

# **ABOUT THE CONTESTANTS**

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## ***WOMEN'S DIVISION CONTESTANTS***

### **2012 ITCC Returning Women's World Champion Sweden Chapter—Veronika Ericsson**

Veronika Ericsson is competing in her fourth international competition as she returns as the reigning champion. Ericsson was a seaman who started swinging around the good old sailing rigs (think Pirates of Caribbean but no weapons or skeletons and a bit less woodcraft). After 10 years at sea, she found tree climbing and eventually left boats to work with only trees. She has been working with trees now for five years and the trees have been her guide, with all the adventures and great people that come with them! Lately Ericsson has been doing studies and teaching at Wintec in New Zealand. She is looking forward to getting back into the trees again!

### **2013 Asia Pacific Champion Arboriculture Australia—Jessica Knott**

Jessica Knott returns for her fourth International competition. She has been a qualified arborist for 10 years and has a diploma in horticulture as well as a certificate in arboriculture. Knott, from Melbourne, has worked for her father in the family owned business for 13 years. Her work as an arborist has taken her to London, England to work on council trees, and Oregon, US pruning forest trees for habitat preservation. She has been married to Troy for one year and enjoys gardening, netball, jogging, and cooking up big feasts. Family time includes playing with her nieces and nephews and watching her father compete in off road rallies.

### **2012 European Champion Swiss Arborist Association—Anja Erni**

#### **2009 ITCC Women's World Champion**

Anja Erni is the 2009 and 2012 European Tree Climbing Champion as well as the 2009 ITCC champion. She returns this year to again represent the ETCC as the still reigning champion. Erni has been climbing for 12 years and is an ISA Certified Arborist. For the past four years she has been a tree climbing instructor for "Baumklettern Schweiz." Erni, and her partner Markus, own Astwerk tree company and have a 5-year-old-daughter, Meret. Besides spending time with her family and friends, she enjoys rock climbing, running, snow/wakeboarding, Pilates, reading, and painting.

### **2013 North American Representative Ontario Chapter (Canada)—Krista Strating**

Returning for the fourth time in the ITCC is Krista Strating from Hamilton, Ontario. She was a finalist in the 2013 North American Tree Climbing Championship and earned a spot at the ITCC. Strating is an ISA Certified Tree Worker, has a degree in Horticulture, and has completed an Arboriculture apprenticeship. She worked in landscaping for eight years before joining Arborwood Tree Service based out of Caistor Center where she has been climbing for five years and is a crew leader. In her free time, she enjoys all types of sports, hiking, camping, and rock climbing.

### **Arboriculture Australia—Julia Chilcott**

Julia Chilcott is the lead hand at Garden Glow Tree Care in Melbourne. She has six years of industry experience and has been competing for three years with a previous appearance at the ITCC in 2012. She has a Master of Arts (Fine Art) which she utilizes in her hobbies of big tree climbing and sculpture. You can check out her latest collaborative project at [www.juliachilcott.com](http://www.juliachilcott.com).

### **Germany Chapter— Annette Neumann**

Annette Neumann makes her first appearance at the ITCC. She has been a tree climber for four years. Neumann believes a "small tree can be a big one too." Sailing and badminton are things she enjoys in her spare time.

### **Hong Kong/China— SoMan Choi**

So Man Choi returns for her second ITCC. An arborist with Modern Arboricultural Services, she has been climbing and competing for three years. Choi volunteers as a certification proctor and evaluator for ISA Hong Kong/China. In her free time, she likes cycling, hiking, and kayaking.

### **Mid-Atlantic Chapter (United States)—Jocelyn Lohse**

Jocelyn Lohse is competing in her third ITCC and was a finalist at the 2013 NATCC. She has been climbing for four years. Lohse, from Richmond, Virginia, has been a climber with True Timber Tree Service since 2010. She also works as a councilor with Riverside Outfitters tree climbing based summer camp. In addition to climbing, Lohse recently became engaged to Scott Ross. Her hobbies include kayaking, gardening, and playing with her dog.

### **Minnesota Chapter (United States)—Rebecca Seibel-Hunt**

Seibel-Hunt of Minneapolis is making her second appearance at the ITCC. She is a Board Certified Master Arborist with a B.S. in Biology from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has completed some graduate work at Louisiana State University. She currently works as a field arborist at Bartlett Tree Experts. Besides spending time with her partner Beth, Seibel-Hunt enjoys reading, backpacking, camping, bird watching, hammock sitting and recreational tree climbing.

### **New England Chapter (United States)—Marcy Carpenter**

Marcy Carpenter is no stranger to the ITCC having competed four times before at the International event. Carpenter owns and operates Arbor One Inc. with her husband of two years, Ed Carpenter. She has an Associate Degree in Arboriculture from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture and a Bachelor Degree in Urban Forestry from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Besides organizing and instructing at the Women's Tree Climbing Workshop held annually through the New England Chapter, Carpenter loves climbing trees, running, gardening, and spending time with her family, especially her 15-month old daughter Sophora.

### **New Zealand Chapter—Nicala Ward-Allen**

Returning for her fourth International competition is Nicala Ward-Allen of Eltham, New Zealand. Ward-Allen has been climbing for 11 years, and her fastest footlock time is 13.26 seconds for which she holds the ITCC Footlock World Record. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Materials and Process Engineering and works as an arborist. Married to husband Neal for over nine years, Ward-Allen volunteers for the New Zealand Chapter helping to set-up and run their regional tree climbing competitions. When not climbing or playing rugby, she enjoys watching "Buffy The Vampire Slayer" marathons on television.

### **Ontario Chapter (Canada)—Jennifer Carroll**

Jennifer Carroll of Stouffville, Ontario, joins us for her first International competition. She has worked in the industry since 2000 when she worked as an Environmental Field Laborer at Toronto Region Conservation Authority. Carroll then worked as a ground laborer for Eagle Ridge Tree Care, before her current job as an arborist at Kelly's Tree Care, Ltd. She has a Certificate of Environmental Studies, an Ecosystem Management Certificate, and a Certification of Arboriculture. When she isn't working, Carroll enjoys nature, playing soccer, and camping.

### **Pacific-Northwest Chapter (US/Canada)—Emily Garlough**

Emily Garlough, an arborist with Out on A Limb Tree Company in Seattle, WA, is competing in her first International competition. Garlough has a B.S. in Environmental Science, a B.A in Anthropology, and a Masters in Forestry. Prior to joining the arboriculture field in Seattle, she worked as a wildland firefighter on a Hotshot crew for the US Forest Service. Garlough has been partnered with Megan Fisher for four years and enjoys gardening, backpacking, woodturning, and running.

### **Prairie Chapter (Canada)—Charlene Scott**

Making a second appearance at the ITCC is Charlene Scott of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. She has been climbing for seven years and has been employed as a municipal arborist for four. Scott has a Diploma in Ornamental Horticulture/Arboriculture from Olds College. When not competing she has volunteered at other competitions including the 2012 ITCC in Portland. She enjoys playing hockey, hiking, camping, rock climbing, and orienteering.

### **2013 North American Champion**

#### **Quebec Chapter (Canada)—Marilou Dussault**

Marilou Dussault of Montreal is competing in her sixth international event. She is the 2011 and 2013 North American Tree Climbing Championship women's champion. Dussault has been climbing for eight years and holds a professional diploma in Arboriculture and Tree Pruning. She has been employed as a tree climber by the City of Montreal for the past seven years. She has a 4-year old son, Liam, and enjoys hockey, skateboarding, and snowboarding.

### **Sweden Chapter—Boel Hammarstrand**

From Sweden is Boel Hammarstrand making her second appearance at the International competition. She went to Hvilan Utbildning AB in Sweden where she took her first climbing course and became interested in climbing. Hammarstrand began her career as an apprentice for a company in the UK then started her own business in 2009 traveling back and forth between the UK and Sweden. Then in 2010 she started UK Swallow Tree Surgery & Garden Care with her partner Cameron. Hammarstrand earned the NPTC qualification and became an NPTC assessor and works doing assessments. She also holds the European Tree Worker certification. Hammarstrand enjoys photography, reading, knitting, crafting, and gardening.

### **Swiss Arborist Association—Simone Scheidegger**

Simone Scheidegger of Switzerland is competing at the International for the first time. Scheidegger is a self-employed arborist.

### **United Kingdom/Ireland Chapter—Josephine Hedger**

2008 ITCC Women's World Champion

Josephine Hedger is no stranger to the ITCC. She has competed five times before and is a past World Champion. Since 2005, Hedger has been running her own business, Arbor Venture Tree Care, along with a training company that provides arboricultural training and certification. She is glad that she is able to manage the business while still being able to do what she enjoys the most....climbing. Hedger also helps organize and run chapter competitions, and has held demonstrations at Arbor Camp. In her free time, she enjoys playing the drums and spending time with her dogs.

### **Western Chapter (United States)—Jamilee Kempton**

From Waimanalo, Hawaii, Jamilee Kempton makes her first appearance at the International competition. Kempton was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest where she was a volleyball player and coach in the Seattle area. She moved to Oahu in 2009 where she worked as a landscaper for three years until she began learning to climb trees from local arborists. Kempton has since worked for a tropical fruit tree nursery pruning and propagating fruit trees, and was employed by Windward Community College removing invasive trees. She also worked for Performance Landscapes providing consultations, pruning, and plant health care. Kempton became an ISA Certified Arborist in 2012 and works as a full time climbing arborist at Lyon Arboretum. She is currently working towards completing her Bachelors at the University of Hawaii in Tropical Plant Soil Science. Kempton has been partnered with Steve Connolly for two years. She spends a lot of time volunteering for the Western Chapter and the Aloha Arborist Association, but spends her free time on native plant conservation, hiking, open-ocean swimming, and body surfing.

### **Wisconsin Chapter (United States)—Shelly Wollerman**

Competing in her third ITCC is Shelly Wollerman of Fitchburg, Wisconsin. She worked in the landscape industry for 10 years before becoming an ISA Certified Arborist and starting work for Steven R. Bassett, Inc. in Madison, where she is foreman of a tree crew. Wollerman earned a Bachelor Degree in Horticulture Landscape Design from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls. She volunteers with climbing classes at University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, and enjoys working out, running, traveling, being a volunteer EMT, and spending time with friends.

## ***MEN'S DIVISION CONTESTANTS***

### **2012 ITCC Returning Men's World Champion Germany Chapter—Bernd "Beddes" Strasser**

1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008 ITCC  
Men's World Champion

Nine-time ITCC World Champion Bernd "Beddes" Strasser of Germany, has more world championship titles than any other competitor in the ITCC. Strasser returns this year to defend the championship. He has been a self-employed climbing arborist for 24 years. Strasser and his wife Susanne are parents to Silas (20), and 2-year-old Elin. In his free time, he loves to be with his family and be outdoors.

### **2013 Asia-Pacific Champion New Zealand Chapter—Scott Forrest**

2011 ITCC Champion

Scott Forrest is making his sixth appearance at the ITCC. Hailing from Long Jetty, New South Wales, Australia, Forrest is a self-employed contract climber with 15 years of experience in the tree care industry. He has been competing in tree climbing competitions for 13 years. Forrest is a Level 4 Certified Arborist in New Zealand, who in his free time, enjoys traveling, climbing, and walking.

### **2012 European Champion Sweden Chapter—Johan (Gustavsson) Pihl**

Johan (Gustavsson) Pihl, from Jörlanda, Sweden, competes in his seventh ITCC this year. Pihl has been climbing for eight years and is an ISA Certified Arborist and Certified Tree Worker as well as a European Tree Worker. He got his start as a climbing arborist in 2005 when he helped with damage from a storm that passed through Sweden and has been going ever since. Pihl has earned a Foundation Degree in Arboriculture and holds a NPTC certificate. He and his wife Lisa have been married for a year and enjoy hanging out with friends. In his free time, he enjoys motocross, windsurfing, going out on the sea with his boat in the summer and snowboarding in the winter.

### **2013 North American Champion Southern Chapter (United States)—Cormac Nagan**

Cormac Nagan returns to the ITCC from Durham, North Carolina. He has been climbing for eight years and earned a Bachelor of Science in Urban Forest Management from Western Illinois University as well as his ISA Certified Arborist credential. Cormac worked with his small family landscape business growing up. He then spent two years with Bartlett Tree Experts in their Raleigh office. In 2008, he started Aerial Innovations Tree Care and Preservation

doing traditional residential and commercial arborist work in the Raleigh/Durham area. Over the past year, he has been focusing on travel and doing independent contract climbing and training for other industry companies. He is married to Erica and in his free time enjoys splicing rope, yoga, gardening, craft beer, and travel.

### **Atlantic Chapter (Canada)—Trevor Burton**

Competing in his sixth ITCC is Trevor Burton from Aylesford, Nova Scotia. Burton has been climbing for 16 years, He went through an arborist program in an agricultural college and went on to gain experience in both utility and residential tree care. Burton has owned his own company, Burton's Towering Tree Services, for four years, and he also volunteers as a Director with Atlantic Chapter of ISA and with the chapter volunteer work days. He has been married to Heather for 13 years and they have two daughters, Cara (10) and Lily (5). Burton loves doing anything with nature but enjoys hunting and fishing.

### **Arboriculture Australia—Barton Allen-Hall**

From Melbourne hails Australian Barton Allen-Hall. He has been working as an arborist for eight years. He has Australia's Cert 3 and Cert 5 in arboriculture and Cert IV in training. Allen-Hall volunteers at Arbor Camp and in his spare time enjoys practicing throwline, slackline, and boxing.

### **Austria Chapter—Sebastian Fluch**

Sebastian Fluch of Vienna, Austria, returns this year for his fifth ITCC. He has been climbing for 10 years, and has worked as an arborist since 2003. Fluch is partnered with Verena and names his interests as simply trees, trees, trees.

### **Belgian Arborist Association (Belgium)—Jo Van Bouwel**

Having competed once before, Jo Van Bouwel returns this year to the ITCC. He has been climbing for 12 years. Van Bouwel earned a Bachelor degree in Green Management and is a European Tree Worker and European Tree Technician. He worked in Holland after his studies and gained the experience necessary to start his own business, TreeXpert, which performs all kinds of tree work as well as consulting and advice. When Van Bouwel is not working on trees, he enjoy playing with his kids, working in the garden, or exploring nature. He also plays guitar in a rock band, the "treemagicbeers", with four other arborists. Van Bouwel has been married to Liesbet for seven years and they have two children, Sam (6) and Bernd (4).

### **Czech Republic Chapter—Jiri Voda**

In his first International competition is Jiri Voda from Jihlava, Czech Republic. Jiri earned a degree from the College of Polytechniks in Jihlava. He has been climbing for five years since he finished school. Jiri has been partnered with Veronika Konecha for three years. Sport climbing, bouldering, long boarding, and reading books are what Jiri does for fun.

### **Denmark Chapter—Thomas Hegner**

Thomas Hegner is returning for his third ITCC. Hegner has been climbing for seven years. Hegner spent four years as a computer programmer before becoming an arborist. He then spent four years at tree care companies in Denmark and Sweden before starting his own company, Hegner Træpleje, three years ago, in Hornbæk, Denmark. He has been married to Sanne for eight years and they have three children, Marcus (7), Cecilie (6), and Julius (2). When not working, Hegner enjoys Alpine skiing, traveling and spending time and having fun with his family.

### **Florida Chapter (United States)—Dominic Palloti**

Dominic Palotti of St. Petersburg, Florida is competing at his first ITCC. He is employed by BFW Landscaping and is an ISA Certified Arborist.

### **Societe de Francais (France)—Laurent Pierron**

Returning for his third appearance at the ITCC is Laurent Pierron from St. Just de Claix, France. He has been climbing for 18 years and holds the European Tree Technician credential. Pierron started in the tree care industry in 1995 then created his own company, Les Sens de L'Arbre, in 2003. He volunteers for various organizations in France. Pierron has been married to Annick for 11 years and they have two children, Mahe (15), and Lohan (11). He enjoys wood carving, mountains and canyoning, kayaking, and caving.

### **Germany Chapter—Moritz Theuerkauf**

Moritz Theuerkauf returns for his second international competition. He has been working as a tree climber for 12 years, and has competed for seven. He learned landscaping then began tree work. Theuerkauf has run his own company in Munich since 2003. He has been with his partner Kristina for four years and enjoys rock climbing, skiing, Kniffel and eating ice cream.

### **Illinois Chapter (United States)—Todd Kramer**

From West Chicago, Illinois, Todd Kramer has competed 10 times in the ITCC. Kramer has been a tree climber for 24 years and is the Director of Field Operations at his family's tree care company, Kramer Tree Specialists. He is an ISA Certified Arborist



and volunteers with the Illinois Chapter tree climbing competition and for the international competition. Kramer has been married to Laura for 12 years and they have two children, Emily (10) and James (8). He enjoys rock climbing, mountain biking, and camping.

### **Indiana Chapter (United States)—Wes Moore**

This is Wes Moore's first time competing at the ITCC. From Muncie, Indiana, Moore is an ISA Certified Arborist and works as a climber for Gillette Duling Tree & Landscape. He is currently a Junior at Ball State University pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geographic Information Service. Moore is married to Lyndsay and they have two children, Wyatt (4) and Sawyer (2). He enjoys spending time with his family, backpacking, and playing guitar.

### **Italy Chapter—Giovanni Ugo**

Representing Italy for the seventh time at the ITCC is Giovanni Ugo. Ugo has been climbing for the past 18 years. He is a multiple time Italian champion, was the Portuguese champion in 2007, and has competed at the European competition 10 times finishing first in 2011. He is a Certified European Treeworker and a supervisor for EAC certification. Ugo has worked as an arborist for 17 years doing tree climbing, consulting, and big tree transplants for Treeplatform®, and is an ISA Certified Arborist. Since 2004, he has been a tree climbing instructor at Scuola Agraria del Parco di Monza (Mb)-Italy. Ugo and his wife, Carla, have four children, Greta (7), Melissa (6), Sante (4), and Maia (2). He enjoys spending time with his family, rock climbing, and skiing.

### **Japan Arborist Association—Hideharu Matsuoka**

Hideharu Matsuoka is making his first appearance at the ITCC. He is an ISA Certified arborist and graduated from MEIKAI University in Chiba Prefecture, Japan. While at the university he was a member of the soccer club. He has been working in forestry for 13 years and has been climbing for seven. Matsuoka volunteers at the Japan Tree Climbing Championship. He is married to Chito and they have a daughter Fuu (10) and a son Shou (5). He wants to grow his children up in nature and likes to explore with his family while enjoying playing in the river, camping, swimming, and fishing.

### **Kentucky Chapter (United States)—Cory Petry**

Competing in his fourth ITCC is Cory Petry of Louisville, Kentucky. He has a Bachelor Degree in Sociology from the University of Kentucky, and is an ISA Certified Arborist and has been climbing for 10 years. He has been in the tree care industry for 13 years and is the owner of Limbwalker Tree Service where he focuses on pruning, preservation, and tree removals. Petry also volunteers with the Kentucky Chapter organizing their tree climbing

competition. He has been married to Jen for eight years, and they have two children, June (5) and Leif (15 months). Though his daughter says that trees “distract him,” Petry does take time to spend with his family, and he enjoys camping, hiking, swimming, gardening, music, and as much yoga as his wife will tolerate.

### **KPB Dutch Chapter (The Netherlands)—Walter Hak**

Walter Hak of Noordeloos is here for his fifth ITCC. Hak has been climbing for 15 years, and owns his own company, Dendro Cura. He has volunteered as a technician in tree climbing competitions. When he isn't climbing, he enjoys fly fishing for pike.

### **Michigan Chapter (United States)—Lucas Drews**

From Coral, Michigan is Lucas Drews who is competing in his fourth international competition. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and is currently employed as an arborist for Woodland Tree Services in Rockford. Drews has been climbing for 14 years and has a degree in Horticulture from Ferris State University. He volunteers his time doing educational instruction and training. Married to Angela for 10 years, Drews says he enjoys rock climbing, swimming, kayaking and cuddling. He and Angela have a 16-month-old daughter Eleanor.

### **Mid-Atlantic Chapter (United States)—Samuel Cooper**

Samuel Cooper returns for his second international competition. Though he lives in Oxford, New Jersey he is employed by The Arborist, Inc. in Manassas, Virginia. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and has been climbing for 11 years. Cooper has volunteered for many years during New Jersey Arborists work days. He and his wife Randi have three children, Evin (15), Sammy (3), and Matthew (1). Cooper enjoys rock climbing with his son Sammy, carpentry, and hiking with his family.

### **Midwestern Chapter (United States)—Brandon Toppins**

Making his first appearance at the ITCC is Brandon Toppins of Springfield, Missouri. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and is a Foreman at All About Trees doing sales and climbing. Toppins has been climbing for 10 years and volunteers teaching classes on climbing, rigging, and safety. In his free time, he enjoys doing anything outdoors.

### **Minnesota Chapter (United States)—Nicholas Grebe**

Nick Grebe of Minneapolis, Minnesota is making his second trip to the ITCC. He is an ISA Certified Arborist who is employed as a pruning crew foreman with Rainbow Tree Care. Grebe has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Horticulture from the University of Minnesota where he also spent two years working on their land care tree crew. He has been climbing for seven years and in his free

time enjoys gardening, beekeeping, deer hunting, milling lumber, splicing rope, and reading science fiction.

### **New England Chapter (United States)—Tim Reynolds**

Tim Reynolds is competing in his first ITCC but competed earlier this year at the North American Tree Climbing Championship. From Woodbury, Connecticut, he has been climbing for three years and says he loves every minute of it. Reynolds is self-employed as a contract tree climber. He enjoys kayaking, hiking, boating, crossfit, and motorcycles.

### **New Jersey Chapter (United States)—Mark Chisholm**

1997, 2001, and 2010 ITCC Men's World Champion

No stranger to the ITCC, three-time World Champion, Mark Chisholm of Freehold, New Jersey, returns for year 23. Chisholm has a Liberal Arts Associate Degree and has been climbing for 30 years. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and works as Director of Operations for his family business, Aspen Tree Co. Inc. Chisholm also does consulting and sales for STIHL, Inc. and New England Ropes/Teufelberger. He is currently serving as the President of the New Jersey Chapter. When he isn't working he enjoys spending time with his family and friends, playing hockey, and training. He and his wife Annie have three children, Ricky (24), Lexi (14), and Libby (12).

### **New York Chapter (United States)—Brian Krawczyk**

Brian Krawczyk from Rochester, New York is competing in his fourth International competition. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and works as a climber/crew leader for Birchcrest Tree and Landscape. Krawczyk has been climbing for 10 years, has a BA from Mercyhurst College, and is also a Certified Tree Safety Professional. In his spare time he enjoys spending time with his wife of 10 years, Colleen. They have two children, Clare (3), and Quinn (11 months).

### **New Zealand Chapter—James Kilpatrick**

Representing New Zealand for the third time is James Kilpatrick of Tauranga. He holds a Diploma in Arboriculture from Waikato Institute of Technology and is a self-employed ISA Certified Arborist. He has been climbing for seven years and holds the current World Record in the ITCC Men's Footlock with a time of 13.65 seconds. Recently he has been working in Hamburg, Germany. Kilpatrick likes to volunteer at tree climbing events, and his other interests include motocross, wake boarding, and building.

### **Norway Chapter—Olve Lundetrae**

Olve Lundetrae is making his second appearance at the ITCC. Lundetrae lives in Oslo, Norway, and has been employed by ISS Facility Services AS for eight years. He has been climbing for 13 years and is a European Tree Worker with experience as a landscape gardner. Lundetrae is a member of the Norwegian Climbing Committee and has been a sensor at the European Tree Worker Exam for several years. He and his wife, Vibeke, have two children, Erle (10) and Jacob (7).

### **Ohio Chapter (United States)—Matt Cornell**

Matt Cornell from Delta, Ohio is making his first appearance at the ITCC but recently competed at the North American Tree Climbing Championship. Cornell is an ISA Certified Arborist and has been climbing for 16 years. He is employed as a tree worker/foreman at L.E. Savory Tree, a private, family-owned business that is a full service tree care provider in Toledo, Ohio. Cornell's work focuses mainly on pruning and preventive maintenance, as well as, removals. He recently volunteered at the Michigan Chapter tree climbing competition. Married 16 years to his wife Sarah, they have two children, Archie and Emily. Cornell enjoys cooking pit style barbecue for his family and friends. He also enjoys maintaining his property that borders the river and bike riding with his wife and children.

### **Ontario Chapter (Canada)—Sean Hoondert**

Sean Hoondert is competing in his third ITCC this year. He is a graduate of Sir Sandford Fleming College where he studied urban arboriculture. Hoondert has been climbing for 12 years and currently works as an arborist for the City of Guelph, Ontario. He and his wife, Meggan, have been married for four years and they have two children, Hayden (3), and Aurelia (1.5). In his free time, Hoondert likes fishing and camping.

### **Pacific Northwest Chapter (US/Canada)—Colin Bugg**

Colin Bugg has been working in Portland, Oregon and is competing in his first ITCC. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and has been climbing for seven years. In his free time he enjoys hanging out with his family which includes Emily, his wife of three years, and their baby, Cordelia.

### **Penn-Del Chapter (United States)—Gareth Peoples**

Competing in his first international competition is Gareth Peoples of Wilmington, Delaware. He is an ISA Certified Arborist that has been climbing for 16 years. Peoples earned an Associates of Forestry Degree from Penn College, and a Bachelors of Forestry Science from Pennsylvania State University. He is currently the owner of Tremendous Tree Care, Inc. but previously worked at Longwood Gardens, Penn State University, and Bartlett Tree Experts. His company services Pennsylvania and Delaware and

he also subcontracts as a climber for other tree companies in the Philadelphia area. Peoples has volunteered at the ITCC and has been an instructor at local chapter seminars and tree schools. He is married to Christine and they have three children Hayden (9), Isaiah (7), and Emma (6). He enjoys spending time with his family, boxing, working out, MMA, and hiking.

### **Prairie Chapter (Canada)—Jesse Antonation**

Jesse Antonation of Winnipeg, Manitoba, has been climbing for 13 years, and this is his third time competing at the ITCC. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and a graduate of the Landscape Tech Course at Red River College. Antonation is the owner of Trilogy Tree Services and serves on the Winnipeg Arbor Day Committee. He and his wife Carla, also an ISA Certified Arborist, have a 2.5 year old daughter. In his free time, Antonation enjoys woodturning, fishing, hunting, and bonsai.

### **Quebec Chapter (Canada)—Leilak Anderson**

Coming to the ITCC for a fourth year is Leilak Anderson of Farrellton. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and has been climbing for over 10 years. Anderson has a degree in business administration from Dawson College and now owns his own tree care company, Leilak Anderson Tree Service. He is currently building a log home, but in his free time he enjoys snowboarding, baseball, and being a volunteer firefighter.

### **Rocky Mountain Chapter (United States)—Luke Glines**

Luke Glines is competing in his sixth ITCC. From Greeley, Colorado, this ISA Certified Arborist runs his own business, Glines, Inc. and has been climbing for 16 years. Glines has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Masters in Theology. Glines works doing pruning and tree removal throughout northern Colorado. He volunteers on the chapter tree climbing competition committee and teaches classes on aerial rescue. In his spare time, Glines enjoys reading, riding motorcycles, and spending time with his daughter Hannah.

### **Southern Chapter (United States)—Chris Bramlage**

From Charlotte, North Carolina, Chris Bramlage is competing in his third ITCC. He is an ISA Certified Arborist and Certified Tree Worker. Bramlage also holds certifications for EHAP, CPR, and as an NCDOT Work Zone Supervisor. He has been climbing for 14 years working at different companies in Ohio and New Jersey. When he made Charlotte his home, he began working for Heartwood Tree Service. He has been married to Teresa for three years and enjoys downhill mountain biking, trail running, riding motorcycles, and long walks on the beach.

### **Spanish Association of Arboriculture—Jaume Ferre**

Jaume Ferre of Valls, Tarragona, Spain is competing in his first ITCC. He has been working as a tree climber for seven years.

### **Sweden Chapter—Rob Ironside**

First timer Rob Ironside, from Odsmal, Sweden is an ISA Certified Arborist and Qualified Landscape Designer. He has been climbing for 10 years but began as a landscape gardener before progressing in to line clearance. Ironside became a self-employed climbing arborist six years ago. He spends a lot of time renovating his house, reading, and spending time with his partner of three years, Maria Gustavsson, and their three-year old son Lucas.

### **Swiss Arborist Association(Switzerland)—Florim Ajda**

Florim Ajda has volunteered many times at the ITCC but this is his first year as a competitor. Ajda has a forestry degree, and is a Swiss Federal Tree Care Specialist. He began his career as a Forestry Apprentice in Switzerland, and worked as a forester for nine years. He first worked as a tree climber in 2006 in the United States. When he returned to Switzerland in 2007 he became self-employed working as a freelance climber for various companies in Switzerland. Two years ago he and some friends started their own business, Arbres & Partenaires. Ajda is married to Jenna and he enjoys hiking, theater, football, swimming, rock climbing, traveling, and developing tree activities for events.

### **Texas Chapter (United States)—Abram Zies**

Making his third appearance at an ITCC is Abram Zies of Weatherford, Texas. He has been climbing for 12 years and is the Owner/Operator of Arbor Care. Zies is married to Lindsey and they have two children, Ethan (11), and Demi (11 months). His hobbies include motocross, wakeboarding, snowboarding, and traveling.

### **United Kingdom/Ireland Chapter—Jonathan Turnbull**

Returning for his sixth ITCC, is Jonathan Turnbull of Perth, Scotland. Turnbull has been climbing for 10 years and is self-employed as Turnbull Tree Care. He has a National Diploma in Arboriculture and is NPTC Certified through Kirklee Hall in Northumberland, UK. Turnbull has also volunteered at chapter events and at the ITCC. He is married to Katy and they have a 3-month old, Harris.

### **Utah Chapter (United States)—Nick Bleckert**

Nick Bleckert of West Valley City, Utah is competing in his second international competition. He is an ISA Certified Arborist who worked in line clearance and has co-owned Xtreme Trees for 13 years. Bleckert volunteers with the chapter teaching climbing classes. He

is married to Shayla and they have two children, Kason and Kylie. Besides climbing, Bleckert enjoys coaching baseball for his son.

### **Western (United States)—Jacob Claassen**

From Santa Barbara, California, Jacob Claassen makes his first trip to the ITCC. He is an ISA Certified Arborist who has been climbing for 14 years. Claassen has been working in the industry since 1999 for various arborists in the San Francisco Bay area. He is now the owner/operator of Nimble Tree Care which he started in 2011 and volunteers for various chapter events. Claassen attended Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. He and his wife Becca have one child, Hazel. In his spare time, he enjoys rock climbing, hiking, backpacking, and traveling the world.

### **Wisconsin Chapter (United States)—Joe House**

Joe House has been climbing for 21 years, and this is his seventh ITCC. House is an ISA Certified Arborist living in Madison, Wisconsin, where he recently started his own tree care business, Tree House Arbor, Inc. through which he does consulting and production tree work. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and spent some time working in Denver and New York. House volunteers as an Illinois Climbing Competition judge, and speaks at his chapter annual conference. He is also a founding member of the Wisconsin Arborist Association Safety Committee. House and his wife of 14 years, Lori, have three children, Alice (11), Jackie (10), and Charlie (8). House says he is enjoying his childrens' youth and likes to keep his wife happy. He also enjoys cross country skiing.