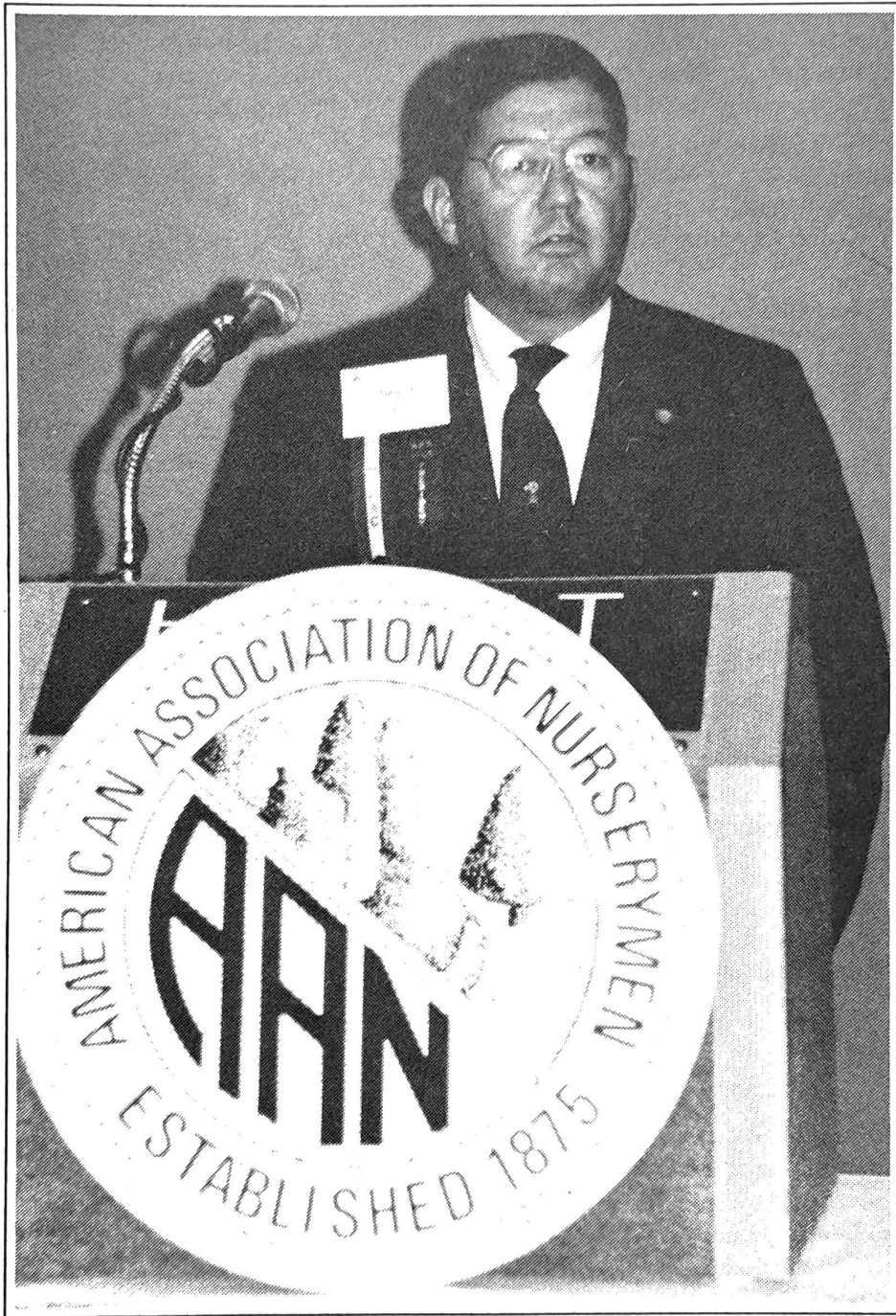


Louisiana's **NURSERYMEN**



AAN President, 1992-93

Dennis McCloskey of Windmill Nurseries

Inside: Accountants: Friends or Foes? • AAN • Windmill Nurseries

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

Why Join LAN?

- LAN expresses the collective voice of the Green Industry in Louisiana. LAN members sit on the Horticulture Commission and lobby for legislation that affects nurserymen.
- LAN promotes professionalism through a Certified Nurseryman training manual and testing program.
- LAN sponsors scholarships for horticulture students in universities across Louisiana.
- LAN supports research on topics important to nurserymen. One LAN grant supported a comprehensive study of Green Laws. This study has assisted Louisiana communities in passing their own Green Laws.
- LAN schedules an annual short course jointly with the Mississippi Association of Nurserymen. This event draws more than 900 participants and more than 100 exhibitors. The course meets alternately in Mississippi and Louisiana, usually on the second weekend in January.
- LAN is subdivided into nursery regions (e.g., the Central Louisiana Association of Nurserymen, the Northwest Louisiana Association of Nurserymen). Through these groups and through the annual short course, you'll meet others in the Green Industry. You'll get ideas, find suppliers or buyers, and meet a lot of enjoyable, dedicated people.
- LAN is a participating member of the huge TAN-MISSLARK trade show, which meets annually during the summer. It is the world's largest nursery show, and provides you with access to almost any nursery product imaginable.
- LAN members receive this magazine, plus supplementary mailouts from LAN secretary Dr. Warren Meadows.
- LAN offers members special services, such as training tapes for those seeking to comply with OSHA hazard communication standards.

To: Officers and Members, Louisiana Association of Nurserymen

I hereby apply for membership in the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen, subject to the approval of your membership committee. I agree that the decision of the membership committee is final.

Should I wish to cancel my membership at any time in the future, I agree that I must do so in writing to the secretary no later than the last day of December of the current fiscal year. Failing to do this, I acknowledge my liability to LAN for the current year's dues.

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(growers, retailers, landscapers, etc. Dues are based on gross sales: <\$100,000, \$35; \$100,000-\$250,00, \$50; >\$250,000, \$100.)

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(\$50, for out-of-state nurseries, chemical and hard goods suppliers)

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Keep on Growing

After 12 years of serving as your magazine editor, I regret to announce that this will be my last issue, at least for the foreseeable future.

I have accepted a fellowship to the University of Texas at Austin, where I'm now pursuing a Ph.D. in journalism.

The fellowship is generous, but it requires that I devote full time to the books. The Graduate School discourages fellowship holders from outside employment.

I've enjoyed producing the magazine these many years. I've reported a lot of changes, from new growing practices to new regulations to an

unfortunate number of natural disasters.

My chief joy in producing this magazine has been getting to know so many of you. Every nurseryman is a walking feature story, full of invention and curiosity.

I feel good about what I've been able to do as editor. When I took over the magazine, its circulation was less than 300. Today *Louisiana's Nurserymen* reaches more than 2,300 readers.

Before I began managing its ad revenues and finances in 1984, the magazine was receiving about \$3,000 a year subsidy from the LAN general fund. Since that time, my records show an average annual subsidy of less than \$400.

I'd like to thank the LAN board for giving me the latitude to manage the magazine. I also thank many loyal advertisers for their financial support.

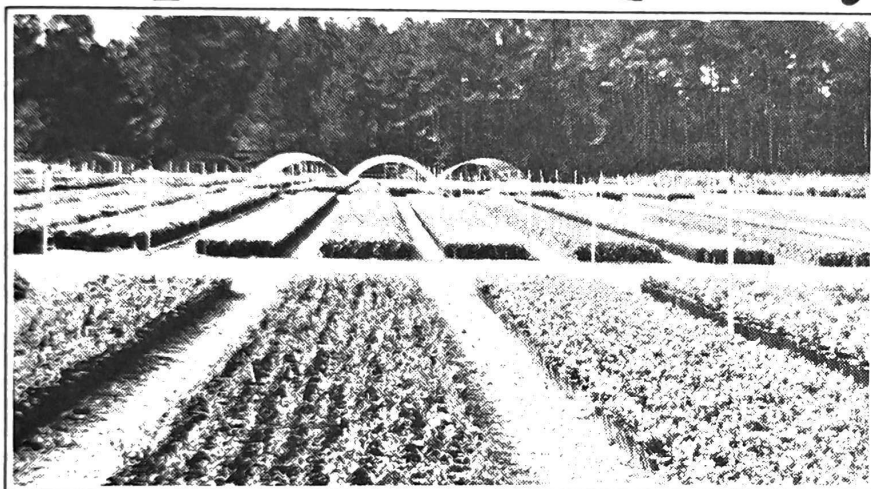
I've kept an archive of back issues of *Louisiana's Nurserymen*, and I've filed all photographs with the magazine they've appeared in. These may not be of great sentimental value now, but they could be a valuable part of an LAN archive 100 years from now.

Will LAN be around in 2092? I am confident that it will. The nature of nursery work seems to attract tenacious individuals—people who work 16-hour days when necessary, people who replant after freezes and rebuild after fires and restructure after economic downturns.

The nurseryman's day-to-day routine makes the world a more beautiful place. Not many other professionals can claim this. I believe this inherent satisfaction will always draw people to the Green Industry.

This is farewell, not goodbye; I'll return to Louisiana in August 1994 to resume my faculty position at USL. I look forward to seeing many of you again. But until then, best wishes.

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On the front cover

Dennis McCloskey presides over the AAN Board of Governors at the 117th AAN Convention, held July 23-26 in Columbus, Ohio. Photo supplied by AAN.

Accountants: Friends or Foes?

BY WARREN PURDY

At this time I would like to discuss the accounting profession as a whole. Most firms place far too much importance on accountants' advice. They are human just like the rest of us and have their limitations. They have been trained in manufacturing and retail accounting and are not familiar with the Green Industry.

What a dilemma—nursery owners are technically oriented and cannot tell their accountants what they need. The accountants do not know the business in order to supply the correct and necessary information. And yet when performing my management audits across the

nation, I receive the greatest opposition to change from the accounting profession, whether it be an accountant, CPA firm, or an in-house bookkeeper. Furthermore, the traditional accounting that is now being used is neither applicable nor useful in the Green Industry.

Should Green Industry operations be molded to fit the restrictions and limitations of traditional accounting in order to make the accountant's job easier? I think not!!!

Traditional Accounting

Let's look at some of the traditional accounting functions and how they have made their way into our industry. By its very nature accounting deals with historical data—

"water under the bridge," so to speak. I can accept this—what I cannot accept is historical data which are neither understandable nor useful to management in the Green Industry.

The prime offender is the format for the Statement of Profit and Loss which permeates traditional accounting. The most important management decision-making tool for the Green Industry contractor is the Statement of Profit and Loss...but here is where traditional accounting methods do their greatest harm. For some reason, accounting academicians have been teaching their students a standard format for the profit and loss statement which is applicable primarily to

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manufacturers and retailers. This universal format is the only one consistently used by accountants and bookkeepers and is automatically forced on all business entities, including those in the Green Industry.

Instead of carefully separating and allocating Direct Operating Costs and Administrative Expense items into their respective categories, most accountants and bookkeepers are content to itemize direct operating costs as "Cost of Goods Sold," which include materials and beginning and ending inventory items. They put the remaining expenses into the mystical catchall term "Overhead" or "Other Expense." The resulting Profit and Loss Statement generally

indicates that the Green Industry contractor has a fantastic gross profit percentage of 40-50% and an enormous overhead percentage of between 35-45%.

When their statements are reformatted to reflect the true direct operating costs and administrative expenses, the actual gross profit percentage is usually between 10-17%, while the administrative ex-

ing procedures we are now expected to use.

Further, the accounting statements should not be kept for the purpose of tax reporting, but should be produced for the sole purpose of management decision-making. The accountant/bookkeeper can reformat the managerial Statement of Profit and Loss to satisfy the banker, bondsman or IRS.

As Green Industry members, we need to establish our own accounting formats

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pense is usually around 10% or less. This would produce a net profit from operations of between 2% and 7%. To compound the problem made by the accountant's statement, the banker and bondsman will use this statement to rate your firm's operations.

Managerial Statement of Profit and Loss

What I am proposing to clear up this misunderstood accounting function is neither novel nor mysterious; rather, a logical look at the need for specialization in our industry. As Green Industry members, we need to establish our own accounting formats in order to have the proper information by which to manage our business.

The Statement of Profit and Loss should reflect the true picture of our operations. Readability, understandability, and accuracy should be the key factors influencing the accounting practices and reports that we accept for our industry—not the traditional or "accepted" account-

Your Statement of Profit and Loss

Take a look at your Statement of Profit and Loss—at the section called "Overhead" or "Other Expenses" (usually the section below your gross profit figure). Do you see items like salaries, officers' salaries, equipment rental, gas and oil, maintenance and repairs, advertising, and 100% of the payroll taxes, insurance and depreciation? Is your "Overhead" higher than 20 percent? Don't feel bad; you are not alone! You are just a victim of the traditional method of accounting—as are many of your associates in the Green Industry.

Let's assume for a moment that you have to use your statement supplied to you by your accountant to make a very important management decision.

You know that you have to cut back on expenses somewhere, but where? With an overstated "overhead," the first place you'd probably turn to to cut overhead is your office staff.

Can you afford to lose the services

of your secretary? Can you afford to miss important phone calls or fall further behind on your administrative paper work? If you had the correct picture through the use of a properly formatted and allocated managerial Statement of Profit and Loss, you would probably find that the actual "Overhead" (administrative expense) is reasonably low and

that the real place to look for potential savings is in the direct operating cost area: improving the efficiency of your field work rather than reducing your very valuable office staff.

You cannot make a correct management decision until you have a statement that meets your specialized needs, a statement that you can read, use and understand. Just as

the accrual method of accounting is of utmost importance to the management decision process, so is the managerial Statement of Profit and Loss. If your present accountant is unwilling to supply you with this important managerial statement, it is up to you to find an accountant who will. After all, who runs your business—you or your accountant?

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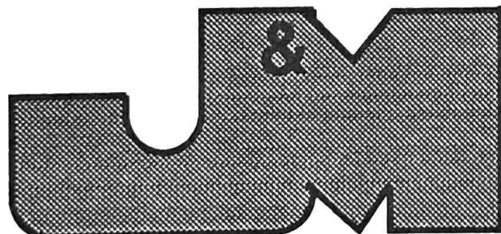
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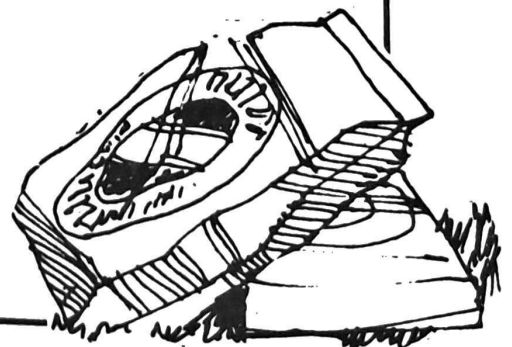
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McCloskey, right, congratulates outgoing AAN President Richard Campbell at the AAN Past Presidents' Banquet.

Photo supplied by AAN.

AAN President McCloskey

THREE DECADES AGO DENNIS McCloskey first put spade to soil in his own nursery. This year he put gavel to podium as president of the American Association of Nurserymen.

In late July McCloskey became the second Louisianian in 11 years to ascend to the helm of the nation's leading nursery association. (Kent Langlinais of Youngville headed AAN from 1982 to 1983.)

McCloskey will spend the year presiding over the AAN board, visiting numerous regional nursery shows and serving as national spokesman for the green industry.

"I became a member of AAN 25 years ago because I felt the association would give me ideas and the opportunity to talk with successful and progressive nurserymen throughout the U.S.," McCloskey says.

"I also felt an obligation to pay my portion to AAN for the work they do on a national scale. AAN

protects us by monitoring regulations and legislation that will affect the industry. For us in Louisiana, AAN recently helped formulate realistic fire ant regulations."

AAN was organized in 1875 as the national trade association of the nursery industry (see related story, page 12). It is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

McCloskey heads Louisiana's largest wholesale nursery, Windmill Nurseries in Franklinton. His company employs more than 100 and ships plants to 20 states. He feels the AAN presidency won't be a stick in his spokes. "As Windmill Nurseries President I attend 15 to 20 trade shows and nursery events a year, so the AAN presidency will increase my travel only by a half dozen or so short trips."

McCloskey plans to continue AAN on its course of self-examination and reform. "AAN recently underwent a lengthy strategic planning program, a communication

audit, and a member audit. We hired a new executive director, Bob Dolibois. We went through a lot of changes, all for the good.

"The member audit ranked the convention as one of the last things in importance. We've gone to a shorter convention, held in conjunction with state or regional meetings. This year we met jointly with the Ohio Nurserymen's Association; next year, with TAN-MISS-LARK; the year after, with the Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association.

"The member audit also told us why people joined AAN: primarily for legislative and regulatory work. They view us as leaders in the industry. We have to concentrate more on what we can do uniquely and best. AAN will also be active in getting government involved in the environmental movement, making sure our business wears a white hat.

"AAN serves as the sounding board for any question or concern

that affects the Green Industry. AAN is recognized as the leader in information. We're becoming much more member-responsive. For example, a member might call and want to know about regulations on the fire ants or interstate trucking or cash accounting or the status of certain chemicals or quarantine matters. AAN staff will check it out and get the member an answer."

To streamline its operation, AAN realigned all its publications, dropping the ones judged as not important. McCloskey feels that AAN should leave educational work to the state organizations, where it's done more cheaply and effectively.

McCloskey says he will revamp the AAN structure to make committees more proactive, and to get more member involvement. "We'll also examine the dues structure to make sure it's fair. AAN is composed of many more small nurseries than large ones. That's one of the most-misunderstood things about AAN. Many, many AAN members come from nurseries grossing under \$300,000."

About 3,000 firms from all areas of the Green Industry are now AAN members.

"I personally feel strongly that we need to get all people involved with AAN. AAN is not a threat to any state or regional association. It wants to be partners in improving the things that most affect nurserymen."

Louisiana's Nurserymen

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Contributors Severn Doughty
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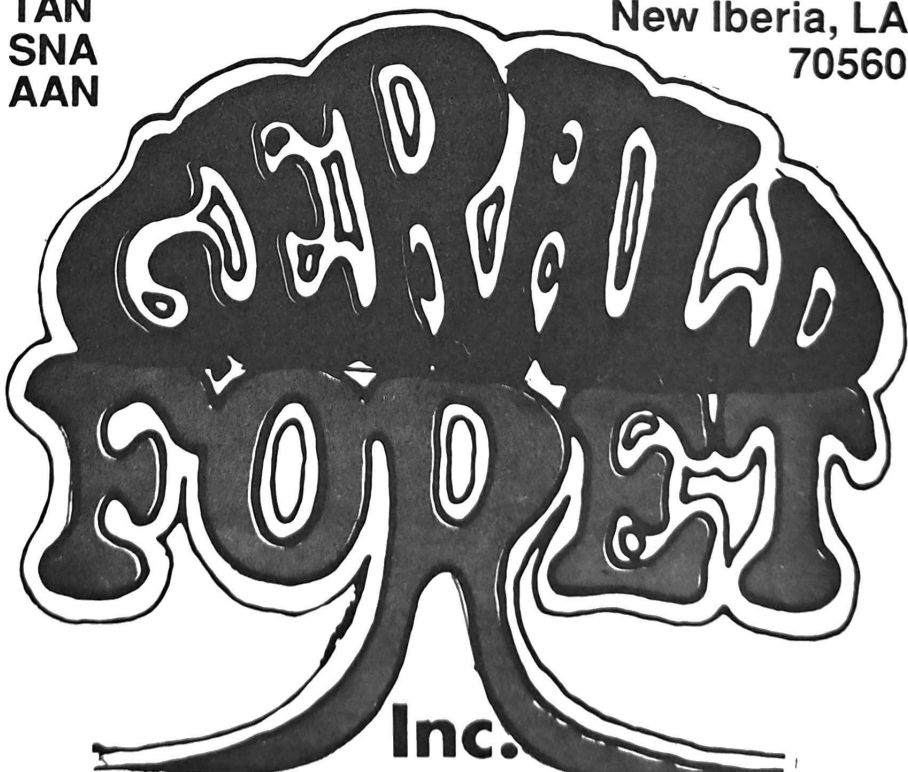
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A leader in many nursery organizations, McCloskey is a past president of LAN, and a winner of the Outstanding Nurseryman Award and the J. A. Foret Award given annually by LAN. He is a past president of the Southern Nurserymen's Association, and has been a board member for the Wholesale Nursery Growers Association. (File photo)

Three Decades of Nursery Leadership

When Dennis and Blanche McCloskey started Windmill Nurseries in 1962, neither could afford to devote full time to the nursery. She taught school and he worked for Orkin.

But that year they bought land in Washington Parish, across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans, and in their spare time they planted their first five-acre patch of landscape plants. Dennis did landscape work and installed patios. Two years later he quit his Orkin job and began a career that would eventually make his nursery the largest in the state.

Windmill Nurseries expanded during the building boom of the 1960s and '70s, opening up markets primarily in the South. McCloskey chose to grow the

staples—crepe myrtle, live oak, holly, magnolia, and so forth—but to offer them in all range of sizes and quantities, always with a critical eye for quality.

In 1970 McCloskey incorporated the nursery and planted his first container stock. Over the years, container stock sales gradually grew to 60 percent of total sales.

He expanded acreage of the main nursery from 133 to 455 in the mid-1970s, then purchased the 140-acre Fisher Farm in 1983 and the 108-acre Jones Farm in 1986.

These expansions entailed more than the purchase of land. Windmill has put in 13 irrigation ponds, 30 wells in the 4- and 6-inch range, six digging machines for field-grown stock, a lighted 14-bay truck load-

ing area, 50 tractors, 80 wagons, dozens of propagation houses and a full-time sales staff of five. Sales offices are located in Dallas, Atlanta, Houston, Memphis and the home office.

McCloskey is careful not to rely too heavily on any one geographic area or any one segment of the nursery market. The Windmill customer base is 45 percent landscape contractors, 15 percent garden centers, 20 percent rewholesalers and 20 percent retailers.

Windmill employs about 100 full-time; McCloskey takes pride in running the nursery in a professional, businesslike fashion, with employee manuals and regular management meetings.

In 1980 McCloskey opened a

second enterprise, Louisiana Horticultural Transportation, to create another income stream and to give Windmill more control over shipping. LHT serves as truck brokers for nursery shipments. A third company, Louisiana Irrigation and Equipment Supply, Inc., sells tree spades, irrigation equipment and related nursery hardware.

A chart of Windmill Nurseries' growth would have its valleys as well as its peaks. The nursery lost millions in inventory during the three disastrous freezes of the 1980s. A nationwide glut of nursery materials and a soft market in the 1980s didn't help either.

McCloskey plans to construct 50 greenhouses a year, to shelter stock against vicious Louisiana winter weather.

To improve sales in vicious Louisiana summer weather, Windmill has gone big-time into containerizing large field-grown stock. Currently about 20 percent of Windmill field stock goes to market in containers, but McCloskey sees this



McCloskey expanded his container plant growing areas dramatically during the mid-1980s. Container plants now comprise 60 percent of total sales. (File photo)

percentage zooming upward, as landscapers and retailers demand plants ready-to-install even in mid-summer. The company builds its own boxes out of treated wood and galvanized steel strapping.

Of his AAN Presidency

McCloskey says, "I intend to represent first, AAN; second, Louisiana; and very far down the list, Windmill Nurseries during the coming year. I hope that I can represent my fellow Louisiana nurserymen in a positive and professional manner."

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AAN: The Green Industry Voice in Washington

Most state nursery associations do a good job of monitoring legislation coming from the state capitol. But in Washington D.C., a veritable jungle of legislative and regulatory agencies, the nursery industry expresses itself chiefly through the American Association of Nurserymen.

For example, when Congress recently considered the North American Free Trade Agreement, AAN represented nursery viewpoints in such matters as potential pest infestations from Mexico and the need for Mexico to recognize plant patents.

AAN worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain the availability of methyl bromide as a pesticide. The association also helped win science-based regulatory responses to such imported pests as the fire ant, the Japanese beetle, and black stem rust.

In business matters, AAN worked to preserve the nursery industry's ability to use cash accounting procedures and current inventory methods. When the IRS attempted to reclassify independent contractors as employees, AAN published a *Guide to the Use of Independent Contractors*, which shows nurserymen how to lessen tax liabilities.

Last year AAN monitored more than 200 pieces of legislation and testified to Congress on nine occasions.

In 1991 AAN initiated a Legislative Leadership Conference which drew more than 200 nursery leaders to Washington, D.C. They visited nearly 150 senators and representatives, presenting nursery perspectives at the grassroots level. During the past year the AAN Nursery Industry Political Action Committee collected \$19,000 to support campaigns of legislators who support nursery interests.

In these and many other matters, AAN serves the interests of nurserymen throughout the nation.

AAN was founded in 1875, and through the years has championed such plant-related movements as the World War II Victory Garden and the Johnson Administration highway beautification program. Currently through its "America the Beautiful" program, AAN is encouraging the planting of one billion trees a year across America. Working with AAN in this effort are Rotary International, the U.S. Forest Service and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

For 40 years AAN has sponsored the National Landscape Awards, the nation's oldest landscape beautifi-

cation awards.

AAN now holds its annual convention in conjunction with state or regional association meetings. Next year AAN will meet immediately prior to TAN-MISSLARK, which will allow nurserymen to participate in both events. At the conventions, AAN consultants provide information on a host of nursery issues, from computer use to immigration laws to quarantines.

Members receive two newsletters, the triweekly *UPDATE* and the bimonthly *AAN TODAY*.

Constituent groups

The Horticultural Research Institute is AAN's research division. During 1992 it funded \$100,000 in



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research projects on such topics as biological pest control, water quality, growing media and pest-resistant trees. HRI will soon publish a study which will help nurserymen reduce nitrate runoff and conserve water.

Three other business-specific divisions of AAN address the particular concerns of three segments of the nursery industry: Garden Centers of America; National Landscape Association; and Wholesale Nursery Growers of America. All AAN members receive a free membership to the division of their interest.

GCA sponsors an annual tour of leading nurseries; this year from Sept. 29-Oct. 2, participating nurserymen will travel from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C., viewing the details of layout and management of leading retail nurseries.

The National Landscape Association will publish two guides written by nursery consultant James Huston. The first is a strategic planning manual that describes how to write a comprehensive one-year landscape/irrigation plan. The second offers tips on how landscape and irrigation contractors can cope with an adverse business climate.

WNGA will soon publish the *Integrated Pest Management for Nursery Operators Training Manual*.

The three business-specific divisions of AAN sponsor an annual Management Clinic in February. These educational meetings make available to AAN members some of the nation's leading nursery authorities. Topics in previous clinics have included business building, maintaining market share, motivating salespeople and managing environmental challenges.

AAN operated the 1991-92 fiscal year with a budget of more than \$2.2 million. Three-fourths of these revenues come from membership dues. Membership costs \$250. For further information about membership, contact AAN at 1250 I St., N.W., Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20005; (202) 789-2900 or (FAX) 789-1893.

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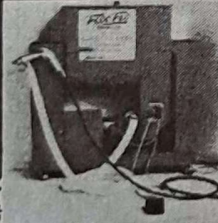
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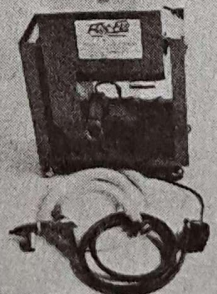
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Ten Pass Certified Nurseryman's Exam

Ten Louisiana nursery professionals passed all five sections of the Certified Nurseryman's Exam, administered by LAN in June.

They are:

Robbie Barry, Barry's Nursery, Grand Coteau.

Steve Bellanger, Banting Nursery, Westwego.

Michele Charvet, Charvet's Garden Center, Metairie.

Nathan Dondis, Greengate Garden Center, Lake Charles.

Don Dugal, Sunset Nursery Farm,

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Bobby Guillot, Guillot Nursery, New Orleans.

Brent Jeansonne, B & J Nursery Marerro

Leslie LeBlanc, D.A. LeBlanc Nursery, Abbeville.

Rick Webb, Louisiana Growers, Amite

Emma Williams, St. Rose.

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- Understanding Pests and Their Control
- Culture of Nursery Stock
- Landscape Contracting, Turf and Tree Management
- Plant Identification.

The exam costs \$75. Anyone failing one or more parts can retake the failed part(s) for \$15 per part. The LAN booklet, *Louisiana Nurserymen's Manual for the Environmental Horticultur Industry*, serves as a study guide for the exam. This is available for \$50 from LAN Secretary Dr. Warren Meadows, 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, LA 70809.

The June test was preceded by a one-day review session conducted by LAN board member Dr. Severn Doughty.

Information about future test dates is available from Meadows (504) 766-3471 or from Doughty (504) 486-4054.

The new certified nurserymen and nurserywomen will be recognized at the LAN-MNA Conference awards banquet in January.

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