



Our Family Tree

A Newsletter For The Employees and Friends Of Wright Tree Service

VOLUME 6
NUMBER 2
SUMMER, 2000

TORNADO!



The storm ripped off the roof of the new Shreveport, LA bus terminal.

WTS Crews Cited For Exceptional Cleanup Work

There was a huge Easter parade in Shreveport, LA last April – a parade of 27 to 28 tornados that touched down on Easter Sunday afternoon in Shreveport and the surrounding area. Wind gusts of up to 80 miles per hour swept through the town and tornados with swirling vortexes measuring up to 200 miles per hour wrought destruction wherever they touched down. “It looked like Mother Nature decided to spin some tops today,” one observer noted.

In addition to the widespread damage, the storms left over 75,000 Southwestern Electric Power Co. (SWEPCO) customers in Northwest Louisiana, Southwest Arkansas and East Texas without power.

More than 700 workers were called



All this man could do was scratch his head as he viewed the destruction.

in from five states, including several WTS crews from Arkansas under the direction of **Division Supervisor Tim Bingaman**. The storm recovery workers returned electric service to all 75,000 customers in just four days – one full day ahead of the initial recovery estimate.

During the critique of the storm recovery efforts, Larry Dalrymple of Central and Southwest Corporation

(SWEPCO’s parent company) stated “there were compliments about the effort of everyone who came to help, but Wright Tree Service was singled out for the exceptional work of its crews. Thanks to Tim, **General Foremen Arthur Colbert and Darnell King** and their crews for a great job,” Dalrymple said in summing up his remarks.

(continued on page 5)

News from ou

CENTRAL DIVISION

Okays From Kansas!

A KPL customer in Tonganoxie, KS wrote the utility, praising the work of **Foreman Lawrence Eiserman** and **Trimmer Leroy Raber**. In his note, the customer singled out the crew's "carefulness, courtesy and the excellent cleaning of the area after they were finished." Those three "Cs" add up to an A+ job by Lawrence and Leroy. **Tim Lieser** is their **General Foreman**.

Delighted In Davenport!

Foreman Rod Kellar and **Trimmer John Kates** normally work in the Ft. Dodge, IA area but, because of a backlog of work for MidAmerican Energy in Davenport, IA, they were temporarily transferred to that area. And they really made an impression on one of the utility's customers. "This letter is being written to acknowledge the good work done on our property by two of your Fort Dodge employees," the customer wrote. "They did the best work I have ever seen from your company. I also believe that Rod could serve you well in a public relations capacity." All of us at WTS are involved in public relations, whether it's solving a problem at the home office or trimming tree lines from power wires. When we please a customer, it reflects on the entire company and, of course, vice versa. Apparently Rod recognizes the importance of good public relations. Thanks, Rod and John, for making us all look good! Their General Foreman is **Bill Glover**.

Hagen Comes Home!

Roger Hagen has rejoined WTS as the **General Foreman** on the Illinois side for MidAmerican Energy. Roger and his wife Patti are now living in Davenport, IA with their wonder dog "Rex."

Wedding Daze!

Congratulations to **Foreman Bobby Bumgardner** and Mona Lisa Shinn-Denton who are planning an August wedding. Bobby works for **General Foreman Charlie McClure**.

Time For Pamper-ing!

Trimmer Lance Edwards and his wife Heidi are celebrating the birth of their son Braden Baker Edwards who was born in May. **Bill Glover** is Lance's **General Foreman**.

Jeremy is Beem-ing!

Best wishes to **Foreman Jeremy Beems** and Sharon Prothe who exchanged wedding vows in early June. **Mitch Frye** is Jeremy's **General Foreman**.

A Goliath Year For David!

In March **Foreman David Rodman** adopted his stepson Chance. In June David and his wife Julie will celebrate their fourth wedding anniversary. And in July David turns the big 4-0. **Roger Hagen** is David's **General Foreman**.

Let The Good Times Roll!

After celebrating their fifth wedding anniversary in May with a special dinner in Topeka, KS, **Foreman Ronnie Gayer** and his wife Cherrylle traveled to Perry, KS where they crashed a party at **General Foreman Roger Farley's**

home. Happy anniversary, Ronnie and Cherrylle!

We're Happy To Report!

Trimmer Dave Knight suffered a heart attack in May but he's okay now and back at work. Dave works on **Foreman Terry Barrett's** crew in Moline, IL.

More Good News!

Foreman Kelvin Outlaw's and his wife Angela's new baby boy, Jalen James, was born prematurely in May and was in intensive care. Jalen James is home now with Kelvin and Angela and is doing fine.

NORTHEAST DIVISION

Schulz' Crews Shine!

Two WTS crews, working in Brookfield, WI, prompted a Wisconsin Electric Power Co. (WEPCO) customer to write an outstanding letter of commendation. "It was apparent that they understood what had to be done and the best way to do it," the customer wrote. "Unlike some work crews who have worked in our area, there was no foul or abusive language. They got right to work, but were courteous enough to answer homeowners' questions about what they were doing and why. We were concerned about what was going to be done with all the trimmings and pieces of timber. They cleaned up all the mess and disposed of it, leaving the yard as tidy as they found it. To say the least, we were very impressed with these two teams and their leaders and highly recommend them for future work." These two crews under **General Foreman Joe**

Branches

Schulz were **Foreman Thomas Bianchi** and **Trimmer Jack Neigbauer** and **Foreman Dan Davies** and **Trimmers Brian Blank, Ron Dahl, James Feldman** and **Craig Lyles**.

WEPCO's Area Forester Jeff Treu received a copy of the letter and he followed up with this note: "Thank you for the work, care and customer

"This letter speaks well for you, Wright Tree Service, and the team that we have all been working very hard to build."

concern you showed here and every day. This letter speaks well for you, Wright Tree Service, and the team that we have all been working very hard to build. It's a pleasure to work with all of you! Please continue to work safely." Thanks to Joe and both crews for the totally professional way they handled this job!

More "Wows" From Another WEPCO Customer!

We're sure Richard Abdoo, CEO of WEPCO, was pleased to receive this letter from one of the utility's Eagle, WI customers. "I want to bring to your attention the exceptional work of **Foreman Al Bienemann** and his crew (**Trimmers Jason Miller** and **Jim Panure**)," the letter stated.

"During a very cold morning this past winter, the crew performed a 'safety' tree trimming of several trees growing through and above the electrical lines near our lake home in East Troy. Al effectively led his crew and, despite the cold weather, was able to complete the job in a timely, professional manner. It was a pleasure to receive such superior

customer service from Al and his crew. Wright Tree Service and WEPCO are fortunate to have such professionals on their team. Al and his crew should be recognized for their fine work." We are only too happy to oblige – good job, Al, Jason and Jim. Their **General Foreman** is **Joe Schulz**.

Praise For Pischel And His Crew!

A CILCO customer in Morton, IL took the time to call her utility (and the utility was good enough to pass along her comments to us) to express her pleasure with the tree trimming around her property. The customer reported the crew did such a nice job, she could hardly tell what limbs had been cut off. She also remarked about the "nice clean up job." **Foreman Russ Pischel** and **Groundmen Tony Chavez** and **Toby Stash** are on the receiving end of this well deserved praise. Their **General Foreman** is **Jerry Alton**.

Father Of The Bride

Adrienne Dawn McMillen, daughter of **General Foreman Danny McMillen** and Linda, exchanged wedding vows with Jason Rettinghaus in a May marriage. We wish the newlyweds a lifetime of success and happiness.

Pass The Cigars!

Northeast Division Manager Don Heyel became a grandfather in early March with the birth of Isaiah Nicholas Heyel to son Matthew Heyel and his wife Jessica. Congratulations, Don!

SOUTHWEST DIVISION

Alert Crew Comes Through!

A Public Service of Oklahoma (PSO) customer phoned the utility, praising the quick action of two of **Foreman Johnnie Smith's** crew, **Trimmers DeAngelo Bitson** and **Steve Watkins**. The customer, who was confined to a wheelchair, was going up the ramp to her home when the wheels on one side of her chair slipped off the ramp. Without a moment's hesitation, DeAngelo and Steve, who were working on her property, immediately ran to her assistance and stayed with her until it was determined that she had not been injured. In her phone call to PSO, the customer said she just wanted PSO to know "what fine people they have working for them." We know we have fine people working for WTS and good deeds like this continually prove it. Take a bow, DeAngelo and Steve – you deserve the applause. **Tom Acker** is their **General Foreman**.

MINNKOTA DIVISION

Sincerest Thanks!

General Foreman Bob Lien and his wife Carol wish to thank all their friends and co-workers for their donations, kindness and support following the death of Carol's mother, Ruth Kilby, in April.

MOUNTAIN STATES DIVISION

We regret there were no items submitted by this division for "News from the Branches."



“Not How We Did It In The Old Days!”

Wright Tree Service recently donated a chipper to Living History Farms, a replica of a working farmstead in Des Moines, IA as it was in the mid 1800s (no electricity, no tractors, etc.). WTS Vice President/Administration Scott Packard, right, presents the chipper to Allen Hauk who is Maintenance Foreman for the popular tourist attraction. The pioneers probably burned their brush but, with a no open-burning ban in Des Moines, we rationalize that the farm will allow one piece of modern equipment.



A Snaky Trick?

Foreman John Mains, Central Division, displays a timber rattler that he and Groundman Lonnie Killman killed with the aid of a hook pull and pruner pole, after the snake had struck Lonnie's chaps. The real shock came later, however, when John's wife Kerri discovered the snake when she opened John's lunchbox. Despite the surprise, John says they still plan to be together for their sixth wedding anniversary in July. Kerri is obviously a very understanding wife!

The Lowdown On High Climbing!

Safety Supervisor Jim Lorrigan, Southwest Division, left, reviews the finer points of climbing with Instructor Rip Thompkins, during the advanced ArborMaster Climbing School held in early May at the home office.



Welcome Back, John!

Northeast Division Manager Don Heyel sends us this picture of John Hurst, who has rejoined WTS as New Project Manager for Indianapolis Power & Light Co.



TORNADO!

(continued from front cover)

Colbert's crews included: **Foremen Taft Bell, Kenneth Campbell, Davy Freeman, Ellis Ludlow, Jeff Mitchell and Trimmers John Brecheisen, Ron Daniels, Chris Hale and Edward Williams.**

King's crews included: **Foremen Joe Cleghorn, Billy Coleman, Michael D. Knief, Chris Williams, Brad Whisenhunt and Trimmers Michael P. Knief, Joshua Lamb, Adrian Nicholson, Joe Patterson, Alex Smith and Kenny Threadgill.**

In commenting on the entire recovery effort, Dick Brooks, chairman and CEO of Central and Southwest Corporation, and Tom Schockley, president and COO, wrote: "The work of each and every one of you – with no personal injuries reported – is a tribute to your professionalism, your ability and your dedication to delivering reliable electric service and outstanding customer service."

We're proud of the key role WTS played in this major recovery effort.

(Photos courtesy of Jim Hudelson, Shreveport Times.)

The Results Are In!

786

**EMPLOYEES QUALIFIED
FOR THE SAFETY
INCENTIVE AWARD**

**During Second Quarter
Of This Fiscal Year
(1/00 - 3/00)**

FROM THE Treetop

By Scott Packard
Vice President/Administration

Well, today has become my day of reckoning. For the past several months, I have successfully dodged the editor of our publication, citing various scheduling and travel conflicts that prevented me writing this article. My last plea for

a continuance fell upon deaf ears. So for the next three hundred plus words, I'll attempt to leave you with a few thoughts from my perspective.

There seems to be a catch phrase for every business these days. A simple slogan that is an embodiment of its ideology, style or prestige. I've certainly fallen for this myth on occasion. Sometimes the business didn't deliver on the premise (or promise), or live up to the Madison Avenue glitz implied by the ad. I didn't feel better or look sharper from the experience – just a little less solvent. I found that simply saying something doesn't make it true; nor can a few words comprise a sum total of purpose.

When I did feel a sense of satisfaction, or exhilaration, it wasn't so much from all the hype, but the relationship formed during the process. Today's technology allows us to purchase just about anything without ever encountering a solitary human. Point, click – type in a credit card – it's over. When it all comes down to price, it becomes a rather empty encounter.

I remember many years ago someone mentored me on his philosophy of business. Among other things, "It's a people business" was always a recurring theme. Of course, I was



very young at the time and didn't necessarily realize the impact of this simple statement. After several years passed, I began to draw towards a conclusion: This guy was on to something. People do make the difference.

By now, you're probably wondering what direction I'm going with this (or you're already tempted to skip to the next page). Bear with me for a moment.

Recently I made a stop at my bank to make a deposit. After waiting what I felt was a reasonable time, the teller returned with my receipt and handed me five dollars. Puzzled, I asked "What's the five for?" "Well," she said, "I didn't feel I handled your transaction quickly, and made you wait too long." Needless to say, I was speechless (I know that's hard to believe), other than a half-dazed "thanks." Even though I was satisfied with the service, it didn't quite measure up to her standards. Unexpected? You bet. More significantly, the impression it left will last far longer than the five bucks.

You're probably wondering what this has to do with the tree business.

Everything!

We make an impact on our customers – each of us. Let's not make price the only difference between the competition and us. Do the unexpected. Exceed expectations. Provide our customers with the one thing they cannot do without – YOU!

S.E.T. NEWS

Seven Graduate From General Foreman Candidate School

The General Foreman Candidate School was held in late May at the home office.

The attendees were, back row, left to right, Foreman Kevin Counter/Central Division; Work Planner Aaron Forrest/Southwest Division; General Foreman Ross Self III/Southwest Division; and General Foreman Arthur Thomas/Southwest Division. Front row, left to right, Foreman Jerry Black/Central Division; Safety Supervisor Marty Pingel/Northeast Division; and Foreman Robert Nelson/Northeast Division.



The General Foreman Candidate School included a Hi-Ranger inspection. Aaron Forrest, left, and Kevin Counter are shown on top of the equipment. Just below them are Robert Nelson and Kenny Vlasman (an instructor from Dueco, Inc.) Standing on the ground are, left to right, Jerry Black, Marty Pingel, Ross Self and Arthur Thomas.

S.E.T. Holds Introductory and Advanced ArborMaster Climbing Schools

Attendees at the advanced ArborMaster Climbing School at the home office in early May were, left to right, General Foreman Bob Lien; Safety Supervisor Randy Rempe; General Foreman Bill Glover; Safety Supervisor Jim Lorrigan; General Foreman Pete Burkett; General Foreman Mike Sanford; Andy Klindt, Wright Tree Care; Tom Schmitz, Wright Tree Care; Rip Tompkins (Instructor); John Nahas, Wright Tree Care; General Foreman Tom Wipp; Safety Supervisor Marty Pingel; and Rick Hansen, Wright Tree Care.

An introductory level training session was held in late April. Attending that session were General Foremen Bob Bailey, Jeff Harris, Mike Harris, Tony Kafura, Danny McMillen and Foreman Keven Bednarski.



BENEFITS

Low Cost Life Insurance For Non-Union Employees

In August 1999, WTS began offering a new benefit that allows non-union employees to purchase inexpensive, term life insurance for themselves and their immediate family members. The plan, written through MetLife, supplements the coverage WTS already provides non-union employees.

July is the open-enrollment period for the plan. If you wish to participate, now is the time to apply. Ask your general foreman or supervisor for an enrollment form and a health statement, then complete and return them to the WTS office. If you were previously eligible for this benefit but did not enroll, you must complete both forms again and have them approved to gain coverage. If you previously purchased coverage under this plan and wish to increase the amount, you also must complete both forms and receive approval from MetLife.

Forms must be received by July 31, 2000; otherwise, they cannot be processed until the next open-enrollment period in December.

The rates are very inexpensive. Employees have been using this benefit to supplement their existing coverage, or to provide insurance for a spouse or child who might not have any other insurance.

Forms received after July 31, 2000 will not be processed until December, 2000, our next open-enrollment period. Plans approved in December 2000 will become effective January, 2001. Thereafter, the open-enrollment period will be December of each year, the same as our health plan.

All rates and purchase amounts remain the same as previously quoted. Please contact Michelle in the Des Moines office if you need additional information.

FROM THE Kitchen



Julia King, daughter of General Foreman Marlin “Darnell” King, Southwest Division, asked her dad to send in this recipe for “Julia’s Shrimp Fried Rice.” (Yes, Julia reads the newsletter.) Sounds pretty tasty, too. There’s just one thing: Julia is only 8 years old, but she and her 10-year-old sister Jennifer have been watching and helping their mother Renate cook for a long time, Darnell says. If Julia and Jennifer keep coming up with recipes like this, pretty soon Mom can hang up her apron for good. *Yeah, right!*
Thanks, Julia!

JULIA’S SHRIMP FRIED RICE

- 3 T canola oil
- 5 baby carrots (diced small)
- 2 T chopped chives
- 1/2 cup cabbage (cut in strips)
- One 4 oz. pkg. frozen salad shrimp
- 1 T soy sauce
- 2 cups cooked rice
- 2 ozs. smoked sausage (diced small)

Heat oil; fry carrots and cabbage until tender. Add chives, frozen shrimp and sausage. Cook for 3 minutes and add rice. Add soy sauce for taste. Enjoy!

Chicken is always a summertime favorite on the grill – and so versatile, too. This recipe is easy to prepare and delicious.
Hint: baked beans make a good side dish.

SPICY GRILLED CHICKEN

- 4 bone-in chicken breasts (or you may substitute thighs and legs)
- 1 1/2 cups chili sauce
- 3/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 1/2 T prepared horseradish
- 2 small garlic cloves, halved
- 1 tsp salt

Mix chili sauce, vinegar, horseradish, garlic and salt in a bowl to make your marinade. Pour off 1/2 of the marinade and set aside. Add chicken to the bowl and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in refrigerator for about five minutes. Preheat grill. Remove chicken from marinade and place on grill. Dispose of used marinade. Turn chicken and baste frequently with the other half of the marinade until juices run clear when meat is pierced with a knife – about 30 minutes. Heat the remaining marinade in a small saucepan, stirring occasionally. Serve hot alongside the chicken.

Family Clippings

News From The Home Office



A Santa Secretary!

Receptionist Donna White presented each of the “secretaries” at the home office on Secretary’s Day (or if you wish us to be politically correct, “Administrative Professional’s Day”) with a surprise bag of personal items, office supplies and gift certificates. In all, Donna, standing, left, prepared 20 bags for the occasion. Thanks, Donna, for making April 26th an extra-special day!



What? No Men?

Ten of the fairer sex from the home office recently volunteered to donate blood to the Blood Center of Central Iowa. Back row, left to right, three blood center employees; Kelli Pettijohn, Michelle Eggleston, Julie Chapman, Joanne Nealon, Belinda Harger, Lori Ordal, Nancy Jacobsen and another blood center employee; front row, left to right, Kyra Mountsier, Tammy Hollander, Wendy Weber. In this photo, Wendy Weber shows how easy the process is.

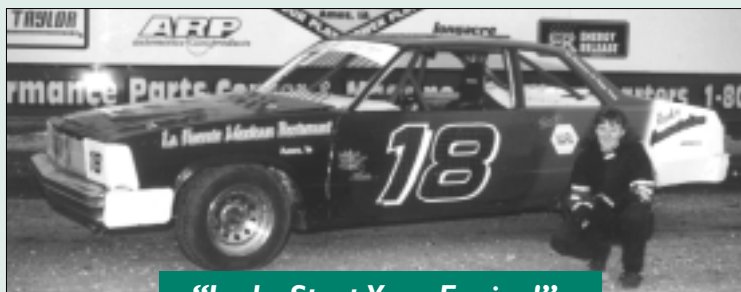


5K A Killer?

Senior Accountant Wendy Weber and AP/AR Supervisor Joanne Nelson competed in a 5K walk/run to benefit the Mental Health Association. Wendy and Joanne won't say how they ended up but Joanne's son finished second in the 19 and under category and her sister won first place in the over 50 group.

Bliss In Beantown!

IT Manager Ron McCauley and Cheryl Tabor were married in early June at Storm Lake, IA and honeymooned in Boston, MA. Best wishes, Ron and Cheryl!



“Lady, Start Your Engine!”


Belinda Harger, AP and mailroom/supplies, shows off her '79 Chevy Malibu which she races in the IMCA Hobby Stock races in Boone and Marshalltown, IA. Belinda races every Friday and Saturday night from April through September.

It Pays To Keep Up!

One of the pages in the new Foreman's Manual update told of a cash prize to the first employee from each division to call the S. E. T. Department and announce they had read the materials. The lucky winners were Glen Crabtree, Jay Hafemeister, Mickey Thompson and Diane Vasquez.

If you have access to the Internet, you can visit us at: <http://www.wrighttree.com>

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