

International and Texas Tree Climbing Competitions History

Information about the first competition and its development:

<https://www.itcc-isa.com/about/missionhistory/history>

More detailed information was outlined in the ISA Arborist News in April 2024. Brief excerpt:

The tree climbing competitions began at an annual company picnic held in California, USA.

According to Don Blair, a former special advisor with ISA, two gentlemen were instrumental in organizing the first competition- Richard Alvarez, who owned a tree surgery company, and Bailey Hudson, an arborist in Santa Maria, California.

"During the company picnic, a couple of guys started climbing with their mouths saying, 'I can foot lock higher and faster than you can,'" said Blair. "I guess things got heated, so they decided to make a competition out of it."

As a result, in 1974, Alvarez and Hudson organized the first official Tree Trimmers' Jamboree. At the first Jamboree, the organizers decided to conduct a 40-foot foot lock and a work climb that consisted of three workstations.

Afterwards, Alvarez visited the California Arborist Association and invited its members to the next Jamboree.

"I went [to the jamboree] in the summer of 1975 and was enthralled by the whole thing," said Blair. "Hudson and Alvarez were planning on going to Detroit that year and making a pitch to the ISA Board of Governors to consent to hosting a climbing competition in St. Louis the following year."

Looking back, Blair remembers the conference held in Detroit as significant because it was also when the ISA changed its name from the Internacional Shade Tree Conference to the Internacional Society of Arboriculture.

The first official ISA Jamboree was held the following year in St. Louis, Missouri; however, the first competition was not without its challenges.

"Judging was done by the seat of our pants, and the rules kept changing in the middle of the event, much to the dissatisfaction of some of the climbers, but it was good enough to get stuck in the ground to where it could take root," said Blair.

Eventually, the rules and judging became more consistent.

"Bob Mazany was instrumental in helping to get our judging on a consistent, even-keel," Blair said. "Bob was an arborist, a WWII airborne, combat vet in the Pacific, and an Olympic-class competitor, coach, and judge in gymnastics. Originally, the Jamboree only used three judges in the Work Climb, which sometimes yielded wild scores. Drawing on his competitive gymnastics experience, Bob suggested that we use five. The highest score and the lowest score were discarded and the middle three were averaged.

Two-time International Champion, Sam Noonan was recently interviewed, and he said: "The first competitions in California included the body thrust, throw line and a work climb with three stations, and you started from the ground. The aerial rescue was added in 1980."

Texas Tree Climbing Competition History

Recording the history of the Jamboree is a way of honoring those who have competed or helped with the event throughout the years. For a tree climber, it is akin to the super bowl or the Olympics on the international level. It is an opportunity to prove how good you are compared to other climbers. During the 80`s, 90`s, there was limited support for the Jamboree, and we had to make do with the few people willing to help. Some would say it was too costly (loses money) and requires too many people and too much time. The limited support and lack of volunteers to assist with the event are part of the reason we can find only limited information on the event in the early years. Although tree climbers are the workhorses for our industry, they do not always get the respect or acknowledgement they deserve.

Tree climbing is among the most dangerous occupations according to the insurance industry. Climbing 80 feet or more off the ground in 100-degree heat or freezing cold, carrying the most dangerous hand tool ever invented (chainsaw) and roping down sections of log that weigh hundreds of pounds, is not for the faint of heart. It requires a great deal of physical strength and mental capacity. This is why there is a kinship or comradery between climbers as they share in knowing what it is like to climb all day and cope with the associated challenges and risks. But there are rewards as well.

[Chronological History of the ISA Texas Chapter Tree Climbing Championship](#)

The history of Texas as an ISA chapter can be found on the ISAT website. The information documented provides details about early discussions and development of the jamboree.

The following is a compilation of information listed by date, from the ISA Texas Chapter website includes observations and comments from myself and others who were involved in the past.

1969 Summer, according to records, during the National Shade Tree Conference, there was a discussion about Texas having its own ISA chapter separate from the Southern chapter.

1975, Larry Schaapveld, with the Texas Forest Service, attended the national conference in St. Louis. He recently noted:

“The work climb was in a big Bur Oak, and everyone started at the base. Everyone free climbed to the tie in point. I am not sure if they had any insurance.”

1978 February, A group of people met to discuss establishing the Texas chapter that included Del & Mary Kennedy, Sandy Rose, J.J. Harod, R.D. Younger, and Roy Rivers.

1978 August 25th, ISA accepted Texas as a new chapter and the first board meeting was called to order. There was a discussion about holding the first tree conference in San Antonio the following year (1979). Minutes of the meeting note:

“A tree climbers jamboree was discussed, and Roy Rivers was elected to head the committee to set it up. It was discussed that we have it at the Houston Memorial Park and insurance costs were expected to be paid out of entry fees.”

1978 December 1st, Board meeting minutes note:

“Motion made by J.J. Harod to table the tree climber’s jamboree until 1980.”

1979 June 14th, Board meeting minutes note a plan to discuss the jamboree during the 1980 convention.

1979 September 27th, Board meeting minutes read as follows:

“Plans for the jamboree are not well along and (Roy) Rivers was not in attendance. This needs immediate attention! Winners of the jamboree in Texas will be sent to the national meeting at chapter expense.”

1980 January, ISAT newsletter announced – Arborist’s Jamboree, Texas Chapter ISA – 1980.

“The Texas Chapter Arborist Jamboree is a competitive program and demonstration of work procedures and tree climbing skills that are common to the fields of commercial, municipal and utility arboriculture.”

The January 1980 announcement goes on for nine pages as it notes the tree climbing events and guidelines on how to run them. There were four additional pages of drawings of knots and climbers in the speed events. There were quite a few statements that captured the thinking at the time and the challenges they were facing.

“Texas regional winners, places 1, 2, 3, will qualify to compete at the jamboree scheduled for the Chapters annual meeting in Houston, June 1980. The Chapter will strive to financially assist one or more winners to compete at the ISA International Arborists Jamboree to be held in Hartford Connecticut, August 1980.”

This statement presumes there would be regional competitions, but they never happened.

“Contestants will be required in the climbing events to use the following equipment: safety helmet, tree saddle or rope saddle, saw scabbard, handsaw 20-26”, saddle rope snap is optional, ½ synthetic or manila rope (hard lay or braded) work boots – lace type.”

It is possible to make a saddle out of rope and some climbers used no rope snap, or only a rope and knots.

Speed Event

Events included a 40-foot rope climb event where contestants could compete in using the foot lock method, the body thrust method, or both.

“Using either one or both methods: the highest score from either will count toward the contestants total score.”

The 40-foot climb was eventually changed to a 50-foot climb.

The foot lock did not require wearing a safety harness under your saddle, however climbers were required to “make one foot lock and perform an on-rope rest...failure to perform a satisfactory foot lock in the trial will result in disqualification.”

The body thrust guidelines note:

“Contestants may use either a taut-line hitch or an unsecured line in this event. Contestants climbing without a taut-line hitch will be aided by a groundman who will belay the tail line to present the fall of the climber.”

You could free climb if you maintained a three-point contact (two hands and a foot or two feet and one hand). It also notes “run all synthetic rope users and then the manila rope users.”

“In the event of identical times, a 40 foot `climb off` with a five-yard running start at the rope will determine a winner.” A five-yard running start...what?

Throwline

In the throwline event you could use either a rubber throw weight, a rope bullet weight, or a saddle rope snap bullet weight. In 1983, there were three 2' x 2' square targets made of wood that were later changed to 3' x 5' rectangles made from PVC pipe. It was convenient as fewer throwlines got stuck, they could be tied in at various heights, and it was easier to get ropes back down. It eventually changed to flagged crotches as it better represented what climbers faced at work.

There were three height levels in this contest and three throws were allowed at each level.

“A contestant must successfully complete at least one of the three throws at the level before graduating to the next height. The weights or bullets may not be pulled back through the target or limb crotch.”

Guidelines also noted: “More than one contestant can be run simultaneously such as one area for rubber weights and another for rope weights.”

Work Climb

The work climb event included a demo climb in the morning. It was a time limited event and exceeding the time was a disqualification.

The contestant started on the ground with either a pre-crotched rope to save time, or they could use their own rope if the judges determined it was in good condition.

“Pre-crotched climbing lines shall only be used if the tree is too large to permit efficient placement of a line by each contestant. A crotch 40-60 feet from ground level will be designated as the tie-in point to be used for the event...climber will proceed to a minimum of (3) workstations within the tree, as specified by bells and a visible marker.”

Those that attended the Jamboree`s in the 80`s recall there wasn't an entry rope. Contestants were given five throws to get into the tree, if you didn't make it by your fifth throw, you were disqualified. There was no landing station and time stopped when the climber's feet touched the ground.

Bull Rope Event

A bull-rope accuracy event was announced but was never part of the competition. It consisted of swinging a four foot long, 12-to-14-inch diameter log over a barrier and onto a target.

“This is a one-man timed event in which a contestant attempts to lower a swinging log over a barrier and land the log on a target...the bull rope is secured to the log, hauled into the

trees and `cocked` at an angle parallel to the ground by tying the log off with another rope.”

Other Events

There were other events listed that didn't make the cut at the time, such as a hand sawing event, a two-man log sawing event, and a chainsaw speed event. There were also discussions of demonstrations and exhibits, such as an aerial rescue, which would not be part of the event until later.

1980 April, ISAT Newsletter announced:

“The arborist Jamboree which was originally planned for the afternoon of June 13th had to be canceled due to problems encountered with insurance coverage.”

1980 October, ISAT Newsletter noted Sandy Rose, President Elect, was the Jamboree Committee Chairman. He included a note:

“I am still interested in the chapter obtaining insurance coverage for a tree climbers jamboree. The last contact I made resulted in a negative response.”

1981 October, ISAT Newsletter lists the Jamboree Chairperson as Del Kennedy, Jr. It also notes the 1983 conference was scheduled and Henry Painter and Larry Schaapveld would be presenting potential sites.

1982 April, ISAT Newsletter:

“Jamboree - - Sandy Rose reported that Del Kennedy found a firm to insure but this could not be done until the Texas Chapter is incorporated.”

It also noted:

“Henry Painter was selected as the general chairman of the 1983 convention and Larry Schaapveld will be the program chairman.”

1982 August, ISAT Newsletter:

“Now that we have been incorporated, plans need to be made as soon as possible to set up the regional contests for our first Jamboree that will be held at our next convention in Fort

Worth. Please contact Gene Prater, the Jamboree Chairman so he can better coordinate this project and forward you any material necessary to facilitate in getting it set up.”

1982 June 18th, ISAT General Business Meeting minutes:

“Jamboree – Del Kennedy, Jr. reported that his committee has located companies willing to insure both participants and spectators for the event.”

The minutes also mentioned the need for a waiver signed by the contestant AND their employer.

1982 October, ISAT Newsletter:

“Plans are underway for the first ISA Texas Chapter Arborists` Jamboree to be held in conjunction with the 1983 Texas Chapter Convention in Fort Worth. The Jamboree will be held in Trinity Park on Thursday, June 16. Events will include the five-station work climb event, the speed climb event (both body thrust and foot lock methods) and throw line event. These will be held and judged by international rules. There will also be a chainsaw speed cutting event, demonstrations of aerial rescue technics will also be performed several times during the day. All companies and organizations are urged to select their most talented arborists and sponsor them in the Jamboree. More specific information will be available in the January newsletter and final information, contest rules and jamboree registration forms will be sent out with the April newsletter.”

It is interesting that in the early years, competitors were often referred to as “arborists” rather than “tree climbers.”

1982 November 17th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Gene Prater discussed all the events that will be held. Registration forms will be available in the April newsletter. There will be a deadline for receiving the forms. There will be trophies in each event and overall. The chapter will send the overall winner to the National Jamboree, paying airfare and room. Also, they will pay the airfare for the second-place entry.”

Interesting to note that both the first and second-place climbers were sent to what was then called the National Jamboree. As it grew to be the International Tree Climbers Competition (ITCC), they no longer accepted the second-place climber. There were some exceptions, for example- if a second-place climber had experience in previous International Competitions as a state champion and an opening was available, it was possible they could be accepted.

1983 April, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (R.D. Younger) included the following:

“It will certainly be interesting to see how our good old Texas boys can compare to the climbers from other parts of the country who think we don’t have anything taller than a cactus.”

The Jamboree Report stated:

“Bob Mazany will be on hand to help with the Jamboree. Bob has gained experience in working with the ISA during the International Jamboree.”

It is likely that Bob invited Don Blair, mentioned above under ITCC history. Their presence, knowledge and advice helped to guide the first competition. Don was with the Sierra Moreno Mercantile Company and developed more versatile and comfortable saddles that were previously not available. The Jamboree and Equipment Show was noted to be from 9:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

1983 June 18th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting Minutes included a letter from Jamboree Chairperson, Gene Prater (with Fort Worth Parks and Recreation) to all Jamboree entrants:

“Well, our first ISA Texas Chapter Arborist’s Jamboree has come and gone and I think we all learned a lot. Overall, the Jamboree was a success thanks to the many fine arborists like yourself who competed. Enclosed please find your certificate of completion and your event score forms. Also enclosed are the times and rankings in each event and overall.

We will hold our second jamboree next year in College Station and we are already making preliminary preparations. Please take a few minutes of your time to write and let me know what you like about our first Jamboree and what you didn’t like so that we can make our next Jamboree even better. I would also like to thank all of you arborists for your participation and courtesy during the Jamboree.”

1983 ISA Texas Chapter Arborists’ Jamboree

Overall Winners

Demetrio Alpizar - 180.3 points – Trees Inc.

Abel Cepeda – 165 points – Blume Tree Service

Kevin Bassett – 150 points – Arborilogical Services

6th place - Del Kennedy Sr. – 122.6 points – Kennedy Tree Service. (note we think he was almost 70 years old and still the oldest climber to compete in the competition)

Work Climb

Abel Cepada – 118 points – Blume Tree Service

Daniel Wright – 109.3 points – Tree Management Services

Demetrio Alpizar – 100.3 points – Trees Inc.

Speed Climb

Demetrio Alpizar – 40 points – Trees Inc.

Abel Cepada – 35 points – Blume Tree Service

Kevin Bassett – 30 points – Arboriological Services

Throw Line

Demetrio Alpizar – 32 points – Trees Inc.

Ed Kennedy – 28 points – Blume Tree Service

Daniel Wright – 26 points – Tree Management Services

Non-Competition Events

Crosscut Speed Cut

Leon Horton/Fred Horton – Time 28.07 – Horton Tree Service

Daniel Wright/Daryl Trout – Time 28.27 – Tree Management Services

Tyron Ferrell/Gene Richardson – Time 28.89 – City of Fort Worth

Chainsaw Speed Cut

David Rich – Time 16.57 – City of San Antonio

Ed Kennedy – Time 22.05 – Blume Tree Service

Gabriel Ramirez – Time 25.48 – Horton Tree Service

There was no information found about who the judges were or if there were any “technicians”. The term technicians likely came later, and volunteers were probably referred to as either a judge or an event helper. The rules called for judges to fill various positions. In the work climb, judges were assigned as; (1) timing/score recorder, (2) safety/skill, and (1) announcer. In the

throw line event, judges were assigned as; (2) timing/score recorder, (2) safety/proficiency, and (1) announcer.

Larry Schaapveld recently mentioned that he was a timer for the body thrust event in 1983. He stated they did not require a belayer or a taut line hitch (which was required later). At the time, there was not an aerial rescue event, just a speed climb, throw line, and work climb. Larry and others recall Del Kennedy Sr., who was around 70 at the time, smoking a cigarette as he went up the work climb tree.

One of the first technicians was likely added to the work climb as it became apparent a belayer was needed. Another tech position was also added as a bucket truck operator in the throw line event for stuck throwlines.

There are six photos on the ISAT website of the 1983 event ([page 647](#)). The second photo shows three climbers in a tree. We believe two are Daniel Wright, and Daryl Trout, and the third is unknown. At the base of the tree is Kevin Bassett preparing to go up with Steve Houser on belay. Notice the other climbers do not have a belayer and no one is wearing a hard hat (only sissies wore hard hats back then!!). The site also has copies of Kevin Bassett's 1983 competition score sheets, and his "participation certificate." We previously sent them to ISAT along with some of the chapter's early newsletters found in our files.

1983 September 9th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

"Kevin Bassett mentioned a few changes that might be made in the Jamboree that he noticed while competing in the ISA Jamboree in Indianapolis."

The first competitions were quite dangerous but over time safety became more and more prevalent in our industry and in the competitions. More climbers were thinking of safer and better ways to do things.

1984 January, ISAT Newsletter states the second "Arborist Jamboree" will be in conjunction with the convention in College Station. The details listed are similar to the first year.

1984 April, ISAT Newsletter included a convention flyer that announced Don Blair with Sierra Moreno Mercantile Company would be presenting "Practical Applications of the Shigometer". Don also helped with the Jamboree.

1984 April, ISAT Newsletter included Jamboree contestant waiver forms (one for the contestant and one for their employer to sign). The event was scheduled for June 14, 1983, in Central Park, College Station.

1984 June 14th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Henry Painter suggested that someone be found to organize the 85 Jamboree because Gene Prater wants to compete in instead of organizing the event.”

1984, ISAT Year-End Report read:

“Although no record of the College Station jamboree winners have been found it was noted that Rick Husband of the Texas Chapter was the all-around champion of the ninth annual International Tree Climbing Jamboree held at the ISA conference August 19-21 in Quebec City, Quebec. Rick was an employee of Trees, Inc. of Houston.”

There was a small news article about the Texas win (November, TRAPS), and so far, it was the first and only time Texas came in first place at the ITCC.

In the ISAT history archives there is an “eagle photo by Dave McDermand”. The photo was taken from high up in the tree, looking down on a climber using manila rope and a two-band saddle. A short article followed:

“Because it was There. Tyrone C. Ferrewl, 23, of the Forestry Division of the Fort Worth Parks and Recreation Department, shows off his climbing skill Thursday in College Station’s Central Park. Earlier, Ferrewl climbed 35 feet in 20.45 seconds using only a rope-and-saddle tree climbing rig to place third in a field of 10 contestants during the second annual Arborists Jamboree for the Texas Chapter of the ISA.”

There are only two other photos of this event in the archives. The 1984 Jamboree expense report shows an income of \$390 for registration (at \$30 each times 13 contestants) and \$110 **for beer** donations. Expenses were listed as \$2,077 for a loss of \$1,577.00.

1985 January, ISAT Newsletter read:

“Our annual Jamboree will be held June 6th at South Bluff Park in Corpus Christie...This Jamboree will have a limited number of contestants, about 25.”

1985 June 8th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Henry Painter moved that Fort Worth host the 1986-chapter Jamboree.”

1985 July, ISAT Newsletter read:

“Mark Peterson also did an excellent job of putting together the Jamboree on rather short notice.”

Someone else had agreed to put the Jamboree together but had dropped the ball. This is likely why the results of the events cannot be found. Mark was also selected as the “Arborists Jamboree” Chairperson.

1985 October 3rd, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Jamboree Chairman Mark Peterson stated that the 1986 Chapter Jamboree will be held in Fort Worth with Henry Painter and Larry Schaapveld handling the details. Aerial rescue will be added as an event. The event will be held in May.”

1985 October 4th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Henry Painter reported that preparations are underway for the 1986 Texas Chapter Jamboree to be held in Fort Worth May 17th. The event will be held in Trinity Park. A limit of 20 contestants will be in effect and aerial rescue will be an event for the first time.”

1985 - ISA announced the 62nd annual conference would be held in August 1986, in San Antonio. The conference included the Arborists Jamboree with Mark Peterson as the local Chairperson and Donald (Don) Blair as Special Advisor. There was a preliminary meeting held August 9th and the “Eleventh Annual Arborist Jamboree Contest” was held August 10th. It is not clear where the “Eleventh Annual” contest statement came from, but it could have been the eleventh international Jamboree.

Two-time International Champion, Sam Noonan also attended the Jamboree. He and Don Blair provided important advice to the judges and contestants. Sam recently mentioned in an interview:

“At the time there was a need to require an on-rope rest demonstration before a contestant was allowed in the foot lock event.

Stamina and training for specific events has always been important.

Regarding manila rope, they were oiled to preserve them, but it would melt into your fingers as you went down a rope. The first thing we did was drag them down the road behind our truck to take the stickers off.”

1986 August 14th, ISAT General Business Meeting minutes:

“The Jamboree now requires contestants to sign a release form before participation and they are not covered by the existing special events insurance policy. Some chapters did not send contestants to this year’s Jamboree because of a legality in signing waivers in lieu of insurance coverage. A special committee was established to find appropriate insurance coverage and report to the board at its December meeting with recommendations to continue or **discontinue** the Jamboree, if proper coverage cannot be obtained.”

1986 Autumn, the archives contain two pages of an Asplundh newsletter about Martin Arreola who won the state Jamboree and went on to represent Texas at the ISA Jamboree in August. The article mentions he finished third in the throwline and speed climb event, but that he placed third in the throwline event in Milwaukee at the 1986 International Jamboree.

“The two previous years, he was second place finisher in overall point tabulations for the state.... The work climb was a premier event for him in Texas competition where he won first place honors. He was also the top finisher in the speed climb, where he uses the foot-lock method rather than the body thrust method and second place finisher in the rope throw.”

1987 March 26th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Earl Caldwell reported that after some research he felt the chapter is open to considerable liability when it comes to the Jamboree. Len Newsome motioned that the Jamboree be canceled for 87 due to a lack of appropriate insurance.”

1987 May, ISAT Newsletter:

“Arborist Jamboree Canceled. Due to a lack of adequate liability insurance, the Executive Committee voted to **cancel** this year’s Arborist Jamboree.”

1988 – No Jamboree was held. During the 9th annual conference, Trees Inc. demonstrated an aerial rescue at Kempner Park.

1989 February 28th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Greg David motioned that the Texas Chapter, ISA, hold a Chapter Jamboree at the Kerrville convention in June 1989 and that the insurance provided through the ISA-Urbana office be purchased to cover the participants of the Jamboree.”

1989 May, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Larry Schaapveld):

“Insurance is a prominent issue. I`m sure you heard the board voted down the Jamboree under the rather low coverage available through ISA International. I feel quite confident we will have a bid for liability insurance to cover the convention and the Board but I`m not confident it will be at a price we want to pay. My guess is that the coverage will be between \$3,000 and \$5,000 per year.”

1989 August, ISAT Newsletter notes that the next year`s convention (1990) “will be our first Jamboree since we hosted the International Convention in San Antonio in 1986.”

1989 October 6th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Larry Schaapveld will contact ISA`s insurance company and determine if they can provide liability insurance.”

James Houser motioned to approve the Jamboree at the 1990 conference which was seconded by Hatton Ogle and approved. Hatton then motioned that the Texas Chapter get insurance from ISA which was seconded by James Houser, and approved.

1989 November, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Mark Heil):

“Well, Jamboree participants, shake off your saddles, uncoil your ropes, get your preliminary inter-company contests completed, and prepare for the next Texas Jamboree at the Austin Conference. That`s right!!! The board approved a Jamboree at the Austin Conference. You should be hearing more from our resident Jamboree expert Mark Peterson, soon. (he doesn`t know this yet!)”

An excerpt from the newsletter:

“ISAT – JAMBOREE – Just a reminder, at the next ISAT conference in Austin, our chapter will again hold an Arborists Jamboree. If you know anyone who dropped out of ISAT or lost interest contact them. We need everyone to take part, so we send our CHAMPION to get the title back to Texas.”

Interest in the Jamboree fell to one of its lowest points in 1989. It would take years to restore interest and get the event back on track. To some non-tree climbers at the time, it took too much time and effort, and lost money every year. However, it is a difficult event to put together and manage, especially with limited volunteers and financial support available.

1990 February, ISAT Newsletter:

“A word from Mark Peterson!!!! This year the Texas Chapter ISA will hold an ARBORISTS JAMBOREE!! The chapter will send its two top finishers from the state to the 1990 ISA Jamboree to be held in Toronto, Canada on August 12, 1990...Lets send our best so we can regain the title as National Champion. The state Jamboree will be held June 15, 1990.”

The **top two** finishers of the Texas Chapter competition, held in Pioneer Farms in Austin, would be sent to compete in the ISA Jamboree at the time. A new competition logo was introduced for the first time in the newsletter.

1990 June 16th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“This year’s jamboree winners were Rosalindo Carlos (State Champ) from Arborilogical Services in Dallas and Martin Areola (second place) of Asplundh in Houston.”

1990 August, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Ralph Flowers):

“Our ISAT Jamboree winners are on their way to Toronto to compete in the International Jamboree. The Texas chapter wishes Rosalindo Carlos and Martin Ariola good luck in the competition and hope they bring back the International Champions Trophy to Texas.... The third-place competitor could substitute for the second-place finisher if he were unable to attend.”

The newsletter included a photo of the first and second place champions and two photos of the work climb event. The competition was just a one-day event and there was no master’s challenge.

1990 ISAT archives show a Dallas Morning News article on Rosalindo (or Rosa), along with several photos of the work climb and aerial rescue events, and a photo of Rosalindo and Martin together.

1990 September 12th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes show that Kevin Bassett was appointed as Jamboree Chairperson.

1991 February, ISAT Newsletter included an announcement of the 1991 Arborists Jamboree that outlined three important goals of the competition in print for the first time. They set the standard for the 1991 and future competitions and may have come from ISA.

“The primary purpose of the annual Texas Arborist Jamboree is education. The concept of the jamboree is to bring together the best tradesmen available for the benefit of friendly competition and education of the membership. This enables all who attend to experience the state-of-the-art climbing techniques, equipment innovations, and safety regulations under actual working conditions.

The second goal is to provide an opportunity for practicing arborists to demonstrate the extent of their abilities.

The third and final goal is to increase exposure of the tree care profession. Media coverage of Jamboree events provides much needed exposure of tree care professionals as a whole. Public education and acceptance of the necessity for tree care is essential to the future development of arboriculture.”

The event was scheduled for June 14th at Trinity Park in Fort Worth. It was still a one-day event without a Masters Challenge event. There was an arcing demonstration, tree planting, tree height and diameter estimating contest, and possibly a chainsaw speed cutting event. Kevin Bassett was listed as the contact person, and he always had the Arborilogical staff available to help over the years.

There was still limited interest and volunteer support, as well as crucial problems to work out. The competition was limited to 24 contestants and rule books were snail-mailed to participants. Employers were still required to sign a consent waiver for employees competing.

1991 August, ISAT Activities, August 1990 through August 1991:

“Six members were in Toronto along with two Jamboree contestants who performed very well. Both contestants will represent Texas in Philadelphia and, with last years international experience in hand, should be very competitive.”

1991 December 14th, ISAT Executive Meeting minutes:

“Kevin Bassett discussed Jamboree plans. He will report further at the next Board meeting for ideas on providing trophies or prize money to Jamboree winners. Greg David motioned

that it should be Chapter policy to only pay for the expenses of Jamboree winner to go to the international competition. Seconded and passed.”

Unfortunately, beginning this year, the second-place winner had to pay his own way. That is, assuming the International Competition would let them compete.

1991 August, ISAT Newsletter, Jamboree Report by Kevin Bassett:

“By all accounts, the 1991 Jamboree was a success. Thirteen contestants competed for the Texas All-Round Arborist Championship and the right to represent Texas at the 1991 International Jamboree to be held August 11 in Philadelphia, PA. The results are:

All-Round 1. Martin Arriola - 1991 Texas Champion Arborist 2. Rosa Ruiz Carlos 3. Arturo Ibara

Speed Climb 1. Martin Arriola 2. Robert Fitts 3. Rosa Ruiz Carlos

Throw line 1. Martin Arriola 2. Rosa Ruiz Carlos* 3. Jose Lopez * won a sudden death throw-off

Aerial Rescue 1. Rosa Ruiz Carlos 2. Rick Smith 3. Jose Mendoza

Work Climb 1. Martin Arriola 2. Rosa Ruiz Carlos 3. Arturo Ibara

Congratulations to the winners. Good luck in Philadelphia. Special thanks goes to all the judges, especially Barbara Flowers, Terry Dodson and his staff at the City of Fort Worth, and A.J. Thibodeaux, Jr.--the B-B-Q was great! Without the volunteer support, this event would be impossible. Thanks again.”

Seven photos of the event are shown in the archives.

1991 December, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Discussion on possible June meeting to include jamboree, certification, and workshop plans. Location and content still undecided. Question discussed on whether to continue Jamboree and usefulness of workshops that include more tree workers and training for Arborists Certification.

Jamboree discussion centered on tremendous expense involved in sponsoring this event. Discussion on not holding Jamboree this summer for Oakland, CA, conference in order to save money. Michael Walterscheidt moved that annual business meeting and jamboree be held in October. Jerry Pulley seconded the motion which was approved.”

1992 There was not a Jamboree this year. The July 22 Expense Report does not have a line item for Jamboree expenses.

1992 November, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Jim Houser):

“We also hope to have a workshop in January or February (you’ll receive details at a later date) and a Jamboree/Workshop in June.”

1992 October 31st, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes

“Kevin Bassett discussed the possibility of scheduling a Jamboree in June 1993 in order to have a contestant for ISA Jamboree in August 1993. A discussion was held concerning combining the Jamboree with other events to offset the costs involved. Kevin pointed out that he is trying to get a Sponsor and would even like a permanent site to hold the event, possibly Ft. Worth. Kevin will formulate his plans and submit a formal proposal at the next Board meeting.”

1993 January 29th, ISAT Executive Committee Meeting minutes:

“Additional workshops this year will include one in June, with the planned Jamboree in Fort Worth, which will feature Don Blair discussing pruning techniques.”

“The International Jamboree will continue. It is possible that in the future only one representative from each chapter will be allowed to compete. The ISA will sponsor the return of the 1993 champion to defend his title in 1994. This will occur on an annual basis.”

“Kevin Bassett announced plans for a jamboree in Fort Worth, June 4-5,1993. It will be held in conjunction with a tree pruning workshop with Don Blair.”

1993 February, ISAT Newsletter, President Message (Jim Houser):

“In Fort Worth on June 4 and 5, ISAT will hold a workshop, jamboree and field day.

Mark it on your calendar NOW! Make plans to be at the Texas Arborist Jamboree ‘93. This will be a unique opportunity for education, fellowship, friendly competition and promotion of arboriculture.

Our event will begin with an educational workshop Friday June 4 at 8 a.m. at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Conservatory. Preliminary plans are to have Donald F. Blair

(arborist, author/lecturer and consulting arborist with the M.F. Blair Institute of Arboriculture) present a seminar on pruning.

Past Jamboree competitions have been limited to the number of contestants. This year a preliminary event may be added to accept more contestants and qualify some for the finals. Any ISA Texas Chapter member may enter the Jamboree OR any ISAT member may sponsor up to two contestants who are not ISAT members.

Preliminary events (if necessary) include:

1. Short Climb - The contestant will demonstrate his/her skill by: climbing line installation, ascent to tie-in position, movement to work station, descent to ground Safety and efficiency are stressed
2. Speed Climb-Body Thrust and secured foot lock

Total points from the preliminary events will be totaled with the top ten competitors moving on to compete in the finals: throw line, work climb and aerial rescue. Points awarded in the final events will be added to the preliminary scores to determine the Jamboree Overall Champion who will then be eligible for the International Jamboree to be held in August at the international conference in Bismarck, North Dakota.”

1993 May, ISAT Newsletter excerpt reads:

“Our event begins Friday, June 4, with an educational workshop at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center/Conservatory. We are very fortunate to have Mr. Donald F. Blair of the M.F. Blair Institute of Arboriculture coming to Texas to present a seminar on tree pruning. Don is an accomplished arborist, author and lecturer. He has published articles in Arbor Age, TCI, the ISA Journal of Arboriculture, and the ISA Arborist News. Don helped develop the ISA Certification Program and has been active in the ISA for over two decades. He is one of the founding fathers of the ISA Jamboree. Additionally, Don is responsible for many equipment and rigging innovations designed to improve comfort, safety and efficiency of the arborist.”

An aerial rescue event was added to the Jamboree, and it started with the speed climb:

“Events will begin with the Speed Climb event (Events and demonstrations to run concurrently thereafter).”

It was the first time the speed events occurred before the other events. The waiver consent form no longer required an employer to sign another form.

The newsletter also noted there was a fatality during a previous chapter’s aerial rescue demonstration (not in Texas).

“This tragic loss of life reinforces the need to be ever mindful of the risks we face during our everyday jobs and during chapter or ISA events.”

From what we know, this may be the reason there was no Jamboree in 1992. Apparently, someone tried to foot lock the dummy's rope in an aerial rescue and both fell to the ground. This practice was not allowed moving forward.

1993 September, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Jim Houser):

“If you missed our Jumbo-ree in June you missed an educational and fun two days. Don Blair was a great addition as speaker and production/jamboree guru. We look forward to doing it again next year. Thanks to many--our exhibitors, Kevin Bassett, Mark Heil, Steve Houser, Larry Schaapveld, Henry Painter, and Terry Dodson (OK, you, too, A.J. and Nick) among others. And thanks for keeping our budget in the black!”

Jim Houser typically called the event the “Jumboree.”

Jamboree Report from Kevin Bassett, Chairperson:

“The June Workshop/Jamboree was a success by all accounts. Mr. Don Blair presented a workshop on pruning that was well received.

Our Jamboree Champion, Dennis E. Garner, and runner-up, Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, traveled to Bismarck and competed in the International Jamboree. Rosa did very well finishing 6th overall and winning third place in the throwline competition. Rosa finished third after a three-way sudden death throw-off as three competitors had a perfect score of 20 points in the event. Dennis did a good job representing the Chapter and finished 20th overall.

A special note of thanks to Pat Wentworth who was the Chapter's designated judge at the International Jamboree Speed Climb event.”

1993 December, ISAT Newsletter note from Chairperson Kevin Bassett:

“Get ready! Mark your calendar now! The ISA Texas Jamboree returns to Fort Worth on June 10-11, 1994. The format will be similar to last year's with a workshop on Friday and Jamboree on Saturday. Our workshop topic will be “Technical Rigging for Tree Removal.” The Jamboree Committee will once again bring an outstanding Arborist to present the workshop, which will be directed toward improving arborists' skills and techniques. We are planning for the best Jamboree ever, so make your plans to participate.”

1994 ISAT letter to members' excerpt:

“About the presenters: Mr. Don Blair has been an active member of the ISA since 1971. He is the owner of San Moreno Mercantile Company, an arborist supply company. Don is a noted arborist and author. He has lectured at ISA events all over the world. He is the author of the new ISA publication, "Arborist Equipment" which will be available through ISA publications soon.

Mr. Sam Noonan has been an active member of the ISA since the 1970's: He is the owner of Noonan's Tree Service in Santa Rosa, CA. Sam was the International Jamboree Champion in 1978 and in 1979. He has served on several ISA committees dealing with climber safety and the Jamboree.”

1994 July, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Gary White):

“Greetings from Fort Worth!! We just finished our 1994 Jamboree and workshop. The workshop was well attended and Blair and Noonan got very good reviews. If you have not heard, the last part of the Jamboree got a little wet. Congratulations to Mr. Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos for winning the overall championship and thanks to Kevin Bassett and his Jamboree crew for running an efficient and safe workshop.”

The Jamboree Report from Chairperson, Kevin Bassett, listed all the competitors, judges and winners in various events. Although it is long, it was the first time everyone involved was recognized:

“Once again, the final event of the Jamboree is over, and a new champion has been chosen. More importantly, Texas arborists from all over the state have gathered, exchanged ideas and enjoyed two days of friendly competition, education and fellowship.

We were extremely fortunate to have Mr. Don Blair and Mr. Sam Noonan present a “treemendous” workshop on rigging and removal. Those who attended were treated to demonstrations of tree removal techniques, equipment, ropes and knots. My condolences to those who missed it. My sincere thanks to those who attended--I hope you enjoyed the experience and gained from it.

The Jamboree competition was interrupted and inhibited by lightning and rain. However, enough of the competition was held to determine a champion. My apologies are extended to the competitors who were unable to compete in all of the events. Hopefully next year we'll have better weather.

I would especially like to thank the following people and organizations for their help, participation and sponsorship of the Texas Jamboree:

Jamboree Contestants: Brown's Reliable Tree Care - Santos Zetino, Gustavo de la Rosa, Jose Benitez and Carlos Ventura

Horton Tree Service - Lynn Vilwak, Mark Baldwin, Mackey Baldwin and John Boatenhamer

Archie's Greenland - Jimmy Seaton

Trees, Inc. - Rogelio Rodriguez and Eugene Romero Asplundh Tree Company - Michael Noyes

Arborilogical Services, Inc. - Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, Jose Onecimo Carlos, Nicolas Martinez, Heliodoro "Quince" Martinez, Arnoldo Gonzalez, and Javier Delgado.

City of University Park - Susan Campbell, Jose Munos and Macario Adame

City of Fort Worth - Weldon Thomas and Rudy Limones

Ray Morrison

Jamboree Judges and Officials: Mr. Don Blair, Mr. Sam Noonan, Mr. Pat Wentworth, Mr. Steve Houser, Mr. Terry Dodson, Mr. Ed Schunk, Mr. Rick Smith, Mr. Kenneth Howpry, Mr. Jeff Quinters, Mr. Larry Schaapveld, Mr. Nick Harrison, Mr. A.J. Thibodeaux, Mr. John Davis, Mrs. Barbara Houser.

Jamboree Exhibitors and Sponsors: Stihl Chain Saws/Blue Mountain Equipment Company - Rodney Barrons and Stuart Lumpkin, Rayco Stump Grinders/Posten Equipment - Bobbie Jones, Morbark Chippers/Nicols Bobcat - Todd Hagemann, Bandit Chippers/Big John, Inc. - Steve Jackson.

Jamboree Site and Set-Up: City of Fort Worth - Terry Dodson, Emerson Vorel, Harold Pitchford and Henry Painter.

Jamboree Results: Stihl Stock Saw Speed Cutting: 1st Rogelio Rodriguez, 2nd Nicolas Martinez, 3rd Lynn Vilwak, 4th Ray Morrison.

Speed Climb Event: Body Thrust Champion - Gustavo de la Rosa

Foot Lock Champion - Heliodoro Martinez

Combined: 1st Nicolas Martinez, 2nd Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, 3rd Carlos Ventura.

Throwline: 1st Jose Onecimo Carlos, 2nd Eugene Romero, 3rd Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos.

Aerial Rescue: Canceled due to weather.

Work Climb: 1st Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, 2nd Nicolas Martinez, 3rd Jose Onecimo Carlos

Jamboree Overall Champion: Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, 1st Runner-up: Nicolas Martinez, 2nd Runner-up: Jose Onecimo Carlos

As our overall champion, Mr. Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos will represent the Texas Chapter as our entrant in the 1994 International Tree Climbers Jamboree to be held this August at Halifax,

Nova Scotia. I hope those attending the International Conference will vigorously support our champion in his quest for the McConnell cup.

There are some of you who have ideas on how we might improve the Jamboree, the Educational Workshops, or the organization in general. I solicit your ideas, your input and your help. Our organization needs each member to become more active. Remember--the Texas Chapter is what you make it. Without your support, nothing can happen; with it, our growth can shade the world."

1994 Fall, ISAT Newsletter and ISAT Board Meeting minutes regarding the 1995 Jamboree included plans to make it a two-day climbing competition, as well as inviting Jim Harris to the event:

"Kevin Bassett started a discussion of possible dates in June for the event. He would like to invite Jim Harris, the new ISA Jamboree Champion, to teach at any associated workshop. A lengthy discussion then continued and touched on topics including extending the event to 3 days to accommodate a possible tree worker certification exam; going back to a June Annual Conference with ISAT alone; creating alliances with other groups besides TALC, such as TAMU or the Texas Urban Forestry Conference; developing a 2-year strategic plan to move away from TALC including polling the membership for commitments. After much discussion the Board decided to hold a 2-day Jamboree and workshop in June in Ft. Worth, but to start considering alternatives for 1996."

1995, ISAT Newsletter excerpt regarding the 1995 Jamboree:

"Friday is earmarked as arborist education day. This year you have a choice of programs to attend. A split session in the morning gives you a choice of "Arboriculture and the Law," speaker to be announced, or "Tree Climbing Safety," presented by Mr. Jim Harris, the current ISA Jamboree champion.

Saturday will be the Texas Chapter Jamboree, with the overall champion earning the privilege of representing Texas at the International Tree Climbers Jamboree in Hilton Head, SC. So, practice your speed climb (both foot lock and body thrust), throwline, aerial rescue and work climb techniques, as current champion Roland Ruiz is ready to defend his title!"

1995 August, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Russell Peters):

"The Texas Chapter has placed another successful Jamboree and Workshop in the books. Although the rain came one hour sooner this year, Kevin Bassett, Steve Houser and the numerous volunteers pulled off a weather delayed competition."

The Jamboree Report read as follows:

“The Jamboree cannot be successfully held without a cooperative effort from many chapter members. The list is a long one, but I must take this opportunity to recognize and thank the following people: Jeff Tweed, A J. Thibodeaux, Scott Wins, Ken Howery, Mark Heil, Terry Dodson, Harold Pitchford, Susan Campbell, Chris Pierce, Joe Chatjield, Darryl Trout, Pat Wentworth, Ed &hunk, Steve Houser, Larry Schaapveld, Barbara Houser and Liz Joiner.

Finally, to the competition itself. Eighteen competitors took their shots at the Jamboree climbing events. The results are as follows:

Nicolus Martinez won both the foot lock and body thrust championships.

The foot lock was timed in 21.97 and the body thrust in 21.56. Ten points from each event gave Nicolas the undisputed speed climb championship. Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos finished second and Arturo Zbarra was third.

Once again Rosalindo showed his talent with the throwline by scoring 18 of 20 possible points. Rosalindo’s only miss came on his first attempt on the lowest target. Martin Ruiz Carlos earned second place honors in a sudden death throw-off with Onecimo Carlos, who finished third.

The aerial rescue was won by Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos with Richard Albert placing second, and Quince Martinez earning the third place trophy. Arborists who attended Jim Harris’ aerial rescue seminar obviously had the edge. The work climb was mastered by Nicolus Martinez, who won the work climb in a determined effort to dethrone champion Rosalindo Carlos who finished second. Arturo Ibarra once again proved himself a consistent professional and earned the third place trophy.

In the end, an extremely close overall championship was determined by a difference of 1.1 points, with defending champion Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos scoring 161.43 total points to NicolasMartinez’ 160.33. Considering Rosalindo’s past International Jamboree experience, I know that he will do Texas proud at this year’s event in Hilton Head, South Carolina on August 13th.

The Stihl/Blue Mountain Equipment Company stock saw speed cutting competition was also hotly contested with Rosalindo Carlos earning his way into the finals by out cutting International Jamboree Champion Jim Harris. The other semifinal was won by Nicolas Martinez over Michael Noyes in some very close and competitive cutting. The finals pitted Rosalindo Carlos against Nicolas Martinez, with Rosalindo prevailing to win the first place trophy and a “new” Stihl O25 chain saw.”

1996 February, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Jerry Pulley):

“With these objectives in mind, we are actively pursuing a couple of new and exciting activities for 1996. The first will be our annual Jamboree. This year it will be held in Waco on May 10 and 11. It will be in conjunction with the Texas Urban Forestry Conference.”

Combining the event with the convention boosted the number of volunteers available to help and increased funding.

Noted in the ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Larry Schaapveld, Committee Chairman, discussed the results and recommendation of the committee, specifically a Jamboree in May with TUFC and a meeting in October with the Texas Vegetation management Assoc.”

The minutes also noted under committee chairpersons, “Jamboree: Kevin Bassett, Jeff Tweed, and Jeff Quinters”, with the Jamboree date set for May 11th.

1996 June, ISAT Newsletter, Jamboree Report:

“This year’s Jamboree was perhaps the best ever. Cameron Park in Waco was a great site! The large Pecan trees offered a challenging test of skill that twenty-four of Texas’ best could not resist.

The speed climb event was hotly contested. In the body thrust Nicolas Martinez set the pace at 29.93, which was finally eclipsed by David Miller’s winning time of 29.16. Martin Ruiz Carlos took 3rd in 33.99. The foot lock event was paced by the early lead of Keith Babberney. His 25.92 was bettered by Nicolas Martinez at 24.07 and foot lock champion Charles Burns, whose 23.16 becomes the current Texas jamboree record. Point wise, Nicolas Martinez’s combined speed in both techniques garnered him 18.92 points toward the overall championship. Charles Burns collected 13.25 points, followed by Keith Babberney, with 11.95. If you need a job done quick, these are the men to call!

The throw line event proved most difficult. Only 4 men scored 10 or better. Defending overall champion Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos and Greg Piedra hit for 10 points. A throw off for third place ensued and Greg Piedra won on the first target.

The throw line champion was also determined by a throw off, when Martin Ruiz Carlos lost 2 points when his hard hat fell off! The deduction forced a tie with Nicolas Martinez at 12. Nicolas ultimately won the throw off, and Martin learned a hard lesson about head protection.

Mark Baker’s 32 won the aerial rescue event hands down! Chris Price won second, narrowly, with 26.23 points over Keith Babberney’s total of 26.17. “Wild Willie,” our new rescue dummy, did a hard job, and never once complained?! The work climb problem was best solved by Nicolas Martinez, Jamboree veteran Onecimo Carlos finished second,

followed by newcomer Fidel Gutierrez in third. Fidel's solid showing in all events totaled 113.84 points which won him 2nd place in the overall Jamboree championship. The day clearly belonged to Nicolus Martinez, whose speed, throw line ability, rescue technique and tree climbing skills earned 151.19 points and the 1996 I.S.A. Texas jamboree overall champion award. Congratulations, Nicolas!!!! Good luck in Cleveland at the International I.S.A. jamboree, the world championship of tree climbing. I have been informed that there is \$10,000 in prize money up for grabs in Cleveland. Just a little incentive for Nicolus and next year's contestants.

Our major sponsor, STIHL/BLUE MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT COMPANY once again put on the event, which has become a crowd favorite, the Texas Stock Saw Speed Cutting Championship. This year's field was cut to the 8 fastest preliminary times. These 8 competitors then raced head to head in elimination rounds. In the consolation race for third place Martin Ruiz Carlos narrowly won over Onecimo Curios. The finals pitted defending champion, Rosalindo Carlos against Carlos Garcia. With the championship series tied 1 win apiece, the title was decided on one final run. Curios Garcia was quick to the wood and held a slight lead through the down cut, but Rosalindo's up stroke was fast enough to make up the difference, plus a little, for the victory. STIHL/BLUE MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT Vice President, Mike McCue, presented the winners with trophies and prizes. I believe a good time was had by all!!

To the judges and officials, I don't have the words to express my gratitude. Work Climb: Rip Tompkins, Pat Wentworth, Guy Leblanc, Scott Wirs, and Steve Houser

Speed Cutting: A. J. Thibodeaux, Don Kerr, Mike Mccue, and Stuart Lumpkin

Aerial Rescue: Chris Pierce, Susan Campbell, and Harold Pitchford, Derin Smith, and Larry Schaapveld

Throwline: Renee Burke-Brown Rick Smith, Mike Richardson, and Jeff Quinters

Speed Climbs: Jamboree Site Setup And Planning: Rip Tompkins, Steve Houser, Scott Wm, Jeff Tweed, Nora Shell Don Horton, Graham Seibel, and the Grand Staff of the City Of Waco's Cameron Park.

Scoring: Liz Joiner, Joe Joiner, and Barbara Houser

Contestants: We Look Forward To Your Participation In Future Jamborees. Without Your Skills There Is No Jamboree. Quince Martinez, Charles Burns, David Miller, David Soto, Fidel Gutierrez, Chris Price, Greg Piedra, Richard Albert, Ramiro Montez, Nicolas Martinez, Martin Ruiz Carlos, Pablo Sanchez, Juan Medina, Mark Baker, Luis Alba, Keith Babberney, Jimmy Seaton, Jose Onecimo Carlos, Sergio Garza, Jessie Starkey, Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos, Antonio Morales, Shane Johnson, Carlos Garcia.

Finally, it is time for this jamboree chair to pass the torch. Please give your assistance to next year's jamboree chair, XXX and put on the best jamboree ever! Put me down as your first contestant in the 1997 I.S.A. Texas Tree Climbing Champion senior's Division??!"

The Chairperson's name was not mentioned above, as they skipped out on the event around two weeks beforehand with no notice. The person had done nothing, and Steve Houser had to put the competition together as Kevin Bassett was the ISAT President and busy with other tasks. The newsletter has three photos of the event.

1996, Urban Forester for the City of University Park, Susan Campbell worked with Tod Noyes to create [a video about the competition](#). Two-time International Champion, Sam Noonan attended and was interviewed along with other Texas climbers. On an interesting note, there was a log toss competition that included throwing a log as far as possible.

1996 September, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Kevin Bassett):

"I am really excited about our meeting next June with the Texas Urban Forestry Conference in Ft. Worth. We will hold our Jamboree competition in conjunction with this meeting. I look forward to being the first Texas Chapter President to compete in the Jamboree!"

The newsletter also mentioned the 1997 Jamboree would be June 13th and 14th in Trinity Park, Fort Worth.

1997 March 13th, letter to Sam Noonan, Noonan Tree Care, from Steve Houser (in the Arborilogical Services archives) asking for help. The letter says a lot about what was going on including the **first** "International Style Jamboree":

"Sam, Kevin mentioned that he spoke with you and that you bravely agreed to help with this year's Jamboree. I will be glad to have your experience and guidance since we will be attempting to run our first international style Jamboree. Since Kevin has decided to be the first Texas chapter president to compete, he will not be able to help setup the Jamboree site or help run it. This means that you and I will be the only people that have any experience with the international style Jamboree. We have chosen the site and the trees, and we will be pruning them later this month.

Kevin asked that I send you a note to let you know that we will need your help. At this point I can only give you the details of what I think we will need. I would ask for your help with the following:

1. Thursday, June 12, walk through the Jamboree site and the site for Friday's seminar.

2. Help with the seminar on Friday as Kevin may ask. The seminar will most likely be on aerial rescue and CPR. They might not need help with CPR but will need help with the aerial rescue. I do not know who will run this portion however, if you are willing to run it, please let Kevin or I know.
3. Help with the judges and contestants meeting on Friday at 5:00 until around 7:00. This will include equipment inspections.
4. We would like you to be the special advisor to the Jamboree which would require your help in overseeing the Jamboree and possibly judging in the Masters Challenge.

I will be glad to have your help, and I am looking forward to working with you again!

Thanks!!

Steve”

Sam was a huge help the first few years of the Jamboree. Going to the international style involved the addition of the Masters Challenge event, doing gear checks the night before, having a tech in the tree on the work climb, and contestants started at the top of the tree, among other changes to various events. There was also a new set of rules to learn/follow, and Sam was one of the only people that knew how things should run.

1997 July, ISAT Newsletter, President Message (Kevin Bassett):

“Once again, the Jamboree has come and gone. As always, the Jamboree could not have occurred without YOUR support and participation. If I was unable to thank you personally at the event, this letter will have to do, THANK YOU! I know there were some rough spots in the organization. If any of you have any comments or suggestions to make next year’s Jamboree better, please drop me a line or give me a call. Your input is valued and needed.

Next year’s Jamboree will probably need to be held earlier in the year which will be necessary so the Texas Champion will have plenty of time to obtain a passport. As many of you already know, the 1998 International Jamboree will be held in Birmingham, England. Perhaps a workshop and Jamboree can be held in February or March when it’s not so hot and the workload for many of us is not so heavy.”

There was no mention of who won, judged, or sponsored the events.

1997 October, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Due to an error the Jamboree report was left out of the committee reports. It was discussed now. A copy of the jamboree budget for 1997 was distributed. The 1998 jamboree will be held in Waco on May 23.”

1998, ISAT Newsletter (early 1998 but the month was not listed) regarding the Jamboree scheduled for May 23rd in Cameron Park, Waco:

“Registration Deadline - Registration form/signed waiver form/paid entry fee \$50 MUST be received by 5-16-98 (by mail) or hand delivered to Jamboree Chairman until Thursday 5-21-98, 5:00p.m., after Shigo Workshop.

MANDATORY JUDGES AND CONTESTANTS MEETING Friday 5-22-98,4:00p.m.

NOTE: Should more than 30 contestants register, the field will be cut to the TOP 24 climbers, based on belayed speed climb event. This field qualifier will run Friday evening if necessary. BE PREPARED TO CLIMB AT THE FRIDAY MEETING.

Saturday Jamboree - Events to start promptly at 8:30am, roll call at 8:00am

Event Rotation Order

Rotation Time 45 Minutes/Up to 30 Climbers

Work Climb 8:30am - 9:15am

Belayed Speed Climb - 9:15am - 10:00am

Throwline - 10:00am - 10:45am

Footlock - 11:30am - 12:15pm

Lunch - 11:45am - 1:15pm

Awards Preliminaries - 1:30pm - 2:00pm

Masters Challenge - 2:00pm - 4:30pm

Awards - 5:00pm”

The cost for participation increased. This was likely the year it became clear that one day was not enough. There were log toss and knot tying events listed as well as a chainsaw speed cutting event.

1998 May 20th, ISAT Board Meeting notes Kevin Bassett and Mike Richardson were Co-Chairpersons for the event.

1998 July 8th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Bassett and Richardson were given compliments for a good jamboree. The winner could not go to England, but Guy LeBlanc will do an excellent job of representing Texas in the International Tree Climbing Contest. Some discussion was held on the 1999 Jamboree, where and when. It was decided that Bassett and Richardson will make the final choice given the preference of Ft. Worth on March 26 or 27. A workshop will be held with the Jamboree.”

1998 October 29th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Bassett and Richardson reported that the 1999 contest will probably be held in Ft. Worth because of the facilities. They were looking for suggestions for a workshop with the Jamboree.”

1998 (fall?) ISAT Newsletter TTCC report from Kevin Bassett:

“Tree Climbing Championship 98 - I think and hope everyone had fun at the Texas Tree Climbing Championship. Without a doubt it was incredibly competitive. Five (5) different men won the five preliminary events and only two (2) climbers were able to finish in the top five in all events.

The difficult Master’s Challenge Pecan was successfully conquered by three of the five finalists within the time allowed. The crowd was treated to three excellent climbs, each utilizing a different method to solve the challenge presented. All climbers utilized the secured foot lock method to gain entry. Rosalndo Ruis Carlos was able to win his fifth (5th) Texas title by installing and retrieving cambium saving rings, which provided Rosa with a consistently smooth and efficient false crotch for his climbing line. The only mark against a near perfect climb came when Rosa rang the weighted station buzzer while exiting the station, having already rang the bell. **This station was set so sensitively** that the buzzer was activated by the afternoon breeze on several occasions when no one was even near the limb.

Our runner-up in the Master’s Challenge was Guy LeBlanc, climbing in his first Jamboree. Guy also won the belayed speed climb and finished second in both the work climb and the footlock events. A Tremendous accomplishment for the Jamboree rookie. Champion Rosalindo Ruiz Carlos is unable to attend this year’s International Tree Climbing Championship; therefore, Guy will represent the Texas Chapter. GOOD LUCK and GOOD CLIMBING in Birmingham, England!

Winning third in the Master’s Challenge was past champion Nicolas Martinez. His solid and strong climb set a high standard for the other climbers to shoot at. Complete results for the top 10 finishers in each event are available.

Special thanks to the judges, officials, and our announcer Mr. Scott Willard. Also, without the help of the following companies and entities the Jamboree would be impossible: Arborilogical Services, Inc., Arborvitae Tree Care, Asplundh Tree Experts, Austin Tree Specialists, Bartlett Tree Experts, Karl Kummerling, Arborist Supplies, McCoy Tree Service, Poston Equipment, Stihl-Blue Mountain Equipment, TECO Aerial Lifts, Texas Forest Service, Texas Outdoor Power-Echo, The City of Dallas Arborists, The City of Waco-Parks Department, The City University Park , Trees, Inc., Versalift/Condor.

I am always amazed at how many wonderful Arborists cooperate together to make this event happen. Sponsors, judges, contestants from utility, commercial & municipal Arboriculture. Ya'll make this the best event in Arboriculture year after year. It is always my honor and privilege to serve as Jamboree Chair because of YOU"

This was the first report that does not call the event a "Jamboree" but refers to it as the Tree Climbing Competition. Since only three climbers were able to finish the new Masters Challenge event, it was clear more time was needed for the competition.

There was also a letter to the editor about the competition from Keith Babberney:

"Once again, our chapter held a heated competition in May to select a representative for the International Climber's Championship. This is a letter of thanks for the many hours of volunteer service that went into creating this competition. There were as many people judging, organizing, installing, compiling, and recording the events as there were competitors. This is the third year I've been, and those ten- and eleven-hour days are harder to endure each time. Most of the organizers come back to do the same jobs year after year. For the Board of Directors, planning for next year has already begun.

Though we competitors had a chance to win a trip to England, the twenty or so volunteers who were there had e to gain from the events. Nonetheless, they made the competition flow smoothly, as always. As a competitor, I Found everyone to be helpful and supportive, regardless of company affiliation. We climbers all had a fair chance to produce the best performance possible. This all came at a rapid pace, as one event led into another, and I am sorry to say I never found a chance to show my appreciation to those who made it all happen.

So, to all of you who deserved more acknowledgement than you received (I reluctantly admit I didn't get all the names, so I'll leave them unspoken, but you know who you are), I offer a hearty "Thank you," and a firm pat on the back. I know most of you would be back with or without my thanks, which makes me appreciate your time even more. And to those who have never been to one of these events, I strongly recommend you try to make it next year. Not only is the competition a great training tool and learning experience, it's also a chance to make new friends who share a love for trees and climbing. I look forward to seeing you there next time.

Sincerely,

Keith Babberney

1999 January, ISAT Board Meeting minutes included a Jamboree Report from Chairperson, Michael Richardson that mentioned two days were set aside for set up and:

“Preliminary pruning and work station setup. Contestants cannot help with the Jamboree setup, however, volunteers will be abducted.... Mandated a pre-competition meeting for all judges and contestants. No instruction will be given on March 20,1999 once the Competition has begun. Therefore, all procedures and rules must be understood prior to the events.

1999 ISAT Newsletter (April or May?) Presidents Message (Harold Pitchford):

“Each of us has talents that benefit our profession. To be honest, I am not a climber nor a “tree expert”, just an administrator, a bean counter for lack of a better word. But given the opportunity to be a part of this organization has afforded me the opportunity to come to know people who are experts at tree climbing and tree care and who willingly share their knowledge and expertise. I watched in amazement as Guy LeBlanc (the overall winner of the “Texas Tree Climbing Championship”) completed the foot-lock speed climb at a record pace. Even I could recognize that his technique was superb. What made it even more enjoyable was watching his family cheer him on every foot of the way and there I was cheering him on just as hard. That brought home to me what it’s like to be a part of this chapter, sharing knowledge, developing life long friends and just having plain old fun.”

The event name mentioned here is the Texas Tree Climbing Championship and a report on the event was provided by Guy LeBlanc:

“On Saturday, March 20, twenty-four men from all parts of Texas woke up to a sunny morning to compete in this year’s climbing competition. Despite the sun it was chilly, with temps in the 40’s, making it tough for some of the “more experienced” climbers to get up to maximum speed.

Though the skies occasionally clouded over, and rain seemed very likely at times, the weather held, and wind was never a factor. Under these conditions, five climbers survived the preliminary events of Work Climb, Footlock, Body Thrust, Aerial Rescue, and Throwline, to make it into the final round or Master’s Challenge. These five, whose combined scores from the preliminaries qualified them for the Master’s were: Vicente Navarro, Nicolas Martinez and Leoncio Carlos, all of Arborilogical Services of Dallas; Keith Babberney of Austin Tree Specialists; and Guy LeBlanc, owner of Arbor Vitae Tree Care, also of Austin.

At the end of the day, Guy LaBlanc won, barely edging out second place finisher Leoncio Carlos. Nicolas Martinez took third.

The Tree Climbing Championship could not take place without the efforts of dozens of volunteers, and without sponsor and exhibitor donations. I would like to note in particular Kevins Bassett and Steve Houser, who spend days year after year to make this happen. Also, Mike Richardson, vice-president of the Texas Chapter, who has assumed Kevin's role as competition chairman, and who did an outstanding job in that capacity this year.

As I did last year, when I competed as an alternate for Rosalindo Carlos after my second place finish in Texas, I will do my best in representing our chapter at the International competition in Stamford, Connecticut.

Guy LeBlanc

1999 April 16th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Richardson and Bassett (both Arboriological Services staff) were commended for the excellent job they did on the Texas Tree Climbing Championship and accompanying workshop. A financial report on both is attached. Due to work responses Richardson was unable to attend the meeting, but his report is attached. There was also some discussion on holding the 2000 jamboree in Lufkin. It was decided to let Richardson make that recommendation to the Board. Richardson was also invited to make a list of items necessary to run the jamboree for purchase. Pitchford will send all jamboree participants a letter of thanks.”

At the time, companies involved with the Jamboree often provided gear for the event which was often lost or damaged. There was a push to get ISAT to purchase the needed equipment as well as a trailer. Mike Richardson noted:

“I picked up the ISAT/Husqvarna trailer this morning and I will deliver it to Arboriological Services this afternoon. I do need an ISAT logo slick to send to Husqvarna who has agreed to pay for our graphics as well as theirs. I did promise Husqvarna that we would display this trailer at our Jamborees and Conventions.”

It was requested that a workshop be included as part of the Jamboree to show a profit.

1999 October 22nd, ISAT Board Meeting minutes notes appointments:

“Jamboree—Thibodeaux/Richardson/Arboriological Services.”

“Jamboree: There was a short discussion on the Jamboree, it will likely be held at Reverchon Park in Dallas. There is a need for up to \$5,000 for equipment for the jamboree.

A motion was made to fund \$1,500 for Jamboree equipment. Motion was seconded and approved. Peters and Richardson will purchase and send bill to Executive Director for reimbursement. A line item for budget will be considered for next year.”

2000 January 28th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Jamboree-The Jamboree (Tree Climbing Contest) will be held on April 27-29, 2000, in Dallas, there will be workshop in conjunction with the Jamboree. A brochure will be developed ASAP and gotten to Walterscheidt for a mailing.”

2000 May 5th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Jamboree: Richardson reported the Jamboree and Workshops were both an educational and financial success. Special thanks were given to Mike Richardson and Arborilogical Services for their work and the effort to have a workshop of the “working person”. There was some discussion on the need to have a workshop in west Texas. Oscar Mestas will contact Mike Richardson about this. We also need to have a program of workshops.”

2000, ISAT Newsletters for spring and summer did not mention the Jamboree. In the fall newsletter the Presidents Message (Mike Richardson) reads:

“A quick recap of this years successes include the ISAT Tree Climbers Championship coupled by a Dendrology, Physiology and Biology Workshop in both English and Spanish! This event was held in Dallas and needless to say we had a huge turnout.

The 2001 Texas Tree Climbers Competition (Jamboree) and the 15th Annual Texas Tree Conference is in the works. Currently we are leaning towards having the Jamboree in Austin this year sometime in late March or early April.”

2000 October, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“A jamboree report was given by Richardson. We are looking at Pioneer Park in Austin for the 2001 Jamboree. Pat Wentworth is checking for the site. Dave Hintz was asked to stimulate interest in the Jamboree and ISAT in the Houston area. Pena said that MTI will offer use of equipment for the Jamboree.”

2001 January 19th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“The Jamboree will be held on March 31 at Zilker Park in Austin. There will be a meeting on March 23 to discuss pruning, etc. for the Jamboree. A workshop will take place on March 30.”

2001 May 3rd, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“The Jamboree was held in Austin. There was some discussion on the scoring. It was agreed that this Jamboree was the best one held to date. Many thanks were given to Davey Tree Expert Company for the tree trimming and to Arborilogical Services for the manpower they put in. Thanks were also given to Carl Schattenberg and Len Newsom. The 2001 Jamboree will be held in Waco.”

2001 Spring, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Mike Richardson):

“The 2001 Texas Tree Climbers Championship was held in Austin on March 31st. Please read Kevin Bassett’s Jamboree Report enclosed in this issue for the details. I would like to thank the participants, judges and sponsors for making this event the success that it was. The preliminary Jamboree meetings usually begin eight months in advance and the actual site preparation time involves over 300 production hours. “

There is a photo of the new trailer with a note:

“The new Texas Chapter Tree Climbing Championship Trailer was made possible by a generous donation from Husqvarna.”

Jamboree Report by Kevin Bassett:

“Although the Texas Tree Climbing Championship was held Saturday March 31, 2001, in Austin's Zilker Park, preparations by the Jamboree Committee began much earlier. A considerable amount of time and effort has been poured into the Texas Chapter Tree Climbing Championship Trailer. A rolling billboard for the Texas Chapter and our sponsors, the refitted and fully equipped trailer will, I hope, prove to be an excellent asset for the Chapter (see picture on pg. 3). The trailer was originally acquired by a generous donation from Husqvarna. Other Texas Tree Climbing Championship sponsors include:

Sherrill Arborist Supply - Mr. Tom Duffy & Mr. Toby Sherrill, Poston Equipment, Brush Bandit Chippers, Rayco Stump Grinders - Mr. Travis Moss, Root Well - Mr. Wayne Lee, Time Manufacturing, Versa Lift - Mr. Steven Rylander, Kandu Stump Grinders - Mr. John Rhodes, GRCS - Mr. Greg Good "More than just a dummy hauler", Sampson Husquavarna, Buckingham, Arbor Master Training, Vermeer - Mr. Ken Palmer & Mr. Rip Tompkins, Stihl Blue Mountain Equipment - Mr. Ron Binkley, Arborilogical Services, Inc. - Mr. Steve Houser, Davey Tree Expert Company - Mr. Dan Huntsinger.

Special thanks to our judges and officials:

Throwline: DJ Young - Pioneer/Dallas, TX; Louis Hampton - Lambert's - Certified Arborist/Dallas, TX.

Belayed Speed Climb: Melinda Adams - Certified Arborist/City of Fort Worth, TX; Patrick Brewer - Bartlett Tree Experts, Certified Arborist/Austin, TX; Bryan White - Arborilogical Services, Inc., Certified Arborist. Belayers: Phil Chatterly - England Chapter, Daniel Huntsinger - Davey Tree Co. - Certified Arborist/Austin, TX

Secured Footlock: Renee Burke Brown, Certified Arborist/City of Plano, TX; Duncan Brooks, Certified Arborist "The Presidents Arborist"/Waco, TX; Greg Welborn, Certified Arborist - Welborn Tree Care/Austin, TX. Belayers: Jeff Sublett - Welborn Tree Care/Austin, TX.

Aerial Rescue: Tom Dunlop - Canopy Tree, Certified Arborist/Minnesota Chapter; Jeff Quinters - TXU - Certified Arborist/Dallas, TX; Brad Mayfield - Trees, Inc., Certified Arborist/Dallas, TX. ·

Work Climb: Steve Houser - Arborilogical Services, Inc., Certified Arborist/Wylie, TX; Pat Wentworth - Austin Tree Specialists, Certified Arborist/Austin, TX; Chris Pierce - Arborilogical West, Certified Arborist/Pagosa Springs, CO - Rocky Mountain Chapter; Don Gardner, Certified Arborist/Austin, TX. Starter: Onecimo Carlos, Arborilogical Services, Inc. - Wylie, TX. ·

Scholarship Events: Jeanine Frazier - Tree Artistry - Dallas, TX; Russell Peters - Arborilogical Services, Inc.

Stihl Stock Saw Speed Cutting: AJ Thibodeaux - Bartlett Tree Experts - Dallas, TX.

Scoring: Steve Barrett - Arborilogical Services, Inc. - Wylie, TX; Pam Black - Arborilogical Services, Inc.

Trailer Outfitting: OA Young - Arborilogical Services, Inc. - Wylie, TX

Due to a fault in the scoring program, the original results announced were inaccurate; unfortunately, two (2) Master's Challenge qualifiers had left the site before the correct results being announced. As chair of the Texas Tree Climbing Championship, I extend my most humble apologies to William Hernandez of the Davey Tree Expert Co., and to Alonso Vasquez of Tree Masters. Their vacated positions in the Masters Challenge were (by rule) filled by the next best finishers.

Master Challenge Judges & Officials Tom Dunlop, Pat Wentworth, Chris Pierce, Jeff Quinters, James Tuttle, Steve Houser, Greg Welborn, Don Gardner, Louis Hampton, Brad Mayfield.

ISAT - SFA Student Chapter - Event Setup & Tear Down Buster Robinson - President, Viviana Marin, Brian Mudder, Gary Frain. ·

Masters Challenge Results Francisco Carlos - Champion; Martin Carlos - 2nd place; Guy LeBlanc - 3rd place; Keith Babberney - 4th place; Keith Brown - 5th place

Congratulations to Francisco Carlos who has earned a berth as Texas Champion into the International Tree Climbing Championship to be held this August in Milwaukee, WI., GOOD LUCK!

The real winner is Texas Arboriculture through the Texas Tree Climbing Championship thousands of people were exposed to the idea of "Tree Care" through articles in the Austin American Statesman and TV coverage by FOX and NBC. You simply cannot believe the time, effort, money, and commitment it takes for this event to occur. Thanks to each and every one of you who make it happen."

2001 September 14th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

"A report was discussed on how to reimburse Arboriological Services for their costs. A motion was made and seconded to approve option 1 which would have the chapter reimburse Arboriological Services \$790.77 and fund the Hispanic Issues Committee \$339.00 the name of Arboriological Services as a dollar for dollar match for the funds raised by the stock saw and log toss events; the motion also stated that a link be provided by the ISAT website to Arboriological Services for 12 months. Motion approved."

The report states that Arboriological Services, Inc. was requesting reimbursement of \$1,129.77 the company had spent on the Jamboree and the new trailer. The report also states that they funded the tee shirts the year prior.

At the time, there was not much financial support for the Jamboree, and it was very costly for the companies that carried the weight of making it happen. They were heavily invested in the event, providing not only their staff, but funds and resources.

2001 Winter, ISAT Newsletter announced: "ISAT Jamboree in Austin March 30-31."

2002 Winter, ISAT Newsletter Presidents Message (Mark Peterson):

"...By not "sitting down", the students at Stephen F. Austin University provided labor and enthusiasm at the Texas Tree Climbers Championship and the Texas Tree Conference. By not "sitting down", Arboriological Services, Inc. closed its entire office, drove to Austin, and assisted in staging the Tree Climbers Championship. By never "sitting down", Steve Houser was recognized by his peers for a lifetime of achievement and service. Indeed, so many others contributed this past year that space does not allow me to name them all. Be it said

that they all have achieved “footprints on the sands of time” and let them be our example.”

During the recent conference, the establishment of the Steve Houser Award of Excellence (AKA the Houser Cup) was announced. Since it originally was not a wooden cup, Houser worked with premier woodworker Kevin Bassett to develop a larger wooden cup that allowed room for the names of past and future champions. The original cup and handles were made of Bois D` Arc with a Walnut base but it was heavy and later redesigned to be lighter in weight and less bulky.

At the end of the newsletter, the next competition date and location was announced: “Texas Tree Climbing Championship, Waco April 12-13”

2002 January 25th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Texas Tree Climbing Championship-It will be held in Waco on April 13, with a workshop on April 12 at the Texas Ranger Museum and Ft. Fisher. There is going to be some effort on more local interest by perhaps also calling it the “Waco Tree Fair”. Bassett will work on the final program and details, he and Melinda Adams will get the costs of the workshop and set the fees.”

The minutes also announced the Chairpersons as: “Jamboree - Peters/Richardson/Hintz” or Russell Peters, Mike Richardson, Dave Hintz.

The event was held on a Saturday and ended at 5:30 p.m. There was a mandatory meeting for judges and contestants on Friday afternoon. International Champion, Mark Chisholm, helped with the event and provided an aerial rescue training seminar on Friday. Certified arborists receive four CEU hours for attending and eight CEU hours if you were a judge, volunteer, or contestant. Today, only three CEU hours are allowed for two or more days of work.

The 2002 event included a log toss and a “kids climb.” To the best of our knowledge, this was the first kids climb in the state (with other activities such as bark rubbing). Kid sized saddles had just begun to be available, and it seemed like a fun event to try. It was a challenge finding a safe way to do it, but double ascenders with foot loops on each ascender seemed to work well. At first, it was a struggle for the children to understand how to work the ropes, but once they got it, they were laughing, and their parents were yelling encouragements.

The competition was in Plano, Texas, and coincided with the historic recognition of the oldest tree in North Texas by the Texas Historic Tree Coalition. The Bur Oak was known to be around 450 years old.

The log toss was just what it sounds like- contestants tossed a log as far as they could, and the longest distance won. The public had the opportunity to compete also, but the event was eventually dropped.

2002 May 10th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Texas Tree Climbing: There was some discussion on the events. It was mentioned that the judges need a little more training. The judges will get the rules a week prior to the event next year; Renee Burke Brown will make sure the judges are better informed. Peterson will make sure that Arboriological Services gets the workshop and Tree Climbing monies taken care of.”

2002 Summer, ISAT Newsletter: “TTCC RESULTS! - Guy LeBlanc

On April 13, the Texas Chapter of ISA held its Tree Climbing Championship to determine who would represent Texas at the International competition in August. The event was held in Waco, at Fort Fisher Park, behind the Texas Ranger’s museum. This was the first year for a significant expansion of the event, into what chairman Kevin Bassett created as a “Tree Fair”.

We were lucky enough to have several nationally known arborists assist with the judging of the event, including Tom Dunlap, of Canopy Tree in Minnesota, and Peter Gerstenberger of the National Arborist Association. International Tree Climbing Champion Mark Chisolm, was also at the event, courtesy of Stihl chain saws, one of our main sponsors and Mark volunteered his expertise during the competition as well as at the previous day’s Electrical Hazards Awareness workshop.

The competition went fairly smoothly this year, thanks in large part to the man (and woman) power provided courtesy of the Stephen F. Austin College’s student foresters, under the direction of Mike Fountain. (It was very refreshing to see more female faces this year!) The students also provided some of the most popular Tree Fair activities, including the very popular axe throw. Susan Campbell and John Giedraitis assisted with two other repeat activities, the log toss and the tree diameter guessing contest. And of course, Steve Houser was critical to the success of this year’s competition as well, helping set up competition events, and having his administrative staff from Arboriological tabulate the scores.

The weather was beautiful. Right up until the first master’s challenge contestant entered the massive bur oak. Then the darkened skies cracked open dumping buckets of rain while the wind cranked up to about 30 m.p.h. and holding. We had decided in advance that if the master’s got washed out that the winner would be declared based on the preliminary standings. And although the rain stopped shortly after declared the event over, the wetness of the tree and the persistence of lightning made it clear that the other judges and myself had made the safest call. So with the competition ending abruptly and rather anticlimactically, the winner’s were... Third Place: Francisco Carlos; Second Place: Keith

Babberny and the winner, to represent Texas at the 2002 International Tree Climbing Championship in Seattle, is Leoncio Carlos.

Congratulations to all contestants, and thanks to everyone who entered or volunteered. As next year's chairman, I would like to encourage anyone who loves trees to contact me about helping to make next year's competition our most fun.

Throwline 1st Babberny, Keith Arborwork Tree Care

2nd (5 way tie) Aviles, Javier Arborilogical Services

Carlos, Francisco Arborilogical Services

Carlos, Leoncio Ruiz Arborilogical Services

Carlos, Willy Arborilogical Services

Navarro, Jose Arborilogical Services

Aerial rescue 1st Martinez, Nicolas Arborilogical Services

2nd Carlos, Balvino Arborilogical Services

3rd Carlos, Francisco Arborilogical Services

3rd Simms, Kelly Amarillo Arborilogical

Belayed Speed Climb 1st Saucier, Jimmy Amarillo Arborilogical

2nd Carlos, Leoncio Arborilogical Services

3rd Willett, Robert Trees Inc.

Work Climb 1st Carlos, Leoncio Arborilogical Services

2nd Carlos, Martin Arborilogical Services

3rd Willett, Robert Trees Inc.

Footlock 1st Babberny, Keith Arborwork Tree Care

2nd Martinez, Nicolas Arborilogical Services

3rd Carlos, Leoncio Arborilogical Services

Stihl Stock Saw Event Carlos, Rosa Arborilogical Services

2002 August 8th, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

“Texas Tree Climbing Contest Bassett submitted a report (attached). The new Chair is Guy LeBlanc. It was requested that the Chapter designate a Liaison to ITCC. It was moved and seconded that Kevin Bassett be designated for at least one year. Motion approved.”

Here is the Jamboree Report submitted:

“This E-Mail may be construed to be my final Jamboree Report. First, the Texas Champion, Leoncio Carlos did an excellent job of representing us at the ITCC in Seattle last week. He finished 27th overall out of 34 contestants. His best event was the Aerial Rescue in which he ranked 19th. The four finalists in order of ultimate finish were: Bernd Strasser (Germany), Patrick Zurcher (Switzerland), Jared Abrojena (Western) and Mark Chisholm (New Jersey, Defending Champ). It was an excellent and exciting event. I was privileged and honored to serve as Head Judge on the Footlock Event.

There are some organizational changes being recommended by the ITCC committee. The main one of interest to the board is the appointment of a chapter representative to the ITCC committee, if you desire, I will be pleased and proud to assume this role for the near term at least. Of course, it may be more efficient to have the current TTCC chair to carry out this function, that is OK with me also.

The TTCC for 2003 is tentatively scheduled for March 28 & 29 at Reverchon Park in Dallas. These dates were determined previously during the Mike Richardson term as President. The venue has been changed due to the opportunity to have the current Mayor of Dallas attend and participate in our event. This will likely generate more publicity and spectators than we have ever been able to muster in the past. Steve Houser is the driving force for this and he is the person who will most likely be able to coordinate the Mayor's activities with us. As you all can see we have an ambitious agenda for the TTCC in 2003 and accordingly Guy LeBlanc and the TTCC committee will need all the help that can be mustered. As we say at the Poker Table “ALL IN”.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin R. Bassett Former TTCC Chair (retired)

There are 23 photos of the 2002 TTCC in the ISAT archives. Mayor Miller also agreed to provide two public service announcements, one on the benefits of trees and the other on the importance of arborists and proper tree care. At one point, the announcements were on the ISAT website.

2002 Winter, ISAT Newsletter, Presidents Message (Melinda Adams):

“The Texas Tree Climbing Championship on March 29 will be the largest ever held. With the Dallas Mayor, Laura Miller, climbing a tree at the event, there will be an abundance of media coverage. Along with the traditional Tree Climbing Championship, there will be several activities designed to keep the crowds entertained. Don’t miss your opportunity to be part of one of the largest ISAT sponsored events in history. Renee Burk-Brown is the volunteer coordinator.”

There was also a press release about the “Mayors Challenge” in the newsletter with a message from the new TTCC Chairperson, Guy LeBlanc:

“DALLAS MAYOR TO CLIMB AT TEXAS TREE CLIMBING CHAMPIONSHIP

In order to increase public awareness of the importance of trees, Dallas Mayor Laura Miller has agreed to donate professional climbing gear and provide an exhibition climb at the annual Texas Tree Climbing Championship, to be held in Dallas’ Reverchon Park on March 29, 2003, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The daylong competition is sponsored of course by the International Society of Arboriculture’s Texas chapter (ISAT), to determine who will represent the chapter at the International Championship (which will be held in Montreal). Approximately 30 tree care professionals from around the state will thrill spectators as they swing through the tree tops competing in several events testing their strength, agility, balance and “tree smarts.”

Admission is free and there will be many other activities and contests throughout the day for both adult and child participation, including ax tossing, speed cutting, and supervised safety climbs for kids. The first 500 attendees will receive a free tree! Food and drink vendors will also be there throughout the day.

The ISAT Tree Climbing Championship is a 28-year tradition which honors the workhorses of the tree care industry – the climbers. The top finishers will compete in a final round for the title of State Champion, and the coveted “Houser Cup,” named after Dallas Arboricultural Philanthropist Steve Houser.

Mayor Miller will award the Houser Cup to the new State Champion and demonstrate her climbing prowess for the crowd. An area will be designated for the media.

The competition begins at 8 a.m. and the Champion will be determined by about 5 p.m. In the afternoon there will be speakers from several of the co-sponsoring groups including Dallas Park and Recreation Department, and the Friends of the Katy Trail, as well as J.C. Montgomery, President of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children.

As a prize, the winner’s airfare and hotel for Montreal will be paid by the Texas chapter, where the winner is expected to represent Texas at the International Tree Climbing Championship in August of 2003. Contestant’s fee is \$50.00. As chairman (and former champion), I encourage all climbers out there who think they “got what it takes” to lay

their money down and take a shot at the State Champion title. Last year's champion was Leoncio Carlos, of Arborilogical Services of Dallas, who competed internationally at Seattle."

2003 January, ISAT Board Meeting minutes:

"Tree Climbing Championship: A press release has been developed. The mayor of Dallas will climb as part of a demonstration. This will be a highly publicized event with the chance for ISA to shine. The hope is to break even, but with the workshop the day prior there should be a profit. The workshop will be on cabling."

2003 Spring, ISAT Newsletter:

"TEXAS TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION WRAP Up by Guy LeBlanc, Chairman

The 2003 Climbing Competition was a success in all ways. On Friday, March 28th, the day before the competition, we had a well-attended workshop on cabling and air spade excavations, with Scott Prohett from Atlanta, GA heading up the cabling portion, and Tyson Woods of Lambert's of Dallas doing the air spade instruction. Nicolas Martinez, of Arborilogical, provided Spanish translation. Muchas gracias, Nico! A huge thank you goes out to Vermeer and Sherrill Equipment, who donated Scott's time, airfare and hotel. Lambert's donated their time and equipment not only for the air spade instruction, but for a lot of set up work for the competition. Props to Louie Hampton of Lambert's, who coordinated that company's involvement for us, supervised the Kid's Climb event, pruned some trees for the event, and even made some killer home brew for after competition relaxation!

Speaking of the Kid's Climb, it was once again extremely popular. This year, Texas A&M's Student Society of Arboriculture donated their time and loaned us their equipment to make the event happen. Photos can be seen at www.ssa.tamu.edu under the kid's climb section. A huge thanks to them, and their president, Jeff Lehde, as well.

Stephen F. Austin University was also essential to our success. Forestry students from SFA once again turned out in force to set up, break down and help run the competition, and again set up the popular axe throw demo and instruction. Thanks to Damon Compton, Professor Hans Williams and all at SFA!

Two other key volunteers were Renee Burke Brown, who was our main volunteer coordinator, and current president Melinda Adams, who chaired the workshop committee.

Mother nature smiled on us, though it was a frigid smile, with temps starting out in the upper 30's on Saturday. But no rain was forecast, and none fell, and although crowds were

suppressed by the cold, cloudy morning, Reverchon Park began filling with spectators as the sun broke through and things warmed up.

Our sponsors from Stihl set up a speed saw competition, and brought former World Tree Climbing Champion Mark Chisolm in from New Jersey to demonstrate proper climbing to the public. Stihl provided chain saws to first, second and third place winners!

In the Tree Climbing Competition, we had 29 competitors from all over the state, and things went very smoothly, thanks to the help of our judges and support staff. The scorekeeping staff, overcame glitches in the scoring software to produce results accurately and quickly. This year's champion, and winner of the Houser Cup was Nicolas Martinez, just barely beating out Francisco Carlos, also of Arborilogical Services. The Houser Cup was beautifully crafted by Kevin Bassett of Arborilogical Services, out of walnut and bois d'arc. It is gorgeous!!! Our sponsors from Stihl are also providing air fare for Nicolas to attend the international competition in Montreal this August.

For the general public, the highlight of this year's competition was the participation of Dallas Mayor Laura Miller. Ms. Miller was trained (in just 4 sessions) by Steve Houser, for whom the champion's trophy is named. True to form, Steve once again spent endless hours setting up this year's competition, adding to his work load this year by training Ms. Miller well enough to do an exhibition work climb. After completing this challenge, the Mayor then presented the day's event winner's with their trophies.

The competition cannot occur without the donated time and money of dozens of individuals and companies. I appreciate each and every one, from the largest contributor to the smallest. Thanks to all. If you have not participated in the past, please consider doing so next year. It is worth the effort."

The newsletter had photos of the new Houser Cup, the kids climb event, and a page dedicated to Mayor Miller's Climb with photos and the following:

"DALLAS MAYOR LAURA MILLER Our thanks to Dallas Mayor Laura Miller for her willingness to venture up in the trees to promote ISAT and the urban forests we all live in. Mrs. Miller spent several days under the tutelage of Steve Houser learning the ropes and after a difficult start she hung in there and managed to complete the climb. Now it's up the Mayor of Ft. Worth!"

Before leaving office in 2007 Mayor Miller agreed to do another Mayors Challenge and this time, she challenged other area mayors to compete in tree climbing, as well as tree planting and the bashing of a tree shaped pinata. The second Mayors Challenge was not held during TTCC. She just had so much fun at the TTCC competition that she wanted to do it again.

In Summary

This document only covers the first 20 years of the competition's history. The event has appropriately evolved to include women beginning in 2016 with Star Quintero as the first female champion.

Photos and a brief history of the Jamboree/TTCC are covered in the [ISAT Newsletter in August of 2020](#).

Steve Houser