

ISA Hispanic Committee Update

by Mark L. Duff

Part 1 of 2: History

For those of you who don't know about us, I'll give some history of the ISA Hispanic Committee:

About 12 years ago an ad-hoc group was formed called the Hispanic Issues Committee. The committee met at the annual ISA conference and was openly attended mostly by conferees from Latin America, the Caribbean and Spain. During this period the committee operated without permanent members, organized structure or policy statements. However, six years ago, the Committee gained full standing committee status under the direction of Manuel Jordan. Since then I have presided as Chair. The name Hispanic Issues Committee was changed to the Hispanic Committee about five years ago.

We now have 12 members, including 4 PhDs, from seven countries (Argentina, Spain, Colombia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the United States). We have formulated written policy and structure statements per the ISA Strategic Plan, and have been busy putting programs together, developing the ISAHispana.com website and translating a ton of technical material. We also have an

ISA Staff Liaison and a representative from the ISA Executive Board on our committee.

The Hispanic Committee falls under ISA's Educational Goods and Services Committee umbrella which is composed of six groups; the Arborist News Editorial Board, Journal of Arboriculture & Urban Forestry Editorial Board, Science and Research Committee, Plant Appraisal and Valuation Committee, and the Best Management Practices Committee.

Why do we need a Hispanic Committee in the first place, you might ask?

1. The majority of tree care workers in much of the US and Texas are Hispanic (many are recent immigrants), and for better or worse, use Spanish as a primary language.
2. The ISA is an international organization and needs to lead the world (Hispanic countries included) in research and in the development and promotion of professional arboriculture practices.
3. The tree care industry has requested our help – it all comes down to the bottom line.

It all started with a two-day USDA Forest Service Hispanic Tree Care Worker Initiative meeting in Atlanta during July 2000. This meeting was attended by representatives of the Big Three (Asplundh, Davey and Bartlett) and others in the tree care industry who employ significant numbers of Hispanic tree care workers. The object of the meeting was to hash out what the major issues were within this Hispanic community.

The major issues boiled down to:

- Lack of communication due to language barriers which leads to safety concerns and greater accident rates among Hispanic workers = loss of income
- Lack of bi-lingual safety/technical training and materials (most of what little existed, was very poorly translated) This leads to inadequately trained staff that creates loss of income
- High turn-over rates – in some cases as high as 200%. (Many workers, as soon as they got their CDL license, moved on to become truck drivers in other sectors.) This leads to loss of income as well.

The committee has launched a number of projects to address these concerns. Find out about them in the next issue.

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ISAT Board of Directors Report

Friday, January 19, Elgin, Texas

Members in Attendance

Courtney Blevins
James Carse
Gene Gehring
John Giedraitis
Jordy Hagen
Jack Hill
Jim Houser
Mike Walterscheidt
Todd Watson
Koby Weatherford
Pat Wentworth
Hans Williams

Others Present

Keith Brown
Neviticus Donnelly

REPORTS

Editor: Editor Blevins will contact various chapters and find out what they charge for advertising and make a recommendation on our rates. (Recommendation later made to double our rates). Bulk mail server also changed to get the newsletter out quicker.

Convention 2006: Walterscheidt reported a net profit of \$7,492.49 with an attendance above 300.

Convention 2007: The Conference will be held October 10, 11, & 12 in Waco. The contracts were signed and will be delivered by Gehring. There was some discussion of Corporate rates for the conference.

Tree Climbing Championship: Keith Brown reported the TTCC will be held in Plano on April 19-21.

Arbor Day: The 2007 Arbor Day will be held at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin. There was some discussion on donating money to the Center to help establish an Oaks of Texas Arboretum. A motion was made to donate \$5,000; motion seconded. After discussion a motion was made to table this motion so that Pat Wentworth could gather more information and make a recommendation to the Board; motion

seconded and passed. A later vote was taken by email and the donation was approved. A motion was made to fund the 2007 Arbor Day Poster Contest at \$2,500; motion seconded; motion passed.

Certification: Wentworth reported on Certification and that the tests are set for 2007 and available on the website.

Membership: Walterscheidt reported we continue to increase.

Educational Services: Giedraitis reported workshops have done well especially Arboriculture 101.

Awards: Giedraitis discussed awards and the possibility of adding another award for 2007.

Publicity: Carse said that all events have been sent to magazines and journals.

Scholarships: A motion was made to increase scholarships for TAMU and SFA to \$2,000 each; motion seconded; motion passed.

Research: We have some dollars now and need to get proposals.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEWS (National Oak Wilt Symposium): Gehring distributed the registration brochure and asked for comments.

Board Attendance: A motion was made to appoint Keith Brown to fill the remaining part of Mary Ann Sullivan's term; motion seconded; motion approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

2007 Budget: A motion was made to approve the 2007 budget with the addition of more dollars for Arbor Day; motion seconded; motion approved.

Logos: A motion was made to approve the new ISAT logos; motion seconded; motion approved.

Next meeting: Thursday, April 19, 4:30 – 6:30 pm in conjunction with the TTCC.

–Mike Walterscheidt, Courtney Blevins

ISAT New Members in January & February

Peter Blanchette – City of Dallas
David Boyer – Austin
John Boyette – Texas Forest Service, Nacogdoches
Larry Clendenen – Kimley-Horn & Associates, Dallas
Christian Deem – Preferred Landscape & Lighting, San Antonio
Christopher Dolan – City of Austin
Arlon Feuerbacher – Stephenville
Margaret Hall-Spencer – First Colony Community Assoc, Sugar Land
Corbett Hancock – The Woodlands
Gerardo Hernandez – Bartlett Tree Expert Co, San Antonio
Karl Hoffman – Freese and Nichols, Inc, Fort Worth
Mike Hooper – Westheimer Tree Experts, Houston
Ricardo Lara – Richmond
Tim Levenhagen – City of Allen
Gary Morgan – VMC Landscape Services, Dallas
Bill Polkinghorn, Jr – Bills Tree Service, Coldspring
Rafael Ramirex, Jr – Trinity University, San Antonio
David Richardson – Carrollton
Richard Thompson – City of Corpus Christi
Brent Wester – Wester Professional Tree Services, Beaumont
Donald Williams – Affordable Arborist by Big Country Tree, Georgetown
Brian Williams – Waco
Gregory Wreyford – Brothers Tree Service, Royse City

Life consists in what a person is thinking of all day.

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

1000 Pine Seedlings Planted In Anapra, Mexico



A thousand pine tree seedlings were planted in Anapra, Mexico February 10 and 11 as part of an effort to improve air quality in the area.

The project was sponsored by two state agencies, the Texas Forest Service and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and two non-profit organizations, the West

Texas Urban Forestry Council (who call themselves Amigos de Trees) and Las Hormigas de Rancho Anapra de Cd. Juarez.

U.S. volunteers delivered the seedlings—purchased from the Windbreak Program of TFS— to Mexican partner Las Hormigas February 10. Las Hormigas handled the distribution of the seedlings to Anapra residents. Each resident who received a seedling signed an adoption form and promised to care for the tree for three years.

Victor Valenzuela of TCEQ has the names of the adopters and will monitor the trees' progress for the next few years.

—Information from Oscar Mestas, Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service

Elvia Villescas, director of Las Hormigas, demonstrates how to plant the pine seedlings.



Houston Urban Tree Count Helps City Work More Efficiently

With the help of a Texas Forest Service Urban Forestry Partnership Grant, the City of Houston is conducting an ongoing street tree inventory for the city. To date, 146,000 street trees have been inventoried using City of Houston staff foresters and interns. “Our goal is to not only inventory 100% of our street trees” says City Forester Victor Cordova, “but also to record all available planting spaces.”

The information collected has helped the city become more efficient in their day-to-day operations. The inventory enables the Forestry Division to estimate and establish a realistic budget, become proactive in managing at-risk trees, support code enforcement, and develop a disaster preparation and response plan to reduce tree damage caused by severe weather in critical access corridors to the Texas Medical Center.

The inventory is also tied into the city’s Geographic Information and Management System (GIMS) website. This system allows the different city departments as well as the general public to query, locate and view street trees using interactive maps.

For more information on the City of Houston’s Street Tree Inventory, contact Victor Cordova at 713-867-0379 or visit the City of Houston’s GIMS website at: <http://pwegis.pwe.ci.houston.tx.us>.

*—Dallas Singleton
Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service*

Coastal Bend Tree Health Conference Covers “Trees and Extreme Weather”

The 6th Annual Tree Health Conference was a great success! With the timely subject of “Trees and Extreme Weather,” 150 attendees and volunteers packed the room. The guest speaker, John Worrell, Bartlett Tree Experts, was a big hit, and imparted a wealth of information. Everyone found the information very beneficial. We are already working on next year’s conference, aptly named “Thar She Blows.”

*—Karen Woodard
Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service*



At the Houston Arbor Day planting on Will Clayton Blvd, left to right: Brian Pope, TFS; Bill White, Houston Mayor; Todd Nightingale, TFS; John Warner, TFS; Wes Moorehead, TFS, and Tyler Wagner, TFS

Thousands of Volunteers Plant 35,000 Trees

The largest volunteer event in Houston Parks and Recreation Department history took place on January 27, Houston's Arbor Day. The HPARD, TxDOT, Texas Forest Service, Trees for Houston and the Houston Airport System partnered together to help transform the esplanades on Will Clayton Parkway into a new forest of 35,000 trees.

Thousands of volunteers braved cold, rainy, muddy conditions and rolled up their sleeves, grabbed their shovels and planted trees alongside Mayor Bill White and Congressman Ted Poe.

"This is the biggest tree planting event in the history of our department," said Joe Turner, HPARD Director. "Needless to say we are excited about the event and about the volunteers, both individuals and corporate teams, who are taking shovel in hand and planting trees with us to celebrate Arbor Day."

When the new forest matures it will not only make a great first impression on visitors arriving by plane to Houston, but every tree planted will have a positive impact on the environment. Victor Cordova, HPARD City Forester, explained, "As trees grow, they remove CO₂ from the atmosphere. A single tree can remove more than a ton of CO₂ over its lifetime."

The Will Clayton Parkway Forest Facelift is part of the Houston Area Freeway Forestation Project sponsored by Congressman Ted Poe. For information on Arbor Day and the Will Clayton Parkway Forest Facelift, or the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, call 713-845-1135 or visit www.houstonparks.org.

Last-Minute Change of Speakers Fails to Spoil North Central Texas Urban Forestry Conference

Maybe rain or sleet or snow can't stop the mailman or Superman, but it can certainly stop headline speakers stranded at an airport in Ohio!

The night before the North Central Texas Urban Forestry Conference, we found out that Dr. Edward F. Gilman's plane was grounded in Columbus and he would not be able to make it to Dallas for his full day of presentations. A bit of a problem? You might say that, or so we thought.

I did mention that rain, sleet or snow couldn't stop Superman, and turns out our "other" speaker filled in for the entire day and was an enormous success. Our own Superman, Dr. Todd Watson, battling the flu and an upper respiratory infection, extended his original two hours to fill the entire day with four fantastic presentations. Starting with Safety Practices he never let up as he continued with Trees & Drought Stress, Mistletoe and Ball Moss Control and finally, Trees & Construction. The talks were highly entertaining and even the mundane-sounding Safety Practices kept the audience in stitches.

About 250 people attended from all over the state and received 5.5 CEU hours from ISAT and SAF. Next year we will hold the 14th annual conference again in February and probably in Grand Prairie.

*—Courtney Blevins, CF
Regional Urban Forester, Texas Forest Service*



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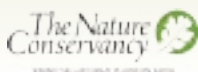


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For more information, or to register;
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Contact Mike Walterscheidt at (512)587-7515
or
Gene Gehring at genegehring@hotmail.com