
THE CONNECTICUT TREE WARDEN NEWSLETTER

No.1 - 2006



RIDGEFIELD WELL SERVED

by Greg Foran
Tree Warden, Glastonbury, and Association President

When John Pinchbeck arrived home from his service in the Army in March of 1964, dry land never looked so good! After spending a little over two years in Germany and a trip home across the Atlantic in a Navy transport ship, John was glad to finally have a settled stomach. "The waves were 30 feet high and I was sick as a dog the whole time" says John from his home in Ridgefield. Such was the price to be paid for service to country and fulfillment of his ROTC training, a stint with the U.S. Army (66th Intelligence Corps).

Immediately entering into the family nursery business with his brother, John had a chance to apply his Cornell horticulture degree. For the next 35 years they stayed together before agreeing to sell "the shop" when John's brother decided to retire. Besides his business, John love of trees landed him the town Tree Warden position way back in 1978 on a consulting basis when the job generated 2-3 calls per week. Since then he became a part-time employee and now responds to as many as 30 calls a day.

As if he wasn't busy enough, John succeeded Warren Jacques as the tree warden association treasurer after joining the board in 2004. While John loves work, his greatest joy in life is his wife, Marie, daughter Carrie, and his beagle, Maggie.

PINCHBECK SELECTED AS OUTSTANDING URBAN FORESTRY PROFESSIONAL

by Greg Foran
Tree Warden, Glastonbury, and Association President

John Pinchbeck has watched the demise of several tree species sadly though not idly through the years. As the American Elms have slowly disappeared, John has worked to try and hold Mother Nature at bay. "There are still a few and we do what we can to preserve them, but the more recent trend is in the loss of the slippery elms and the devastation of the ash decline", says John. "The other problems are with older maples and weak scaffolding branches and the old red oaks."

John contracts out most of his work through a variety of firms with bucket trucks, crane operators and other paraphernalia. He has bid work on an hourly and a per tree basis and even considered using a method based on diameter. His bottom line is getting a fair price and working with someone who can be trusted to do good work.

After 42 years in the business, John is still as ambitious as any green college graduate. John is an attendee at the 1st Municipal Forestry Institute in California in February of this year and also would like to start his own website in addition to the existing one now set up by the Ridgefield Tree Committee. The Committee was formed in 1996 and has an excellent working relationship with John. "They have been instrumental in setting up the Ridgefield Tree Book, the Forestry Management Plan, and the Ridgefield Notable Tree Book and a website in addition to many other helpful things."

We all know there are many skill sets needed to be a successful Tree Warden and much knowledge as well. Named the Professional Forester of the Year for 2005 by the Urban Forestry Council, John has all the tools to do the job. When asked what makes John Pinchbeck such a successful Tree Warden, Priscilla Holmes of the Ridgefield Tree Committee doesn't hesitate, "John *really, really* loves the Town. I can't think of anyone more concerned about the looks of the Town of Ridgefield than him. And the

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <i>Ridgefield Well Served</i> |
| 1 | <i>Pinchbeck Selected as Outstanding Urban Forestry Professional</i> |
| 2 | <i>Four Tree Wardens Attend the Municipal Foresters Institute</i> |
| 2 | <i>Tree Warden Volunteers for Katrina Service</i> |
| 3 | <i>2006 Tree Warden School and Certification Program</i> |
| 4 | <i>List of Certified Tree Wardens, Class of 2006</i> |

continued on page 3

FOUR CONNECTICUT TREE WARDENS ATTEND THE MUNICIPAL FORESTERS INSTITUTE

by John Pinchbeck
Tree Warden, Ridgefield

A blizzard blanketed the East Coast. Leslie Kane, tree warden for Guilford, was on a flight out of Bradley that morning. As the plane weaved and wobbled down the runway, apprehension clouded her anticipation of the *Municipal Foresters Institute* in California that was her objective. Leslie breathed a sigh of relief as the plane became airborne and headed west. She was greeted at the airport in Ontario, California, by John Pinchbeck (Ridgefield) and Ken Placko (Fairfield) and latter by Irwin Langewisch (Milford). The four of us would participate in *Municipal Foresters Institute* representing Connecticut, which had the largest contingent second only to California.

After a short bus ride from Ontario airport to the UCLA Conference Center at Lake Arrowhead, we arrived at the beautiful site where we would spend the next week in classes and informal discussions with about eighty-five attendees and fourteen instructors from all over the United States and Canada.

Classes began soon after arrival, and initially featured Ed Barlow, a futurist with a series of lectures on "Leading Through Continuums of Change." Changing business and social environments and building our capacities for leadership in the urban forestry profession were presented and discussed. Classes went from eight am to none pm with a break for lunch and dinner. It was a great week of learning from each other, a chance to communicate and share experiences with many people all engaged in the same occupation. What started out as a rough journey ended as a successful week, and we were pleased to be a part.



(left to right) Ken Placko, Fairfield; Leslie Kane, Guilford; John Pinchbeck, Ridgefield; and Irwin Langewisch, Milford.

TREE WARDEN VOLUNTEERS FOR KATRINA SERVICE

By Ken Placko, Tree Warden, Fairfield

In May 2006, I had the opportunity to be part of a hazardous tree assessment team to evaluate the damage done to them by Hurricane Katrina in the Louisiana/Mississippi area. We stayed in F.E.M.A. trailers located behind the town hall of the town of Kenner adjacent to the New Orleans airport runway. These trailers were once used by municipal workers as a place to stay while their own houses could be restored. The next day I got to meet the rest of the relief team.

The project was sponsored by the US Forest Service, Louisiana and Mississippi Forestry Commissions, the Society of Municipal Arborists, the International Society of Arboriculture and the Davey Company. Team members came from as far away as Argentina, Canada, California, the Midwest and New England, so a quick dendrology in identifying plants of the Southeast was worthwhile. As we drove around to get a better understanding of the area, even though the streets seemed busy, you could get a sense that something major had taken place here. Passing by vacant shopping malls and a number of closed restaurants, gas stations and other businesses, I asked the question, "Why were they closed?" The answer I got was that there were not enough people left to open these places back up. Over 130,000 houses were abandoned.

As we drove a little further, you could see neighborhood after neighborhood abandoned with just parked cars and water-marked houses, some destroyed from water pressure from the damaged levee system. It was explained to us that because the water remained in these areas for a few weeks, that the whole biological system had been destroyed, and we were looking at a sterile soil that would take years to return back to being useful.

The next day, in the town of Metairie, Louisiana, a small, suburban town west of New Orleans, we broke up into teams of two and started walking street by street to identify any tree hazards caused by the storm and entering the information on hand-held palm coders with global-positioning capability. This information was downloaded daily to generate final evaluation reports. The most significant thing we noticed was the number of magnolia trees that died due to suffocation by flood waters. The oaks and pine trees seemed to have suffered minor damage with a few broken limbs.

Con't on page four

2006 TREE WARDEN SCHOOL & CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Board of Directors of the Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut, Inc. is pleased to announce that an eighth Tree Warden School and Certification Program will be conducted in the fall of 2006.

The purpose of the Tree Warden School is to provide tree wardens, deputy tree wardens, and others with comprehensive training leading to certification. The premise is that well-trained tree wardens will be better able to serve their municipalities in a more prudent and effective way, increasing public safety while conserving public trees at the same time.

The course will begin in September 2006 and will consist of six classes. Subjects range from basic tree biology and identification, hazard tree assessment, pests and disease, general arboricultural and urban forestry, tree law, the public and tree warden responsibilities.

A test will be administered at the conclusion of the last class. A grade of 70% or better will earn participants a certificate designating them as Certified Tree Wardens. They will then be required to obtain 15 continuing education units over three years to maintain certification.

The course will be held at the Connecticut Forest and Park Association offices, Middlefield. Call 860-570-9257 for an application form and information.

Con't from page 1

other quality that he has, which can be a liability, is that he is sincerely willing to help *anybody* - which can lead to being overworked."

Never having heard him complain, I would assume he is happy with that liability nonetheless. Congratulations to John on being named the 2005 Outstanding Professional in his field.



John Pinchbeck, Tree Warden, Ridgefield

Join the
Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut Inc. today!
Call 860-570-9257 for information
or visit the Tree Wardens Association website at
www.cttreewardens.org

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
NINETEEN PEOPLE WHO
COMPLETED THE 8TH
TREE WARDEN SCHOOL**

*The graduates of the
Class of 2006*

Steven Biekert	<i>City of Groton</i>
Mark Bove	<i>Wolcott</i>
David Bower	<i>Vernon</i>
David Gabriele	<i>West Hartford</i>
Jeff Gargano	<i>Cheshire</i>
Steve Geddes	<i>CT-DOT</i>
Susan Gudaitis	<i>Rocky Hill</i>
Robert Jahn	<i>Cromwell</i>
Patrick Kearns	<i>Southbury</i>
Walter LeGeyt	<i>Canton</i>
Michael Mangiafico	<i>Coventry</i>
Robert Niesyn	<i>Cromwell</i>
Guy Pendleton	<i>Old Saybrook</i>
Scott Petow	<i>Glastonbury</i>
Paul Pronovost	<i>Thomaston</i>
Richard Toce	<i>East Hartford</i>
Stephen Tofeldt	<i>Newington</i>
Richard Tomasco	<i>Milford</i>
Phil Tuthill	<i>City of Groton</i>

Hurricane Volunteer Service (con't from page 2)

After two days in Metairie, we had completed the street tree inventory and were ready to move to Waveland, Mississippi, a coastal town that saw the wind at full-force of Katrina, but also saw a 16-foot wave of water submerge the entire town up to Interstate 10, some eleven miles inland. This town lost 80% of its tax base in a 12-hour period, as well as all the public records from the water that completely flooded the Town Hall. We found a volunteer shelter that would feed us three meals and lodging for fifteen dollars a day. Since no one was there yet, except the volunteer help, we had a choice of what barracks we wanted. There was ten of these barracks with a plan to build more and a number of tents to house the many volunteers expected to be coming this summer to help rebuild the area.

The damage in this area was far worse than in Metairie, and you sensed the frustration from the remaining people on the lack of assistance some nine months later. The mission in Waveland was a little different. Because of the devastation that occurred with the initial wind and storm surge, thousands of the stressed pine trees that were being attacked by the Southern pine beetle. The locals indicated that this beetle could kill a tree in a couple of weeks once it took hold. What town officials were looking for because of the sheer numbers of dead trees was a break down of volume of work needed for a massive clean-up. The goal was to identify hazardous tree conditions over the roadway, hazardous trees on private property that could affect the roadway, and a count on the number of dead trees on private property. I was amazed to see the number of trees still standing after such forces hit them. What was also amazing was to observe a scour line some 16' above the ground where the debris floated and scraped the bark off. Except for the pines, the oaks and even the magnolias were still hanging onto life. Pines were dying out fast. In one section alone some one mile by half a mile that we surveyed we counted over five hundred dead trees all within a subdivision. With fire season just around the corner and before they start to rebuild something needs to done.

After eight days and upon my return flight home I had time to reflect about my time I spent down south and the wonderful and dedicated people I met along the way. I was awestruck and humbled by the amount of work that needed to done and yet proud to make a small contribution of time and energy to such a worthwhile cause.

The Connecticut Tree Warden Newsletter is a publication of the Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut, Inc., a nonstock, IRC 501(c)(3) corporation. The mission of the organization is to provide educational opportunities for Connecticut's municipal Tree Wardens and to educate others about Tree Warden roles and responsibilities. Call 860-570-9257 for additional information and membership application. This publication was edited by Robert Ricard, Extension Urban Forester, University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and members of the Tree Wardens' Association of Connecticut board of directors.



Volunteers performing tree risk assessment nine months after Katrina (photo Ken Placko)