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Editorial Safety, A Six Letter Word

It is not surprising that organizations of the shade tree care industry have taken defensive steps to more clearly define safety requirements and specific job functions within the industry. It has been our observation that employees of the professional arborist are just as accident prone as the non-professionals and "storm scavengers" who shun industry association participation, state safety courses and other accident-prevention programs.

Within the past three months we have kept an informal tally of safety violations committed by tree climbers employed by selected professional arborists. Just for openers, our list includes climbers who were: struck by a tree branch; cut on the hand with a power saw; shocked by a short-circuited wire; climbing into trees with frayed ropes; wearing the wrong size saddle; struck by objects kicked back by a chipper; not tied into the tree properly; wearing street clothing and shoes in a tree; operating a bucket with outriggers not in place; and others.

In one case a climber grossly miscalculated a lateral move and severely hit his side against a large branch knocking off his eyeglasses and hardhat. Only his safety line (which was not passed around a main leader) saved him.

The recently released American National Standard Z133.L, developed by industry leaders including the National Arborist Association and the International Shade Tree Conference, is an excellent standard for the arborist. Additionally the OSHA manual for arborists compiled for members of the National Arborist Association brings safety snafus into focus. Likewise, state safety programs like the 43rd All-Ohio Safety Congress specifically detail problem situations.

Why then is there an incongruity between these excellent safety measures and the poor on-the-job track record of professional arborists? It is because the employer (arborist) tries to motivate the employee (tree climber) by preaching safety. This method is about as practical as an elastic safety line. The employee soon believes that safety measures are company practices rather than in-dividual practices for himself.

Safety posters can be wall-to wall, plastered on every piece of equipment and riveted on to hardhats, but without individual motivation the tree climber will be safety color blind.

The professional arborist must communicate safety in a climate in which the employee cares first about his own safety, which, in turn, is the company's safety.

Likewise, the associations to which the arborist belongs must be continually motivate members not in safety practices but in job performance of

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This is not pebble beach but piles of stones picked from Adventura Golf Course in Biscayne Village, Fla. Bergman says this is the most stones ever picked from any job.

STONE PICKIN' PRO (from page 16)

then windrowed for the stone picker.

When complete, the course is free of stones and ready for seeding.

What do you do with the stones? Bergman has the answer. Some are used as the base for greens. Others are taken out to future parking areas or used as a base in areas where concrete will be placed, he says.

The business is basically a family operation. There's Melna, "Stoney's" wife, and four sons. Bob, 20, Fred, 18, Michael, 17 and Paul, 14, who drive trucks, tractors and other equipment used in the job. Even the youngest, Mary, 6, helps out by bringing water to the hard-working crew. Another daughter, Cheryl, 22, takes care of the telephone calls at the Michigan residence on M-15. The family moves to the job in a mobile home, formerly an interstate bus.

"Toughest course we've encountered so far was the High Mountain Country Club, Franklin Lakes, New Jersey," says "Stoney." "It was rolling terrain and gave our equipment a workout."

To date, Bergman has picked stones from more than 147 golf courses. "We believe that our operation can be moved quickly to practically any part of the country," he says. "We recently picked stones at the Adventura Golf Course in Biscayne Village, Florida. That experience will go down on our records as the most stones ever picked from one course."

In addition to picking stones, Bergman specialize in seeding, fertilizing, consultation and irrigation work. "We feel that these jobs are interrelated," he says. "When we finish picking stones, the course is ready to seed. Some of our other equipment lends itself to a seeding operation. A contractor who hires seeding and fertilizing is sometimes delayed in getting the operation going. Since we offer these services in addition to picking stones, the contractor can have this vital function performed on time."

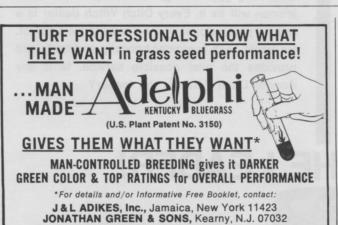
Picking stones on new courses permits Bergman to observe and contribute to new trends in golf course construction. Some of these include: fewer sand traps — some newer courses don't use any; dramatic increase in the use of irrigation; and generally more interesting courses.

Bergman figures that as much as 15 percent of the total contract price on new construction should be allocated for stone picking. "The time to pick stones is before the grass seed is planted." "It will never be less expensive; the investment more than pays for itself."

Future plans for this Michigan resident include making another rock picker that can pick up stones of one-fourth inch size. This picker would be used on race tracks. "Our present picker can handle stones even smaller than three-fourths inch," he says. "But we can't guarantee that every stone of that size will be picked up. That's why a second picker is needed."

EDITORIAL (from page 6)

which safety is an integral part. To add ANSI Z133.1 or any other manual to the package of accomplishments of an association does nothing for the tree climber. To elicit and discuss ways in which ANSI Z133.1 can be used as a tool to help the tree climber place a higher value on his own safety will be meaningful to the association member and the industry. We charge that this is the duty of arborist organizations. Without this kind of effort, safety will never be much more than a six letter word.





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