

STRASSER AND LI TAKE TITLES IN SEATTLE

A Brief period of "liquid sunshine" during the Sunday Field Day at Volunteer Park failed to dampen spirits as large crowds surrounded each of the five preliminary event trees of the International Tree Climbing Competition.

The most talked-about event, the belayed Speed climb, Set in a *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, challenged climbers to a 91-foot vertical race through a maze of gnarled limbs. Bernd Strasser of Germany Set the pace with a time of 39 seconds. Steve Chisholm, Sr., head judge for the event Said, "Bernd jumped up the tree from limb to limb like a tree frog-amazing!" Todd Kramer of Kramer Tree Specialists, Chicago, Illinois, spent most of the event's two days in the tree at the 91foot mark as head technician. "The climb was so high we had to replace the bell with an air horn during the test climbs because the judges an the ground couldn't hear it," Kramer said with a chuckle.

Kiah Martin of Australia led the women an their 57-foot challenge with a time of 39.09. Wendy Robinson of Bend, Oregon, our volunteer Show photographer (her work can be Seen throughout the pages of this conference issue) commented, "It was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet people from all over the world. As an Bonus, I learned more about climbing than I ever imagined."

Christine Engel, 2001 women's Champion, thanked the ITCC Committee for changing the competition to a two-day event. "This year, as a competitor, I was able to enjoy more time meeting with people and watching other climbers," she Said. "Last year it was a constant rush, rush, rush. Two days, muck better not as stressful for the climbers or judges. More time for learning and networking."

The camaraderie at the event was inspiring. During the women's aerial rescue event, Adel McChesney entered the ring and with a minute left to go before her Start time, realized she had forgotten her ball lock carabiner. Without hesitation, Deb Stamp-Schrader, the ondeck climber, removed the ball lock `biner from her own lanyard and handed it to Adel to use. Throughout the day, one competitor alter another Gould be Seen cheering the other climbers to do their Best.

At the dose of the preliminary round, two women and four men advanced to the Masters' Challenge event. A review of the names and countries represented Shows just how international the ITCC has become.

The ITCC Committee, led by Ken Palmen chair; Rip Tompkins, head judge; and Scott Prophet, special advisor, did their Best to Set challenging climbs for both Masters' events. A large crowd of spectators remained in Volunteer Park to watch the competitors run through their steps. One by one, the competitors presented their skills in front of the watchful eyes of an international judging team. In the end, Wenda Li of Ontario prevailed for the women and Bernd Strasser of Germany collected his third title as top climber in the men's division division.

The success of this event is directly attributable to the hard work of the ever-growing army of volunteers who make it happen. More than 80 members spent from two to four days preparing the site, judging climbs, inspecting equipment, tabulating scores, and performing myriad other duties. The ITCC Committee spends many hours in the months before the event preparing the rules, collecting equipment, contacting other members, and planning the agenda. Thank you for your passion, commitment, and hard work to make the competition a success. Special thanks to Ian MacCallum, local ITCC Arrangements Chair, for his countless volunteer hours laying the groundwork before and during the competition. We'd also like to thank the many Sponsors, in particular Davey Tree Expert Company, for their generous support.

