

CLIMBERS CORNER

Big Tree Climb Benefits TREE Fund

It all started at the gala TREE Fund auction in Milwaukee in 2001! The package that went out to the highest bidder read:

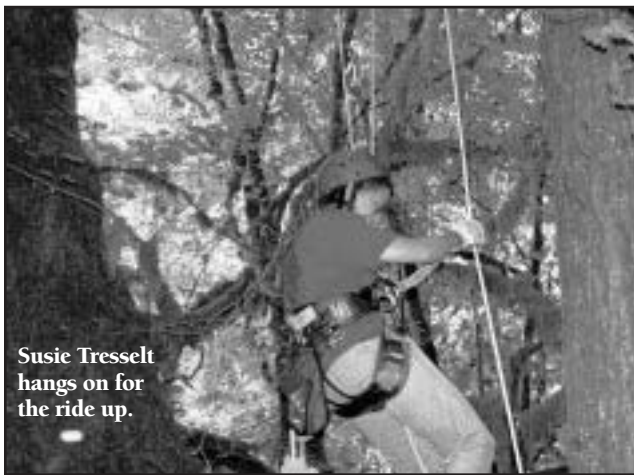
The Big Tree Climb

Courtesy of ArborMaster Training and the Pacific Northwest Chapter, ISA
July 22–23, 2002

You and a guest will get the once in a lifetime experience of climbing one of the tallest trees in the Pacific Northwest—therefore, in the WORLD. On the first day, receive expert training from ArborMaster Training on tree climbing techniques and safety. Then on the second day, you will have own personal guide as you climb to the top of the old-growth forest canopy with a guaranteed breathtaking view.

Well, the package was generously bid on and purchased by Ben and Tina Tresselt of Arborist Enterprises in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It was a surprise gift to Ben's brother, Tony, and his wife, Susie. And so the planning began. With the local help and assistance of Michael Oxman in choosing the site and tree, and John Cichel of the U.S. Forest Service in securing the permit for the climb, the team was assembled and the plans solidified in anticipation of this wonderful climb.

The experience is best described in the words of those who took part.



Susie Tresselt hangs on for the ride up.

I used to think we had big trees in Pennsylvania. I didn't know what "big" was until Tony and I went to Washington this summer to climb one of the monstrous trees on the Olympic Peninsula. The best part of the climb was when they set up a zip line from near the top of the tree out to the trail about 200 feet away. It was a huge rush to step out into space and float above the trees and down to the trail far below.

—Tony and Susie Tresselt

There were many who helped to make this climb happen, and we are especially thankful to Ben and Tina Tresselt for bidding on the package and affording us the opportunity to have such an experience. And to my wife, Deborah, who worked on many aspects in the planning stages from accommodations, to airline tickets, to coordination of arrival times and ground transportation—thanks, Deb! From there it was the grace of God, perfect timing, great weather, beautiful forest, and fantastic trees. The team was super—without a doubt, some of the best I have ever climbed with. See you at the top!

—Ken Palmer

The big tree climb was beneficial, enjoyable, and educational. I believe it was a positive experience for all. Right from the start when we all met at the airport, you could tell that we had an awesome team to tackle this challenge. It really is quite an undertaking to get up into anything over 200 feet high, and, as the climb approached, I found myself



Everyone who participated in the climb brought home wonderful memories of the once-in-a-lifetime event.

preparing and training for the event, thinking about footlocking 150 feet or so, just to get to the first limb.

The one thing that everyone agreed made the difference was the elevator system we set up to get people up and down in a safe, easy, and efficient manner. Some of us had to get up there the old-fashioned way so that we could set up the elevator and begin "shuttling" climbers up and down. It took most of the morning the first day to set up; however, by early afternoon, anyone who wanted to be in the tree had ample opportunity. The top of the tree was definitely the place to be because the bugs down below were almost unbearable, even for me—a Canadian.

The experience is one that I truly will never forget and would love to do it again. The view and feel from a tree so tall and obviously so old as well is indescribable. It is one of those things that you have to see to believe, but in this case, you have to climb it to believe it.

—Dwayne Neustaeter

The TREE Fund climb was special in many different ways, but the most significant aspect in my mind was the gathering it brought about. Members from all levels and facets of our industry, our profession, our tribe, came together to benefit a worthy cause and explore the wonders of an old-growth canopy. That gathering was a joy in and of itself.

—Michael Tain

Climbers Corner (continued)

One lasting impression I took was from a climber who, having worked for many years in the not-so-giant trees of the northeast, was visibly bugged-out at the thought of using his (or any other) system in such high and strange territory. He eventually succumbed.

—Tobe Sherrill

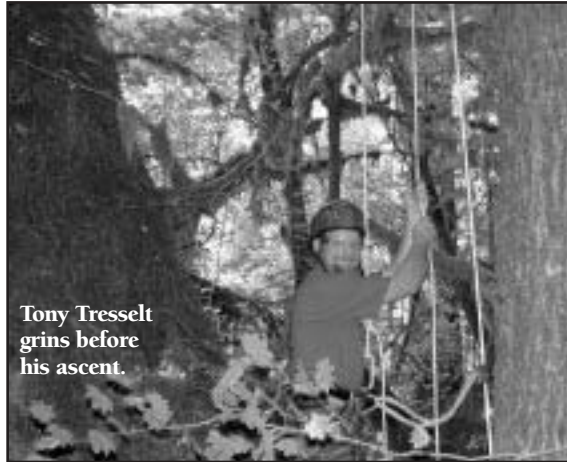
The site selection and planning for the TREE Fund climb was remarkable. From start to finish, I can't recall a single snag. Everyone who participated also played a support role, like the elevator line—one goes up and one goes down. The fund climb brought together a pool of experience that flowed like water. And I got to catch it on tape.

—Jerry Beranek

The climb for the TREE Fund was a blast! Good people, good tree, good weather, great time! Thanks to Mike Oxman for doing the initial legwork and Ken Palmer for a great job keeping the climb site organized and safe. It was fun seeing the Tresselts having a good time. No better way to spend a beautiful day than hanging out at 200 feet with Jerry Beranek and some other buddies.

—Rooster T. Cornfield (Rip Tompkins)

An aged arborist, weathered by the nature of his craft, sits under the shade of an old Sitka spruce. Moist coolness is a welcome gift. This place of gentle giants gives freely. Silence slowly disappears; his presence is vaguely



**Tony Tresselt
grins before
his ascent.**

familiar, accepted. Quiet thoughts drift to days many years past. Good days spent with comrades in the lofty heights above. Days they called "TREE Fun'D 2002."

—Norm St. Jean

When John Muir climbed in that windstorm, I wonder if he knew what an impact his tale would have on those of us who would be inspired to go aloft merely to experience the charms of the canopy. I suppose it's pretty obvious that something special occurred on this climb that signals the growing acceptance of the movement to relish the abundance of the trees. To have been there is a privilege that I will always cherish. I think we forged bonds with our beginnings, with our surroundings, and with each other. It was great meeting some of climbers for the first time and seeing a lot of them again, after a long time.

—Michael Oxman

Article compiled by Deborah Palmer, ArborMaster Training, Inc.
Knut Foppe and Christine Engel also participated in the climb.
Photos courtesy of Dwayne Neustaeter, Tobe Sherrill, and Knut Foppe.