



Bill Weber captains associates' interests on Board

Bill Weber, team captain (and owner), of Arborwear, LLC in Newbury, Ohio, was sworn in as the new associate member of the TCIA Board of Directors during an induction ceremony at Winter Management Conference in February. As the sole associate member director on the 10-member board, Weber represents the interests of TCIA's other associate members.

Arborwear, a TCIA member since 1998, is a manufacturer and seller of clothing for tree work, including pants, shirts, hats, jackets and other outerwear and accessories. Weber started his own small tree care company in 1986 and, understanding the need for clothing specifically designed for the rigors of the tree care industry, helped build Arborwear to what it is today.

He says on his website, "Sure, there are days I'd rather be working in the trees, but we all have those."

He has a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Vermont.

During college and afterward, he operated a small residential tree care business. In the early to mid '90s, he co-founded and managed several polymer related companies, including a polymer insole company making formable and shock absorbing footwear and sporting goods components; another making cranial orthotics and prosthetic liners; and a third a ski helmet company that is now making helmet liners for the military. Finally, he managed a small division of an industrial sealant company prior to joining Arborwear in 2000.

He and his wife, Debbie, a pre-school teacher, live in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, with their three daughters – Anna, 14; Katy, 12; and Margot, 10.

"Some of my greatest lessons in life came from the tree care industry," Weber says, explaining what made him join the Board now, after being a member for 13 years. "But when I was running my business I had no idea the depth and breadth of the industry. I want to make sure others realize what is out there and what is possible."

TCIA has changed a bit for associate members, those whose businesses depend on tree care companies using their products or services, during the last 13 years, he says.

“I think the association has always looked out for folks like us, but a big difference today is that there is so much more information available, from us and for us, information that can help everybody. The folks at the TCIA have always treated us like partners in the industry and have really helped us grow.”

He has helped out with many associations and organizations on various committees, and served on the board for the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Association. He served on TCIA’s Associate Member Committee several years, and served as its chair, and serves on the Nominations Committee.

“I know the importance of a diverse group of people and I think this (TCIA) Board has that in spades.”

Yet he is humbled following in the footsteps of both his immediate predecessor in the associate director position, Tony Gann, and other board members who have come before him.

“Let’s face it, I have some big shoes to fill, literally, but I am hoping I can bring a unique perspective to the board. We are kind of like the Swiss – we try and make friends with everyone. We work with competing tree care and utility line clearance companies, equipment manufacturers and distributors, chemical companies, arborist supply dealers and many more. I hope we have learned a little about each one of these types of members and that we can bring some of their views to the table more clearly and perhaps come up with some ways to challenge the board on everyone’s behalf.”

His goals include making those in the industry more aware of what TCIA membership can do for them.

“I really want to make sure both members and non-members are completely aware of everything the association can do to help their respective businesses. I still hear people ask, ‘why should I become a member?’ They have no idea of what resources are available.”

“I’d also like associate members to work more closely together and share information where possible. It may sound tough, especially when you compete, but look what the chipper manufacturers are doing already, they are collaborating on safety issues. (Several chipper manufacturers gathered in January 2011 to compare notes on chipper safety issues.) Hats off to you guys! I think we could all work better together to grow the industry. We can make our marketing dollars go farther and services more meaningful for our customers – more members, bigger shows, more qualified buyers, less headaches and hassles.”

Finally, what’s up with the “team captain” title he uses at his company?

“I’ve never been big on titles, but I am big on building a great team like the one we have at Arborwear. The team here is awesome, truly awesome. I learned a long time ago that if

you surround yourself with people who work as hard as you and who are smarter than you, then you'll see a lot more wins than losses. This is certainly the case here at Arborwear. This is team is outstanding!"