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ACTIVITIES OF THE CTLA¹

by L.C. Chadwick

Activities of the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers in 1976-77 can be categorized as follows: 1) publicity and public relations activities, 2) insurance area activities, 3) legislative area activities, and 4) consideration of revision of *A guide to the professional evaluation of landscape trees, specimen shrubs, and evergreens*.

Publicity and Public Relations

The activities in this area have been handled largely by Paul Dawson, Paul Dawson & Friends, Washington, D.C., under the direction of the Council. Among the activities in this area are:

The audio/visual program—tree values. — This 80-slide audio/visual program was completed during the year and has had an excellent reception. In the first six months of 1977, 31 sets have been purchased and 34 additional rentals, all of which means a multi-fold showing of the *Tree Values* sets. Each sponsoring organization has been supplied with a set. The audio/visual program has been presented at all ISA Chapter meetings, at meetings of ASCA, NAA, AAN, and at many local professional and nonprofessional group meetings. It was shown at the recent convention of the American Society of Appraisers in San Francisco. If the present demand continues, additional sets will be purchased. A few minor changes will be made by the Council. A new story will go out to the press this fall encouraging continued use of the audio/visual program. Preliminary plans have been formulated to develop a new audio/visual program entitled *The functional value of trees*.

Information leaflet—tree values. — A special leaflet on tree values has been prepared and

enough copies supplied to each of the organizations for them to mail to all of their members. The leaflet emphasizes such points as: tree values, what are your trees worth; planning for highest value; how your trees and shrubs are evaluated and what to do if you suffer loss or damage to your landscape plants. Ten thousand copies were printed and the supply has been nearly exhausted. Copies have been sent out with all press material and correspondence. An additional 10,000 copies have been authorized by the Council, and these will be made available to members of the sponsoring organizations at the rate of \$8.00 per hundred. You are encouraged to make use of this leaflet in contacts with your customers.

Feature articles. — Feature articles on tree values and the importance of obtaining professional appraisal in casualty cases have been furnished to several speciality magazines, including *Southern Living*, *Sunset Magazine*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *American Home*, *House Beautiful*, and *House & Garden*. The use of these articles by the magazines has not been ascertained to date. *Better Homes & Gardens* ran a feature article in a recent issue on the Guide and The Value of Trees. Members of the Council are cooperating with the Washington office to get coverage in other national magazines.

Trade press. — Much material has been supplied to the trade press on the audio/visual program, casualty losses, insurance coverage, and the Guide, and this material has been picked up by many local organizations. Articles have appeared in the official publications of the sponsoring organizations, in the *American Nur-*

¹Presented at the annual meeting, ISA, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in August 1977 as a report of the Shade Tree Evaluation Committee.

seryman, Grounds Maintenance, Weeds, Trees and Turf, Florida Nurserymen's Digest, Pacific Coast Nurseryman & Garden Supply Dealers Magazine, Western Landscape News, National Landscape Association News Notes, and several other publications.

Winter damage. — Information on casualty coverage for winter damage to plants was furnished in the United Press International, the Associated Press, Script Howard magazines, AP Radio Service, and the News Service of the three major broadcasting systems. This material resulted in some flak from insurance agencies but, undoubtedly, they are now more aware of tree values. While winter damage losses may not be covered under homeowner policies, the IRS does recognize that plant damage caused by freezing conditions can be a deductible casualty loss when the freeze is unusual.

Rapid response program. — Early this spring the Council instituted a free service called the Rapid Response System. It is a method to provide news media in any specific area with authoritative material on casualty loss. Anyone in the tree, landscape, or nursery industry is invited to phone the Washington office, 232 Southern Building, Washington, D.C., phone (202) 347-8219, when a casualty damage occurs in his part of the country. Once the facts are known, the Washington office will provide the news media in that area with information covering ways property owners can gain compensation for tree and landscape losses. To date, material has been furnished to areas in the states of Massachusetts, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, New York, and Washington, D.C. Members of the sponsoring organizations are encouraged to make full use of this service.

Other activities. — Other activities of the Washington office include the handling of an increasing amount of correspondence, preparation of special stories to the trade and consumer press, such as *The Role of CTLA*, and the story on the Wye Oak. Clippings still continue to come in from the North American Clipping Bureau of articles furnished the consumer press last year. Clippings of stories have now been received from 168 different cities in 39 states, Washington,

D.C., and five Provinces in Canada. Two or more clippings, some from different papers, have been received from 53 different cities. There has been good coverage in both large and small cities.

Included in the plans for fall is another series of articles to a selected list of publications and radio public service announcements. Council members have cooperated with the American Association of Nurserymen in compiling information on the functional value of trees and other landscape plants in conserving energy. This material was presented to the House Committee on Ways and Means by Leo Donahue of the AAN staff, as a tax incentive reminder.

Insurance

Action has continued on the part of the Council to instigate changes in insurance policies covering tree and plant casualties. As reported last year, the Council was successful in obtaining an increase in the maximum coverage for any one tree, shrub, or plant from \$250.00 to \$500.00. This increase in coverage was limited to six states, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, Ohio, and Vermont. Insurance Services, Inc. of New York City has apparently been satisfied with the acceptance of their All-New Homeowners '76 Policy Program, as the increase in coverage will include nine additional states, Indiana, Nebraska, Alabama, Delaware, Missouri, Oregon, Maryland, Montana, and Florida. It is our understanding that 15 other states will be added to the list in 1978.

Unfortunately, not all insurance companies follow the Homeowners Policy suggestions of the Insurance Services Office, and furthermore, the recommendations are not mandatory for any company. During the past month, Council member Fred Micha, has visited the Insurance Services Office and from this contact and other communications has obtained some interesting facts:

1. Tree claims settlements represents a very, very small segment of the insurance business, so small, in fact, that some agencies do not keep a compilation of the claims.

2. Our endeavor to obtain a more adequate coverage of horticulture. Tree casualty claims will need to be through a specialty insurance company. The 20 major firms writing homeowners policies would not be interested in specialty

coverage. It would have to be a company willing to take the risk and there are several companies that function in this capacity.

3. Specialty coverage rates would range from \$5.00 to \$6.00 per \$100.00, depending on the perils named.

The Council's activities will continue with further contacts with Insurance Services, Inc., the American Insurance Association, the American Association's Insurance Service, and specialty agencies, in its efforts to determine the best procedures to follow in horticulture - tree casualty claims. Our endeavors will also include procedures for making known to the insurance and legal professions that professional appraisal is advisable and that members of the supporting organizations are available for claim appraisal work.

Legislation

As reported last year, our first efforts to convince IRS that competent horticultural appraisal of casualty trees, rather than "before" and "after" real estate appraisal of the entire property, was unsuccessful. The possibility of legislative solution to the problem is now under active consideration. However, the Council finds industrial statistics are needed before any bill is introduced into Congress. To this end, a questionnaire has been prepared and will be available for each organization to mail to their members. Please take the time to complete the questionnaire. This information is desperately needed. It might be further noted, that in its efforts to rectify IRS rulings, some Council members have aided in the preparation of material for two appraisals pending in tax courts.

Revision of the Guide

Sales of the *Guide to the Professional Evaluation of Landscape Trees, Specimen Shrubs, and Evergreens*, have continued at an adequate rate during 1976-77. As of the end of July, 1977, total copies sold or distributed amount to 3,264, with total sales of \$17,277.60. Total expenses, including \$11,000.00 to support the STE/CTLA program, amounted to \$14,605.36, leaving net receipts of \$2,622.24.

In 1975, 5,000 copies were printed and 1,736 copies remain on hand.

The Council has given considerable thought and attention to a revision of the Guide, as a reprinting will be needed within another two years, if the present rate of sales continues. Several revision changes will be recommended but they do not need to be outlined at this time as they are still being studied. However, the Council strongly feels that the basic rate per sectional square inch of trunk diameter for trees over 12 inches in diameter is too low. The basic rate of \$10.00 per sectional square inch was established in 1973 and it is a known fact that costs of business operations have greatly increased since that time.

In an endeavor to obtain a consensus of opinion of members of the arboricultural profession, a questionnaire was prepared and distributed. The questionnaire contained such points as the basic rate, whether or not the basic rate should fluctuate annually, based on costs of business operations, location, and negative values, and change in replacement costs from that presented in the 1975 edition of the Guide.

Forty-six questionnaires were returned, representing various parts of the country. Practically all the returns indicated that costs of business operations had increased during the past two years with percentages ranging from 5 to 50% (avg. 16.9%). Slightly over 75% of those answering prefer an annual basic rate depending on the cost of business operations, or cost of living index. As of January 1, 1976, 45.6% favored a basic rate of \$12.50 per sectional square inch of trunk diameter, with an increase for the current year based on percentage increase of business operations. Approximately 90% of the returns favored elaboration of both location and negative values in the revision. Nearly all the returns indicated an increase in replacement cost for 1977 for trees over 12 inches in trunk diameter, than figures indicated in the Guide.

The Council had hoped to have definite recommendations to make on the basic and replacement rates for action at this Convention. However, at the time of preparation of this report,

such recommendations have not been formulated. One of the major obstacles is the discrepancy between the replacement cost of a 12-inch tree and the basic rate evaluation of trees larger than 12 inches in diameter. It is hoped that a definite recommendation can soon be made and accepted by the sponsoring organizations for 1978.

In closing, may it be said that your STE Committee/CTLA Council has spent many hours, both individually and collectively, on its activities

during 1976-77, and believe that the funds allotted to it have been wisely and justifiably spent. Further, it is the opinion of the Council that considerable progress in public relations and other channels has been made, and it is determined to move forward in 1977-78.

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A CONTRIBUTED ABSTRACT

SAFETY AND THE CHAIN SAW ¹

Safety must be practiced at all times, on the job as well as off the job. If a person is hurt or laid-up it is going to affect the job he is to do. We must continually be reminded of our safety obligations to ourselves as well as our fellow man.

Chain saws are a time-saving tool when properly maintained and used. If not they can be one of the most costly pieces of equipment you own. The USDA Forest Service has long had a safety program for all facets of work projects and tool handling. Now OSHA says everyone, employee as well as employer, must conform to their safety programs. The people who will have the biggest problem conforming to the new standards are the more experienced employees and the older employees who say, "I have been doing it this way for years and never have had trouble and I'm not about to change now."

In some instances, having safety equipment can or may be more hazardous than not having it. It is usually better to have protection than not have it. In most cases, people can and will get used to wearing their particular protection and not mind it.

What price should be put on safety? Many

foremen and/or employers say I can't afford this protection. The loss of a limb or crippling accident or even death is also expensive. Remember, a loss may hurt you or one of your loved ones.

Chain saw companies put out safety films and many industrial companies have for loan, or nominal fee, such films. Use them. Chain saw safety starts with the individual running the saw and man is probably the weakest link in the safety chain.

Provide a properly adjusted and running saw, and head, ear, and hand, and leg protection. These items must fit properly and comfortably for the individual. Poor fitting equipment in itself is a hazard. These items should be tailored for the job as well as for the person wearing them.

In summarizing, accidents will, do, and can happen anytime. The idea of a safety program is to cut down on the severity and number of accidents. The better the attitude of the organization on safety, the better the safety record of that organization. *D.W. West, White Mountain National Forest, Conway, New Hampshire.*

¹Presented at the New England Chapter Meeting, ISA, in North Conway, New Hampshire in October of 1977.