

**Aloha Arborist Association  
Meeting Minutes  
November 14, 2012**

Members Present: Steve Connolly, Carol Kwan, Steve Nimz, Andrew Kendall, Dudley Hulbert, Lance Bookless, Sergio Vasquez, Jamilee Kempton, Amy Nichols

Guests: Stephen Stout (HEMIC), Jason Suzuki (Hawthorne Pacific Corporation)

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 17, 2012, MEETING MINUTES**

- A) President Steve Connolly called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. The October 17, 2012, meeting minutes were approved as is.

**II. GUEST SPEAKER – STEPHEN STOUT, HEMIC**

- A) Stephen introduced himself and gave some info on his background. He owns a chain saw, has been involved in rigging, and he rappelled the Seattle space needle while working on a lead removal project. While he hasn't worked directly in our industry, he has worked in dangerous ones and has some idea of our issues.
- B) Andrew asked a question prior to the meeting, "If I have certifications, can I get credits for that to pay less for workers compensation?" Stephen responded by explaining about experience modifier. It's similar to golf where every golf course has its own par. Those who are "over par" pay more penalties (handicap) and those who are "under par" pay less. A company with an experience modifier of 100% based on payroll figures and the classification of its industry is premium neutral. If your experience modifier is above that, your premiums rate is adjusted higher. What the insurance company wants to see is no claims. A few little hiccups are OK. If your company is below the average compared to your peers, the NCI will adjust your experience modifier down – say 0.9, 0.8. How low can you go? DuPont has a 0.20 experience modifier. That means DuPont's competitors are paying around 80% more on workers compensation insurance – it makes it very difficult to compete.
- C) Everything from all of the companies in the industry feeds into the average – but it also affects that individual company's experience modifier. As an industry, insurance may go up because of other companies' problems. For tree care, there is a lot of risk so we pay high rates. For the last 13 years for HEMIC, the lowest experience modifier in all classifications was 0.43 for any industry. For the tree care industry, the lowest is in the 0.70s. It's a good idea to find out what your experience modifier is.
- D) When Stephen goes into the field, he's looking at the attitude of the employer – how detailed are the records, how active is the employer on keeping up on safety matters, how often are inspections done, how much effort goes into equipment to keep the company at the top of its game. Information on the company's attitude is given to the underwriters. When the underwriters see someone like Stephen going in on a job and seeing all the good things that a company is doing, that can result in as much as 3%-8% additional discount from the underwriters. Things like a return to work program, a drug free workplace program, and a safety program can get a reduction up to 18% on the premium just because legislation has said that's the reward for being safety minded.
- E) Andrew asked if a safety certification helps. Then there would be more incentive to do be safety minded. Stephen noted that when you're trying to do a state or federal job, they

require a minimum experience modifier of 1.0. They also require that you have certified and competent employees on the job. That's one way that certification can help you. He also noted that it would be unfair to hone in on tree care only because other industries have certified people too and they don't get discounts for having certified people.

- F) Generally the maximum experience modifier seen is around 1.45, 1.47. Beyond that, the companies go out of business. They just can't compete anymore.
- G) Things are going to change for everyone in 2013. There's a split point – the amount of claims have gone down in the last 15 years but the cost has gone way up. In 2013-2016, the split point will change from \$5K to \$10K to \$15K in 2016. If you're good in your safety, you'll get more credits. If you're bad, you'll pay more and have more debits on your company. The bad companies will have to absorb more of the cost of claims. The reason they changed it is to make the model truer to the efforts companies put in for their safety. The model has been the same for the last 20 years and will be changed to be more accurate over the next 3 years.
- H) Dudley commented that when he shops around on the Mainland, workers compensation is a lot cheaper. There are a lot of guys in the tree care industry here who are unlicensed and uninsured. We've tried for so many years to be professional in our industry but there is still a long way to go.
- I) Stephen said that no matter how small your company is, make sure that you have a written safety plan and procedures and that your workers use PPE. These things are also required by OSHA. OSHA covers 18% of what's out there, but what HEMIC is interested in is everything else that leads up to that 18%.
- J) If there are any questions, he's also the president of the Big Island Safety Association and a member of a bunch of other associations. He speaks at PACRIM conferences as well. He has a large network of people to tap and is happy to be a resource for us. You can contact him at (808) 960-9391 or [sstout@hemic.com](mailto:sstout@hemic.com).

### III. OLD BUSINESS

#### A) Training Workshops

- i) LICH Conference 2012 – October 25, 2012
  - (a) Excellent conference
- ii) Trees and Biology Workshop (WCISA Regional Meeting) – February 2013
  - (a) The Honolulu one will be either February 20<sup>th</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> at McCoy Pavilion.
- iii) Trees and Law Spring 2013
  - (a) Steve Nimz will talk to ASCA members to see if he can find someone to speak at this.

B) Public Outreach

i) Pruning Young Trees and Shrubs, November 17, 2012

(a) Only 7 people have signed up so far.

ii) Malama the Trees Conference (Maui)

(a) This will be next Saturday too (November 17, 2012). HILA's Landscape Management Conference is also on November 17, 2012.

iii) Trees from the Ground Down, March 9, 2013

(a) Tabled

C) Research Committee

(a) John Montoya is difficult to get in touch with. Nothing new to report.

D) Moanalua Gardens Volunteer Workday

i) A volunteer workday was held on November 3, 2012, to treat the *Ficus benjamina* that is badly infested with the lobate lac scale. It went great. J.P. Damon, the owner of Moanalua Gardens, will do a second spray and drench next weekend as well. We have to wait and see if the tree survives. He's been watering it a lot too. The soil in the area is very compacted.

E) Landscape and Forestry Pest Identification Cards

i) Carol doubts that the cards will be done by the end of the year.

F) AAA Website – PayPal for Membership Dues

i) PayPal is now up and running on AAA's website for processing membership payments.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A) Pest of the Month – Ficus Whitefly (*Singhiella simplex*) – PEST ALERT

i) Distribution: Native to southeastern Asia. Introduced to U.S. – Florida (2007), California (2012)

ii) Hosts: various Ficus species (*F. bengalensis*, *F. benjamina*, *F. microcarpa*), *Rhododendron indica*

iii) Damage: Feeding may cause yellowing of leaves, defoliation, and branch dieback. High populations stunt growth of young trees.

- iv) Field ID: adults have white wings with faint grayish-brown markings and dark red eyes. Fly readily when disturbed. Nymphs have light green to tan oval bodies. Pupae with red eyes. Immature stages on both lower and upper surfaces of leaves. Eggs are yellow to light brown and elongate, deposited mostly along the midvein on the underside of leaves.

B) LICH Representative from AAA

- i) Carol moved that Steve Nimz be AAA's LICH representative. Dudley seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

C) 2013 HTCC

- i) Steve Connolly would like to do the volunteer workday in advance of the event this time. We just need to pick a day and schedule it with J.P. The planned work is for removing deadwood from a mango. Dudley will coordinate with J.P. to see if January 12, 2013, or sometime in March might work.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A) Welcome to Jason Suzuki of Hawthorne Pacific Corp. He's selling chippers now. They carry Morbark and Toro lines of equipment. He can be reached at 372-0651, 676-0320, or jsuzuki@hawthornecat.com. The company's website is www.hawthornecat.com. They are moving their Ag & Turf division to Campbell Industrial Park. He was asked what's the deepest one of their trenchers can go. It can go 4' deep. They also rent equipment and sell used equipment too.
- B) Carol is running for WCISA Board. It has to go through the nomination vetting process and be approved by the WCISA Board for the slate of candidates, but she is hoping to make it on the ballot. Jamilee has agreed to transition into Carol's AAA duties.
- C) This is the last meeting of 2012. Please renew your membership for 2013. Mahalo!

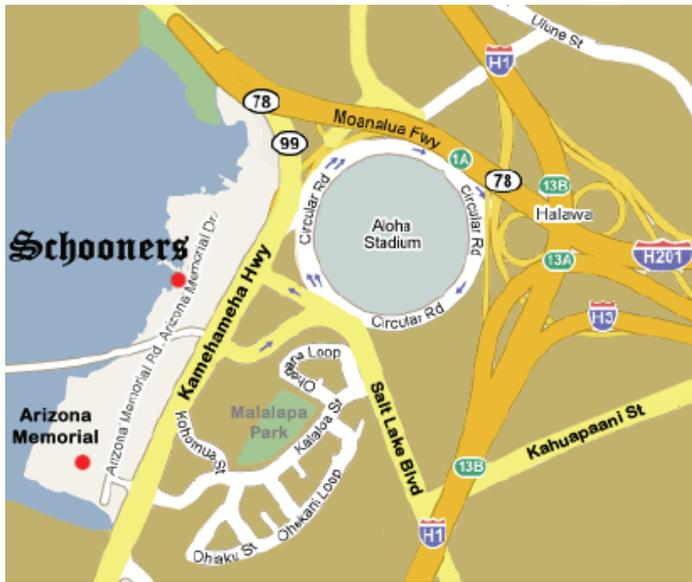
ADJOURNMENT

- A) The meeting was adjourned by President Steve Connolly at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol Kwan

**PLEASE JOIN US!**

*The next meeting will be on Wednesday, January 16, 2013, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at Schooners Restaurant (next to the Arizona Memorial) – 57 Arizona Memorial Dr, Bldg 604, Pearl Harbor.*



Attachments:

1. 2013 AAA Membership Application
2. Pest of the Month – Ficus Whitefly (*Singhiella simplex*) – PEST ALERT

**2013 Aloha Arborist Association  
Membership Application**

Please process my membership with Aloha Arborist Association for calendar year 2013.

Membership:  \$10 Student     \$25 Government Employee     \$50 Individual

\$150 Company     \$1,000 Lifetime Member    Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

If Company Membership, please designate 3 company representatives for voting purposes\*:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

You may publish this information on the AAA website:  Yes     No

*\*Company members may send any of their employees to workshops at AAA member rates*

Please send this completed form to Aloha Arborist Association, P.O. Box 893953, Mililani, HI 96789-0953 with a check made payable to Aloha Arborist Association. If you prefer, you can pay online with a credit card at [alohaarborist.com/index.php/become-a-member/](http://alohaarborist.com/index.php/become-a-member/) and send us this form via email ([info@alohaarborist.com](mailto:info@alohaarborist.com)) or fax (808) 625-4287.

**Mahalo for your support!**