

# WALKER TALK



SERVING LAWN MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS



Lancaster Bible College purchased a T25i for mowing tight areas and an H38i for mowing wide areas.

Landscaping  
Is **NOT JUST A JOB**

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# WALKER TALK

## The Old and the New



Like many parts of a well-lived life, there is balance needed between the old and the new. Life is out of balance when old people live in the past, and miss all the wonderfulness and discovery of the new, or when young people focus only on the new, and ignore the richness and principle-teaching of the past. Both perspectives are needed to avoid wasting time repeating mistakes from lessons learned from the past and missing the opportunities that come with new developments.

Concerning the old things, I am referring to the great old principles for living life and operating a business. I confess that I use the wisdom contained in the Bible as my guide to old principles, and that is reinforced by many years of applying these principles to experiences in my daily life and seeing them work. If properly applied, these principles work and will keep working. These old principles guide successful living today as much as they did several thousand years ago when they were first written down—they are time-tested. These principles will not be swept away by the new.

Concerning the new things, I believe that, when our Creator made us "in his image," he gave many of us the gift of discovering and being creators of new things. It is very much in human DNA to be dissatisfied with the way things were done in the past and find ways to do things better—the work of inventors, tinkerers, engineers, scientists and researchers. I marvel at all of the developments that have occurred in my 71 years, and there is no end to the discoveries that will continue to be made to make improvements. We can't even imagine all of the new that we will see in the future.

As we operate Walker Manufacturing, we are doing our best to balance the old and the new. Our approach is to stay with the principles that have brought us this far. These foundational and timeless principles will need to be passed down from generation to generation of leadership in the company in order to continue being successful. I am a second-generation leader doing my best to pass on principles to the third generation as my father did for me.

For the new, we are a company moving ahead; we are not sitting still. New and improved products, new programs, new developments and new technology are all driven by the curiosity of how to make our lawn mowers and our company better today than the day before. I am excited about the future; I see our best days are ahead.



*Bob Walker*

Bob Walker, President



# From Green Grass to Bluegrass: Pickin' and Trimmin' in North Carolina



Randy Hawse started mowing and playing the banjo at about the same time. Last year, he had more than 250 gigs.



**R**andy Hawse says he often feels like Tarzan in the jungle. Instead of swinging from trees, however, he's swinging from mowing his accounts during the day to playing his banjo at night. He's comfortable with the role, though. It's something he's been doing for the better part of 40 years.

For 16 of those years, the owner of Randy Hawse Landscaping in Wilmington, North Carolina, played banjo on a riverboat. While he performed, his wife, Regina, worked as the onboard cruise director and DJ. Three years ago,

the boat moved on, but no worries for Hawse. His reputation was well-rooted, just like the grass he mows. He quickly picked up a gig with a group called the Folkstone Stringband, and the show goes on several days a week with over 250 gigs last year.

Imagine working days in the southern heat and humidity, then showering, changing clothes and playing at a venue for several hours. There would have to

**"For me, operating Walker Mowers is like going to work every day at Disneyland. If you want to go somewhere, all you do is move your little finger and you're there," according to Randy Hawse, owner of Randy Hawse Landscaping.**





This custom-built trailer and power dump make quick work of handling clippings and debris.

be plenty of enjoyment involved and, for Hawse, there is. He likes operating his Walker Mower nearly as much as he enjoys strumming a tune.

### LEARNING CURVE

"I started mowing and playing the banjo at about the same time," Hawse recalls. "Our family moved from West Virginia to North Carolina in 1970, and a few years later, as a teenager, I started mowing neighbors' yards and learning to play."

One could say his mowing career took off a little more quickly than his music. After the phone never stopped ringing, his father, a chemist with DuPont, convinced his son to install an answering machine in his bedroom. "That was the beginning of having more work than I could handle," says Hawse. "In fact, I haven't done any advertising in more than 30 years."

He continues, "In 1989, I needed a new mower and visited a nearby dealer. I had \$4,000 in cash in my pocket, but for some reason, the dealer didn't want to sell me a commercial mower. At another dealership, I saw my first Walker Mower and I didn't care how much it cost. I wanted it."

Hawse says that 16-HP unit with a 42-inch GHS deck cut down his mowing time from 90 minutes to 20 on one account alone, and he could almost discard his string trimmer and

rake. As his business grew, so did his fleet of Walker Mowers. He later purchased two 20-HP models with 48-inch GHS decks, followed by two 26-HP electronic fuel injection (EFI) units, again with 48-inch decks, and many of the implements and accessories that go with them.

Adds Hawse, "I gave a 20-HP unit, along with a 54-inch side-discharge deck, to Dad to mow back on the farm we still owned in West Virginia. He loved the way it steered compared to what he was using, one with a steering wheel.

"For me, operating Walker Mowers is like going to work every day at Disneyland. If you want to go somewhere, all you do is move your little finger and you're there. In addition to being easy to drive, they're powerful; leave a manicured, precision cut; and make quick work of picking up pine straw and magnolia leaves."

### CHANGING COURSE

Prior to the Great Recession, Hawse grew his company into a full-service landscaping business, offering landscape installation and irrigation, as well as mowing. Since then, mowing takes precedence, although he still offers renovation and irrigation services to 50 or 60 of his current mowing customers. He does it with two full-time employees and one

part-time employee who work virtually year-round with him.

Over the years, he's learned a few valuable lessons. In 2000, he commissioned a fabricator to build a new trailer. One of its unique features is having two spring-loaded ramps, one from the trailer to the ground and the other from the trailer to his dump truck. After pulling up to a site, he easily lowers the rear ramp and drives away with his mower.

Returning with a dump box full of grass, he simply backs up the ramp, nudges the other ramp to the dump truck with the mower and up he goes.

After depositing the grass with the power dump, he's ready to resume mowing. "The outfit beats battling heavy wooden ramps, and using a pitchfork to load debris or handling heavy tarps full of grass," he remarks, adding that he has run across a few other helpful hints.

"The out-front deck actually helps me control insects like chinch bugs. Notice my white socks. If there are any chinch bugs in the lawn, they fly over the deck and land on my socks where I can easily spot them. They're very destructive, having one fang that sucks the sap out of the grass and another that excretes waste. Because they're small, the size of a pin head, their strength is in their numbers. Leave them on the lawn for a month and you'll be calling a sod truck.

"When working in the sun all day like we are, I advise people to go to their dermatologist twice a year. I've had several pre-cancerous cells removed and one spot on my arm that could have been very serious."

He offers two other suggestions. "Most operators understand how important it is to grease their equipment, but some grease fittings can be hard to reach. I purchased a Lincoln grease gun that attaches to my air compressor. With one hand holding the hose and the other on the trigger, greasing even difficult fittings is made easy.



“Make sure to change the straps on your backpack sprayers. They don’t last forever. Three years ago, one snapped while I was taking the sprayer off the trailer. Somehow my ring finger got tangled up and broke. The doctor put screws in it, and after three surgeries, even today I can’t bend it all the way. The injury didn’t impact operating my Walker Mower since it’s so easy to steer, but I had to relearn how to play parts of the banjo.”

Hawse ends the workday by playing a couple of tunes for the *Walker Talk* editor and Regina, who adds a bit of irony to the story. “Randy probably hasn’t told you he is backed by a world-renowned banjo string manufacturer located in Michigan. Just goes to show you how mowing lawns with a Walker Mower and playing a banjo is a good fit for him.”

The name of the manufacturer? GHS Strings. **WT**

**“I saw my first Walker Mower and I didn’t care how much it cost. I wanted it.” – Randy Hawse, Randy Hawse Landscaping**



Randy Hawse purchased four Walker Mowers since buying his first one in 1989—a 16-HP unit. His most recent additions are 26-HP electronic fuel injection (EFI) models.





# LANDSCAPING

## Is Not Just a Job



**Ben Stauffer graduated from Lancaster Bible College in 2012 with a bachelor's degree. He says, "The grounds department has a lot of ground to cover, including mowing 30 acres of turf, so we put a premium on being efficient."**

**"I** love teaching students." A comment more typically associated with professors, this one comes from Ben Stauffer, director of physical plant at Lancaster Bible College. His department manages the school's housekeeping and facilities, and he oversees the grounds and repair shop.

"I have two managers, one in housekeeping and one in the facilities department, and only five other full-time employees in housekeeping and facilities. Hence, students, who work 40 hours a week in the summer and 28 during the school year, do most of the work," says Stauffer, who graduated from the school in 2012.

He continues, "Some of the 10 to 12 students who come to work in the grounds department have a background in landscaping and others don't, but they learn. We teach them not only how to maintain the landscape, but to maintain equipment as well—all valuable skills they can take with them no matter where they go after graduation."

Stauffer's attitude about preparing students for life after school mirrors that of an institution named by the *Wall Street Journal* as one of the top colleges in the country to prepare students for their chosen career.

Founded in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1933, Lancaster Bible College has nearly 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students who major in any of 25 academic departments. The school has a 15-to-1 student-faculty ratio at the main 120-acre campus, and fields six men's



**“Previously, it took 30 students to clear all of the walks; now it takes only five. It’s amazing what you can get done with quality equipment.”**

**– Ben Stauffer,  
Lancaster Bible  
College**

**Lancaster Bible College students who work throughout the summer get free room and board, plus a salary.**

and seven women’s varsity and intramural sports. The college also has four other locations throughout the country in Greenbelt, Maryland; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Boca Raton, Florida; and Memphis, Tennessee.

### **COVERING GROUND**

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree, Stauffer spent two years working as a mechanic. Being raised on a dairy farm, he was well-equipped to fix almost anything—from trucks, tractors and skid-steer loaders to cars. He moved to Florida for a year to work at a camp for troubled kids prior to returning to Lancaster Bible College three years ago as a full-time mechanic. He later became director of grounds before moving into his current position.

“Students start work around 7 a.m., blowing off the walks and getting the campus ready for the day,” Stauffer explains. “At 8 a.m., the rest of the workers arrive, including student crew chief, Devan Turner, and senior grounds worker, Caleb Pollock, who operate our Walker Mowers. The school purchased a model T25i in 2015 for mowing around tight areas and a model H38i with a 64-inch rear-discharge deck last year for mowing wide areas.

“The grounds department has a lot of ground to cover, including mowing 30 acres of turf, so we put a premium on being efficient. With the Walker Mowers, we can cut all of the high-profile areas in a day or two. There’s no scalping and the stripes really stand out on campus.”

He continues, “They are extremely versatile, and can easily be fitted with a GHS, side-discharge or mulching deck during the long mowing season. When outfitted with enclosed cabs, and a brush or snow blower during the winter, they can clear our walks in less than an hour. Previously, it took 30 students to clear all of the walks; now it takes only five. It’s amazing what you can get done with quality equipment.”

When not mowing, Turner and Pollock join other student workers with campus chores. They do anything from helping lay sod and planting 2,000 tulips a year to pruning, trimming and weeding. Students generally work until 4 p.m. Friday afternoons are reserved for washing equipment. In addition to its mowers, a Bobcat skid steer and smaller handheld equipment, Lancaster Bible College has a fleet of 15 vehicles, including three F-250 pickups, several vans and a bus.

“Our biggest challenge is getting things done on time. We work around special events, class times and student schedules,” adds Stauffer.





The school purchased a model T25i in 2015 for mowing around tight areas and a model H38i with a 64-inch rear-discharge deck last year for mowing wide areas.



unusual requests. For example, in the spring, the school sponsors an annual charity 5K Mud Run. We bring the mud in and clean up afterward.”

Students who work throughout the summer get free room and board, plus a salary. “But it’s not just a job,” Stauffer emphasizes. “They work together on solving problems. They share ideas. They learn how to maintain equipment and do basic things like changing the oil and filter on their cars. Some who are mechanically inclined also help me with major repairs.”

“As a Bible college, most graduates pursue a career path in the ministry, although a few student workers have chosen to work in the green industry or continue their horticulture education. Either way, the skills they develop working the grounds, the repair shop and even in housekeeping can always come in handy, and even help support themselves until a career opportunity arises.”

One day, who knows? His student workers may receive course credits for their learning experience. In the meantime, they all work toward the same goal, Stauffer emphasizes: “We take care of the grounds and our environment, so students want to come here and train to carry out a biblical world view.” **WT**

“Our department is all about delivering great service. In addition to keeping the landscape in top condition (mowing starts in late March or early April, and goes well into the fall with leaf pickup), we often receive special and sometimes

Ben Stauffer, the director of physical plant, stands between senior grounds worker Caleb Pollock (left) and student crew chief Devan Turner (right). Says Stauffer, “We teach students not only how to maintain landscapes, but to maintain equipment as well—all valuable skills they can take with them no matter where they go after graduation.”





# Mowing the ALASKAN WAY

A-1 Lawn & Landscaping crew leader Paul Fine puts one of the company's three Walker Mowers through its paces. Nineteen mowings a year are typical in Alaska.

**"To avoid scalping, some companies have a sea of employees that go out with 21-inch Honda mowers. We can replace three of these workers with one Walker Mower and do a better job." – Ted Pendagast, A-1 Lawn & Landscaping**

**T**he land of the midnight sun conjures up all sorts of images—everything from polar bears and huge glaciers to sub-zero temperatures and dramatic summer and winter solstices. What one doesn't associate with the nation's largest state is mowing lawns, unless, like A-1 Lawn & Landscaping, you've been

doing it for 27 years.

Located just a few miles from downtown Anchorage, the company consists of six landscape crews, four mow crews, two detail and trimming crews, two special services crews, four drivers in trucking and expediting, and three full-time mechanics that generate approximately 66 percent of the company's revenue.



**A-1 Lawn & Landscaping company manager Ted Pendagast spent several years in the industry on the East Coast prior to moving north.**





**A small footprint allows the Walker Mower to get into tight areas, but it also frees up space on trailers.**

but they make that up in spades with their maneuverability and quality of cut.”

He admits the mowers are probably 50 percent more expensive than other zero-turns, something that was originally a hard sell to company owner and founder Bret Kelly. But his previous experience proved to be a good sales pitch, and the machine’s quality of cut and subsequent durability paid dividends.

### **MORNING DRILL**

A-1 Lawn & Landscaping has 45 full-time employees during peak season and 11 year-round. Its ratio of installation to maintenance is 80:20, although Pendagast would like to see the work even out a bit. As he points out, maintenance work is steady, is good for cash flow and provides opportunity to upsell customers.

“One of the things I learned while working in Connecticut was the value of selling services à la carte,” says Pendagast. “The company owner taught me a lesson the hard way when he took me out to dinner and I ordered a steak. I was disappointed when all I got was a steak, with no potatoes, no vegetables, no dessert and so forth.

“As he explained, when you sell a package of maintenance services, customers tend to place less value on each of the

The rest, not surprisingly, comes from snow removal.

### **SHORT SEASON**

Probably the biggest difference between mowing in Alaska versus the lower 48 states is the short season. Company manager Ted Pendagast ought to know, having worked several years as a landscape contractor on the East Coast prior to moving north.

“We get approximately 19 mows [a year] here compared to Connecticut, where 26 or so was the norm,” he notes. “It’s not your normal mowing either. Grass grows faster here because of the longer days and turf is more undulating, thanks to freezing and thawing and subsequent heaving. That’s one reason we brought the Walker Mowers on three years ago. The floating deck does an amazing job.

“To avoid scalping, some companies have a sea of employees that go out with 21-inch Honda mowers. We can replace three of these workers with one Walker Mower and do a better job.”

**A-1 Lawn & Landscaping consists of six landscape crews, four mow crews, two detail and trimming crews, and two special services crews. All target 8:10 a.m. to be on the road.**

Pendagast, who also worked with Walker Mowers in the lower 48, lists a few other reasons why the company now has three of the little yellow machines and is looking to add more. “They have a small footprint, which allows them to get into tight areas while freeing up space on trailers. The bagging system virtually revolutionized our fall cleanup. The decks deliver a superior cut. They’re very maneuverable and the hydros make them gentler on the grass than other zero-turn mowers. Walker Mowers may not be as fast as other competitors on the market,





**The ratio of installation to maintenance is 80:20, but A-1 Lawn & Landscaping manager Ted Pendagast would like to even that out a bit.**

services, may it be pruning, fertilizing or providing spring cleanup. Selling them individually raises their value just like it did for me for the potatoes I didn't get."

The morning drill is intense. Supervisors clock in at 7:30 a.m. and attend a briefing where they find out if there are any schedule changes. The manager quickly rearranges crew assignments by moving magnetic name tags on a whiteboard. Employees clock in at 8 a.m. and crews are on the road 10 minutes later.

"Getting out on time is important," Pendagast emphasizes. "Alaska has a population of around 750,000, which is extremely small for a state its size, yet half that population lives in Anchorage. Traffic is heavy, meaning that crews often spend nearly 25 percent of their time driving to and from sites. That's another benefit of Walker Mowers. We can transport them with smaller trailers that are easier to haul around and park."

The dense population also puts a premium on space for the company's commercial properties. Hauling away snow accounts for a big share of its snow removal revenue.

## HOMECOMING

Pendagast is not a newcomer to the area's

subtleties. He spent 10 years in the Army as a paratrooper, with some of that time spent stationed in Anchorage. He moved back to the state in 2011 and started working for A-1 in 2014.

The labor challenge is one of those subtleties. Although a tight labor market isn't unique to Alaska, the state offers a few added twists. One is the North Slope. The oil industry is huge there and provides an opportunity for good wages and unlimited overtime. The other is a short mowing season of five months that requires part-timers to

find other work during the year.

"We have a seasoned full-time staff, but turnover among our summer workers can be upward of 65 percent annually," says Pendagast. "Training is ongoing to raise our proficiency, keep injuries down and limit equipment damage."

Training is made even more important by what he terms as a limited knowledge pool. "On the East Coast and throughout the lower 48, the landscaping industry is well-established, and contractors share new ideas and best practices through their associations and peer groups. We don't have that networking here," admits Pendagast.

Part of his charge is to share his knowledge with employees, and he does that every Saturday by holding horticulture classes. He also conducts on-site training, offering tips to new Walker Mower operators, for example, and strives to educate customers about the value of slow-release fertilizers and the application of liquid ice melt in November.

This landscaping veteran is also unintentionally sharing his knowledge and experience with competitors as they, too, take note of A-1's smaller trailers and more compact mowers. **WT**





Lawn & Beyond's owner says the Walker Mower speeded up his business growth, not because it mows fast, but because "when you're done mowing, it's a wrap." INSET: Victor Crowell poses with his wife, Dana, and daughter, Jade. At first eye contact, Dana mentioned to a friend that an unsuspecting Victor would be her husband one day.

# 'Nothing but GRASS'



“I like to leave properties looking nice, neat and well-trimmed with the Bermuda grass resembling a green tabletop. I don't want to see twigs, leaves and other debris. When I'm done mowing, I want to see nothing but grass.”

That's what Victor Crowell, physical education teacher and owner of Lawns & Beyond in Montgomery, Alabama, saw when mowing a property several years ago, but it wasn't his property. “The contractor was using a little yellow machine with a

hopper on back and the name Walker on the side,” says Crowell. “I wasn't familiar with the machine, but another teacher had a Walker Mower and advised me to get one. I couldn't afford to buy a new one, but Capital Tractor in Montgomery said it would keep an eye out for a used one and came through.

“At the time, my wife, Dana, questioned the decision to spend ‘that much’ for a mower, but it certainly paid off. My only regret is I didn't buy one sooner. It may not be as fast as some mowers

on the market, but it certainly speeded up my business growth because when you're done mowing, it's a wrap.”

## JUST BEING NEIGHBORLY

Growing up in Seale, Alabama, Crowell and his two brothers shared mowing duties. His brothers didn't like to mow. But guess who did?

“After we were married, Dana and I moved to a new subdivision and taking care of the yard was second nature to me. I enjoyed it,” says Crowell. “It wasn't long





**There's just enough room on Victor Crowell's trailer to fit his complement of yard tools and equipment. TOP: The mower's 42-inch deck allows easy access to enclosed backyards, a common feature among properties in Victor Crowell's subdivision.**

before a neighbor wanted me to mow her yard. One request led to three, which turned into seven, and soon I was mowing nine yards in the subdivision with my CRAFTSMAN push mower."

When the number approached 15, he upgraded to a CRAFTSMAN rider and later added a Snapper Pro zero-turn mower. The Walker Mower, with a 42-inch GHS deck, came onto the scene a few years later in 2013.

At one time, the accounts grew to 60, but as he points out, good help is hard to find. That was simply too many properties to maintain alone. He now looks after 46 accounts, half one week and half the other. During a typical week, he gets out of school at 2:30 and mows from 3 p.m. to dark, Monday through Thursday. If it rains, though—and it rained a lot this year in Montgomery—his weekends disappear.

In addition to mowing, Lawns &

Beyond does small landscaping jobs, installs shrubs and smaller apple and crape myrtle trees, prunes trees and trims hedges. Fertilizing and weed control are left to lawn care companies. Equipment, including five STIHL hand-held units, a Toro push mower, the Snapper Pro and the Walker Mower, fit "neatly" on an open trailer.

Crowell says he's learned two valuable lessons over the years. "One lesson is, when you buy quality equipment, no matter what it is, it lasts a long time. The other is avoid being in a rush. A few years ago, I was hurrying around and injured myself. This accident could have been avoided by just slowing down and waiting a few seconds. If I'd done that, I could have avoided spending the extra time to make a trip to the emergency room."

### **BUILDING A BUSINESS**

Crowell and his wife met while in graduate school at Alabama State University. At first eye contact, Dana mentioned to a friend that an unsuspecting Victor would be her husband one day. They were married a year later.

Crowell has been teaching for 19 years and Dana, 18. In Alabama, the school year goes from the first week in August to the end of May. Teaching takes a lot of energy and commitment. Dana has a class of 18 second-graders, while 250 students go through Crowell's physical education classes in a day. The pair enjoys what they do and it shows. In fact, last year, a local TV station presented Crowell with the Golden Apple

award for his work with students.

Still, both would like to retire within six years or so. The timetable suits Crowell's plan to grow his business. "You don't really have a business if it relies exclusively on you being there every day," he emphasizes. "Ideally, I would like to find someone who cares about my customers and equipment as much as I do."

Dana laughs, "That's going to be hard to do since he's the only one to date who has driven the Walker Mower."

That, however, is the plan. Continue mowing until retiring from teaching and then, yes, buy another Walker Mower and field two crews. The 42-inch deck just fits inside the backyard gates many of his properties have. The Snapper Pro, which he purchased in 2008, has a smaller deck for even smaller gates, and it's a machine he likes to use for rough mowing.

"Teaching is hard work if you are committed to doing a good job," Crowell reiterates, "but so is the lawn maintenance business. As much as I like mowing, I don't want to be the one doing all the work all the time. Being a physical education teacher and running in a few half marathons helps to keep me in shape, but the sun and humidity here can wear a person down. Not to mention it would be great to have time to build the business, and spend more time with Dana and our 10-year-old daughter, Jade."

**"My only regret is I didn't buy one sooner. It may not be as fast as some mowers on the market, but it certainly speeded up my business growth because when you're done mowing, it's a wrap."**

**– Victor Crowell, Lawns & Beyond**

His long-term plan then calls for buying a property with more space for storing equipment and, yes, having a bigger yard for doing what he enjoys doing—turning Bermuda grass into tabletops. **WT**



# THE WALKER FAMILY REUNION

In July, the Walker Family Reunion was held at the factory in Fort Collins, Colorado, to celebrate the production of the 150,000th Walker Mower and 40 years since the creation of the first Walker Mower. Over 2,500 guests from the

United States and nine other countries were on hand for the celebration. The three days were filled with entertainment, fun and fellowship.

The 150,000th Commemorative Mower design based on the T25i was also unveiled. This one-of-a-kind T27i

Walker features a blackout package that includes a gray body, carrier frame and deck, along with a black anodized aluminum muffler guard, black wheels and other accents.

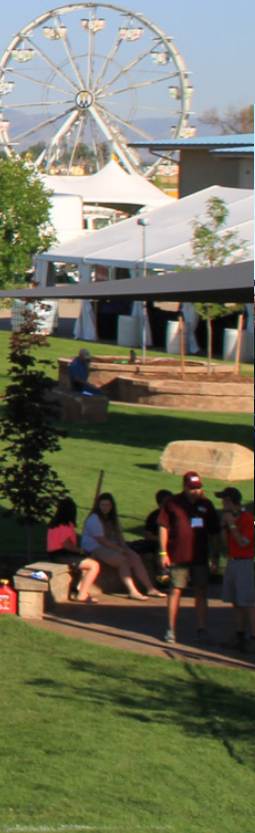
For more coverage of the Walker Family Reunion, please visit [www.walker.com/reunion](http://www.walker.com/reunion). **WT**



The Walker World Championship Obstacle Course was a highlight, with over 240 operators competing. The top three winners each took home a new Walker Mower and are as follows:

- **FIRST PLACE:**  
Glenn Miller of Montrose, Colorado
- **SECOND PLACE:**  
Daniel Brenneman of Virginia Beach, Virginia
- **THIRD PLACE:**  
Leon Miller of Olathe, Colorado





Walker suppliers participated in a variety of ways, including a trade show, event stage and entertainment sponsorships. Kohler Engines was a major sponsor of the stage and entertainment, as well as a brat fry for attendees.

A Vintage Vehicle Show featured Walker products back to the late 1950s, and included a contest for best products and best of show for Walker Golf Cars, Power Trucks and Vintage Mowers. The winners are:

- **BEST GOLF CAR** (also Best of Show): Mark Eaton of Wichita, Kansas
- **BEST POWER TRUCK:** Mike Weber of Dodge City, Kansas
- **BEST VINTAGE MOWER:** Bruce Tallman of Windsor, Colorado





# Manufacturing Mowers, Bringing Together Families

**A**t the opening ceremony of Walker Manufacturing's third family reunion, company president Bob Walker emphasized that it takes a big family to produce and sell 150,000 mowers. It takes dedicated employees and satisfied customers, along with a network of dealers, distributors and suppliers.

The *Walker Talk* editor had an opportunity to talk with a handful of these extended family members and ask them directly what brought them to the celebration. **WT**



**"To be with like-minded people." – Daniel and Pamela Sigouin of La Coupe Royale in Terrebonne, Quebec**

Daniel Sigouin has been mowing lawns for four years. Two years ago, he met Bob Walker at the Green Industry & Equipment Expo (GIE+EXPO) in Louisville, Kentucky. He tried out a Walker Mower and since purchased two, and is looking for a third one to help maintain his 130 accounts. "We came here to have a good time and be with like-minded people," says Sigouin. "Everyone here feels like we're part of a family."







**“To celebrate.” – Robert Bentley of Bentley Lawn Maintenance in Janesville, Wisconsin**

Robert Bentley has been in business 23 years, 20 of which he was operating Walker Mowers. He currently has two employees that help maintain his commercial and residential customer properties. Accompanying Bentley is his wife, Peggy, who keeps the books, and daughter, Heather, one of five part-time workers. In fact, Heather has been working with her dad for 17 years.



**“We love the Walker company.” – Harry and Sally Warren, homeowners from Gering, Nebraska**

A retired pharmacist, Harry Warren mows a 1.5-acre lawn with, in his words, “a small Walker Mower fitted with a grass-handling deck.” Says Warren, “If I had a different mower, it would take me twice as long to mow the lawn. We would have a Walker Mower no matter what it cost.”



**“I wanted to see the Walker family and the factory, and take home a few maintenance tips.” – Glenn and Marilyn Zagorski of Zagorski Landscaping in Parsippany, New Jersey**

Glenn Zagorski tore his Achilles 10 years ago. Until then, he always operated walk-behind mowers. Unable to walk for eight weeks, he was worried about losing his business until a friend talked him into buying a Walker Mower. “I wished I had purchased one 10 years earlier,” he recalls. “That one mower replaces two to three employees.” Zagorski has now been mowing lawns for 40 years and just purchased a new Walker Mower.



**“To see how and where the Walker Mowers are built.” – Ron Holt, a service writer from Rexburg, Idaho**

Ron Holt, who works for Coates Power Equipment, came to Fort Collins with his wife, Michelle. What better way to learn more about the mower than to visit the factory and take a tour?



**“To celebrate and see the factory.” – David and Jonna Schneider, homeowners from Fort Madison, Iowa**

A riverboat pilot, David Schneider has owned a Walker Mower for 11 years. He admits to mowing more than his lawn with it. “We live on a cul-de-sac and mow our neighbors’ lawns, too. I just love to mow.”



**“I’ve been to every reunion.” – Rainer Hantschel of Chlorophyll Clipper in Denver, Colorado**

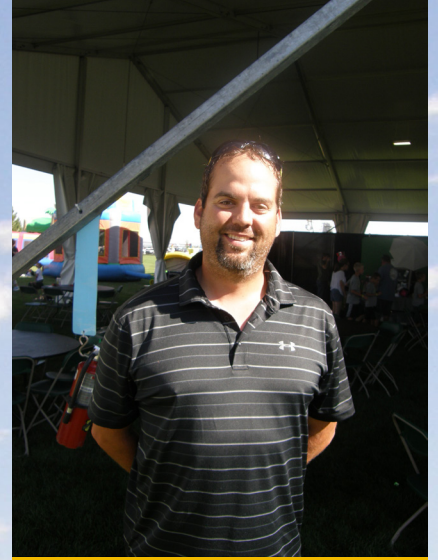
A retired flight attendant, Rainer Hantschel has attended all three Walker reunions. This year, he came with his “significant other,” Junie Weed-Zeigler. He mows 41 lawns with a new Model S he purchased last year. He purchased his first Walker Mower, a used one, in 1990.





**“To join the party.” – Matt Hird, a five-star dealer from Te Awamutu, New Zealand**

His third trip to Fort Collins, Matt Hird says he enjoys working with the Walker family. This year, he brought along a customer to partake in the company's festivities and hospitality.



**“I brought the family to enjoy the festivities.” – Eli Korbar, a landscape contractor from Burlington, Colorado**

Eli Korbar purchased an existing company that had a Walker Mower. Now he has three. While here, the family took a side trip to Rocky Mountain National Park.

**“Definitely a highlight to visit the factory and see how Walker Mowers are built.” – Kory Knutz of Valley Green Landscape in McMinnville, Oregon**

Kory Knutz came to the reunion with his dealer, Alex Batten, from Northwest Logging Supply. “I bought my first Walker Mower in 1995 after I saw how it striped lawns,” says Knutz. “I’ve been using them ever since and, at one time, had three. They’re good machines; I admire them and the company’s value system. I guess you can call me a Walker nerd.”



**“Feels like home.” – Mike Ramsey, former facilities manager, and Cathy Ramsey from Fort Collins, Colorado**

Mike Ramsey is a former facilities manager of the Walker Mower factory. He left his position 10 years ago to free up some time to take care of an ailing family member. “I started out mowing homeowners’ associations, but now concentrate on larger residential properties,” he relates. He currently takes care of 40 customers with two 25-HP Model Ts with Hi-Dumps™.



**“Heard about the event and decided to come out.” – Bill Johnson, a retired municipal worker from Holyoke, Colorado**

Bill Johnson retired from Holyoke last year after spending 21 years running one of the city’s four Walker Mowers. He said it took all week to maintain the municipal grounds and that included two days when he would mow around 2,400 cemetery headstones.







### LARGER AIR CLEANER USED ON MB23i AND MH24d

Models MB23i and MH24d are now using a larger Donaldson engine air cleaner to offer extra capacity (and less frequent servicing), better filtration action and engine protection.

### 40-INCH DETHATCHER IMPROVED

Several parts of the 40-inch A10 dethatcher attachment were redesigned for improved durability and performance. The tine tray was reinforced by adding a structural spar to the leading edge. The foot trigger latch now uses a captured design for a better lift-and-release action. The new lift handle has a more comfortable grip position for the operator and the lift lever folds for compact storage. The optional P/N 6606-11 wall-mount bracket stores the dethatcher on a trailer or garage wall.



### CASTER WHEEL TIRES NOW SIX-PLY

Both 11- and 13-inch tail-wheel and deck-wheel tires were upgraded to a six-ply rating with additional rubber in the tread area of the tire for extra puncture resistance, wear capacity and durability. The six-ply is being used on MB, MT and MD tractor tail-wheels and on all deck caster wheels with a cutting width of 52 inches or larger (except on the DS56). The new tires also fit on earlier units.



### MOUNT KIT ATTACHES SPYKER SPREADER TO WALKER DECK

A kit is available to mount the Spyker S80-12010 Pro Series commercial spreader (purchased separately) on the 42-, 48- or 52-inch gear-driven Walker Mower deck carrier frame. The spreader easily attaches to the Walker without tools. The kit includes a Walker-designed control module bracket and gate control lever, both placed for easy reach by the operator.





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