forces and stresses during rigging operations – $25,000
Brian Kane, University of Massachusetts

Trees will be removed with conventional rigging techniques and forces, stresses, and dynamic motion of the tree will be measured. Data will be analyzed to develop both practical guidelines for climbers and a more robust physical model of the tree using finite element analyses.

Measuring the breaking strength of climbing systems - $25,000
Dennis Ryan, University of Massachusetts

An increasingly popular single rope technique that employs a cammed ascender on a single rope will be tested for its strength when used with climbing lines.

Investigating physical soil conditions and tree response to permeable paving - $10,635
Justin Morgenroth, New Zealand School of Forestry, University of Canterbury

This research will investigate the effects of permeable pavement on underlying soil conditions and the resulting whole tree response.

Can improved urban soil management result in increased soil carbon storage and greater tree growth? - $25,000
Susan Day, Virginia Tech

Determine if soil restoration practices improve carbon storage and find the most economically viable and beneficial restoration treatment in terms of carbon sequestration and tree response.

Development of risk assessment criteria for branch failures within the crowns of trees – $25,000
John Goodfellow, BioCompliance, Washington

Identify and manage high-risk branches resulting in a reduction of tree caused damages, improvement in the safety of arborists, reduction of power interruptions, and improvement of the cost-efficiency of vegetation maintenance expenditures by cities and utilities.

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Here’s a riddle for you? What color are oak, maple, hickory and every other American hardwood?

Answer: Gold.

Obviously, that’s a trick question with a trick answer. This time of year, especially, and in this economy specifically, all hardwood turns gold – when you turn it into firewood, that is.

How “gold” is firewood? Let’s compare it with another gold, “black gold” also known as oil.

A national television news broadcast gave a statistic around Labor Day that $300 in firewood (the national average at the time) was worth about $600 in home heating oil. Putting it another way, you can use a floating estimate of the value of firewood as you listen in on the daily pricing of oil. On average, nationally, a cord of wood equals 150 gallons of home heating fuel. At about $4 a gallon, a national average, that’s $600 a cord.

As each month goes by, there is increased demand for firewood – the traditional cut, split, 18-inch stove and fireplace logs. Similarly, there is accelerated growing demand also for other tree “waste” for heating or other energy sources. In past columns, we’ve touched on biomass – that is the use of specifically ground tree material for heat and energy. This time, we focus on the good-old-fashioned firewood industry, talking with some TCIA members, both veterans and newcomers, for their perspectives.

We start with Terry Hughes, longtime TCIA member, founder and head of Terry Hughes Tree Service in Gretna, Nebraska. Hughes should know a thing or two about the firewood business and tree care, having broken into the business in high school back in 1961. He’s still very active working every day on the property, producing firewood and “planting a slug of trees.”

Hughes utilizes not only his own take-down material but also material that comes into the company dumpsite (wood and lawn waste). He says the hardwoods such as ash and oak are separated. What is not generated as firewood gets processed into landscape mulch.

While you might think that firewood is seasonal, and most consumers do, the fact is that Hughes enjoys a robust year-round firewood business serving camp sites (camping and open space recreation is popular in his region, and he’s strategically located near three state parks) as well as...
Hughes is the supplier to the famous Stokes Bar and Grille in Omaha, which uses his wood to flavor its food.

On any given day, he says the Hughes' operation "has three guys on firewood." Terry says that production adds 2 percent to 3 percent to the company gross -- "and we gross a lot!" he says, meaning that the firewood division is a significant profit center.

"I bought my first log splitter in '68, a Vermeer LS200 that is still working!" he says. "We upgraded back in '95 the moment we got back from TCI EXPO, with a Brute, (now out of business, he says) along with a conveyor."

"I was stunned by the increase in production, some five-fold," Terry says, noting the increased throughput of that machine and also the material handling capability of the conveyor. "We use it three days a week until the weather gets cold, then we run it five days a week in busy firewood season. Logs go in one end and firewood, an easy 6-way split, comes out the other."

Hughes uses a skid unit, a Cat 236 loader, for lifting logs and shearing pieces that are too large to be processed as one piece. For logs larger than 20 inches in diameter, Hughes employs a larger Cat 924 with a custom made hydraulic shear "made by Morbark specifically for us." He's looked at wood processors but concedes that they won't work for his operation, since logs in his area of the U.S., he says, aren't straight enough for the equipment to be efficient.

The market is so strong that Hughes is in competition with his son, Stacy Hughes, for material. The battle is between firewood and mulch. Terry has said that if he didn't get to the logs one day, they would be mulch the next!

"If I had enough wood, I probably could go full time producing firewood year-round," Terry Hughes says.

On the other side of the timeline and with a slightly different take on making money in the firewood business is Lance Chambeau, Mobile Firewood Processing, a new TCIA member and an extension of the Chambeau Family Farm in Pawlet, Vermont.

"Technically," he says, "we are not in the firewood business. We are in the firewood service business."

As Chambeau explains it, "We go to guys who sell (firewood), and we process their material." That includes tree care professionals with material and loggers looking to process low-grade (non-lumber) pieces. Using a Multitek machine, Mobile Firewood Processing can custom-process logs from 6 inches up to 22 inches in diameter and 12 to 27 feet in length into firewood.

"Usually, wherever we go, people have equipment to load onto our machine's live deck and advanced processor. We researched everything, starting with a used..."
machine just to test the market. After several months, we sold the first and bought a new machine, taking delivery just this August.”

He described the custom-designed machine as a Multitek “Model 2020 on steroids,” featuring the same engine as used on a Model 2040, and 60-inch circular cutoff saw instead of bar saw. Essentially, Lance explains, it’s a Model 2040 on a 2020 chassis with a built-in conveyor. That way, he can pull the machine onto a site as one piece of equipment and not have to rig a separate conveyor. This reduces setup time considerably, according to Chambeau.

“The advantage of mobile processing is that, for people who want a big pile of firewood, we make it easy to make a windrow of firewood, starting with a 1-minute setup and breakdown versus an hour. This is the first Multitek unit built with hydraulic levelers. Hit a button and the levelers retract so we can hook it up to a truck and move another 20-25 feet, push a button to relevel, drive the truck away and we’re ready to go.”

“We hope to get a solid 120 days of processing the first year to consider this a success. We can process 25-30 cords a day of regional hardwood (lower grade hardwood, not sufficient for furniture and cabinet veneers). For guys with land clearing businesses or larger tree care guys, we can set up on site and process firewood for about $50 for a full cord, which they can truck out and re-sell.”

From a manufacturer’s viewpoint, Peter Hincks, sales manager at Timberwolf, says demand nationally is exceptionally strong, obviously due to anticipated fuel costs for the coming heating season. “In some places it’s almost a panic situation as people try to get equipment either to take care of themselves and their personal needs or by entrepreneurs who see the opportunity to make a profit.”

In the Northeast, he says, there are extra pressures on firewood processors/sellers.

**Thinking firewood?**

Checking around the country, we found that pricing varied considerably from $200 to upward of $400. In New York City, seasoned, cut, split and delivered hardwood was running upward of $600 a full cord.

Pricing depends also on:
- Your regional demand
- Type of wood
- Whether you deliver or not
- How far you deliver from the yard
- Amount of firewood
  - Multiple cords often means discounts
  - Fractional cords (half cords down to enough for a campfire or home fireplace)
  - Face cords (approximate volume versus full cord)
- Delivery method
  - Dumping
  - Stacking

Please circle 11 on Reader Service Card
that are increasing, and will continue to increase, demand and prices for firewood. Due to an unusually wet summer, there is a shortage of logs for firewood, largely because the forest floors were so mucky – Maine especially – that conditions made it virtually impossible to get the big equipment in to cut and or process material into firewood. The lesson to be learned here is that conditions such as climate and weather, plus events such as fires, can affect costs in the short to mid-term, and therefore the end-price to consumers.

Not only does Hincks see the shortage of logs driving prices up, he also notes the irony of people trying to get equipment to process what they do have, which puts demand on the equipment supply chain. Then there is the potential fire danger with people trying to heat by burning "green" or unseasoned wood.

He’s getting feedback from the marketplace that buyers are scrambling to find enough firewood to keep their processing equipment working and also to acquire equipment for increasing output - "anything to get more orders out." An interesting, pure-business observation he made is that, "if you can’t keep up with orders, that just means your price is too low."

Conveyors are strong, he notes, but adds that the related challenge is ensuring that one has the right kind of equipment, namely loaders or skid loaders, to keep the conveyor, processor and the firewood crew operating at top efficiency.

Timberwolf offers 15 models of splitters for users ranging from the homeowner to the commercial processor, plus a complete line of firewood processors ranging from about $29,000, which will produce a cord an hour, to a $55,000 unit for what Hincks describes as the "serious commercial producer" looking to produce up to four cords an hour.

Rion Casey is a marketing specialist for Bailey’s, a TCIA member and broad-line reseller that has been shipping woodsman tools for more than three decades.

"Based out of Laytonville, California, a small rural town in Northern California, most of our employees use some sort of wood heat, so they have both a professional and personal perspective of the firewood business. Firewood processing tools have always been one of our staple markets since the beginning of the company. We sell to professionals and homeowners alike, offering a large selection of the basic tree falling tools (saws, bars, chains, wedges, safety equipment, and all their accessories) as well as many specialized items for the firewood business owner and homeowner.

One specific example of a specialized tool for moving felled logs would include the Lewis Winch, which fits most chain saws and which can pull 4,000 pounds. It’s the kind of tool that, according to Casey, once you’ve seen it, you wish you’d had one years ago! Other recent additions to the Bailey’s Log Handling Tool line include a
full line of portable arches from Logrite, which provides for easy transportation of logs. Plus, the Timberjack, which has always been a staple for moving and propping up wood to cut, he adds.

“For the high production consumer, our full line of hydraulic grapple and log trailers, from the ATV unit to the 10-ton trailer with grapple, can keep a firewood processors working at max capacity with ease,” Casey adds.

“Still the most popular production tool for firewood processing, be it professional or homeowner, is the log splitter. Bailey’s carries a broad line of professional grade log splitters made by Iron & Oak, from 8-ton to 34-ton capacity.

“Naturally, as energy prices rise, so does the demand for alternative ways to heat a home. We try to stay ahead of the curve on the latest and greatest in firewood technology. Some of the new items can increase production without a big dent in the budget.”

For example, he cites the Smart Holder, which holds a log at waist height, reducing the need for constant bending and keeps the saw chain out of the dirt.

The Mingo Marker is a simple tool that marks your log in increments of 6, 12, 14, 16, 18 or 24 inches for precise firewood cutting.

“Another great tool just released,” he says, “is the Smart Splitter Manual Log Splitter for those who don’t want to swing an axe or maul. Otherwise, the 15 pound Mega Mule Maul will get through the toughest trunks — for those who can swing it.

The interesting thing about the firewood industry, at least for the next few years, is that regardless of which way oil prices go (and they were dropping in mid to late September) consumers will remain sensitive to the volatility and keep demand high for home heating and for home “atmosphere” fires, as well as the growing demand for wood by restaurants, hotels and camping areas.

While firewood may be the oldest heat source known to man (other than the sun), it remains, after millions of years, a primary source of energy — and a newly rediscovered source of gold, if you’re so motivated.
### Vermeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Number</th>
<th>Part No.</th>
<th>Knife Description &amp; Size</th>
<th>SALE Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<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>BC1220-BC1250</td>
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<td>10, 13, 17, 2050</td>
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### Brush Bandit

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<td>250, 254 after '01</td>
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<td>Double Edge 7-1/4&quot; x 4-1/2&quot; x 1/2&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1890 Intimidator</td>
<td>KCH20103</td>
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### Asplundh

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<td>16&quot; Drum</td>
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<td>Single Edge 16&quot; x 3&quot; x 3/8&quot;</td>
<td>$22.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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new gear and equipment at every turn. See the products everyone’s been talking about - right on the show floor.

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Please circle 42 on Reader Service Card
Vermeer celebrated its 60th anniversary in August, with tours and events for the media, customers and dealers, wrapping up with a bash for employees at its Pella, Iowa, headquarters and manufacturing facilities.

Its celebratory activities in Pella included the unveiling of new equipment, including the SC852 self-propelled stump cutter (the SC652 will debut at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee), the BC2100 chipper and the HG8000 horizontal grinder, which Vermeer touts as having the largest infeed opening on the market.

Those in attendance, including TCI magazine editor Don Staruk, were treated to demonstrations of the new equipment, including additions to the line of hay bailing and processing equipment that gave Gary Vermeer, who founded the company in 1948, a leap forward in the agriculture equipment industry in those early days.

Gary’s son and daughter, Bob Vermeer, chair of the board and co-CEO, and Mary Andringa, president and co-CEO, along with Mary’s son, Jason Andringa, managing director of Vermeer EMEA (the company’s facility in Goes, Netherlands), hosted a forum for their visitors at which they discussed family history and involvement with the business, as well as past, present and future directions for the company.

(Allison Van Wyngarden, Bob Vermeer’s daughter and manager of distribution development for the company, also took part in events during the week.)

The Environmental segment, which is made up primarily of equipment related to tree care, accounts for approximately 17 percent of Vermeer’s current business. But this group, along with its Forage (hay/crop bailing and raking equipment) and Underground (drilling, trenching and terrain levelling equipment) segments, also has plans to turn more attention to products for the burgeoning green markets. This includes development of a line of electric grinders for processing wood and green waste for bioenergy and biofuel markets, and a new compost turner for recycling facilities.

As with the Environmental segment, plans to expand into green markets in Vermeer’s other groups include equipment for harvesting and processing crops and materials for biofuel/bioenergy, and hori-
horizontal drilling equipment to accommodate growing gas and oil pipeline operations.

“We feel that the potential for revenues is enormous,” Jason Andringa said of the biomass and biofuels markets.

Attendees toured manufacturing facilities to see first hand the production of chippers, stump grinders, tub and horizontal grinders and other equipment. A continual focus of discussion was Vermeer’s commitment to lean manufacturing, a practice by which the company eliminates duplication of efforts and tasks to reduce wasted time, materials and money and increase flexibility, speed of response and efficient use of available resources. For example, since adopting lean manufacturing, Vermeer has cut the time it takes to build a chipper from 52 days to 2.5 days; and from 80 hours per unit to between 23 and 28 hours.

Vermeer has every intention of continuing and growing its current markets – on its own and through partnerships – as well as pushing into new ones, family and staff assured their guests. In addition to other partnerships, the company recently partnered with Gyro-Trac, a TCIA associate member that manufactures skid steer loaders used in timber reduction and right-of-way and other land clearing work.

Jason Andringa told his guests that he, as a representative of the third generation of the Vermeer family, has been charged with not just maintaining the status quo of the company, but with helping grow the firm significantly both in established markets as well as in new and developing opportunities. He added that he and his peers, along with their employees, have no problem accepting that challenge and pursuing it – for at least another 60 years.

Governor Chet Culver, left, joined Bob Vermeer and Mary Andringa on stage during a luncheon for the press. The governor addressed the guests, touting Vermeer’s role in the Pella community, specifically citing local churches and schools that have benefited from Vermeer’s giving, and its broader role in the state’s business community.

Field of Chips – The BC 2100 launches the remains of a tree toward the cornfields of Pella, Iowa.

The drums for the HG8000 horizontal grinder, shown in the background here, each requires 100 hours of welding.

The new SC852 stump cutter is put through its paces for guests.
any of us, happily, aren’t in a position of having to worry about having to make the perfect 40-second presentation of our business when we get on an elevator. That said, however, there are times when you’re called on to speak about your business. This happens most frequently with potential creditors or major customers, but the need arises other times as well.

What do you say?
Do you talk about the physical operations or the financial side? Bankers, creditors and other interested persons tend to focus on one or the other, or both. But there’s more. Missing from this summary are the intangibles.

The physical operations
For most entrepreneurs, operations is the easiest segment to talk about. The product is what brought them into starting their own business. The product is tangible and often quantifiable. Producing and marketing the product is the daily life of the business. The business generates data, such as the amount of production, the number of employees, the business facilities, the types of physical products.

The financial stuff
Many owners find it harder to speak as knowledgably – and in as much detail – about the financial side. You know the finances in detail, of course, but you may not know the details of the accounting behind the figures. Nor do you need to know that – it’s not your job as manager or owner or entrepreneur.

Financial statements are the language of business, though, and you do need be able to address basic questions about them. There’s more to this than conversation – being able to discuss the financial statements in some detail shows that you know the infrastructure of your business. The key is knowing what information matters on those statements, and what doesn’t.

Many of the terms are self-evident. Let’s look at some of the terms that aren’t self-evident, and of the concepts that sometimes get thrown about in financial discussion.

Net worth. Although this term is commonly heard (at least in some circles), it doesn’t really tell much about the business. Simply put, net worth is assets minus liabilities. The result is a number that doesn’t say anything – unless it’s a negative number.

A negative net worth – having more liabilities than assets – should raise sharp questions and red flags about the solvency and the financial health of the business. Underlying the question of net worth, then, is the question: “Is your business solvent?”

Working capital, another term that gets bandied about, looks at the question of liquidity. Liquidity and solvency are closely connected. Working capital is taking a different slant on the question of the viability of a business.

Technically, working capital is the total of your business’ current assets, which include cash, short term investments, accounts receivable, and inventories. These assets are considered liquid, because they can be converted readily to cash. However, the amount of cash you have to work with obviously is limited by the demands on that cash. What might look like a large amount of cash suddenly diminishes when you realize that most of it is already spoken for by a stack of bills. For that reason, many people focus on net working capital, which is current assets minus current liabilities.

Here’s the confusing part. When people refer to working capital, chances are they really mean net working capital – considering both current assets and current liabilities. You should assume that’s what’s meant.

Accounts receivable are only as good as their collectability. If your accounts receivable are current, if you’re monitoring them closely and taking action to collect overdue accounts, then the amount of accounts receivable on your balance sheet should be close to representing the actual worth of those accounts.

If you offset your Accounts Receivable by an Allowance for Uncollectible on your balance sheet, resulting in a net figure for Accounts Receivable, that figure is probably more in line with the reality of your Accounts Receivable.

Retained earnings is probably the most confusing account on the financial statements. It’s also rather meaningless much of the time. “Retained earnings” sounds regrettably like a savings account – earnings that have been retained. Logical. But Retained Earnings has nothing to do with real money. It’s an accounting convention, one that makes the balance sheet balance and connects the income statement to the balance sheet. How this works is mildly interesting to those of an accounting frame of mind, but for most of us, all we
need to know is that there is no actual $$$ involved. Because Retained Earnings is the accumulation of profits and losses over the life of the business, it’s historical. For the first few years of the business, the account has some meaning since it shows the recent history. Past five years, though, it’s simply an accumulation of income statement results.

However when retained earnings is in negative figures it’s showing there have been losses in the past. That should raise a red flag signaling the need for more questions starting with: how much loss and when?

Be aware that the account may be (or should be) called “Accumulated Deficit” rather than “Retained Earnings.” Or, if the total for “Retained Earnings” is in parentheses, this is an accumulated deficit.

**The missing information**

Much significant information about your business is missing from your financial statements. Some is financial: financial statements don’t give complete information, particularly in matters of depreciation expense (a non-cash “expense”) and payments of loan principal (only the interest payment is shown). A more complete financial picture is shown by including a well-constructed cash-flow statement with the financial statements.

But what about the other information, that isn’t financially based? These assets aren’t recognized on financial statements, yet they say much about the well-being of your business. If you’re presenting information about your business – either written or verbal, you should highlight those assets as well.

- Reputation
- Business history
- Location
- Loyal customers
- Employees
- Marketing program
- Community involvement
- Business culture

Don’t sell your intangible assets short. They’re the underpinnings of your business.

**Oh yes, the elevator speech**

What do you say when someone asks what you do, or what your business does? Remember how your mother told you not to talk about yourself so much? This may be one of those moments. Yes, you need to talk about your business, but the best descriptions include the ripple effect: what your business does for customers, neighborhoods, environment, property.

“Our business is tree care – keeping trees healthy, not just looking good – and having a positive impact on the environment.”

Note that you’re telling your new elevator friend not only about your service, but what that service does for everyone’s well-being. Now that’s a promotional elevator speech.

Mary McVicker is a freelance writer living in Oak Park, Illinois.
**Landscaper electrocuted trimming palm fronds**

Angel Mejia, 34, of Marco Island, Florida, was electrocuted September 8, 2008, while trimming a palm tree that was touching a live power line at a home on the island. Mejia, who was working for a local landscape firm, died from the electrocution after being transported to the hospital.

When police and fire and rescue officials responded, Mejia was still up on a ladder that was leaning against the palm, according to marcoeagle.com. A co-worker was also up on the ladder assisting Mejia.

“It’s reasonable to believe at this time that the tree he was working on was touching the electric line while he touched the branch,” one of the officials told the paper.

Fire crews were told by Lee County Electric Cooperative the power lines near the tree were still live. LCEC officials were dispatched and shut power off in a matter of minutes. Fire rescue personnel set up additional ladders and stabilized Mejia, who was dangling in a safety harness from the tree, before bringing him to the ground.

**Firefighters rescue tree trimmer from palm**

Firefighters freed a tree trimmer who became entangled and trapped in a palm tree Sunday morning, September 7, 2008, in Los Angeles, California.

The 25-year-old man was trimming a tall palm when a number of fronds crashed down on him. The fronds became entangled in his harness, trapping him in the tree, according to the San Jose Mercury News.

A bystander called the fire department, and firefighters were able to cut away the fronds and harness, allowing the trimmer to descend a ladder. The man was taken to a hospital in good condition.

**Landscaper crushed by falling limb**

A landscaper died September 2, 2008, when he was apparently crushed by a limb from a tree he was trimming in Huntington, New York. Glorismel Gonzalez, 41, of Huntington, was in a tree, about 30 feet up, according to a report on newsday.com. Gonzalez was attached by rope and harness to the 50-foot tree when a giant limb he was cutting fell back and crushed him against the trunk of the tree.

The Huntington Manor Fire Department responded to the scene, removed him from the tree and transported Gonzalez to Huntington Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Gonzalez, owner of a local lawn and garden service, had been a landscaper for about 16 years.

**Tree worker killed in fall from tree**

A tree service worker fell 30 feet to his death August 25, 2008, while trimming branches at a home on the Ormond Beach/Flagler Beach border in Florida.

Witnesses reported that Dewitt Payne, 30, was cutting a large branch above his head with a chain saw when the limb began to fall, according to reports in the Florida Times-Union and the East Volusia News-Journal. Payne dropped the saw to grab another branch, but the cut limb swung down and knocked him out of the tree.

Deputies were told he landed on the back of his head and upper back. Paramedics arrived and tried to resuscitate him, but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Payne worked for a local tree service, but the owner of the service reported that Payne was working a side job at the time of the accident.

**Trimmer survives shock**

A Richmond, Virginia, tree trimmer electrocuted July 11, 2008, when a branch from the tree he was trimming came in contact with an electrical wire lived to tell about it. Fire department rescuers say the man never lost consciousness and was lowered from the tree after the power company shut down the line, according to a WRVA News report.

The man was taken to VCU Medical Center as a precaution.

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**Accidents in the tree care industry that occurred during the month of August 2008.**

Graphic compiled from reports gathered by, or submitted to, TCIA staff.

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Send accident reports to staruk@tcia.org.
What if you lost everything you’ve worked for?

What if it could have been prevented?

It may sound dramatic, but it’s true: one accident could put the entire future of your company in jeopardy. Do you have complete confidence in your company’s safety program?

The Certified Treecare Safety Professional (CTSP) program from TCIA is designed to help every tree care company achieve a strong safety culture in which all employees are motivated to participate. Key employees are enrolled in the program to become their organization’s internal safety trainer(s). Their education includes instruction in encouraging a company-wide buy-in, teaching and coaching adults, and strategies for building a team-oriented commitment to safe work practices.

The benefits to CTSP? Lower insurance premiums, fewer accidents and injuries, reduced employee turnover, decreased risk to your business, and more.

You’ve worked too hard to lose it all to an accident.

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1-800-733-7622 or visit www.tcia.org to learn more about CTSP and enroll in the program.
Are you serious about improving your business profitability and avoiding business slowdowns?

TCIA's “Business Boot Camp” is a pre-conference workshop to be held in conjunction with TCI EXPO in Milwaukee this November. It will cover business basics for small tree care company owners and managers who are serious about improving their business profitability.

This workshop is beginner-level and open to all tree care companies.

“It’s for beginners based on business experience, not on the size of the company or gross revenues,” says Bob Rouse, TCIA’s director of Accreditation, who will be running the workshop with John Iurka and Randall McDonald, both TCIA Accreditation consultants and approved Accreditation auditors.

Specific topics will be workshop-based, and participants will be polled ahead of time regarding the areas in which they need assistance. Participants will be encouraged to discuss situations specific to their operations.

It will cover managing human resources for small businesses, writing and implementing company policies – including a safety program, labor pricing, cash flow and monthly budgeting, service proposals and specification writing.

These are not one-size-fits-all solutions.

“There are no magic numbers or magic bullets for addressing labor costs per hour or the economy in general,” says Rouse.

But there are basic solid business practices for addressing profitability, such as making the most of the leads you get and doing so on a shoestring budget.

“Anytime you address profitability you are addressing the economy,” says Rouse.

“There are only two things you can control as far as the economy is concerned: keeping your expenses down and under control, and maximizing the leads that you get.”

Maximizing leads will include points on how to convince customers why they should hire a tree care company that might be a little more expensive, such as your having insurance, good customer service, doing the job right the first time, a knowledgeable staff, etc.

There will be ample time to discuss how to customize and implement best business practices for your company.

All of the materials and suggestions provided meet the TCIA Accreditation standard. It will be great for companies enrolled in or considering Accreditation, but it will be helpful for any business.

Register before Oct. 10 and pay just $125 (includes seminar and trade show only pass).

Visit TCIA’s Web site, www.tcia.org, to register and for more information, or call 1-800-733-2622.

OSHSA QuickCards:

Fall Protection Tips (English): www.osha.gov/Publications/fall_protection_qc.pdf
Fall Protection Tips (Spanish): www.osha.gov/Publications/fall_protection_sp_qc.pdf

OSHSA Fact Sheets:


OSHSA Web Resources:

Tree Care Industry Safety and Health Topics Page: www.osha.gov/SLTC/treecare/index.html
Landscape and Horticultural Services Safety and Health Topics Page: www.osha.gov/SLTC/landscaping/index.html
Fall Protection Safety and Health Topics Page: www.osha.gov/SLTC/fallprotection/index.html
Hurricane Recovery page: www.osha.gov/oshDoc/hurricaneRecovery.html

OSHSA’s Compliance Assistance division has free, Web-based training materials that address many of the hazards discussed in the accident briefs listed on page 54 in this issue of TCI. The Tree Care Industry Association asked its OSHA Alliance partners to compile a list of related materials that may address some of issues involved in these incidents. They include:

OSHSA QuickCards and other publications can be downloaded and printed on plain paper or they can be ordered from the OSHA Web site at: http://www.osha.gov/pls/publications/publication.html.
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Winter Management Conference
Feb. 8-12

The Westin & Sheraton Grand Bahama Island
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WMC is the must-attend event of the year:

**Education**
Earn CEUs at expert-lead business seminars designed especially for owners and managers.
TCIA presents an All-Star Lineup for WMC 2009!

**Team-Building**
Develop and reward your top staff and strengthen professional relationships.

**Networking**
Multiple opportunities for building new business relationships with fellow industry leaders.

**Relaxation**
The conference agenda is designed to leave time for relaxation and recreation, either on your own or as a group.

**Fun!**
Join in an afternoon of deep sea fishing, hit the links for a cause, or meet and mingle at one of several evening receptions.

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Provides award-winning arborist services on a wide range of properties throughout the nation. Rather than focusing on isolated management techniques, our certified arborists approach the tree as an entire biological system. We have full-time opportunities available for our following positions:
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Assistant owner in daily operations, sales & client contact. Applicant must possess skills in identification of plants, insects & disease. Full benefits include company vehicle, medical, dental & life insurance. This is a salary-plus-commission position. Please submit resume to: Winkler’s Tree & Landscaping, Inc.; Vince Winkler, President; PO Box 1154; LaGrange Park, IL 60415. Call (708) 544-1219 or e-mail info@winklerstreeservice.com.

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Production climbers have a limited amount of energy and endurance, and ascending, overhauling tail and working aloft in general are very taxing on those precious commodities. It is no surprise that the top performing climbers are always on the lookout for ways to shave weight from their climbing systems and for the latest energy-saving innovation that will allow them to keep grinding longer. Rope is one of those areas of innovation.

With all the new small climbing lines available, would you believe that rope manufacturer Samson’s best selling arborist climbing line is a tried and true ½-inch, 16-strand line called Blue Streak that weighs in at a hefty 7.7 pounds per 100 feet? It’s true. And while the larger ropes have benefits of their own, this article is going to focus on the lighter lines with smaller diameters.

ANSI Z133.1-2006

The American National Standards Institutes Z133.1-2006 Safety Requirements for Arboricultural Operations, Section 8.1.8 on “Ropes and Arborist Climbing Equipment” states the following:

Arborist climbing lines shall have a minimum diameter of ½ inch (12.7mm) and be constructed of a synthetic fiber, with a minimum breaking strength of 5,400 pounds (24.02 kilonewtons [kN]) when new. Maximum working elongation shall not exceed 7 percent at a load of 540 pounds (2.402 kN). Arborists climbing lines shall be identified by the manufacturer as suitable for tree climbing.

In regard to the smaller diameter lines, the ANSI committee recognized the need for an exception:

Exception: In arboricultural operations not subject to regulations that supersede Z133.1, a line of not less than 7/16-inch (11mm) diameter may be used, provided the employer can demonstrate it does not create a safety hazard for the arborist and the arborist has been instructed in its use. The strength and elongation ratings of the line selected shall meet or exceed that of ½-inch (12.7mm) arborist climbing line.

All of the lines discussed here, with the exception of the static lines, meet or exceed the ANSI Z133.1-2006 criteria. These static ropes are technically outside of the standard, as they exceed the weight and elongation requirement, but only measure ⅛-inch (10mm).
Understanding ropes

A quick review of the anatomy and physiology of rope reveals that polyolefin fibers are weaker than polyester fibers, which are weaker than nylon. Nylon and polyester melt around the same temperature of 480 to 500 degrees. Polyolefin fibers melt at an average of 305 degrees. Polyester shows a lower elongation at breaking percentage, flexes better, and is more abrasion resistant. The bottom line is that manufacturers can match different fiber materials together by various construction methods to achieve ropes that have characteristics very suitable for arborists’ needs.

The market is screaming for new innovative ropes that function well with and hold up to mechanical ascenders. In true fashion, arborist supply houses and rope manufacturers have answered the call with a barrage of new lines.

The primary construction types of today’s smaller lines are double braid and low- or high-stretch kernmantles. Technically, all double braids are kernmantles (kern = core; mantle = cover), but for simplicity’s sake they will be described here as double braids. The terms jacket, mantle, sheath and cover are synonymous in referring to the outer protective sleeve of the rope.

The ropes

The use of ascenders by arborists in Single Rope Technique (SRT) is quickly gaining popularity, opening doors to new systems and gear that spelunkers and mountaineers have used for some time. The market is screaming for new innovative ropes that function well with and hold up to mechanical ascenders. In true fashion, arborist supply houses and rope manufacturers have answered the call with a barrage of new lines.

Snakebite HTP

The first is from Sterling Rope, the Snakebite HTP. HTP stands for high tenacity polyester. It has a very smooth, tight braid of 32 carriers, measures 10mm (3/8 inch) and is made from polyester that provides more coverage to the core, according to Adam Gagne with Sterling Rope. This type of braiding pattern keeps the dirt out as well as making it hydrophobic (repels water). It is very light and, as a low-stretch kernmantle, it only elongates 0.63 percent under load. Gagne says they are very pleased and surprised at how well it is selling so far.

Neopro

John Hartenburg, with Knot and Rope Supply, says that, for performance with mechanical devices, he gives high marks to Sterling’s Snakebite as well. He also mentions a new 16-strand that measures 7/16 of an inch called Neopro from All Gear (Atlantic Braids). According to Hartenburg, this line is worth trying as SRT; it has a tight braid pattern and is abrasion resistant. Neopro provides excellent grip and performs well in both SRT and doubled-line systems.

KM III

The world’s most popular semi-static line is New England Ropes’ KM III, according to Bill Shakespeare, New England Ropes rope guru. It has a polyester jacket and a unidirectional (parallel) core. It is a great line for SRT or foot locking. A word of caution: the jacket can be abrasive to the bare hands.

Tachyon a.k.a. Lava

Hartenburg says that over a five-year aggregate period, his best selling 11mm or 7/16 line was a dead heat between Samson’s Velocity and Yale’s Blaze. The clear leader in the tree house now, he says, is New England’s Tachyon, also sold as Lava. Shakespeare describes Tachyon as a lightweight rope with exceptional grip that is
soft on the hands. The cover is a 24-strand polyester braid that doesn’t flatten out under load. This is due to the Flexifirm core, which is a standard nylon double braid core that has a polyolefin strand in the middle. This technology allows the rope to be spliced on both ends right off the reel. This is a result of low constructional stretch that reduces sheath slippage, thereby keeping the rope round under tension – in other words, minimal milking. This rope also conforms to EN1891A, making it suitable for life support.

**Blaze, Poison Ivy, Poison Hi-Vy**

Yale Cordage’s Jamie Goddard knows what arborists are looking for. First he gave the industry Blaze, an 11mm, 24-strand polyester line. It is light and nimble. For climbers who prefer a little more size, Goddard and Yale added 0.7mm to Blaze and created Poison Ivy and Poison Hi-Vy. Each of these lines is spliceable, 24-strand double braid with low elongation that will not square up under a load. Poison Ivy, Hi-Vy and another Yale product, Blue Moon, all work well in many systems, are friendly to mechanical ascender devices and are excellent choices for SRT. They are all easy on the hands during ascent and while working in the canopy.

**Velocity**

Samson manufactures Velocity, a lightweight Class I double braid. It is a 24-strand, 11mm line with a proprietary in-house coating known as Sure Grip. Climbers who have used Velocity for years may have noticed a subtle change in the

(Continued on page 72)
Splicing Symposium Aim is Safer Climbing

By Rich Hattier

One interesting aspect of arboriculture is the fact that there is such a variety of disciplines that are all inter-related and yet so completely different in nature. Whether you are a climbing specialist, spray technician, researcher, lab technician, ground worker, sales representative, utility specialist or owner of a tree service, you need to have a common base knowledge of the trees that you work with in order to perform your job professionally. The extra knowledge required to perform your chosen discipline may not involve trees at all, but the applications of your work can directly affect the many other disciplines of arboriculture. Often the specific knowledge needed for your discipline can be gained through field experience, but in many cases the knowledge must be taught through universities.

One discipline often overlooked as an important factor of professional arboriculture involves the development and manufacture of climbing equipment. To produce safe and effective tools for climbers, a strong knowledge of the characteristics of trees and how they function as well as an understanding of how climbers interact with the equipment is absolutely necessary. It is equally important for any arborist using the equipment to have a strong knowledge of the characteristics, applications and limitations of that equipment in the field. The open dialogue between climbers and manufacturers has led to the development of some of the safest and most useful tools that climbers use. An example of this interdisciplinary cooperation took place earlier this year at the first Spring Splicing Symposium, held near Louisville, Kentucky.

The intent of the Symposium was to provide a fuller understanding of the techniques used to produce high-quality hand splices for a variety of different cordage, including: 16-strand, double-braid and hollow-braid constructions. In order to achieve this, participants immersed themselves in two full days of learning all things rope, including: rope construction, cordage characteristics, anatomy of a splice, and the use of specialized tools. In gaining a deeper understanding about how splicing works, participants were then in a better position...

(Continued on page 73)
According to Jim Cass, the northeast sales representative for Samson, the amount of Sure Grip has changed from 4- or 5-to-1 (Sure Grip/water) mix to a 3-to-1 mix as a result of market demands. When asked about the rope’s integrity in regard to picking or breaking a strand, Howard Wright, Samson’s application engineer, pointed to the fact that each strand carried \( \frac{1}{24} \) of the jacket load, which is shared evenly. If a strand is broken, the jacket loses \( \frac{1}{24} \) of its strength, which in itself isn’t that big of a deal. The problem is the load becomes imbalanced and the rope becomes vulnerable to problems faster.

**Lightning**

Wright is the designer of Samson’s Lightning, a rope made with climbers in mind who use a 16-strand line and want to experiment with new technology. It is a lightweight 16-strand line that employs SmartCore technology to give it the feel of a 16-strand without all the weight. The lightweight foam core material is an engineered structure with a very thin chemical jacket that adds rigidity to it. The cover is polyester that resists abrasions well. The market has given the rope a lukewarm reception, according to Cass, possibly due to the cost, which is within range of other high tech lines. Climbers who have used Lightning apparently complain about the line’s stretch. Wright says not to worry, that the elongation characteristics tested at a 16-strand level. The foam core gives the stretch a different feel. He wants climbers to bear in mind that this line was primarily designed with the 16-strand-line climber in mind, or \( \frac{1}{2} \)-inch lines and not the competition level or smaller diameter line user.

**End of the line**

The marketplace is full of choices when it comes to arborist climbing lines. This article focused on just a sample of what is out there. There is a tremendous amount of data available on the design and testing of these and other lines, so it is easy to shop around. If you are looking to save energy and become a more productive climber, explore these smaller diameter lines and incorporate them into your climbing systems.

**Keith Pancake is an ISA certified arborist, utility specialist and tree worker with Broad Oak Tree and Shrub Care in Peterborough, N.H., a TCIA accredited tree care company.**
Splicing seminar
(Continued from page 71)

to make decisions on where to apply a spliced eye as well as which type of cord construction would be preferable for a given application. With eyes and minds wide open, they discussed unsafe applications of splices and figured out safe alternatives to these applications.

Teaching a student to splice is very similar to teaching a student to climb in the fact that no singular splicing approach will be useful to all splicers, just as no singular climbing style will be used by all climbers. In an effort to provide students with as many different splicing techniques as possible, four splicing veterans were brought in as instructors, each of whom had a completely different background in the industry and different approach to splicing. But each instructor has had the quality of their splices “certified” by submitting splices to be tested for strength under the supervision of cordage manufacturers.

John Hartenburg, Octavious Benton, Michael Tain and Rich Hattier served not only as instructors for this class, but also as cheerleaders when a splice was going well, and grief counselors when it wasn’t. Rounding out the team of instructors was Courtney Kilgore, who organized and ran all of the logistics as well being the one to keep us all on schedule during the event.

The classroom sessions of the symposium systematically explained each step of the manufacturers recommended instructions for producing a splice that would meet industry strength ratings as well as showing many alternative techniques that could aid in making the process somewhat easier to understand and perform. Each classroom session was followed by hands-on practice with performing the splice and applying the various techniques. The lessons learned during these hands-on sessions were invaluable to students and instructors alike, and very quickly the quality of the splices produced improved dramatically. Each student was encouraged to not only keep their hand-crafted splices, but to use them with confidence.

As with most any gathering of arborists, the fun had during this symposium was not limited to splicing alone. Impromptu classes on various climbing techniques, recreational “fun” climbs, canoe races, hikes in the ample woods and “Treeboat” camping all helped to offer a measure of relief from the nonstop barrage of splicing information our participants experienced.

Keep an eye on TCI’s calendar of events for details on the next installment of the Spring Splicing Symposium.

Pull-testing the splices. New England Ropes provided rope for the symposium, with additional sponsorship from Knot and Rope Supply and Anchor Bridge Ropeworks.
On June 25, OSHA’s Compliance Directorate released a Directive that would have wiped out commercial arboriculture as we know it, forcing all companies to adopt unsafe practices designed for the logging industry.

TCIA went to work immediately in Washington and pledged in an Aug. 8 Regulatory Alert to members that the association would “not rest until this directive is rescinded.”

Effective August 21, the Directive has been rescinded!

TCIA was successful in convincing OSHA that the onerous June 25 Directive that placed arboriculture squarely under the logging standard was unsafe, arbitrary and contrary to established safe practices derived from decades of industry experience embodied in the ANSI Z133 standard.

Your Voice for Trees Political Action Committee has worked hard over the past four years to develop strong relationships on Capitol Hill. TCIA has also devoted countless hours working through our Alliance with OSHA to educate and advance safety in the industry. Both efforts proved crucial in getting the directive rescinded.

In its place, OSHA issued a new directive on August 21. We are still reviewing and analyzing it, but our first impression is that the new directive is a significant improvement over what OSHA issued on June 25. That said, we will be asking for clarifications from OSHA on issues that may be confusing in order to comply and to gain a better understanding of the process when a Compliance Safety and Health Officer writes a logging citation. To review this directive, paste the following address into your Web browser: www.tcia.org/eblasts/regulatory_blast/PDFs/Aug2008OSHADirective.pdf.

TCIA members should begin to become familiar with the contents so that you can comply with its requirements. Be sure to note the information on hearing protection. Inclusion in this directive of what has been a requirement for our industry, but perhaps not heavily enforced, will place it on enforcement officers’ radar when looking at your operations.

We are continuing to review the document, will be working with our Hill contacts over the next few weeks, and are seeking another meeting with OSHA the week of September 22.

On behalf of tree care companies across the nation, TCIA would again like to thank David Marren, Legislative & Regulatory Affairs advisor; Josh Ulman, TCIA lobbyist; Kevin Caldwell of Caldwell Tree Care, Rebecca Moran of Superior NW Tree and Shrub Care, Erich Schneider of Schneider Tree Care and Chris Freeman of Sox & Freeman Tree Expert Company – along with our Voice for Trees Political Action Committee and its supporters – for being key partners in our effective government relations program that allowed us to be successful in our goal to rescind the June 25 Directive.

TCIA and our Winter Management Conference wants to save you money and help you to grow your business! You may have heard by now that for the 2009 conference in the Bahamas, February 8-12, we’re offering a second, lower cost hotel option located on the same property as the host hotel. For as much as $100 less per night, the Sheraton Our Lucaya offers a comfortable hotel experience with similar resort amenities to The Westin, our host hotel.

We’re also holding the line on 2009 program registration costs. WMC is offering up an outstanding all-star educational program, plus the networking, location and recreation WMC is known for, and we’re keeping more money in your pocket, too – full conference registration for TCIA members is still just $699 (the same since 2007), which includes four breakfasts, all educational sessions, poolside forums, Welcome Reception, and Farewell Party.

We’re all feeling the crunch of our changing economy right now – one more reason why Winter Management Conference is so important in a service industry such as tree care. At WMC, we bring business owners and managers together to get the latest information on competing successfully and increasing sales, and attendees return home with new ideas for motivating their teams, boosting customer loyalty and improving bottom lines.

Visit www.tcia.org and click Meetings to learn more about the 2009 conference, check out the two hotel options, and book your room(s). Look for the full conference brochure in your mailbox this fall or – better yet – pick up your copy at the TCIA Membership Booth at TCI EXPO in Milwaukee.
TCI EXPO in Milwaukee will have it all

Where can you go to find over 60 hours of seminars, workshops and panel discussions presented by leading industry experts? How about a diverse selection of seminar topics that span arboriculture, safety, business leadership, and Spanish-language tracks?

The early-bird registration deadline for TCI EXPO is October 10, 2008

Where can you stock up on the CEUs you need, including some for free? And where can you find all this plus more than 175 exhibitors, 188,000 square feet of trade show floor, raffles, receptions, demonstrations and more?

You guessed it – you can find it all at TCI EXPO. The world’s biggest and most comprehensive tree care industry show is coming to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Nov. 13-15, 2008, and you don’t want to miss it!

Every year, the TCI EXPO Program Development Team searches for the most interesting and progressive presenters with the most beneficial seminar topics to offer to you. Because we know that everyone has different needs related to education, we offer three educational tracks (arboriculture, safety, and business leadership, plus a full track presented in Spanish) so that no matter what your job title, there will be seminars at EXPO that fit your needs. We strive to bring you speakers and presentations that are at the forefront of our growing field, because we know that when you’re not changing, you’re falling behind – and to stay competitive, you have to have the latest and greatest information.

A variety of skills demonstrations take place each day throughout TCI EXPO at the demo tree in the center of the trade show floor.

TCI EXPO offers three educational tracks – arboriculture, safety, and business/leadership – and additional sessions presented in Spanish. All sessions also provide ample opportunity for networking.

From aerial rescue, business basics, and crane safety to tree risk assessment, using PR, and wind load analysis – no matter what your interest, skill level or training needs, there is something for every member of your crew.

Learn more about our speakers and program by visiting www.tcia.org to read seminar descriptions and EXPO speaker biographies or download the full brochure. You can also find a printed version of the TCI EXPO brochure in your latest issue of TCI magazine.

Baker’s dozen earn CTSP credential in August

The following earned their Certified Treecare Safety Professional credential in August, most of them at a workshop in San Jose, California, August 20-21, 2008.

San Jose, CA

Dan Dunn, CTSP A Plus Tree Service
Roy Jones, CTSP Asplundh Tree Expert Co.
Alicia Jones, CTSP Asplundh Tree Expert Co.
Mikael S. Otto, CTSP Mowbray’s Tree Service
D. Paul Jones, CTSP Arborwell
Joseph N. Allga, CTSP West Coast Arborists
David L. Hill, CTSP Bartlett Tree Experts
Luis Abrego, CTSP Finch Tree Surgery, Inc.
Pedro Correa, CTSP S. P. McClennahan Co.
Jason Pingar, CTSP West Coast Arborists
Damon Schrosk, CTSP Treecology Inc.
Dixon Farmer, CTSP Four Seasons Tree Care

Londonderry, NH

James Courville, CTSP Mayer Tree Service, Inc.

The 2008 Award of Merit went to Mark Tobin, shown here with his wife, Mary Beth. Who is deserving of this year’s Award of Merit? See the enclosed insert. Deadline for nominations is October 17.
Take part in October’s Drug-Free Work Week

October 20-26, 2008, is National Drug-Free Work Week and all members of the tree care industry are encouraged to participate. To help in this effort, this month’s TCIA Member Giveaway included with this Reporter includes a First-Line Fact Sheet for employers/supervisors about identifying and dealing with drug and alcohol use on the job, and a Fast Facts card for reminding employees about the dangers of substance abuse on the job and how to deal with it.

The aim of Drug-Free Work Week is to highlight that being drug free is key to workplace safety and health and to encourage workers with alcohol and drug problems to seek help.

Drug-Free Work Week is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor in coordination with members of its Drug-Free Workplace Alliance. This cooperative program, which represents both employer/contractor associations and labor unions, aims to improve safety and health through drug-free workplace programs. It focuses on the construction industry because research indicates that it has higher than average rates of worker alcohol and drug abuse — a serious concern given that it also is among the industries with the highest rates of workplace accidents and injuries. But because drug-free workplace programs benefit all workplaces, employers and employees in all industries, not just construction, are encouraged to take part in Drug-Free Work Week.

Suggestions as to how TCIA members can support Drug-Free Work Week include:
- Implement a Drug-Free Workplace Program
- Promote your Drug-Free Workplace Program
- Train supervisors & educate workers
- Remind employees about the availability of assistance
- Offer health screening
- Compile a list of local resources
- Review your health insurance policy
- Allow employees time to volunteer in community drug prevention efforts
- Create a Drug-Free Workplace Display
- Feature Drug-Free Week in the employee newsletter or Intranet
- Distribute a payroll message with help lines or a reminder about Drug-Free Work Week for employees
- Hold a social event celebrating safety and health

For more ideas on how to recognize Drug-Free Work Week, visit the Working Partners Web site at www.dol.gov/workingpartners.

Take part in National Drug-Free Work Week October 20-26, and use the enclosed info sheets to make a safer workplace year-round.
The Tree Care Industry Association recognizes our Partners Advancing Commercial Tree Care. Their strategic partnership with TCIA supports our journey to Transform the Industry.

Helping to build a stronger marketplace can have significant benefits for your company. To learn about the many branding and marketing opportunities available, contact Deborah Johnson, Director of Development; johnson@tcia.org or call 1-800-733-2622
Nominations sought for National Arbor Day Awards

The Arbor Day Foundation wants to honor the top individuals and organizations involved in exemplary tree planting and environmental practices during 2008. The Foundation is accepting nominations for the 2009 National Arbor Day Awards, which honor the very best efforts in tree planting, tree care, conservation and environmental stewardship.

The deadline for nominations is Dec. 15, 2008. The Arbor Day Award winners will be honored Arbor Day weekend, April 24-25, in Nebraska City, Neb.

Awards are given for work at the national, state and community levels to recognize conservation efforts such as tree planting and care, Arbor Day celebrations, education and roadside beautification.

To nominate an individual or organization, send the name and address of the nominee along with a short paragraph about their work to education@arborday.org, or to Awards, Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Ave., Nebraska City, NE, 68410. The Foundation will contact nominees with an official entry form and information about the Arbor Day Awards.

Vancouver man has neighbor’s tree cut down

A Vancouver homeowner says she is looking into legal action after a next-door neighbor apparently impersonated her and had a towering 100-year-old fir tree cut down on her property without her knowledge.

The homeowner is renting out the property and her tenant, Steve Hawkins, called to tell her that he came home to find one of the trees in the back yard had been cut down by a tree cutting service. Both Hawkins and the owner, who did not want to be identified, said they gave no one permission to cut the tree down.

KATU News was able to talk to a woman with the service who cut down the tree. She said they received a call to bid on the job and that the $1,700 bid was accepted so they took the tree down as agreed.

The tree cutting company told KATU News the neighbor posed as the homeowner and paid to have the tree cut down. He even took the crew into the back yard of the home and showed them which tree to cut down.

“He lied to us,” the woman with the tree cutting company told the reporter.

Crew members were still working on the site when KATU News arrived on the scene. Only a stump and cut sections of the tree remained. Limbs had already been run through a chipper parked out on the street.

The homeowner contacted police who told her it was civil matter. The homeowner told KATU News she was getting legal counsel on the matter.

Morton Arboretum researcher honor, reaches milestone

The Morton Arboretum marked a high point and a milestone recently.

A second researcher for the Arboretum received the L.C. Chadwick award for arboriculture research from the International Society of Arboriculture. Dr. George Ware picked up the award during the ISA annual meeting in St. Louis. Arboretum Senior Scientist Dr. Gary Watson received the L.C. Chadwick award in 1993.

The honor is given to individuals “in recognition of research that has contributed valuable information to arboriculture,” according to the ISA.

Ware, dendrologist emeritus and former research director, reached a milestone on August 25 with 40 years of Arboretum service. He was centrally involved as the Arboretum bred and marketed five new elm trees that are resistant to Dutch elm disease.

Now, he and Kunso Kim, Arboretum assistant director of collections, are likely glimpsing the future as they keep a dozen promising elm trees from China under observation. These 12 Chinese species are virtually unknown in the U.S., but not to the Arboretum, home to the largest elm collection in the U.S., and which grows nearly all of the 22 known Chinese elm species.

Observation of the 12 is especially timely given the maladies affecting trees across the United States, such as Dutch elm disease, elm yellows, oak wilt, emerald ash borer, and others.

Ware is especially focused on the Anhui elm, he says, because it loves stream-side habitats.

“We are always interested in trees that grow around streams and in flood plains because they tolerate low oxygen levels in the soil. That’s something trees have to confront in urban areas where soil is compacted and frequently, less oxygen reaches the roots.”

The average life span of an urban tree is fewer than 10 years, according to Ware. But planting harder trees increases the likelihood of a longer life span.

Scientists are cracking the genetic code of weeds

When scientists identified the function of the 25,000 or so genes that make up human DNA, they unleashed a new wave of innovation in healthcare that is allowing physicians to tailor the treatment of diseases for better outcomes. The same type of genetic research is helping scientists do battle on a very different front – learning how to better control the invasive weeds that harm crops, reduce harvests and, for arborists, create havoc in landscapes and along rights of way.

“We also hope to use what we learn about the genetic traits of weeds to determine how we can help food crops thrive under environmental stresses and poor growing conditions, just as weeds do,” says Nilda Burgos, a weed physiologist in the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Science at the University of Arkansas.

One leading example of the impact of molecular research involves work underway on weedy red rice (Oryza sativa), a troublesome weed that plagues rice crops around the globe. An estimated six out of 10 rice fields in the southern U.S. alone are...
If we can narrow that down, perhaps we use more nitrogen than rice,” Burgos says. which weed genes cause the weedy rice to the crop and grows even bigger.

infested with weedy red rice, resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars in losses annually due to reduced yields.

Researchers have discovered that weedy red rice absorbs more nitrogen than the rice cultivated for food. This means that when nitrogen-rich fertilizers are applied to an infested field, the weed robs nutrients from the crop and grows even bigger.

“As a next step, we hope to determine which weed genes cause the weedy rice to use more nitrogen than rice,” Burgos says. “If we can narrow that down, perhaps we can learn how to make crops more nitrogen efficient and produce higher yields. In the meantime, the practical lesson for farmers and gardeners is to control weeds so they don’t steal the fertilizer meant for crops.”

“When seeds and vegetative buds are in a resting period, they are far harder to control,” says Mike Foley, research leader for the USDA’s Agricultural Research Service, Plant Science Research Unit. “By identifying the genetic triggers that keep seeds from germinating, we hope to find clues that will help us develop more effective control measures.”

Though research on weed genes is taking off in labs around the world, much remains to be done. “Ongoing molecular research into the genetic code of weeds is crucial,” says Lee Van Wychen, director of science policy for the Weed Science Society of America. “By understanding more about the characteristics of weeds – both the good and the bad – we can identify new opportunities not only for agriculture, but for use in other fields.”

Send Tree New Digest items to staruk@tcia.org.
By Jim Oldiges

I t was August 1996, pre 911 thoughts and ways. Current President Bill Clinton was making his trips and visits for his re-election.

I own and operate a tree and lawn maintenance service, and I do a lot of work in Toledo, Ohio, and southern Michigan. The job this day was roof-line trimming on a 60-unit, three-story apartment complex in Toledo. So I packed up my gear and crew and to the job site we went.

I took a less used route because, as we know, a chipper and truck are easier to handle there than on a busy four-lane road. A very calm and sunny day, I thought everything was perfect. Talking to Rich, the manager at the apartment complex, we double checked to see how much trimming and clearance were needed. We then got started.

As I looked out onto the usually busy four-lane Secor Road, there was no traffic or noise. Curious.

Grabbing my new Stihl telescopic pole pruner, I thought this would a very good job to put this to work. My ground people were set and I was in a work mode, so let the work begin.

Roof line clearance was going nicely, but I kept noticing the lack of traffic. Then one of my crew yelled up to me that, “Rich wants to know what the heck are you doing, Jim!”

I had a few fast answers, but the best was doing the roof line trimming. At that point, I looked around, because I could hear a helicopter hovering around my work area. At about the same time, my crew noticed a police escort across the road. They yelled to look to the left at the parking lot at the Sheraton Hotel, which I did.

Keep in mind that I had the pole pruner in my hand as I was turning in that direction. The Secret Service helicopter swooped down within eyesight – the pilot and I could see the whites of each other’s eyes.

As it turns out, President Clinton’s convoy was pulling out onto Secor Road. My crew and I had arrived as I got to the job site 15 minutes before the road blocks were set up.

I put down my pole pruner, and then gave a friendly wave. The helicopter crew waved back.

My own crew and I watched the long convoy disappear onto the highway and the rest of the day I had a smile, a laugh and a good story to tell. This honorably discharged marine on a roof top did get a little bit of attention that day using my new pole pruner. It never crossed my mind that a tree trimming job could quickly turn into a political or a government event.

It’s 12 years later and my wife, Tina, told me that Bill Clinton is coming back to Toledo. I told her we should watch the 11 o’clock news to see if a different tree trimmer had a similarly political viewpoint.

God Bless America!

Jim Oldiges is owner Jim’s Lawn and Tree Service in Erie, Michigan.

The Secret Service helicopter swooped down within eyesight – the pilot and I could see the whites of each other’s eyes.
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