

SHADE TREE

# Leaves



ISSUE 01  
WINTER 2024

**MW-ISA**  
Midwestern Chapter  
  
International Society  
of Arboriculture

KANSAS · MISSOURI · NEBRASKA · OKLAHOMA



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## MW-ISA Tree Climbing Competition

**June 7-9, 2024 - Owen Park - Tulsa, OK**

Registration for Volunteers will open Early April

Registration for Climbers will open Early May

More information will be available at [www.mwisa.org](http://www.mwisa.org)



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, ANDY BERG:



The last time I wrote my President's Letter it was the start of fall and now red maples are flowering as the growing degree days start to accumulate - winter flew right by! By the time this is released, there will likely be a lot of things popping. We didn't have much of a winter in St. Louis this season and it's about to be go time for most of us with spring around the corner.

With the new year came and went our 78th Annual Conference & Tradeshow. While there were some hiccups along the way, it was a great success. We had over 350 people in attendance which had the opportunity to pack the venue like sardines to learn and network. The wide range of session topics and large number of attendees hopefully had many of you leaving motivated, refreshed, and excited to get back to your respective positions in such a dynamic profession. I love having the chance to hang out and chat with so many fellow arborists who share the same passion as I do. Those not in this industry really don't have much of a clue as to what we do and how complex (and cool) arboriculture and urban forestry is.

On behalf of the Board and those that worked hard on the event, a big thank you to all that attended, exhibited, and sponsored. It's a big financial and time investment to attend this Conference and my hat's off to those that either paid out of their own pockets or sent their employees. Lastly, thank you to everyone that took the time to leave feedback in the surveys to help us improve for future events.

With the warm weather will bring our next big event, the annual Tree Climbing Competition, which will be held in Owen Park in Tulsa, OK from June 7-9, 2024. A reminder that registration is only open to MW-ISA members before being opened to non-members, which I don't think usually have an opportunity, as registration sells out within hours the first day. Stay tuned for more information on the event and registration. The TCC is high demand, very well-orchestrated, and seems to get more and more popular each year. It's a must see!

We will keep you all informed on future opportunities for credentialing and continued education. You can expect a handful of webinars this year which is a quick, easy way to obtain some knowledge and a CEU or two.

Stay safe out there and spread the word of arboriculture!

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**ONE SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL** = Geeks out when talking trees and, more importantly, is crazy about company growth!

Yes, it's certainly all about the trees, but we are on a mission here, and that's to lead the market in our region, so this person will be just as business-minded as they are an ISA Certified Arborist!

**Lead our teams** = We are looking for a Manager, not a laborer. Of course, you've put your time in and know every nuance up in the canopy, but we have teams of Arborists that need a LEADER! Topics such as Safety, Skill Development, Productivity, Efficiencies, Strategy, Planning - this is the language you'll be using!

**Trimming & Removals** = We call it our Maintenance division. The way we see it, we trim trees to keep them healthy. It's simply the 3rd part of our business model along with our Plant Health Care & Tree Installation divisions.

**A day in the life** = Safety first, strategizing with upper management, and training efficiencies will be what you'll be doing in this role. 60% is in the field, developing & training teams 'hands-on,' and the other 40% is strategizing, scheduling, and planning.

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#### SUBMIT ARTICLES:

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staff@mwisa.org or  
(531) 289-8267

#### Newsletter Deadlines:

May 1, August 1, October 1

#### CONTACT US:

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## NEWLY CERTIFIED MW-ISA ARBORISTS:

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Octavio Valle  
Paul Sathi  
Ryan Squibb  
Stan Braude  
Steven Matthews  
Timothy Henson  
Tracy Bunton  
Trenton Wells

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Southeast Oklahoma Forest Health Workshop

Kiamichi Forestry Research Station

May 10, 2024 (Idabel, OK)

### ISA Certified Arborist Exams

May 7, August 6, November 5 – Bonner Springs, KS

May 16, 2024 – Jefferson City, MO

May 21, 2024 – Springfield, MO

### MW-ISA TCC

June 7-9, 2024 - Owen Park - Tulsa, OK

Registration for Volunteers will open Early April

Registration for Climbers will open Early May

More information will be available at [www.mwisa.org](http://www.mwisa.org)

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## MEMBER'S SPOTLIGHT: JOHN PARISH

Hey everyone! My name is John Parish. I am a Certified Arborist and the Assistant Operations Manager at Hansen's Tree Service in O'Fallon, Missouri. I have been working in the Arboriculture industry for nearly four years. Prior to joining Hansen's, I was a Special Education teacher for the Special School District of St. Louis. When COVID-19 hit and my job was affected I knew it was time to get back outside. Working outdoors has always been enjoyable for me and it helped me stay in shape while I played sports, especially during my college football career.

Coming into the green industry, I had some knowledge but nothing as organized as Hansen's. Luckily, I quickly found great mentorship at Hansen's and they showed me the force that is ISA. I jumped in with both feet and fell in love with all things tree. Naturally, I really found home on the educational side and went for the credentials earning my CA, pesticide license, and TRAQ. Working my way up from an entry-level groundsman really helped put into perspective just how important education is in arboriculture. No matter how long you've been in the game, it never hurts to keep learning because the truth is we don't know everything and we never possibly could – and that is a huge drawing force to the industry for a lot of people.

The education that ISA provides is what continues to drive me to get involved. I have been lucky enough to join the newsletter committee and am really looking forward to this opportunity. I'm eager to get to know educators and dive into the topics they choose to tell us all more about. We are all bristling with potential, so I encourage everyone to read the information provided in this newsletter and keep steady on your learning journey.

## NEW MW-ISA MEMBERS:

Alan Jankowski	Cyrus Andrews	Andrew Johnson	Brandon Merle Moir
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## TOUR DES TREES 2024 REGISTRATION OPENS

(NAPERVILLE, IL. February 1) - The registration for the annual Tour des Trees bike ride to benefit Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund (TREE Fund) is now open. Anyone interested in participating as a rider in the 2024 event can go to [www.treefund.org](http://www.treefund.org) for information and registration.

This year's ride will take place from September 22 to 28. The ride will take place in southern New England, starting in Stamford, CT and ending in Providence, RI. Highlights of the 425 mile, five-day journey include a start from the Bartlett Arboretum, where TREE Fund will help celebrate the 100th anniversary of

the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), and a route that travels through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts with loop around Martha's Vineyard and finishes in Providence, RI.

"We are looking forward to a beautiful route and another great group of riders, who all love to share their knowledge and love of trees," said Jonathan Cain, Communication and Engagement Manager for TREE Fund. "The Tour des Trees is a bike ride, but it is also an engagement event where our riders are able with talk to people in the community about the importance of trees, tree research, and proper tree care. These riders are all very passionate about what they do and they love to talk to locals about it."

Several outreach and engagement stops will be scheduled along the route where riders can learn or share their knowledge about arboriculture with local tree lovers.

In addition to the ride, for anyone that is not able to join the ride in New England, TREE Fund has set up a virtual event, the Virtual Tour des Trees at home, where participants can ride their bikes, run, walk, or swim 425 miles and collect donations to earn custom apparel prizes.

TREE Fund is a non-profit organization whose mission is to support scientific discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry. The Tour des Trees bike ride is the main fundraising and community outreach event for the organization and the 2024 route covers 425 miles from Stamford, CT to Providence, RI. Riders travel from all over the country and abroad to participate and fundraise for the event. More information can be found at [www.treefund.org](http://www.treefund.org).



### Job Listing Page Available

Have a job opening? You can now submit your job openings to the MWISA Staff to be listed on the MWISA website. This service is FREE to MWISA members! Check out the new page by visiting the MWISA website at [www.mwisa.org/jobs](http://www.mwisa.org/jobs).

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# THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TREES

Jermel Stevenson, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation - City of Overland Park, KS

This article will focus on the role an urban forestry has in relationship to trees' historical and cultural significance in a municipality. Trees in a city carry rich symbolism across cultures and contexts. Trees often serve as gathering points, fostering a sense of community and unity. Public parks or tree-lined streets provide spaces for people to come together, socialize, and build connections, symbolizing harmony and togetherness within a diverse urban population. Certain trees hold cultural and historical significance, representing heritage and traditions within a city. Ancient or heritage trees might symbolize wisdom, longevity, and a connection to the past, emphasizing the importance of preserving history amid urban development.

Several U.S. cities boast trees with historical or regional significance, often revered for their age, cultural importance, or unique stories. Here are a some examples:

- According to the Connecticut Historical Society the Charter Oak was a white oak tree that played a significant role in American history. According to legend, it was where colonists hid the Connecticut Colony's charter in 1687 to protect it from the English governor's attempts to revoke it. The tree fell during a storm in 1856, but its legacy lives on in various depictions and memorials.

- The Survivor Tree in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: This American elm became a symbol of resilience after surviving the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building according to the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum. Despite severe damage, it recovered and was transplanted back to the site, serving as a symbol of hope and resilience.

- The General Sherman Tree in Sequoia National Park, California: While not in a city, this giant sequoia tree is a prominent natural wonder and holds the title of the largest tree by volume in the world. Named after General William Tecumseh Sherman, it stands as a testament to the grandeur and longevity of nature according to the National Park Service.



- The Moon Tree in Washington, D.C.: A sycamore tree grown from seeds that orbited the moon during the Apollo 14 mission in 1971. Seeds from this "moon tree" were distributed across the United States, and one of the offspring resides at the U.S. Capitol grounds, symbolizing America's achievements in space exploration according to NASA.

Our current era of administering urban forest programs provides us the opportunity to continue this practice to reflect society during the 21st century. In Overland Park KS, our urban forestry program works with the Kansas Forest Service to designate Champion Trees. Champion . The trees are designated by a point system calculated using the tree's circumference, height and crown spread. Identifying Champion Trees honors large, resilient trees, increases awareness of a variety of tree species and promotes preservation for both historical and scientific interests. Overland Park has four Champion Trees: Black Cherry, Cherrybark Oak, Post Oak and the Shingle Oak. Their sizes can be found and locations can be found [here](#). Our Forestry program also coordinates the Plant it Pink Forest. This specialty forest has ornamental trees primarily and its intention is to bring awareness to breast cancer awareness. Our municipal urban forest programs play a significant role in cultural, historical awareness and education in our municipalities. This article only scratches the surface of the potential.

General Sherman Photo Credit - National Park Service.



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**Bob Skiera Memorial Fund Grant** Supports projects which will help arborists and urban foresters communicate the value of trees and urban forests on a global basis through technology transfer and engagement with developers, builders, civil engineers, city planners, elected officials and other policymakers.



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## COTTONWOOD FAILURE

Sometime in 2019 when I was still working in Seattle, I was asked to my opinion on the planned renovation of a park and its effects on the Lombardy poplar (*Populus nigra*) in Seattle. The tree in question was the largest of its kind in the city and was cherished by the local community. The plan for this park was to turn the lawn into artificial turf and add a playground right next to the tree.

To determine if doing this and preserving the tree was possible, I assessed the tree with a sonic tomography unit and root mapping tool to see how structurally stable the tree was and where its roots were in relation to the planned construction. What I found was that the tree was rather hollow, had a relatively small root system with one major structural root extending into the predominate wind direction, an undersized steel cable support system in between its three trunks, and was right where they wanted to install the playground.

I told the City Planners that going forward with their plan was not feasible with the preservation of this tree. I told them that installing the playground would structurally destabilize the tree as it would sever its most structurally important root, and changing the irrigated lawn to artificial turf would rob the tree of its summer water source and likely lead to its death. I also told them that if they wanted to preserve the tree, they needed to prune the tree, and install a larger support system.

I was informed that the location of the playground couldn't be changed for ADA reasons, and that the lawn had to be switched to artificial turf for climate goals. A lot of pressure was put on me to reconsider my opinion and tell them that the tree would be fine if they did nothing to it and install the playground. I refused to change my opinion and I simply told them to either remove the tree or not go forward with their project as planned. I was then told that the project had to go forward because this park renovation was in a low income, minority neighborhood that was prioritized for renovations due to race and social justice goals. They said that they could not cut down the tree because when they asked for public opinion on the park renovation the first thing the public said they liked about the park was that stately tree. The whole situation was hard and there was no easy solution.

Fast forward to this year, and I got a text from a colleague still in Seattle with a picture of the tree in question and a huge crack running down its trunk. Based on the pictures I received, it doesn't look like the park renovation ever occurred as the lawn still exists and there is no playground. I also found out that the pruning and cabling I recommended was also not done. My guess is that when COVID hit, everything got put on hold and forgotten about which was the worst thing that could have happened.



Now, the tree has been severally reduced in height which will somewhat lessen its life span but will make it more structurally stable. I am not sure what they will do with the park renovation but now if they do switch the lawn to artificially turf and cut into the tree's root system, it will be much more impactful due to the severe height reduction that has occurred to the tree and they will still run into issues trying to cut the tree down with the community as the tree is still standing.

Much of the time tree removal or retention is a hard choice but, in this case, it is a very complicated situation with many moving parts. Unfortunately, their non-decision has resulted in the worst outcome possible, a slowly dying tree with many structural defects and a community without a new playground. Hopefully this is a good lesson for those in tree decision making positions. In my opinion, when you have these positions of power, you need to make a decision because non-action never works out for the best.



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