

Client Connection

July-September 2011

From the desk of Victor E Hemard Jr, President

At Random: I'm Not Just Whistlin' Dixie

When I warn you that bad things are going to happen, my friends, I'm not just whistlin' Dixie!

Take, for example, a client I have repeatedly recommended improving their backup system. What do I hear? "Oh no, we have a procedure where we backup every day, and we rotate five tapes."

What will you do if you have to go back more than a week? And, where will a copy of the files be stored offsite in case of disaster?

You can guess what happened next. It's a sad tale. A data file was damaged during an update six weeks ago. That backup had already been overwritten and there was nothing offsite to fall back on. I hated to give them the bad news. I hated it. There was nothing else I could say. I couldn't... I wouldn't... say, "I told you so."

When the client asked me what they should do in the future, I said they should have a backup going back at least one year, perhaps even several years, and have data stored on site and off site. I then pointed them to our Safe and Secure backup

and disaster package.

With Safe and Secure, you get backups throughout the day and night without having to manage tapes. It keeps backups as long as you want and also stores data off site.

Think about it.

Would it be better to let an automated system manage your backups?

Would it be better to know data is being backed up on site and off site?

Would you like not having to assign someone to swap out tapes or drives?

If there are problems, would it be a comfort to know they are immediately reported to us by e-mail and are taken care of without having to call you and walk you through some technical jungle to fix problems?

Of course it would. Install a good backup and disaster recovery system and you will sleep better at night... and so will I.

Another case in point: I have clients who continually get viruses, spyware, scareware, and other forms of malware. Again, when I tell clients they need another layer of protection provided by a good



I'm Not Just Whistlin' Dixie 🎵

router with anti-virus, anti-spyware, and anti-malware at the router level, I'm not just whistlin' Dixie!

These days, anti-virus protection at the computer level is simply not enough to ward off the bad stuff traveling over the internet. You also need a second layer at the point your computer network connects with the internet (the router device).

Instead of having to remove viruses and malware, would you prefer to work with your e-mail and do research on the internet, knowing viruses, spyware, and malware are being zapped by the router before they even have a chance to enter the computer network?

I would.

(Continued on page 2)

ACF Annual Meeting—New Orleans Style

I'm glad I attended this annual meeting of the Association of Consulting Foresters. I attended only part of last year's meeting in Louisville and I missed out on a lot of information and on a lot of fun as well.

My first event to attend was the President's Reception. The food was great and there was plenty of it. It was a chance to re-connect with some of the members at this reception and dinner. Some were clients, but most were friends and acquaintances I've known for many years.

The next morning's technical sessions included an update of Louisiana forestry by Louisiana State Forester Wade Dubea, mitigation banking by Dave Urban, and a review of the housing and credit crisis by Danielle DiMartino. After Ms. DiMartino's assessment of the housing market, I was definitely ready for the Bloody Mary social.

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

At Random	1
ACF Annual Meeting	1
FPA Bank Reconciliation	3
Cinque Terre	4
Books I've Read Recently	4
Time Well Wasted	5
Ask Vic!	6

I'm Not Just Whistlin' Dixie (continued)

“Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him.”

-Benjamin Franklin

“If you don't understand wood procurement in the southern United States, you'll never get the reports right.”

Rogue Security Programs

A rogue security program is software that appears to scan and detect viruses, spyware, malware or other problems on a computer. It then attempts to dupe or badger you into purchasing the program by presenting you with false warnings and by taking the computer hostage until you pay.

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We're not just hardware and software. We help you use technology to:

- 1. Automate your business**
- 2. Grow your business.**
- 3. Increase productivity.**
- 4. Get you out of “overwhelm.”**
- 5. Increase the value of your business.**
- 6. Protect your data.**

(Continued from page 1)

It's like having a solid core door and double dead bolt locks on your front door to deal with criminals before they can enter your house.

Of course, there's always the shotgun for protection inside the house,,, but that can be messy. Just like cleaning a virus can be messy after it has invaded your computer. It's better to keep all forms of viruses, spyware, and malware outside the computer network.

Would it be nice if you could just get your work done quickly and efficiently without worrying about a scareware window popping up? Without having to cringe every time you reboot, expecting a rogue security program (see box on left) message to appear telling you there are 52 viruses on your computer or your hard drive is failing?

Yes, of course it would be nice. Be protected at the router and get your work done without the worry and hassle caused by bad stuff over the internet.

My next random comment has to do with software reporting.

I work with companies in the timber and oil business. This requires specialized knowledge of the reports required to effectively manage the business.

People who have worked

with me know I go through great pains to make sure they get the information they need from the FPA system and other programs.

Over the past several years, there has been an influx of companies, many of them from Canada, selling software for wood procurement.

It seems as if every time I talk with a wood procurement manager using a Canadian system I get the same comment: “I wish I could get better reports.”

As most of us know, there is more to wood procurement than installing software and hooking up to wood scales to weigh trucks.

If you don't understand wood procurement in the southern United States, you'll never get the reports right.

Companies put in systems so they can get accurate reporting to effectively manage their business and make good decisions. Swipe cards and fancy touch screens are neat, but if the manager doesn't get the right information in the back office, he can't be an effective decision maker.

I listened to a teleseminar call recently and the CEO of a Canadian company was asked why they were making such a push in the United States. His answer was, “No one can make decision here [in Canada].”

Even in a bad economy, companies in the US are making decisions every day. Many times it's the wrong decision. Check out the reporting for yourself.

So, would it be better to have a wood procurement system from a US-based company who knows the wood procurement business? Would you have better results with a software system providing common sense reporting relevant to the wood procurement markets in the United States? Would you prefer to have more effective tools to make good decisions?

I would. And I wouldn't recommend anything less for my clients.

Wouldn't it be great to just go to a reports menu and run a report, rather than having to send information out to a spreadsheet and then manipulate the spreadsheet to get your information?

Of course it would.

Before you buy a software system of any kind, whether we're talking about something relatively inexpensive, like QuickBooks, or a specialized accounting program for your industry, please check out the reports. You'll be glad you did.

Finally, working with clients in the timberlands and oil fields requires the ability to

FPA Bank Reconciliation and Cash

I still find some cases where the Bank Reconciliation in Forest Products Accounting (FPA) was checked off against the bank statement, posted, and forgotten, but not reconciled with the cash account. This is not good!

When you reconcile the deposits, checks, and miscellaneous transactions against the bank statement, the job is only half done. The other part of the process is to verify that your bank rec balance, after outstanding checks and deposits, is equal to the general ledger balance for the bank account.

The process, first of all, begins with checking off the checks and deposits against the bank statement for the period and adding any miscellaneous

transactions for interest, bank charges, or transfers from other cash accounts.

Once the difference in the statement and the bank rec window is zero, do not post it immediately. Run a Bank Reconciliation Summary Report then run a Trial Balance report (by accounting period) in the General Ledger module to compare the GL cash account balance with the expected GL cash balance in the Bank Reconciliation Summary report.

If the expected GL balance in the Bank Rec and the actual GL balance match, you should then post the bank rec for that month.

After posting the bank rec, you must run all four reports in the Bank Rec module and save a hard copy of them for the file. The reports are: Bank

Reconciliation (Summary), Outstanding Transactions, Miscellaneous Transactions, and Cleared Transactions. These reports must be printed and filed away or saved by PDF file because they will disappear once the next month's reconciliation starts. Also run the Trial Balance again and put it in the file to show you matched with the cash balance at the time of posting.

The final step is to close the period you just reconciled. This keeps you and other users from accidentally posting back to the previous period and affecting the cash balance after it has been reconciled.

Do this every month and you'll have an accurate cash balance at your fingertips in the FPA system.

I'm Not Just Whistlin' Dixie (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

work in remote locations with specialized hardware and software on hand and even specialized vehicles to get out to those remote chip mills and sawmills and remote oil field offices.

When you show up on location, clients expect you to solve problems while you're there. You can't run down to Wal-Mart or Office Depot for parts or software. You have to have it with you.

That requires an investment, but well worth it if you can get out to the back office or the chip mill yard

ankle deep in mud and solve the problem. The problem could be an accounting one, requiring you to work with an accountant to reconcile the cash balance. It could be a workstation that is down in a scale house or a wireless router that isn't working.

Whatever it is, the pasty faced geek from the local computer store won't have the resources or the expertise to work with your accounting, software, your office staff, your foresters, or your computer system. Try to save a few bucks by hiring the first geek in the phone book, my friends, and I assure you, bad things are going to happen.

Believe me, you need more specialized help. You have a problem that has to be solved. An accounting problem. A wood procurement problem. A computer problem. A rural problem. A deep woods problem. A pain in the arse!

Call us... we'll help you. Even if we have to jump in a 4-wheel drive and sling some mud to get there.

And when I say that, I'm not just whistlin' Dixie!

Keys to Success

I recently listened to an interview with author Keith Cameron Smith, who wrote [The 10 Distinctions Between Millionaires and the Middle Class](#) and other books on building success. From his discussion of the behavior of those who have attained success and some of my own ideas, I see these behaviors as keys to success:

1. Think long-term (years and decades) rather than short term.
2. Talk about ideas, rather than focusing your conversation on things and other people.
3. Embrace change rather than feel threatened by it. Change means opportunity.
4. Take a calculated risk as opposed to fearing risk and taking no risk at all.
5. Continue to learn and grow. Learning doesn't end when school ends.
6. Work for profits. If you are not a business owner and are earning a salary, work to make your employer more profitable. It will pay off.
7. Be generous. Give a handsome tip. Give to your church. Give to charity.
8. Have multiple sources of income that are related and make sense according to your abilities and interests.
9. Focus on increasing your net worth rather than just your paycheck.
10. Ask yourself big questions (How can I increase my income next year? How can our company double our revenues?) rather than just the small questions (How can I cut back to make it through the end of the month?)

Cinque Terre

The Cinque Terre (Five Lands) is a rugged portion of coast on the Italian Riviera. It is composed of five villages: Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore. Nancy and I visited our daughter Kristin in Florence, Italy in 2006 and Cinque Terre was one of the most enjoyable parts of the trip.

The best way to travel between the villages is by walking the trails up and down the rugged, steep landscape. You can travel by boat or train, but hiking the walking trail, known as Sentiero Azzurro ("Blue Light Trail") offers the best view of the bay. The trail into Corniglia finishes with a climb of 368 steps while the steepest part of the trail is on both sides of Vernazza.

The village of Vernazza has good seafood and, of course, traditional Italian food. Kristin is fluent in Italian, but even if you aren't familiar with the language you'll be okay if you mix in some English and hand expressions to get your point across. There is usually someone close by who speaks English and is happy to help.

One thing for sure, if I ever get back to Italy, Cinque Terre and Vernazza will be a top priority.

Books I've Read Recently

It's Not Who You Know It's Who Knows You by David Avrin is a good guide for small businesses to get yourself noticed with traditional and electronic media without going over the top.

Glenn Beck's Common Sense by Glenn Beck. In this book, Beck draws a parallel between January 1776 and today, when we face an overstuffed, overfed, bloated federal government. Just as Thomas Paine's Common Sense made the case for revolution, Beck's writings tell us the government bureaucracy lacks a quality that is all too uncommon: common sense!

(Continued from page 1)

What's a Bloody Mary Social? Many of the members had not experienced the Bloody Mary Social before, but it has been a long-standing tradition at the Louisiana Forestry Association, normally occurring after the morning technical sessions and before the luncheon. That's about the only time I drink a Bloody Mary. It's kind of a ritual, I suppose.

The luncheon featured John Maginnis, a journalist and author on Louisiana politics. There were also awards. The most memorable was the Distinguished Forester Award, awarded to Mike Nolan of Stevens Forestry. Mike is battling cancer and was unable to attend. It was very difficult for Mary Stevens Clapp to get up and talk about Mike since Mike has been with Stevens Forestry for many years and is like family. I was pulling for her to find the words. She found the words. It was perfect.

That brings me to one of the unique things about the ACF. Because the meeting is in the summer, it is more family oriented. Besides Mary Clapp and son Eric, who is studying forestry at Louisiana Tech, I was able to speak with JD Neeley and his family, including his wife Beth, his daughter Taylor, and son Daniel, who will be a senior in forestry at the University of Arkansas-Monticello. Hap Hachtel and son Robert were also there.

That is only a short list of members I know fairly well. The whole conference is designed to accommodate family members of all ages. More than most professions, consulting foresters seem to pass the business on from one generation to the next.

But I digress.

Later that afternoon, I was able to reconnect with an old classmate of mine from the LSU Forestry Class of 1974. It was none other than Dr. Randy Rousseau from Mississippi State University. Randy's subject matter regarding genetics in woody biomass production was timely because of the future role of woody biomass. I also learned about how plantations are fertigated (fertilized and watered) to promote growth.

The next morning, there was an interesting presentation by Rudy Sparks of Williams, Inc. His presentation discussed cypress logging and lumbering in the Atchafalaya Basin. He had some rare film of those activities that only had captions, but Rudy's narration carried us the rest of the way. Rudy was also in the LSU Forestry Class of 1974 and we had a chance to speak before I hopped on the bus for the next event.

We later arrived at a field tour of the Jean Lafitte Swamp and Wetlands. Jean Lafitte, as we all know, was a privateer who helped Andrew Jackson defend New Orleans against the British in the

War of 1812.

We viewed a film about South Louisiana culture. In that film was a friend of our family, Irvin (Papa) Perez, who used to hunt and fish with us at Delacroix Island. He also was an artist and decoy carver who got my dad started with duck decoy carving. We also learned a lot from Papa about hunting ducks and catching redfish and speckled trout in the marsh. The walking tour later gave us a good look at the swamp and its wildlife.

After a good lunch of baked catfish at Restaurant de Familles, we went on a boat tour of the Jean Lafitte Swamp. There were plenty of alligators to see and we handled one and passed it around. The duckweed and stained water reminded me of many trips I've made out in the swamp in pursuit of ducks, fish, or crawfish.

Later that evening, we had a dinner on the riverboat Natchez. It was nice to ride on the river and enjoy the breeze. After about 30 minutes we hit a thunderstorm and almost everyone got wet to some degree. There was a nice buffet in the lower level that helped me forget about the weather.

All in all, it was a great meeting, and the members of the Louisiana Chapter got the job done in style. The conference, chaired by Warren Peters, was well organized and executed by a host of members from

(Continued on page 6)

Time Well Wasted: Laura and Greg

As I mentioned in the last issue, my youngest daughter, Laura, is engaged to be married to Greg Hutton in October. We have since been to Charleston to work on some wedding details and to spend some time with Laura.

I got some great photos of the Hobcaw Yacht Club at sunset. To show them here wouldn't do them justice, so I suggest you go to my Facebook page if you're interested.

We did some work around the house Greg and Laura plan to occupy after the

wedding. There's always more to do, but I think we got a few things done that will make the move in easier.

You know, a wedding can get on your nerves. I'm not a big wedding person. I usually have an excuse for not going to one. For example, when a friend's daughter got married the same night as the LSU-Arkansas game, that was good excuse not to go. Right?

My point is, after an hour-long discussion about the wedding invitations, caterers, flowers, and bartenders, I've had enough. I'm done. Make a decision. I'll be okay with it.

Charleston is a good place for a destination wedding and for food. On our last two trips, we enjoyed good seafood from Red's Ice House, Gilligan's, Poogan's Porch, and Poe's Tavern. It was by no means all work. The beaches are clean and the fireworks display in Charleston on the 4th was one of the best.

Anyway, it's coming along and we will return again to finalize some details. This is all new to me, but I will be a seasoned veteran a year from now. Read on.



Laura and Greg on Pitt Street Bridge in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina

Time Well Wasted: Brandon and Stephanie

My son Brandon said, "Dad, I'm going to pick up the ring!"

I said, "What's your plan?"

A couple of weeks passed by and he had devised a plan with Stephanie's sister and cousin to make his proposal for marriage.

Just like a true electrical engineer, it was quite an elaborate plan devised with his two co-conspirators, Julie and

Janice, to pick up Stephanie at the airport, then later that evening drive to a location displaying his proposal up in lights.

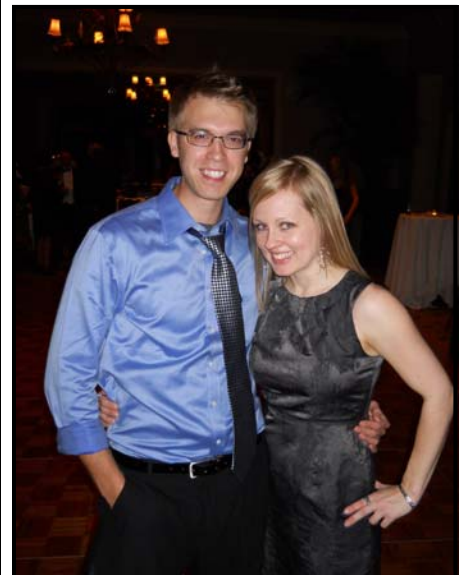
The evening went well, so now we have a wedding in the family next June.

As I mentioned a couple of issues ago, Stephanie is an exceptional young woman whom we have known since Brandon started going out with her a couple of years

ago.

I was instantly comfortable around Stephanie the first time she came to visit us with Brandon. She is originally from Boerne, Texas and now lives and works in Dallas as a Speech Pathologist.

This is not an official announcement, but I wanted to informally let you in on it. Read on.



Brandon and Stephanie out on the town

Time Well Wasted: Kristin and Drew

A message from Andrew (Drew) Horansky: "I would appreciate the opportunity to talk with you about Kristin."

Well, let me think. What could that mean? What do you think?

Yes, we had that

conversation and a couple of days later Kristin and Drew were engaged.

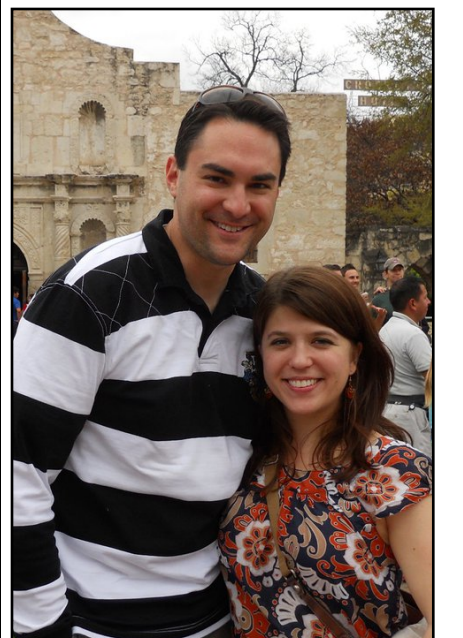
Drew's plan involved a trip to the botanical gardens in Austin at a bench they shared earlier in their courtship. It worked!

Kristin is in her last year of medical school in San

Antonio and Drew is a news reporter in Austin.

This is brand new, so no date has been set, but I wanted to let you in on it.

I suppose I'll have to attend at least three weddings in the next year, even if LSU is playing at the same time!



Drew and Kristin at The Alamo



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Vic Hemard
President

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Ask Vic!

Q What is failover?

A . Failover is the ability to switch over to a standby computer server or system if your current software, server, or system fails or is unavailable due to fire, theft, flood, wind, or other natural disaster. If you cannot go very long without your accounting system or other specialized software, a failover system is essential.

Q What is a failover system?

A There are two types of failover systems: comprehensive and specialized.

A comprehensive failover system is found in our Safe and Secure backup and disaster recovery system. It is part of a larger backup and disaster recovery (BDR) system that will allow a failed or damaged server to switch to a backup computer on site or to get all recent data from a remote offsite location.

An example of a specialized failover system is our FPA (Forest Products Accounting) Failover offering. In FPA Failover, we keep current backups on our servers and are prepared to use those backups to make the FPA system available to you by remote control if your server

ACF Annual Meeting (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

the Louisiana Chapter.

I finally caught up with Donald and Melanie Baker (who were usually very busy with the meeting) when I was leaving the hotel the next morning to see my sister in Mandeville. Donald and I have worked together on a couple of projects in the past.

Also, a special shout out to Executive Director Lynn Wilson and the job she does for ACF. That Vanderbilt education has served her well as has her many years of experience.

Next year's meeting will be in Michigan on June 23-26. It will be a good meeting to attend, especially if you haven't spent much time in the forests of the Great Lakes.



JD Neeley and Daniel Neeley in the swamp,



Eric Clapp and Mary Stevens Clapp handling an alligator.

goes down or if you cannot use the FPA system due to

fire, theft, wind, flood or other disaster.