

The Cutting Edge



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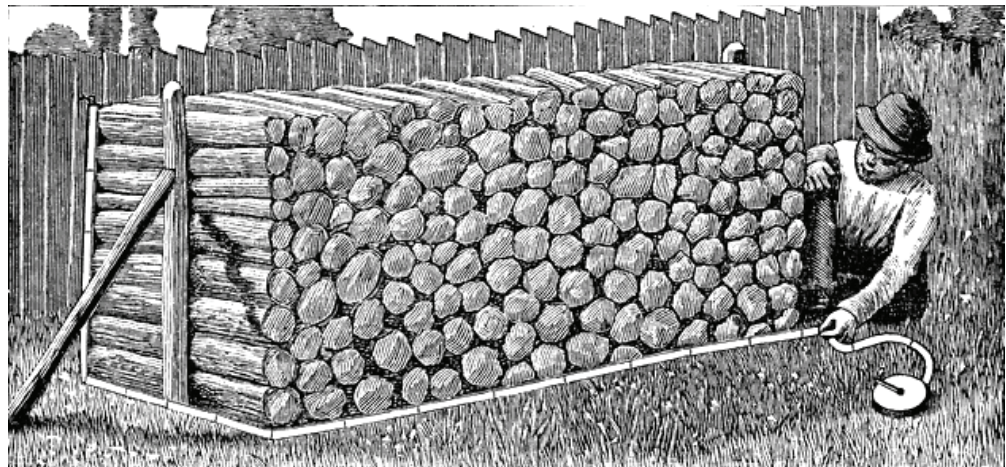
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THE NEW FACE OF FIREWOOD

The Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, Inc. (TIMPRO CT)
is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)6 non-profit corporation. Our mission is to
enhance the image and understanding of the forest products industry throughout the state through pub-
lic outreach programs, education, and a commitment to professionalism among its members.

TIMPRO CT NEWS

From Ag Days to the Annual Meeting, we've been busy at TIMPRO CT. In the pages that follow, we'll celebrate an award winner, honor a retiring officer, and welcome new members – including one who has joined our board.

Hallie Metzger, Editor



The Annual Meeting took place on April 22 at the Hull Forest Products warehouse in Pomfret. President Brennan Sheahan reviewed the past year including workshops, Log-A-Load, the North East Forest Products event, and more.

Vice President Henry Gundlach reported on his participation in the American Loggers Council meeting in Washington, DC. Henry said, "I met with Senator Chris Murphy's aide Emily Smith and Richard Blumenthal's aide as well as with Representative Elizabeth Esty. They all seemed knowledgeable with the concerns we had. Some of the topics we discussed were bringing youth into the industry, allowing family members under 18 to be more involved in the family business, and convincing the USFS to bet-

Membership in the Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association

Membership is open to sawmills, loggers, foresters, landowners, supporting businesses and anyone else interested in supporting the forest products industry in Connecticut. Benefits include educational programs, a voice in the Connecticut Legislature, a listing on the TIMPRO CT website, current information on issues affecting the forest products industry, discounts from area businesses, a free subscription to ***The Cutting Edge*** and more.

-ter manage forest land under their control so that most of their budget isn't spent fighting forest fires.

TIMPRO CT is indirectly a member of the American Loggers Council by our relationship with NELA but they are looking for individual members at \$100 and Association memberships at \$2500. We had the opportunity to talk with Darrell Peters, the rep from The NH Timber Owners Association.



They have a larger organization than Connecticut, with 3 full-time employees and a more diverse membership. One of their larger concerns is what is known as the Northern Pass. The federal government wants to take over and manage approximately 100,000 acres of forest land in NH and Vermont. The concern is not only a loss of the tax revenue but the record of the federal government properly managing the land they have now. I met and spoke with a representative from the US Forest Service; he agreed that things need to be changed at the federal level but federal employees are not allowed to voice their opinions publicly." In a later conversation, Henry said he'd like to attend the conference again.

Joan Nichols reported on legislation: "The state budget is top priority. Many DEEP forestry staff will be retiring soon and with a hiring freeze there will not be enough foresters to manage state land timber sales. Because of the budget concerns the formula for dispersing revenue generated from state timber sales is always up for discussion. At one time it was the first \$600,000 that went to the forestry program, then everything over \$600,000, then \$0. Now it's the first \$100,000, thanks in part to advocacy from Connecticut Forest & Parks Association as well as the Farm Bureau. Having private foresters mark timber is opposed by the state unions. There was an outsourced tax panel review and one of the changes they suggested was to open up Public Act 490. An item related to forest land was perhaps raising taxes on forestland thereby removing some of the incentive for land owners to keep their land in forestry. Thanks to the Connecticut Forest & Park Association as well as the Farm Bureau and Working Land Alliance, it wasn't opened up. Now we will need to keep a lookout for any more activity in that area. In other state matters, truck weights are now up to 100,000 lbs. in the state for agricultural commodities including forest products but still need to be approved at the Federal level. This year Connecticut Representative Elizabeth Esty and the transportation committee approved a 91,000 lb. weight limit for bulk milk transport as a pilot program. If all goes well with this commodity, the new weight limit may be expanded to other sectors of agriculture."

In other business, Treasurer Steve Tallman was not able to attend but the financial information submitted shows that revenue is slightly higher than last year at this time since many members paid their dues in early April. Secretary Gerald Bellows proposed a shift from a rolling membership to establishing two enrollment and renewal dates to provide a steadier income flow.

TIMPRO CT WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

Eryk S Thoman-Thurber, Student Member
Jerimoth Forestry / Ponaganset High School
Foster, RI.
Carl Crane , Logger and chipper
East Windsor, Ct
Shawn Varley, Logger
Harwinton , Ct
Joseph Crider, Logger and firewood producer
Griswold, Ct

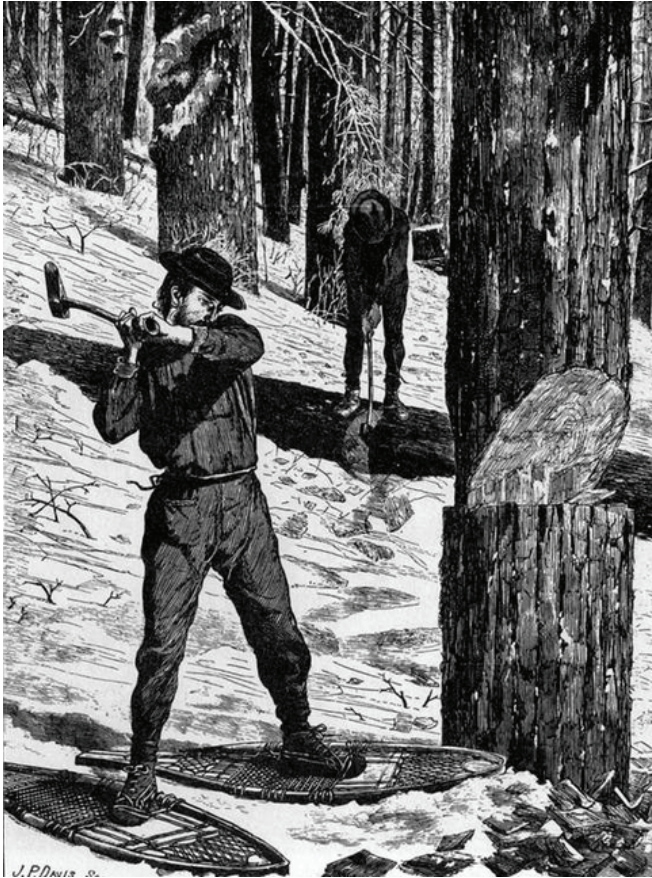


Two workshops on April 22 offered TIMPRO CT members some pointers on chainsaw safety and maintenance. A representative from Stihl Corporation headed the morning session. In the afternoon, John Costa covered issues related to preventative equipment maintenance, including proper choice and use of lubricants.

Pictures on this and preceding pages courtesy of Joan Nichols and Brennan Sheahan



THE CHANGING FACE OF FIREWOOD



A Hollywood star is the unlikely face of the changing world of firewood. You wouldn't recognize Forbes March unless you watched "One Life to Live" before the script killed off his character Nash Brennan in 2009. Today he is very much alive and thriving as the supplier of kiln-dried, shrink-wrapped logs to restaurants and residents in New York City through his New York Firewood Company. His career change from floodlights to firewood underscores a shift in the industry from bulk mixed hardwoods to product differentiation and customer service.

Consider the experience of Jeffrey Viola of J&J Log and Lumber Company in upstate New York. "I've been in the business since high school," he explained. "We try to make it as professional as possible. We take orders seriously and deliver good solid hardwood that's dry." He's invested in equipment, such as an automated splitter, that's expensive but "phenomenally productive." "I've added a lot of equipment," he continued. "We deliver with a window, too. People don't want to hang around all day waiting for delivery. We call ahead. That's where the service end comes in." In fact, he now offers stacking as an additional service for a fee. "We stack neatly and even sweep up the debris," he added. Thanks to this level of service, his business

has grown steadily by word of mouth. Viola's customers also value his integrity. "There's people out there shorting their customers or not delivering dry wood as promised," he warned

Dave and Andrea Perugini, owners of the Back2Basic store in Terryville, are also aware of the new trends. "I traveled the country as a pipe welder," said Dave Perugini, "until my wife said, 'It's time to get off the road'." The couple bought the store ten years but only started offering firewood last year. He has been certified by the Connecticut Grown program and only accepts wood from known suppliers. The Peruginis supply kiln-dried wood and also create shrink-wrapped bundles for sale at gas stations and other outlets. Campgrounds are additional customers. Concern about diseases and insect infestation has resulted in very tight restrictions on what people can bring with them to campgrounds. "Campgrounds buy tractor-trailer loads that we load with pallets," said Perugini.

The Open Hearth is a homeless shelter/transitional living facility with a focus on employment and recovery based in Hartford, and it also supplies state parks and restaurants with wood-burning pizza ovens. Marilyn Rossetti, director of the non-profit organization founded in 1884, explained "the wood yard is a social enterprise so we don't make any money. We only buy from the same people and have a limited delivery area. We provide work experience to our clients who haven't worked in a long time. They have paid supervisors who help them develop a work ethic." The Open Hearth processes about 1,000 cords a year.

Convenience and reliability help drive customers to suppliers such as Back2Basics, J&J, and Open Hearth. Another factor is environmental regulations to curb emissions from wood-burning stoves and halt the spread of insect pests or diseases. Kiln-dried wood is valuable not only because of its low moisture content but also because the process kills pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer.

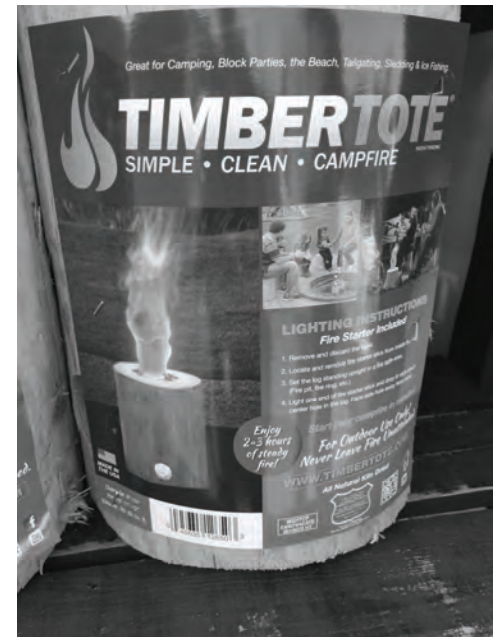
If all this seems like good news for the firewood industry, there is still a supply problem that hampers growth. In fact, there are two supply bottlenecks. One is the availability of wood. A forester, Viola is very aware of this. "Alternative energy is cool now," he said, "But supply is dependent on silviculture and mileage from our location. The firewood business is easy to get into and doesn't take much equipment. After Hurricane Sandy and other storms, we had a lot of wood down. People were getting in and out of the business." A lot of people were selling the salvaged wood so supply was up and prices were down. Some customers today experience sticker shock now that the supply is down. Dave Perugini agreed about supply: "It's hard to get wood now. It's expensive and I end up competing with a lot of others for it." He'd love to get more ash. "Ash that's dried is the most desired product. There are ash salvage sales. I'll buy a lot but then, when I go back, there's no more. I'm limited by supply, not demand."

The second supply bottleneck is the lack of manpower. Viola noted, "We have difficulty finding labor, even with machines and equipment." This is a problem TIMPRO CT has addressed on many fronts. We encourage and help young people entering the industry through our scholarships, student memberships, and advocacy to reduce the expense of equipment and insurance.

Greater financial reward may improve the outlook and help bring in young people. Forbes March has created something close to a customized product for which people will pay good money. He can charge up \$250 to \$450 for 40 cubic feet of wood or 50 bundles, the so-called "Manhattan cord," and ships some 3,000 cords a year. Restaurants, in particular, will pay for deliveries of custom-cut kiln-dried cherry, hickory, white birch – even the red cores of beech trees. As March explained in an interview for *The New Yorker* magazine (January 18, 2016 p.27), pizza chefs are finicky. "If you change their wood, you change the way their oven behaves, and they can't cook in it."

Will increased demand drive enough profit to support more growth and bring younger people into the workforce? What will replace the supply of ash as the diseased and dead trees are harvested? No one knows yet. But one thing is for sure: it's not your father's firewood market anymore.

Staff at The Open Hearth help men in transition develop job skills. Photo courtesy Marilyn Rossetti



Shrink-wrapped and trademarked, firewood is now a supermarket commodity.



TIMPRO CT VICE PRESIDENT HENRY GUNDLACH WINS NELA AWARD

At the South Burlington, Vermont Annual Loggers' Banquet, in front of over 200 members, the North Eastern Loggers Association awarded its 2015 Leadership in the Industry Award to Henry Gundlach. The submission, assembled by Joan Nichols, cited his service to TIMPRO CT and the Northeastern Loggers Association. Chair Colleen Goodridge told the audience "I've had the privilege of working with Henry Gundlach for several years on the NELA Board of Directors. Henry could always be counted on to be fully engaged in conversations and brain storming about how to improve our industry's standing in the community and how we could make our industry a more attractive option for young people. Since 1997, Henry has also served on the Advisory Board for the Agricultural Education program at Northwestern Regional #7. Mia J. Haaland, Program Director for the Agricultural FFA program at Northwestern Regional #7 attested to his many contributions. He has attended FFA and Agricultural Education activities to show his support for the students and staff. In addition to advising, he has chaperoned activities and trips, delivered piglets, helped students locate new sugar bushes, solicited funds for FFA activities, donated materials and use of equipment, met with administrators and state officials, hauled away manure, repaired buses, cooked at events, and even delivered a calf. But most important of all, he has served as a link between educational programs and real world agriculture.



Henry Gundlach at NELA awards ceremony. Photo courtesy of Clay Britch

NEW MEMBER SHAWN VARLEY JOINS THE BOARD

As one TIMPRO Board member retires, a new member joins us. Shawn Varley of Harwinton has been logging since the winter of 2003. A graduate of Wamogo High School, he worked with a land clearing company. He owns a skidder and is now with J&J Log and Lumber Company. He has no specific agenda for the Board at this point. "As a Board member, I want to get an idea of what is going on in the field," he said. "But we need to get more people into this field." He knows first hand that a big barrier for newcomers is the cost of equipment and insurance. "You have to work way more hours than you should have to in order to pay for these," he said.

Shawn Varley takes a break during a land clearing job.



MEET STUDENT MEMBER ERYK THOMAN-THURBER

Eryk S. Thoman-Thurber may be new to TIMPRO CT but he is actually a second-generation member of our organization. A junior at Ponaganset High School in Foster, RI, he has been working in the woods with his father, Robert Thurber, for years. "I was home-schooled until 6th grade," Eryk explained, "so I spent lots of time in the woods with my father." Eryk has handled almost every type of equipment, such as skidders and feller bunchers, and has done almost every kind of job in the woods. In addition to helping out at Jerimoth Forestry, his father's company, he also works at a local sawmill. He has taken the Game of Logging Level 1 training course twice and is president of his school's FFA chapter. He is also a member of the school band where he plays trumpet. Finally, he has raised and trained oxen teams for competition. "A family friend introduced me to oxen and I had my first team when I was eight," he recalled. Now with his second team, he competes in fairs and shows. He sees his future in the woods. "I'm looking at soil science or forest management," he said, "maybe a combination." And he intends to become an active member in TIMPRO CT. "I won't always be a junior member," he promised.



Eleven-year old Eryk with his first team of oxen, Holsteins Lucky and Champ. Photo courtesy of Martha Thoman

LONG-STANDING TREASURER STEVE TALLMAN PLANS RETIREMENT



Photo courtesy of Joan Nichols

A lifetime in the woods here is ending as TIMPRO CT Treasurer Steve Tallman prepares to retire. "I starting cutting wood when I was in high school," he recalled. "The best thing is being out there by myself." He tried working on crews of one or two other men but always came back to being on his own. After working for Hull Forest Products for twenty years, he and his wife will move to Las Vegas where he will look for a job as a security guard or truck driver. "I'll miss working in the woods. It's so nice if you can knock off work an hour early and go hunting," he said. Tallman has been on the TIMPRO CT Board since its founding in 2007. "I've made a lot of really good friends, especially through TIMPRO. I'll miss that a lot," he said. "I'll also miss Hull. It'll be weird making new friends. But we'll move into a development where I have a cousin. It's unbelievable – forests, mountains. It's beautiful." We wish him the best in retirement.



BITS AND CHOKERS

TIMPRO CT AT AG DAYS IN THE CAPITOL

President Brennan Sheahan tended the TIMPRO CT display at the Agricultural Day event in the Capitol on March 16. He had an opportunity to discuss our concerns with Governor Dannel Malloy (below), with Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture Steven Reviczky (right), and with a visitor (below right).



Photos this page courtesy of Joan Nichols



TIMPRO CT members Joan Nichols and Steve Strong helped dedicate the new Lockwood Farm pavilion on April 19. Construction was highlighted in the December 2015 issue of *The Cutting Edge*.

L-R: Joan Nichols and Terry Jones, both members of the CAES Board of Control; Steve Strong, timber framer; Dr. Theodore Andreadis, CAES Executive Director; CT Department of Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky. Dr. John F. Anderson, past Executive Director of CAES, also participated.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER KIMI SEKORSKI REPORTS FROM ETHIOPIA

Kimi Sekorski posted this picture from Ethiopia where she is carrying on restoration work with a group from college. "I love this country, also...Having the best 21st birthday ever down here," she wrote. Follow her trip on her Instagram account (@KimmerAcres).



FIRST LOOK AT 2016 MAPLE SYRUP SEASON

Although official USDA statistics weren't available at press time, Mark Harran, President of the Maple Syrup Producers Association of Connecticut reported: "The 2016 season in Connecticut was about average, not great, but not bad either. It started early, around the first of February, and was short and not so sweet. It was virtually the complete opposite of the last two years when it started late, around mid-March. It was also short but yielded a good to excellent syrup crop. This season, due to a mild winter and early spring warm up, many folks had their last boil by mid-March. As a consequence, those Connecticut sugar makers who have historically waited until mid-February to tap really had it tough. An additional factor was that a number of sugar makers reported low sap sugar content. All in all, the crop was less than expected, but was acceptable to most." By contrast, initial reports indicate that Quebec had its best year ever: some 60 million pounds by early spring – roughly double last year's total in or during the same period. In northern New England, a January warm-up enabled some producers to get an early start and continue tapping into April.



PO Box 508
Oneco, CT 06373

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2016

Check calendar on Timpro website for any changes.

CT Professional Timber Producers Association

Look for mailings or check the
website for further details and
any changes to the Calendar of
Events.

Ideas for classes you would
like offered?

Contact TIMPRO CT:

PO Box 508

Oneco, CT 06373

860-948-0432

info@timproct.org

Articles, ideas, pictures
you'd like to see?
hallie.metzger@rcn.com

**JUNE 24 MASTER LOGGER PROGRAM: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOGGERS AND
LANDOWNERS,
2 CEUs, \$40/MEMBERS, \$50/WALK-INS, LATE REGISTRATION
8:30-12: WINDHAM COUNTY UCONN EXTENSION CENTER,
139 WOLF DEN ROAD, BROOKLYN, CT
1-3:30: BATES PROPERTY, 663 REYNOLDS ROAD, RTE 94,
GLOUCESTER, RI**

Get Involved

The Board of Directors is seeking members who are interested in helping out with various activities throughout the year such as CEU programming, fairs, Ag Days at the State Capitol in March, Plant Science Day in August in Hamden, programs at the Agriscience Centers and more. The Board, made up of business owners, just like yourselves, is keenly aware of the demands on your time. Any amount of time, no matter how minimal, is greatly needed.

Contact TIMPRO CT for more information:
860-948-0432 or e-mail: info@timproct.org.