



Texas Tree Climbing Championship: A Retrospect

The Texas Tree Climbing Championship (TTCC) started as “The Arborist’s Jamboree” in 1983. Originally, the award was a brass cup with a plaque for the winners’ names. In 2001, this award was replaced by the Houser Cup (see the pic on the cover) and in 2021 we’ll introduce another cup for our women contestants. The 2020 TTCC was unfortunately canceled due to COVID-19, so we did a deep dive into past archives, gathering pictures from as many people who would respond.

Enjoy a picture retrospective of our past competitions...



Tree sport champ is lord of the limbs

Continued from Page 17A.

“The work climb combines coordination and ability. Three or four “work stations” are positioned in a 100-foot-tall tree, and a bell is placed on a branch at each station. A rope is hung from each of the branches. At the end of each rope, a ball is attached so it hangs only 10 inches off the ground.

The contestant must maneuver along each branch and ring the bell without making the ball below touch the ground.

At the Texas jamboree, Mr. Carlos placed first in the work climb and second in the speed climb and aerial rescue. His total points earned him the 1990 state title.

Since he came to Dallas from his native Mexico five years ago, Mr. Carlos has worked for Arborological Services Inc., a tree care company based in Wylie. The service prunes, cares for and fells trees in the Dallas area.

Smiling as he effortlessly moves from branch to branch, Mr. Carlos seems as comfortable in a 70-foot red oak as he does on the ground.

Feeling safe in a tree “is the first thing a climber has to learn,” said Steve Houser, general manager of Arborological Services. “These guys are as used to being up in a tree as they are on the ground,” he said.

The tree company does not use a “cherry picker” or ladders when trimming trees, and its climbers do not use spiked climbing boots, which damage trees.

When climbing a tree to cut branches, Mr. Carlos throws a rope over a high branch and attaches it to a harness, or “saddle.” He then et-

her walks up the tree trunk, pulling as he goes, or hangs from the branch, lying flat out and then throwing his hips skyward as he pulls on the rope. The motion looks kind of like a flopping fish out of water.

He goes up and down a tree so quickly he looks as if he were riding in an elevator.

Arborological Services employees Mr. Houser, Kevin Bassett and Onecimo Carlos, Rosalindo’s uncle, helped train Rosalindo.

“Kevin and I were astounded at how well he picked everything up,” Mr. Houser said. “He is one of the better climbers I’ve ever seen in my 12 years in the business.”

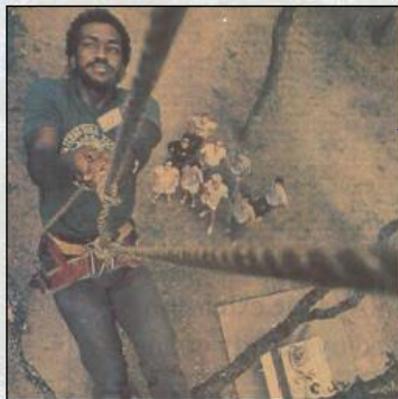
Mr. Bassett, who in 1985 placed second at the state jamboree and 15th in the international jamboree, will attend this year’s international competition with Mr. Carlos because he knows the “ins and outs” of the event, Mr. Houser said. Until then, his uncle, Onecimo, will tutor him, and Mr. Carlos will practice as he works.

Onecimo Carlos, 35, placed fourth in the 1986 state jamboree and said he is proud of his nephew.

“I have experience and when someone needs teaching, I help,” he said. “He is a better climber than me. He is ... younger. I’m too old now.”

Mr. Carlos is a shy young man with an engaging smile. He is taking English classes and working to attain his citizenship.

“He is a quiet guy and doesn’t brag about his success,” Mr. Houser said. “All the guys have been encouraging him, and we’re excited for him even if he doesn’t show it. We’re all real proud of him.”



The second Arborists Jamboree was held in College Station in 1984. Safety rules were somewhat more relaxed then.



Joshua Erickson and team at the 2018 contest in Waxahachie.



Nicolas Martinez celebrates his fourth and final win in 2005. Or is it?

Head Technician Jim Dossett leads climber orientation in Waxahachie, 2018.



Kirbie Houser-Pastenes recruits a young scorekeeping volunteer in 2018.

Like father, like daughter! You can't have the TxTCC without Housers.



Competitors and volunteers from 2013.

2018 Aerial Rescue judges and techs, led by Nevic Donnelly.



In 1997, Kevin Bassett hung up his bullhorn and joined the contestants. Here, he consults with fellow competitor Keith Babberney before an event.





Kids of all ages find something to enjoy at the TxTCC. Here, Bill Koenig introduces young attendees to an eastern-eyed click beetle. Did we mention it's on a leash?



Marking the targets for the Throwline event takes a lot of tape.



Candace Matthews prepares for the 2017 Belayed Speed Climb in Austin, as Head Judge Chris Brewer

Scoring is a thankless and sometimes very frustrating job, but our volunteers do it with a smile.



Steve Houser helps Dallas Mayor Laura Miller prepare for the "Mayor's Challenge" event, which kicked off the 2003 contest at Reverchon Park.

Star Quintero is awarded first place in the 2016 Work Climb event.



Tom Dunlap helps a future arborist get off the ground at the 2003 Kid's Climb.

