

ADVICE TO STUDENT ARBORISTS¹

by Larry Hall

In 1951 it was the National Shade Tree Conference, then the International Shade Tree Conference, now the International Society of Arboriculture. Believe it or not, I became a member in 1951. Recently I was asked by a young client (35 or about) "How old are you, Mr. Hall?" Well, say I, "I'm 56 years old. That's not so old if you're a tree". We both got a chuckle out of that extemporaneous comment. I started in the business when I was 18 years old, became a member of the NSTC (or ISA) at 21. I have no formal training.

I give much credit for what I have learned about trees, and life in general, to my persistent association with, not only the ISA, but NAA and ASCA. I am a member of all 3 groups. I believe in being an active member. Let me reminisce and take you back to my arboricultural beginnings. I worked with the Davey Company for 6 months as a line clearer, right out of high school. Line clearing has its place in arboriculture, but it was not for me. I heard of Archibald Enoch Price and signed on with him in November of 1948. He was the kind of person that encouraged those that expressed interest to learn more and more. He loaned out his books and pamphlets. I can vividly remember reading much written by Dr. J. C. Carter, Dr. L. C. Chadwick, Dr. P. P. Pirone, and many others.

Then it happened that I accompanied Archie to some meetings and heard these people speak. He actually introduced me to them. I shook hands with them and asked face to face, person to person, questions of these learned men. They were real. They would talk to me, a tree skinner. They, each one of them, smiled at me. Wow! I truly felt I had gained some sort of "Degree Cum Laude" at that meeting.

With this new 'degree' I felt I owed it to myself and the world of trees to go forward. I can remember years ago, and I can remember only a few days ago, hanging around with guys like E. B. Himelick, Dan Neely, Dick Campana, Alex Shigo, George Ware, Bob Felix and Jim Kielbaso. Meeting with the Davey's, Asplundh's, Bartlett's,

many others, exchanging ideas and thoughts with them. These random meetings in the hallways, bars, and restaurants can be as educational as the seminars.

Visiting with, and asking questions of, the exhibitors is very rewarding. Don't pass up that important part of the meetings. Don't just fondle their wares, ask questions, get brochures, and get on mailing lists. Meetings such as conferences of the ISA are of much value to many of us in viewing new equipment, techniques, fertilizers, pesticides. We must gain up-to-date knowledge on this as well.

The fact that you people are here today suggests you are a member of ISA or that it is under consideration. If you are a member, for heaven's sake, be an active member. Don't just sit there, get involved. Even if you lack confidence, force yourself to get on a committee, give a talk, ask questions. The second and third time around it becomes easier.

When I was a brand new member, I couldn't conceive of myself giving a talk, joining a committee, or even asking a question from the audience. I finally tried it, and I liked it. The more I became involved, the more I learned. The old cliché "the more you put in, the more you get out" is so true.

I served as President of the I.S.A. in 1984. I spent much time visiting many of our Chapters. It was a time consuming, as well as energy consuming, effort. I sincerely believe I gained in that year far more than I gave. Whatever Chapter I visited treated me in grand fashion. It was truly an unforgettable year. I visited with Chapters from coast to coast and from Texas to Canada. Emphatically I declare that those involved with trees are, for the most part, as fine a group of people as can be found. It has occurred to me, do the trees do something to bring out the best in these people?

Arboriculture is advancing. The general populace is becoming more aware of the value of trees to life. In Andreas Feininger's book, entitled *Trees*,

1. Presented at the annual conference of the International Society of Arboriculture in San Antonio in August 1986.

the author makes this profound and sweeping statement, "Man's life, his origin, his uniqueness, and perhaps even the continuation of his very existence are inextricably tied to life of trees. Had there been no trees, it seems more that likely that the human race would never have come into being; should the trees die, it is not inconceivable that man too would become extinct."

As we learn more about the chain of events that contribute to life on our planet, we are forced to recognize that the simple daily events often taken for granted are part of a web of immense complexity and sophistication.

One of our political leaders once said, "What's so special about a tree? You've seen one, you've seen them all." This is an indifference we can no longer afford. One acre of trees (approx. 78 trees) provides enough oxygen annually to sustain 18 people. Twenty mature trees are needed to offset the effect of an auto driven 60 miles in one day. The daily transpiration rate of an average size midwest shade tree is reported to be 75-100 gallons of water. The evaporation of this much water requires about 225,000 kilocalories of energy, or the equivalent of 5 average-size room air conditioning units. Obviously, a single tree would not effectively cool an immediate environment, but many trees could contribute to a given micro-environment. It would be interesting to observe the morale of mid and upper class America if we as ruthlessly pulled out our air conditioners as we bulldoze trees for new roadways and new buildings. In many ways, isn't a city without trees like a desert? The presence of trees and other vegetation helps cool our urban areas, acts as a buffer to heavy pollutants, acts as visual and sound barriers. All this and more.

One wonders if it isn't sinful striving to justify the presence of trees, but that is sometimes done. It

is true that trees, in some undefined way, help to tranquilize our minds and make our existence more pleasant. Simply sitting beneath a tree and enjoying it's shade, marveling at its massiveness, wondering who designed and structured it and who decided the leaf form and placement. It seems rather exciting that, in our advanced technology, there are still so many unanswered questions about how a tree grows. As our world becomes more fabricated and man-made, trees become a significant reminder that man is a part of nature.

Trees are special. They serve as symbols and have functions. Trees are relevant in contemporary culture and our attitude is reflected in the way we care for trees or any living thing. You students are needed in this industry. The fact that you are here suggests a commitment on your part. Our industry does not pay well, but perhaps we are getting better. The more we upgrade and perform in a professional manner, and this we can do in better fashion with educated people such as yourselves, the more we can justify escalated charges to the client and thus pay better wages. Do remember this. You must not measure wealth by the money you have, but more by the things you have for which you would not take money.

Let me say to all of you. This is becoming more and more, an important industry. If you are going to be a viable force in this world of arboriculture you need the I.S.A., you need N.A.A. and you need A.S.C.A. Become active and gain from it. To paraphrase J.F.K., "Ask not what the I.S.A. can do for you, ask what you can do for the I.S.A."

*Archibald Enoch Price
The Care of Trees, Inc.
Wheeling, Illinois 60090*