

Tree stand safety prevents injury, death

Nine years ago, we lost my cousin, Mike Pace, who died at 42, leaving two beautiful children, from a treestand fall. Someone had allowed a stand to grow into a tree, and even though he was an avid treestand safety minded person using his belt when he hunted, he failed to do so when climbing this tree. When he did not pick up his children from daycare, the family knew something was wrong.

The Auto Sheriff's Department organized a manhunt because no one had any idea where he was that day. His poor little body lay there all night as they called the search to resume at 5 p.m. the next day using 50 to 60 people. He had fallen 12 feet, face down, severing his spine. His Swartz Community mourned for their ball coach, teacher, and mentor.

My childhood neighbor fell from his stand leaving him paralyzed for the rest of his young life.

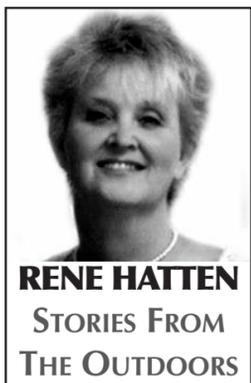
My husband's cousin fell from his stand and his leg was shattered as he laid six hours before being found.

My daughter's former boss, hung upside down six hours before he was found and had a very long recovery time.

My own son found himself up a tree with a climber when the bottom fell away, and by God's Grace, he was not injured when he decided to

"Tarzan" down, and the vine ripped out of the tree sending him down much faster than he wanted.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries classes have always taught in hunting and fishing to let someone know where you are hunting. In addition to common courtesy, this one rule could save your life if you fall and are unable to call for help. Let someone who knows the area well know where you will be, what time you are ex-



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pected to be back, and stick to your plans. Providing them with GPS coordinates will be a big help to a search and rescue team if one is needed.

Some additional treestand safety tips from The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries would remind Hunters that although most hunters are aware of the need to safely handle their firearms, but too often hunters overlook basic treestand safety.

According to the Tree-

stand Manufacturer's Association (TMA), one out of three treestand hunters will fall from a treestand during their lifetime and require medical treatment. Furthermore, 75 percent of treestand falls happen to hunters between the ages of 30 to 60 years old.

Hunting from an elevated position have many advantages, two of which are a birds-eye-view of the immediate area, and the confidence of knowing that a hunter's scent is less detectable by game than hunting from the ground. However, these advantages come at a high risk if safety precautions are not followed. In everything we do, safety always has a priority. We put on our seatbelt before driving a car, we look both ways before crossing a street; hunting from treestands should demand the same common safety sense. Below are some safety tips that every treestand hunter should follow before, during, and after the hunt:

Never use a homemade stand. Only use TMA certified stands. The TMA performs rigorous testing on all manufacturers' stands to ensure safety of hunters in the field. Many hunters have had a homemade stand collapse due to environmental conditions or engineering flaws.

Wear a TMA approved full-body harness. Every stand sold with the TMA



Citizen photo by Rene Hatten

RENE HATTEN captures photo of two deer at a corn feeder with her game camera while in her deerstand.

certification label includes a full-body harness. Older, chest-type straps are dangerous and can cause more injury than a fall. Become familiar with the harness and practice putting it on and off several times before the hunt. Many companies now offer a jacket-style full-body harness which is much easier to wear than standard harnesses and are very affordable. If you are a treestand hunter, a harness should be as important as the clothing you wear.

Know your treestand. This seems elementary, but every treestand is different and models change



Courtesy photo

BEN MARSHALL harvested this nine-point buck in Morehouse Parish recently.

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LHSAA sanctions powerlifting as new high school sport

For the first time ever, the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) welcomes the education-based sport of powerlifting to its lineup of sanctioned high school sports in which student-athletes can vie for LHSAA state championship titles. Prior to the 2012-13 school year, powerlifting was considered a non-sanctioned sport, and regional and state competitions were conducted and regulated mainly by the Louisiana High School Powerlifting Association (LHSPA).

The sport actually began

in the United States and Britain during the mid-1950's after the number of participants and fans began declining for weightlifting. In the sport of powerlifting, participants are separated based on their gender and weight, and they compete against others who are in their same weight classification. The athletes take turns lifting different weight amounts, which are measured in pounds. It's much more than lifting heavy weights off of the ground; there are three different lifts contested in powerlifting meets: the

squat, the bench press and finally, the deadlift. To many, the sport seems easy, but like any other extracurricular activity, powerlifting athletes undergo rigorous training and practice in order to excel.

Today, in Louisiana, the powerlifting season begins in December and ends with the state meet held the second weekend in March. The sport includes both male and female athletes who train each year for a chance to be called

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