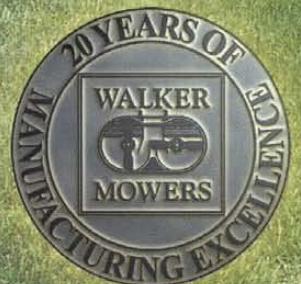


WALKER TALK

SERVING LAWN MAINTENANCE PROFESSIONALS TO COME

Connecticut's
Caretaker

MORE TO MOWING THAN MOWING
VIENNA'S CASTLES
WALKER FITS LIKE HAND IN GLOVE
WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR DEALER



VOL. 15

WALKER TALK

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NEXT CENTURY TALK

As I write this in December '99 and you read it next year, we will have passed into the next century. I suppose this marking of time has caused almost everyone to think about the future and form their own opinions. Clearly there are extreme views. Some have looked glibly at 2000 saying nothing will happen and "let the good times roll." Meanwhile, the alarmist and doomsdayers have

predicted catastrophic problems, often profiting handsomely from the fear of the future.

For the Walker family, our view of the future is more balanced and is based on our faith. We look at Holy Scripture and believe the future will bring both good and bad things into our company.



Together, the Walker Family steps into a new century of business. From left to right: Margaret, Bob, Max (seated) and Dean.

We are people of optimism and hope. Yet, catastrophe and hard times may come and human frailty may affect our progress and prosperity.

A recent emphasis within the company is to be "Rock Solid" in the power equipment industry. To us that means being an independent company, being dependable and being grounded on moral principles as we work with suppliers, distributors, dealers and end-customers. We face the future with confidence and without fear. A favorite bit of wisdom from Holy Scripture sums it up for me and my family: "The righteous man will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord" (Psalms 112:7).

Bob Walker

Bob Walker
President

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Connecticut's caretaker

After demonstrating the Walker, the McClures found that it delivered a near reel mower cut with the added advantages that come with pickup capability and the ability to use several different attachments.

How long would you stay in business if you charged upwards of 30% more for your services than the competition? What if you operated with a two-complaint rule, meaning that on the second complaint, you simply told your customer to find another landscaper? Or, perish the thought, what if you maintained a property according to Mother Nature's schedule and not that of the customer?

Sounds like a ticket for a new career! To the contrary. For Rich McClure & Son Landscape Services in Bethel, Connecticut, the bottom line is providing the best service possible. Everything else is really academic, including price, complaints and scheduling.

Rich McClure's grandfather started the business in 1957. Back then the

landscaping market was small, comprised primarily of wealthy people who could afford to hire out their lawn maintenance. There were no backpack blowers, edgers or trimmers. And the only real mower of note was a "reel" mower — zero-turn rotary mowers were only a dream.

"We knew that if their company's livelihood depended on one machine, that machine would be as near perfect as it could possibly be."

"Customers expected my father to be a caretaker," tells Rich, who with

son Rich Jr. operates the business today. "Things have changed dramatically over the years: the equipment we now use, the competition and the breadth of the market. But one thing hasn't changed for us. We still manage residential properties like they are estates, and we are the caretakers."

The old-school approach to landscaping works for some 130 accounts that stretch between White Plains, New York, to Hartford, Connecticut. The company offers them a full range of services from turf management, including insect control and fertilizer application, to landscape design and installation, lawn renovation, grounds maintenance, and flower bed installation and maintenance. The McClures also maintain and install irrigation systems and remove snow, all with a total of four employees including the father-and-son team.



The McClures say their Walker saves them at least 30% in time with one less person on every property they mow. Part of that savings comes from having to do less trim work. Trimming now, as Rich Jr. shows, is relegated to tough areas where the Walker can't reach.

"What really separates us from the competition is the type of accounts we have and the quality of services we offer," tells Rich. "We don't work for commercial accounts where most of the competition around here is today. Our customers are high-end homeowners who expect a high-quality job."

TIGHT NICHE

Rich McClure & Son Landscape Services wasn't always a four-person operation. As Rich explains, the company was much bigger a few years ago. And then the light dawned on them.

"At the time, we were bringing in maybe \$1.3 million in sales and made 8% of that," he tells. "We decided we could make a lot more by doing less volume. It would require both my son and me to do more of the actual work, but that's what we decided to do."

So, the McClures went back to their roots and narrowed their niche, offering a full range of services to a select few customers. They sold most of their heavy equipment, pared down their employee rolls and rolled up their sleeves, sharing responsibility for various service categories.

"We've had to share duties and responsibilities," Rich Jr. adds, "because there is so much to learn out there. One person can't possibly spend time going to all the schools, let alone become proficient in all areas." His father agrees, noting that over the last seven years both of them have spent nearly every spare moment during the winter months attending seminars and other educational classes.

As caretakers and not service providers, Rich McClure & Son Landscape Services sees the majority of its customers at least once every month. At that visit, the team will provide whichever service Mother Nature dictates. It may mean trimming a particular type of shrub, but not all shrubs on the property, applying fertilizer or protecting the property from insects that are readying for their seasonal debut.

"We know what types of shrubs are on our properties and when they need to be pruned," explains Rich. "That's when we do the work. If customers ask us to prune or otherwise maintain something out of Mother Nature's schedule, we explain that the end

result will not be satisfactory for them or for us.

"How we feel about our work is just as important as how our customer feels. It's such a good feeling for us to know that all the shrubs and flowers are blooming just right, and that the grass is healthy and lush."

Yet, it's how the customer feels that allows Rich McClure & Son Landscape Services to charge a premium for its work. It's difficult for customers to complain about price when the end product meets their satisfaction.

MOWING, TOO

Of the McClures' 130 accounts, 22 are full-service accounts, meaning they receive all insect control and fertilizing throughout the year, along with seeding, mulching, edging and mowing. Until recently, the company really hadn't pushed its mowing service. As Rich points out, mowing can contribute disproportionately to overhead. And containing cost has been key to their downsizing.

Approximately four years ago, the McClures launched a search for a new mower. They wanted something that would fit their caretaker approach and deliver a reel mower look, but wouldn't kill them in overhead — either downtime or labor.

"The Walker has made our mowing so productive we're going to expand our mowing business next year."

"We had nearly resigned ourselves to buy a reel mower when we saw the Walker," relays Rich. "Some area landscapers thought the machine wasn't heavy-duty just because it was small. But size had nothing to do with qual-

WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE YOU MISS THE MOST

The McClures have always felt strongly about their Walker, but they didn't really know how much they depended on the unit until a freak breakdown put the mower out of commission for a day.

Tells Rich Jr, "The alternator belt broke, and in the process it broke the oil seal on the engine. That occurred on a Friday and we didn't have the Walker until the following Monday.

Let me tell you, that was the longest day we've put in in a long time. You really don't know how much you miss a machine until you don't have it. What we couldn't figure out was how we ever ran the business without the mower."

The McClures welcomed their Walker back to work on Monday with a new appreciation for its value.

ity. We found it to be very well built. Our philosophy is if you buy top-quality equipment, you should never have to replace it. We've had some of our equipment 30 to 40 years and it still runs perfectly. Our Turfco edger, for example, is 37 years old and we still use it.

"After demonstrating the Walker, we found that it delivered the closest thing we've ever seen to a reel cut. And unlike a reel mower, we could use the Walker for several different grounds-keeping applications."

Another key selling point, Rich Jr. explains, is the fact that Walker Mfg. is focused like they are. The company concentrates its energies on building one type of mower, not a full line of products.

"We knew that if their company's livelihood depended on one machine, that machine would be as near perfect as it could possibly be."

The McClures say they haven't been disappointed in their diesel-powered mower and its 48-inch GHS deck. In fact, says Rich, "We're cutting

more lawns with the Walker in less time than ever. More specifically, on every property we save at least 30% in time with one less person.

"We've seen landscapers around here with faster mowers. But we find that in many cases they mow so fast they skim right over the grass. In fact, double cutting is not unusual for them."

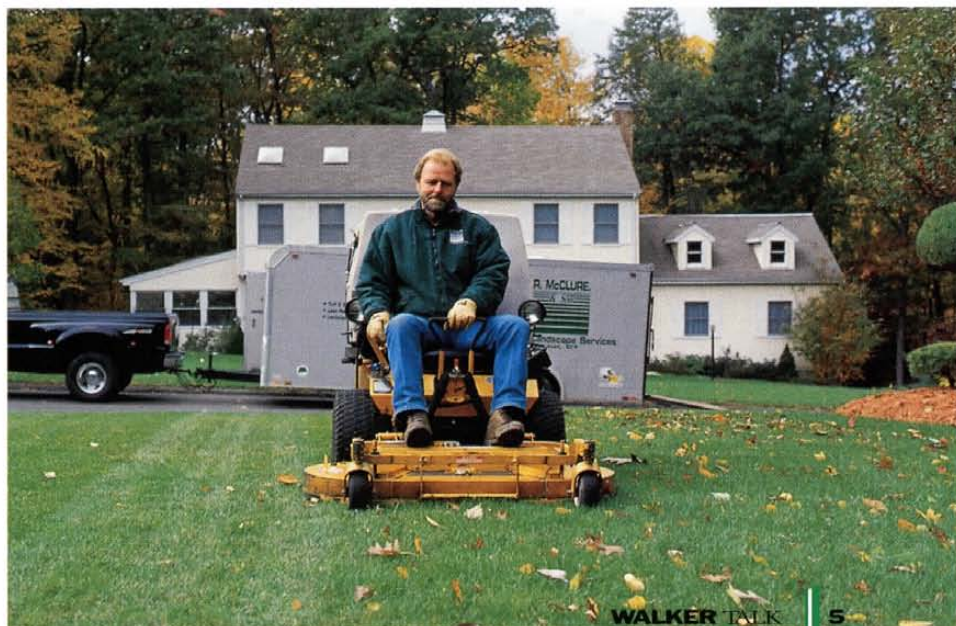
These faster mowers also don't have the pickup capability that Rich says is so important to their customers. Instead of mow and blow, the McClures do the opposite: They blow and edge the property before mowing. The end result is a clean, neat package.

Cost savings occur in other areas,

too. The company spends less time cleaning up at season's end now because it uses the Walker to clean up with each mowing as the season winds down. In addition, attachments such as the rotary broom — used primarily for spring cleanup and sweeping up after lawn renovation — and the blade — for pushing snow off sidewalks — help the McClures get even more mileage out of their machine.

But it's the mowing where the Walker really makes its mark, says Rich. "The Walker has made our mowing so productive we're going to expand our mowing business next year." Growing the mowing business is relatively easy, he admits, especially among the company's current base of non-mow customers. "All they have to do is see the mowing job and they want to sign up for mowing."

Despite customer interest in their mowing operation, the McClures have no plans to launch into a separate mowing operation. Their long-range plan still puts a cap on their business. Simply put, they like the idea of staying small and delivering as many quality services as they can to a select few customers. The Walker fits nicely into that "caretaker" scheme by giving them the ability to deliver a high-quality mowing job while keeping overhead to a minimum. **WT2000**

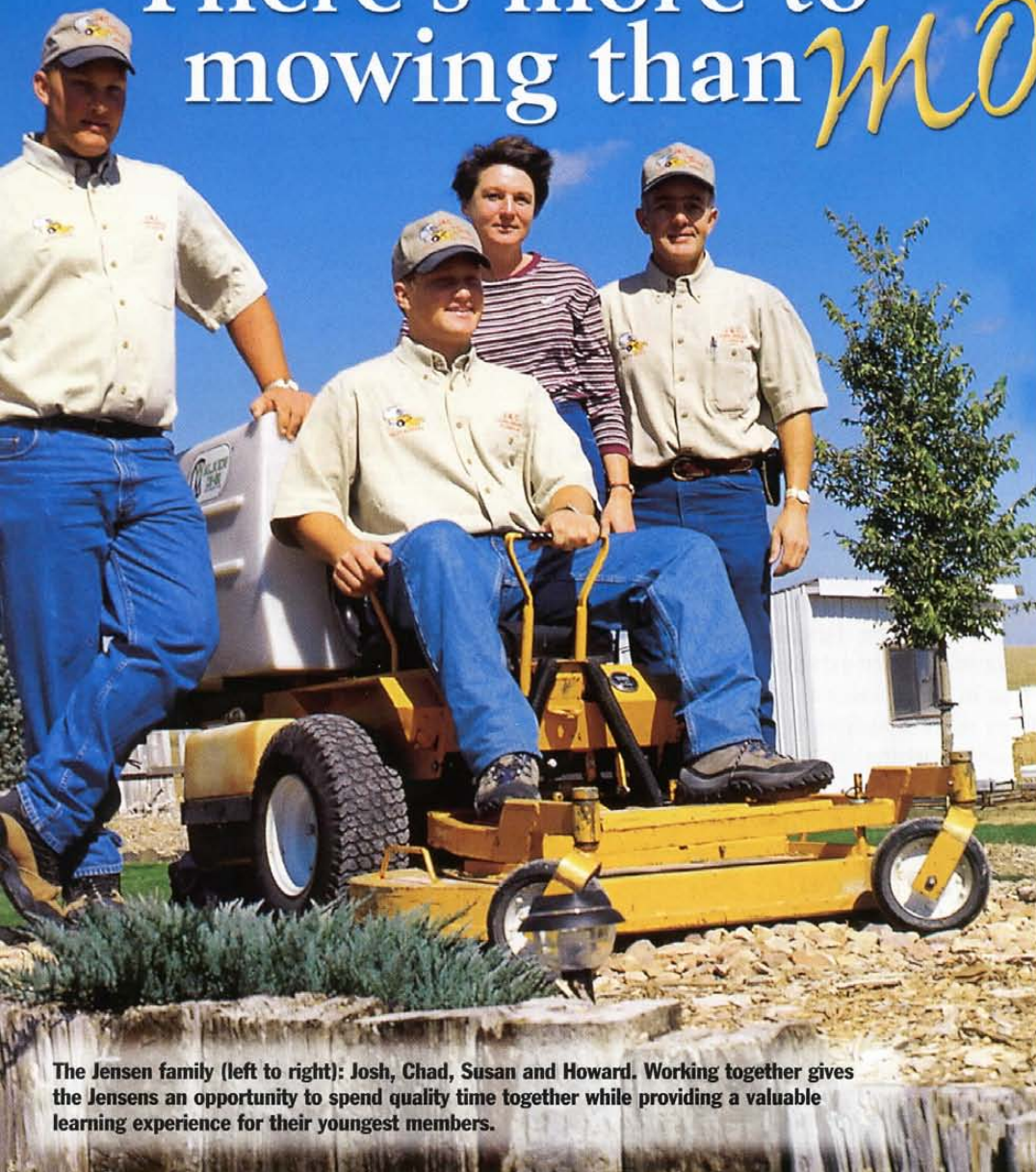


Rich McClure admits there are faster mowers than a Walker, but ground speed isn't everything. "In many cases, the other mowers mow so fast they skim right over the grass," he relates. That's something his customers wouldn't tolerate.

Walker family values

There's more to mowing than

mowing



The Jensen family (left to right): Josh, Chad, Susan and Howard. Working together gives the Jensens an opportunity to spend quality time together while providing a valuable learning experience for their youngest members.

Howard Jensen wears many hats. He's been working for the railroad for 28 years; an engineer for most of that time. He runs a nursery, an RV park, a Walker dealership, and is a respected lawn maintenance contractor. But more than anything else, Howard Jensen is a family man. His railroad career has generated enough income over the years to provide seed money for his

business ventures. That, in turn, has given him the opportunity to provide another lifestyle for his wife Susan and two sons.

"My dad was an entrepreneur," tells Howard, who with sons, Josh and Chad, operates J&C Lawn Service in Alliance, Nebraska. "I was hired by the railroad when I was 18. Corporate America has given me a lot, but it has taken a lot away, as well. I've missed many birthdays, anniversaries and

other important family get-togethers while operating locomotives and building another person's dreams. I wanted to give my sons an opportunity to choose another course, to be able to build their own dreams and spend more time one day with their families."

Howard began working on that goal 10 years ago when he and Josh started mowing lawns. At the time, Josh, the oldest son, was only seven years old. But that didn't stop him from helping in the new business.

Today, Josh and brother Chad are the backbone of a business that maintains 200 properties every week.

"I tell customers we really don't have any competition in Alliance," explains Howard. "I have my three Walkers and two sons. Even if as a dealer I sell a Walker to a competitor, I still have my sons. As I relate to my customers, no matter what happens, no matter how busy the season is, there will always be a Jensen on their property."

Chances are the Jensens will always be operating a Walker. J&C (for Josh and Chad) purchased its first Walker in the spring of 1994. It was a 16-hp model with a 42-inch deck. That year, explains Howard, they doubled their customer base. The following year, they purchased a 25-hp model and doubled their accounts again. One year later, after becoming a Walker dealer, J&C bought another 25-hp unit. The company also added a 62- and 54-inch deck.



Howard Jensen has spent 28 years "building another person's dream." He wants his sons to have an opportunity to build their own.

"When we purchased our first Walker, we were physically tired," explains Howard, who still operates a locomotive for the Burlington, Northern and Santa Fe railroad in Alliance. "With the Walkers, we dramatically increased the size of our business without working any more man-hours."

The mower's quality of cut and overall speed for finishing a job help to sell residential and commercial customers on J&C's services. Operating cost per man-hour is the key selling point for Howard's Walker dealer customers. It's really the same story, but from a different perspective, he explains, noting that both concepts are a bit of a hard sell in the sand hills of western Nebraska.

"With the Walkers, we dramatically increased the size of our business without working any more man-hours."

"Many of our lawn service customers still don't understand what it means to have their property maintained by a professional company. We're no different than any other business that provides a service that people need. We have overhead and we need to make a profit.

"Other contractors need to get that point across to their customers, and understand that part of delivering a professional-looking service is operating professional equipment." In fact, Howard likes to tell contractors who just purchased a Walker that their new mower makes them a real professional. Of course, it takes more than a mower to become a professional. But as he points out, being a professional is 80% attitude. Having a Walker on the back of your trailer lends a lot toward attitude.

"I can take my Walker mower and my dump truck, and compete anywhere in the country," Howard explains boldly. In other words, if he can make a living in Alliance mowing and maintaining lawns, he can make a living anywhere — as long as his Walkers and his boys accompany him.

FAMILY TIES

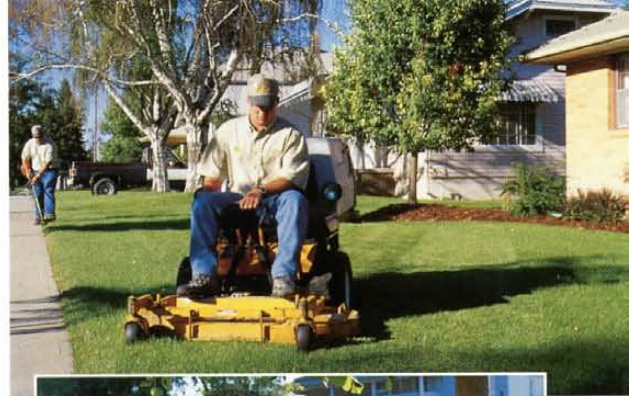
Alliance has a population of approximately 15,000 people, 20% of whom work for the railroad transporting coal cars to and from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming, and ushering loaded trains to other parts of the country. About 100 trains make their way in and out of Alliance each day.

"As parents living in Alliance, we have to ask ourselves what we offer our young people for a future here," tells Howard. "Not everyone can work for the railroad and not everyone wants to. Furthermore, it's my feeling that life has to be a balance between having financial success and being a success at raising a family.

"My No. 1 challenge in the lawn maintenance business is to get it to the point where my sons would be able to raise a family by working in the business." Howard says the Walkers have helped to meet this challenge by growing the business without growing expenses. The father and sons are also very service-oriented, to the point that they say complete lawn care covers just about anything a customer will ask of them. They've even had calls for property maintenance 70 miles down the road.

"I've told my sons that if they learn to service the masses, the masses will serve them," Howard explains. "This is really a service-oriented country. And those who perform top-of-the-line service will have a key advantage as we move ahead."

The flip-side, of course, is that Howard's sons may never want to operate a lawn service business. Chad, a few years younger than Josh, is too



Chad (top, on mower) and Josh spend after-school hours working with their Walkers and talking with customers.

(bottom) Crew member Derick Underwood puts his Walker through its paces. The mowers have allowed J&C Lawn Service to more than double its business without increasing man-hours.

young to know what he wants to do long term. Even Josh, at 18, is undecided. He currently is splitting his time between taking college-credit courses at the Alliance Learning Center and working in the business.

"The new Learning Center gives people an opportunity to obtain a four-year degree without having to travel several hours to attend classes," Howard relates. "That's the beauty of the internet. In Josh's case, being able to attend classes close by also gives him an opportunity to continue gaining valuable experience running a business, e.g., interacting with people and making his dollars stretch. The bottom line is that if he decides, or if both he and Chad decide they don't want to operate a lawn maintenance business, that's OK. They've still had an invaluable experience."

In the meantime, Howard and Susan have had the pleasure of interacting with their sons at a level few families can today. That's an invaluable experience for them, as well. **WT2000**

Vienna's Castles

Belvedere and Schönbrunn castles are truly unique places in Vienna, Austria.

Combined, these two castles draw nearly 10 million visitors a year, and it is easy to see why visitors are charmed by the beauty of these venues. Part of that beauty is the maintenance of the grounds around the castles. From seas of perennial flowers to acres of finely manicured turf, visitors can easily see how involved just maintaining the grounds can be.

"We have to use only the best," explains Peter Pinzenohler, a co-manager at Schönbrunn. "We looked at everything else, and we found that the Walker was the only one that we had no negative remarks about." Pinzenohler, who is responsible for finding the best equipment to maintain the grounds at Schönbrunn, says he gives the Walker an "optimal" rating in his book. He says that is the best rating he has, and not many pieces of equipment receive his best rating.

As a 25-year veteran of Schönbrunn, Peter says his years of experience make him the perfect candidate for choosing the right equipment. "I have seen many different kinds of mowers in 25 years at Schönbrunn," tells Pinzenohler. "I have walked behind mowers and I have ridden mowers. But none of them compares to the Walker for productivity and cut."

Manfred Hovezak, a gardener at Belvedere, says virtually the same thing about the Walker. "We have people from all over the world coming to see our property," says Hovezak. "The Walker is a piece of equipment that works fast. But more



importantly, it makes the turf look beautiful.”

Belvedere takes pride in the vast number of perennial flowers which they plant each year. So, mowing the grass around them should be done carefully, as Hovezak explains.

“We put a lot of time into maintaining our flower beds, so we need to use a machine that makes trimming around the beds easy while doing a good job.” Hovezak says the Walker has become the tool they have found that gives them the kind of cut they need to complement their beautiful flower beds.

Both castles have full-time staffs; Belvedere employs 15 people to maintain its four-acre site, while Schönbrunn maintains its 1.5 million-square-meter property with 170 employees — 40 of which are apprentices who must have three years of previous experience to work there.

Sixty of Schönbrunn's employees work in the gardens and parks while the remaining employees work in the numerous greenhouses throughout the property. Many of the gardening employees are involved in a bookkeeping process of each plant that starts in the greenhouses and is followed through to planting.

When the mowing is all said and done for Pinzenohler and Hovezak, they both agree on one thing — these castles are rich in history, which they admit is the main attraction. But they are eager to tell anyone who will listen that the grounds surrounding these pieces of history are also an integral part of attracting tourists. **WT2000**



The Walker is easily put through its paces at Schönbrunn around many obstacles including slopes, beds, ponds, and even an occasional tourist.



The perennial flower beds at Belvedere Castle give operators a perfect opportunity to show off the Walker's maneuverability.



Manfred Hovezak is the primary Walker operator at Belvedere.

Walker's clean cut complements the beautiful perennial flowers and roses, according to Walker operator Peter Pinzenohler.



FACES BEHIND THE WALKER NAME

For years, Walker customers have received a production sheet with each employee's name and signature on it. But over the years customers have asked, "Who are these people?" This issue of WALKER TALK features the third stop in a five-part series that's introducing readers to the "Faces Behind the Walker Name."

Details, Details, Details ...

Finishing

"What would a Walker be without paint?" Maybe a better question is: "What would a Walker be without the attention to detail given by the Finishing Department?" Each welded part is smoothed by grinding. Before painting, all parts are washed with a 150° F high-pressure spray of water and phosphate cleaning/coating chemical. Many of the metallic gray-colored parts are powder coated and cured in a 400° F batch oven. All the yellow parts and large gray parts are spray painted with automotive/industrial air-dry enamel. The air-dry enamel cure is accelerated by placing painted parts in a 120° F hot room. Walker owners see a detailed finish with an attractive, durable coat of paint. But it's what they don't see that probably means the most.

The next step for "Faces Behind the Walker Name" is the Assembly, Inventory, Warranty and Shipping Departments, the featured departments in Volume 16 of Walker Talk.



(From left to right) Front row: Shawn Brinkman, Frank Martinez, Mark Johnson
Second row: Roddy Alexander, Pablo Pluma, Mark Meza
Third row: Dave Scoggin, Jay Wojcik (finishing supervisor), Jim Christopher
Fourth row: Bill Held, Allen Murrow, Shawn Brunmeier, Brian Park, Derek Ketterlin
Back row: Josh Dunn

1999 WALKER

Your Walker Man

Paul Lefort
William A. Young
Steve Gillis
Johnny Clark
Dan Updike
John Grisavage, Jr.
Wesley Baldassare
Scott Hendershot
Eldon Kell
Daniel Amen
John Beckner
Russ Smith
Jeff Stoneking
Dan King
Amos Davies
Darrell VanWagner
John Weiscopef
George Villa
Jim Wilson
Keith Yarnell
Carl Cox
Evan Lefort
Roy VanBeber
Don Pilon
Rich Nash
Rich Campbell, Jr.
Allen Maxwell
Rick White
Curt Quinn
Collin Jones
Al Hardwick
Johnny Heldt
Nathan Campbell
Tom Grady
Tim Case
Bret Hodson

Paul Lefort, Production Manager
William Young, Fabrication Supervisor
Steve Gillis, Parts Fabrication
Johnny Clark, Parts Fabrication
Dan Updike, Parts Fabrication
John Grisavage, Jr., Parts Fabrication
Wesley Baldassare, Parts Fabrication
Scott Hendershot, Parts Fabrication
Eldon Kell, Parts Fabrication
Daniel Amen, Parts Fabrication
John Beckner, Parts Fabrication
Russ Smith, Parts Fabrication
Jeff Stoneking, Parts Fabrication
Dan King, Parts Fabrication
Amos Davies, Parts Fabrication
Darrell VanWagner, Parts Fabrication
John Weiscopef, Parts Fabrication
George Villa, Parts Fabrication
Jim Wilson, Parts Fabrication
Keith Yarnell, Parts Fabrication
Carl Cox, Tooling
Evan Lefort, Laser Fabrication
Roy VanBeber, Machine Shop
Don Pilon, Maintenance
Rich Nash, Welding
Rich Campbell, Jr., Welding
Allen Maxwell, Sub-assembly
Rick White, Sub-assembly
Curt Quinn, Sub-assembly
Collin Jones, Sub-assembly
Al Hardwick, Sub-assembly
Johnny Heldt, Sub-assembly
Nathan Campbell, Sub-assembly
Tom Grady, Sub-assembly
Tim Case, Sub-assembly
Bret Hodson, Sub-assembly

The only way for a small company to compete with conventional product with conventional hope to survive in the marketplace

FACT BOX

- ✓ Grinders use approximately 90 sanding discs per day smoothing welded parts
- ✓ The cleaning process uses 1,000 gallons of water per day mixed with biodegradable chemical cleaner; no solvents are used for cleaning and no hazardous waste is generated
- ✓ Approximately 8,000 gallons of paint and 7,200 pounds of powder are used per year in painting
- ✓ An average of 1,100 parts are powder coated each day



Rich Erbes, Sub-Assembly
Stanley Hicks, Chassis Final Assembly
Montoya, Chassis Final Assembly



Bill Hoffman, Warranty
Butch Stull, Warranty



Jim Christopher, I
L, Paint
rtinez, I
row, P
lexand
atterlin
Davis,
coggin
Pluma,
Tomas
Helzer,
Schm
Villa,
Garcia.



PHY

erty and uncompromising quality.
me product offered by a small company can

"Machine of the times"

For Connecticut gardener,
new Walker fits like

HAND in GLOVE

Edward Cook may be a student of gardening, but when it comes to his Walker mower and mowing strategies, he belongs at the head of the classroom.

Edward Cook calls himself "the gardener." He maintains 40 properties throughout northern Connecticut with a dedication that borders on obsession. In his words, that's because he likes what he does and he plans on doing it for the rest of his life.

Cook owns and operates EGC & Co. (stands for Edward G. Cook or Environmental Growing Concern) in Suffield, Connecticut. Passersby can't miss his snappy-looking truck and custom-made trailer at curbside, with lights flashing during unloading and loading. The lights are part of what he calls a "hot loading" strategy that alerts drivers to his presence. "You can't be too careful when you're in this business," tells Cook, "especially when

you're a one-person operation. One accident cannot only cause injury, but it can put you right out of business."

EGC targets high-end residential customers, many of whom are retired or near retirement. These are the people who still enjoy their gardens but would rather have someone else do the work. Cook is that person who spends three days a week gardening and two days mowing.

"I learned to appreciate gardening from my father," Cook relates. On-the-job experience, and additional training here and overseas, have given him the tools and knowledge to deliver what customers want.

A PROFESSOR OF GARDENING

Listening to "the gardener" talk about his business is not unlike sitting in a classroom. A conversation, for example, may begin with a discussion about technique. "I always mow at a slight angle down across a hill. I never turn into the hill. That would cause the machine to lose traction."

Then the talk may focus on business. "I don't make a purchase, I make an investment. Every piece of equipment I own is designed to help me with my work."

Then it may lead again to technique. "It's important to take notes on every property you maintain to be better prepared the next time you service the property. I also take notes on fuel consumption and track all maintenance costs."

Before you know it, the subject may turn to buying a new piece of equipment. "I have my own equipment test form I fill out when trying out new equipment."

Then it turns to safety. "Did you know that agricultural-related accidents are the number three cause of injury in this country?"

SAFETY FIRST

The gardener emphasizes safety for several reasons. He lost his father in a tragic auto accident when he was only



Cook calls this grove of trees on one customer's property the Black Forest. But it's no challenge for his Walker mower.



Small, heavily trafficked roads dictate the use of safety cones and following other safety precautions.

15. Later, he was in an accident himself that caused months of suffering and hardship. He also knows that operating any type of equipment can be dangerous, not to mention the fact that the roads around Suffield are typical of most in New England, meaning they are relatively small and very heavily trafficked. Most contractors, including EGC, simply pull up to the curb and unload. There is no safe haven for trucks and trailers.

In addition to lighting up his truck, trailer and mower for loading and unloading, Cook also carefully displays safety cones at the parking site. He demonstrates his technique for putting up and taking down his cones, never once turning his back to oncoming traffic. He also practices safety procedures in all aspects of his operation, from operating his equipment to storing his fuel and other potentially dangerous material. "Notice where I keep my fuel and oil in the shop?" He answers, "Close to the main entrance where fire personnel can quickly identify it." Spoken like the volunteer firefighter he is.

NEED FOR VERSATILITY

But he really gets in gear talking about his new Walker, one he pur-

chased in the spring of 1999.

"This is a Model D with a Kubota liquid-cooled engine," he explains. "It is equipped

with a 48-inch GHS deck and the larger-capacity hopper. Options include lights, arm rests and a tail wheel lock for mowing hills.

"I invested in this machine because the way I used to mow, with a walk-behind mower, was taking its toll. The Walker's a compact machine for storage, features an out-front design for better trimming, and the flip-up deck makes routine deck maintenance a breeze.

"I didn't need a monster mower, but I wanted one that would give me versatility. With this machine I can use several size and type decks, and several different attachments. As a one-person operation, I'm always looking for ways to keep costs down. A machine that wears several hats can help do just that."

In addition to mowing — he says the Walker has cut his mowing time in half — Cook employs the Model D for dethatching, overseeding, bulldozing, mulching, power brooming debris, and even hauling around gardening tools in a cart.

"I call this machine the ultimate golf cart," he adds with a smile, although having time to golf is simply out of the question.

When Edward Cook purchased his first Walker mower, he said he didn't need a "monster" mower. Instead, he wanted one that would give him versatility.

ture program. Later, he toured Scotland with a gardening group and continued to soak up as much information about gardening as he could. Gradually, his business began to make a steady transition from mowing to gardening.

Hence, full-service customers today, 15 out of his 40 accounts, get treated to one of the best mowing jobs in town. They're also treated to everything from weeding and shaping evergreens by hand to "deadheading," which encourages branching, bushy growth and more flowers. EGC also installs flowers, shrubs and hardscape elements, and places an emphasis on protecting the environment.

Cook. "I literally rolled pennies, nickels and dimes to save up the money to buy the mower. I finally had enough money three years ago to buy one, and did ... only to have it stolen a few weeks after I made the investment. It was so new that it still had the plastic on the seat. I was destroyed." He goes on to explain that insurance didn't cover the mower since it was stored at a customer's site.

It took Cook two years to save enough for a down payment on another new Walker. With the help of his dealer Red Rider in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, he now proudly owns his second machine.

"It will easily pay for itself in two years," says Cook, referring to the Model D. "With the Walker I am able to do more for less, and more than meet the economics of doing business. In fact, since I've had the Walker, I've retained seven new customers just because they like the way the Walker mows."

"The gardener" calls his Walker a "machine of the times," if for no other reason than because it has rejuvenated his business. Being self-employed for 23 years is no small feat. And at times, Cook, like others in his position, has entertained the thought of having another career. A one-person operation is particularly difficult and demanding, he adds.

"As a self-employed person, you have to learn to accept the negatives that go with being in business, and concentrate on the positive aspects, the real people and the services you bring to these people. The Walker is one of the positives to the extent that I truly believe it has saved my business."

An overstatement? Probably. But in any case, the truth for this owner/operator is that the mower has had a positive influence on his business. More importantly, it's helped him continue to do something he wants to do for the rest of his life. **WT2000**

CUSTOMIZING YOUR WALKER



Edward Cook has added a few features to his new Model D, most of which are designed to give him an added measure of safety and comfort. Here are a few of them.

- Amber work light is especially useful when mowing at dusk. "It lets people know where I am," says Cook.

- A seat belt is important for new operators who may not be accustomed to operating a zero-turn mower, Cook relates. But he

says he also wears one just to ensure that he stays with the machine in case of an accident.

- A mirror allows him to see what's going on behind the machine. That's especially helpful when making numerous tight-area turns.

- A drink holder ensures that the operator will stay hydrated. This was particularly handy for EGC this year as temperatures stayed above 100° F for several weeks at a time.

- Two small levels take the guesswork out of determining just how steep a hill is.

FROM BOY NEXT DOOR TO GARDENER

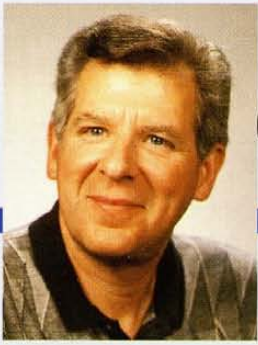
Cook began mowing lawns in 1977. He mowed lawns exclusively for 10 years until, in his words, he started to listen to his inner person. "My dad was an Episcopal priest and always had beautiful gardens. I developed an appreciation early on for flowers, grass and growing things. I decided I wanted to be a special person who could bring the beauty of gardening to my customers."

So Cook became involved with the Future Farmers of America (FFA), then enrolled in a two-year horticultural

program. Later, he toured Scotland with a gardening group and continued to soak up as much information about gardening as he could. He also mulches grass clippings when he can put the nitrogen back into the soil.

Overall, Cook says his business is approximately 70% mowing and 30% gardening. But he doesn't like to make that distinction since the Walker, in his mind, is more than a mower. It's a gardening tool that fits his business like hand in glove.

"I wanted a Walker from the first time I saw one 20 years ago," says



BOB T'S

Tech Talk

Keeping up appearances

While it is true that what your mower looks like won't affect the way it cuts, it does affect the image of your business. Keeping your Walker Mower purring and looking good is part of doing business — just like keeping track of income and expenses.

By following the recommendations in the Owner's Manual, you can set up a comprehensive, rigid maintenance schedule. Don't be distracted from that schedule by anything. If you refused to let an employee stop for lunch or take time off for rest, how long would that person last? A good maintenance program will give your Walker "nourishment" to continue working.

CHECKLIST FOR AN ANNUAL CHECK-UP (RESTORATION)

- ✓ Clean the tractor and deck thoroughly using an auto wash soap or household detergent. After washing, blow off all electrical connections and switches with compressed air.
- ✓ Strip tractor and deck for repainting. If the paint is in good condition, only a touch-up may be needed.
- ✓ Clean the inside of the catcher box with an automotive whitewall cleaner. These cleaners contain bleach that will remove some of the stains. This process should be done periodically during the mowing season.
- ✓ Remove the engine. Have an authorized service technician evaluate it and perform the needed tune-up, repairs or overhaul.
- ✓ Check all of the pulleys for wear and damage. Replace as needed.
- ✓ Check the idler pulleys for wear and the bearings for smooth operation.
- ✓ Check all idler arms for straightness and idler pulley alignment with the belt.
- ✓ Replace all of the belts. This is cheap insurance.
- ✓ Check over all of the springs. Replace any that are stretched, bent or show any signs of damage.
- ✓ Check all gearboxes for proper oil level, and for damage and leaks. Check the seals closely. Repair or replace as needed. Change the gear oil in any gearboxes as specified in the Owner's Manual maintenance chart.

✓ Examine the throttle, choke and parking brake cables. Replace any that are damaged. Lubricate the cables with silicone or another non-petroleum lubricant.

✓ Clean the blower thoroughly. Check for worn impeller blades and housing. Check the bearings by making sure the impeller turns smoothly. Repair or replace as deemed necessary.

✓ Check all of the switches (safety, light, implement, accessory and ignition) for proper operation. Replace any that are questionable.

✓ Check the wiring harness for any damage. Repair or replace. Check all of the plugs and connectors for damage and corrosion. Clean or replace as needed, and apply dielectric grease to protect the connection.

✓ Check all of the solenoids, relays, lights, gauges and circuit breakers for proper operation.

✓ Examine the tires and valve stems carefully for cuts, cracks, nicks or bulges. Make sure there is sufficient tread for good traction.

✓ Replace any bent or cracked wheels, or wheels with worn lug mount holes.

✓ Replace any worn or damaged chutes (deck, body and catcher).

✓ Replace the hydro fans if they show any signs of damage, and certainly if any blades are missing.

✓ If the operator's seat is damaged, replace it or have it repaired. Your back is not replaceable.

✓ Check the deck caster wheel bearings and pivot bushings.

✓ Replace any deck height adjustment bushings that are worn, broken or missing.

✓ Install a new set of sharp and balanced blades.

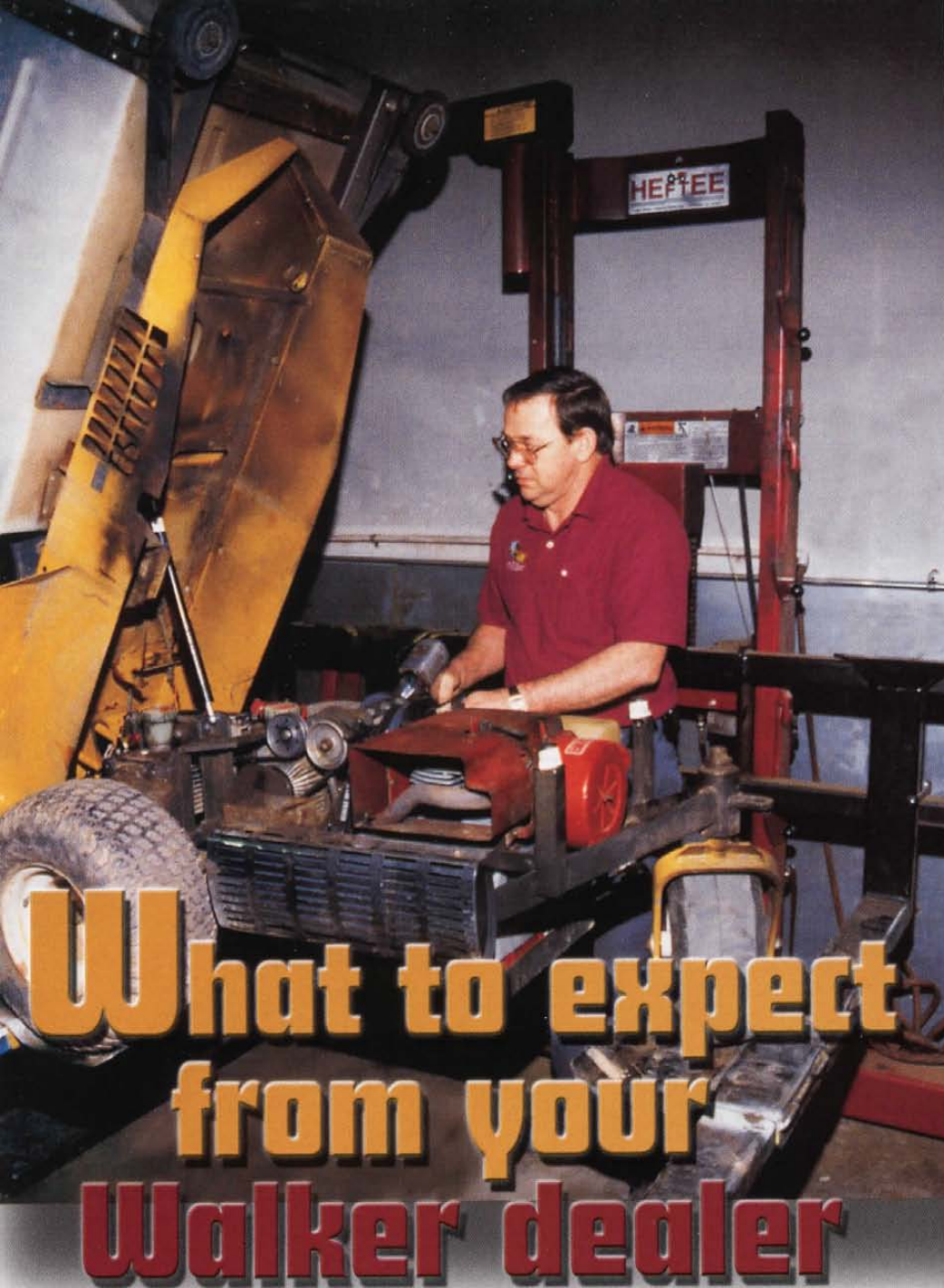
✓ After everything is reassembled, check all adjustments carefully: PTO clutch, blade brake, transmission control, safety switches, fuel solenoid and cables (throttle, choke and parking brake).

✓ Finally — give your Walker a good coat of wax.

Now you're set for another successful cutting season. You can cut each yard with pride and confidence.

WT2000

Bob Tomasek is manager of customer service at Walker Mfg.



What to expect from your Walker dealer

A Walker Mower is not a throw-away machine. It is designed and built to provide commercial operators with years of reliable service.

For most operators, a Walker Mower is a big investment and a big decision, one that requires a fair amount of discussion and research on the front end. After the purchase has been made, these same operators will look to follow a routine mainte-

nance schedule to protect their investment.

A Walker dealer will be there for the customer: on the front end, during the buying process, and afterwards by providing parts and service support.

Just what can you expect from your Walker dealer? If you're just thinking about buying your first Walker, look to your dealer to be more than a salesperson. Your dealer

will ask questions to determine the makeup of the properties you maintain, and to better understand how you plan to use your new mower.

IS A WALKER FOR YOU?

The Walker Mower is a compact, zero-turn mower, with plenty of power and cutting capacity to keep up with larger mowers. Yet, it has the maneuverability to allow it to get into places where bigger mowers can't. Still, the Walker Mower is a specialty product and not a machine for every operator. Look for your Walker dealer to help you determine if the Walker is suited to your operation. He will ask, for example, if you place particular value on a quality cut, or the machine's grass-handling

A Walker dealer will be there for the customer: on the front end, during the buying process, and afterwards by providing parts and service support.

capability, versatility and maneuverability. He will also walk you through the important price/value ratio of a new Walker. It's true, the Walker Mower is not an inexpensive machine. But many users feel there is not another mower on the market that delivers a better price-value ratio.

Then your dealer will give you plenty of opportunity to try out the mower, generally at a planned demonstration at a site of your choosing. Effective demonstrators will give you plenty of instruction up front before letting you operate the mower. He may even have you view Walker Mfg.'s "How to Mow" video prior to operating the mower.

The most effective demonstration for you and your dealer is a head-to-



Service is more than fixing equipment on a timely basis. The most successful dealers work closely with the customer, from the point of sale and demonstration process to providing exemplary after-sale service.

head demonstration with a competitive machine. If that's not possible, your dealer will encourage you to divide a test area in half and let you mow half with your current mower and the other with the Walker. There really is no better way to show time savings.

Spend as much time as you need during a demonstration to get a good "feel" for the mower. If you need more time, ask your dealer. Some dealers have a rental program in place. Others will work with you however they can to ensure that you're as comfortable as you need to be before making a purchase.

SERVICE SUPPORT

The best place to get service for your Walker Mower is at the dealer where you purchased the machine. In fact, before buying a Walker Mower, or any mower for that matter, make sure up front that the deal-

er stocks a good supply of both fast-moving and slower-moving parts, and that the technicians are trained to work on the mowers and can perform all functions.

Look around the shop and ask to see the parts room. Talk with the technicians and then talk with other landscapers in the area to find out how your dealer stacks up.

Then ask your dealer about repair times. For commercial operators, time is money and down time is lost money. Your dealer should strive to offer a 24-hour turnaround on repairs, or be in a position to offer a loaner if a machine can't be fixed in that time frame. Most dealers will also offer priority air freight to help keep your equipment up and running.

NON-EQUIPMENT SERVICE

Service is more than fixing equipment on a timely basis. Most dealers are in a position to help their customers with non-equipment issues. Many are able to give advice about operating a business, including job costing, estimating, employee relations, insurance and margins. Many offer formal seminars on business topics.

As part of their service program to customers, some dealers will also offer service contracts for routine maintenance such as oil and filter changes, and lubrication. Such contracts can be especially attractive for smaller contractors. Other dealers make a point to offer daily maintenance training for operators.

The most successful dealers, whether they sell Walker Mowers or other brands, are those who work closely with the customer from the point of sale and the demonstration process to providing exemplary after-sale service. This is the value they offer customers and this is what separates them from cost-cutters, mass merchants, big box stores and others that don't offer service. Remember, the only way your dealer will be able to continue to provide a high level of service is to obtain a fair margin on their products, parts and service.

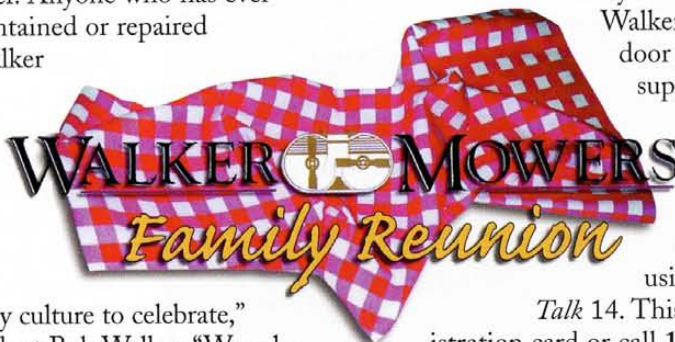
The best place to get service for your Walker mower is at the dealer where you purchased the machine.

In many ways, your dealer will resemble the products he sells. If he sells quality products that require quality service, expect him to be in a position to deliver. But like the products he sells, price is only a beginning point of discussion — the end point is how that dealer and product will deliver for you. **WT2000**

FAMILY REUNION UPDATE

Plans are in full swing for the *Walker Mowers Family Reunion*, August 11 and 12, 2000 to celebrate building the 50,000th Walker Mower. Anyone who has ever owned, operated, sold, maintained or repaired a Walker is part of "the Walker family" along with all Walker component and service suppliers. Each "family member" should make plans to attend this event at the Fort Collins, Colorado factory.

"It is part of our company culture to celebrate," explains Walker Mfg. President Bob Walker. "We celebrate reaching a milestone, company goal or achievement."



One "family" member will be chosen by a random drawing to drive the 50,000th mower off the assembly line and have their trip to Fort Collins paid. Other giveaways include two Walker Mowers, Walker wearables, and many nice door prizes provided by Walker suppliers. All registered attendees are eligible to win any of these on-site drawings.

Registration packets will be sent in late January to anyone who pre-registered using the tear-out card in *Walker Talk* 14. This issue also contains a pre-registration card or call 1-877-WALKER50.

WALKER MID-AMERICA DEALERS VISIT FACTORY



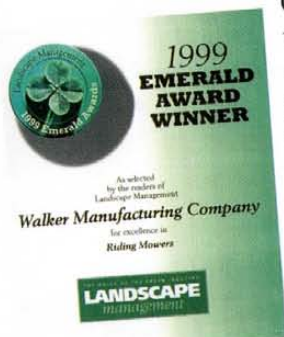
A group of 38 people, representing dealers from Missouri, Oklahoma and eastern Kansas, made a visit to the Walker factory in early December to participate in a dealer meeting with their distributor, Walker Mid-America of Harrisonville, Missouri.

During the two-day visit, dealers participated in factory tours, product and service meetings, and the new Dealer Development Program (DDP) from Walker.

WALKER CHOSEN AS FAVORITE RIDING MOWER BY LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT READERS

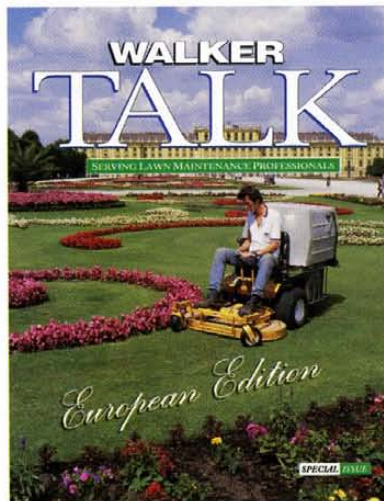
The Walker Mower has made a showing in the past several years in *Landscape Management* magazine's Green Emerald Awards. But this year readers picked the Walker as their favorite riding mower. In the contest, Green Industry professionals voted on their favorite products in 18 different turf/landscape categories, using ballots in the magazine and in person at Green Industry trade shows.

"For years Walker Mowers have been indispensable for so many lawn maintenance contractors across the country," says Susan Gibson, executive editor of *Landscape Management*. "This year, our readers made it official."



WALKER TALK EUROPE NOW AVAILABLE

The special edition *Walker Talk Europe* is now available upon request. The 52-page publication profiles successful Walker users throughout the 14 countries of Europe where Walkers are sold. Each country is profiled in their native tongue along with a parallel text in English.



Walker Talk editors interviewed Walker users from monasteries to cemeteries, castles to campsites, and back yards to school yards. Today, nearly 5,000 Walkers are in Europe, amounting to 11% of the total Walkers produced.

FACTORY EXPANSION PLANNED

Planning is underway to expand the Walker Mfg. facility by adding 100,000 square feet. In addition to expanded areas for assembly, finished product storage and shipping, a portion of the new area will house an automated powder coating system for complete finishing of the product. The addition is projected to provide capacity to produce up to 50 Walker Mowers per day, a 100% increase over current output. "Based on a continuing strong sales pattern this spring, we expect to start construction in June 2000," says Bob Walker, president of Walker Mfg.

48-INCH SIDE-DISCHARGE DECK INTRODUCED

A 48-inch side-discharge deck (DSD48) is being introduced into the Walker line of decks, making a total of 10 interchangeable decks that fit on the Walker. Operators will enjoy the same proven side-discharge and tilt-up capabilities offered in other Walker side-discharge decks. This two-bladed, gear-driven deck complements existing 48-inch GHS decks where users are looking to side-discharge and maintain the same cutting width, or where the 48-inch mowing pattern is preferred.

RECALL BULLETINS

Two recall bulletins were issued in '99. All owners of the affected units are encouraged to have their machines inspected and updated free of charge by contacting their local Walker Dealer (contact the factory if there is difficulty in finding your dealer). The following units are affected:

- Bulletin #99125 — All Models equipped with Donaldson Radialseal™ Air Cleaner prior to S/N 99-37800

- Bulletin #99126 — All Models S/N 99-38987 through 99-41628



TAIL WEIGHT FOR MD/MT TRACTORS

An 85-pound cast-iron tail weight has been designed to counterbalance the MD/MT tractor when using implements (or large decks on SD models). The weight (P/N 7647) mounts low on the chassis frame and does not interfere with dumping the grass catcher or raising the utility bed. Weight can be increased by installing extra 10-pound plates (P/N 7647-5).

OPTIONAL SEATS OFFER A SMOOTHER RIDE

For increased operator comfort, two choices in operator seats are now an available option for Walker Mowers, either factory-installed or as an upgrade kit on earlier models:

- The comfort seat is a built-up (not molded) seat with a steel frame, extra-thick foam padding and removable/replaceable covers. Armrests are optional.

Order P/N 6103-5 for the upgrade kit and P/N 6103-15 for armrests.

- The suspension seat offers full-spring suspension with dampening, and has adjustments for back angle, bottom angle and operator weight. Optional armrests will be available in the near future. Order kit P/N 6103-10 (Model MS, MC, MT) or P/N 6103-20 (Model MD) to upgrade earlier models.



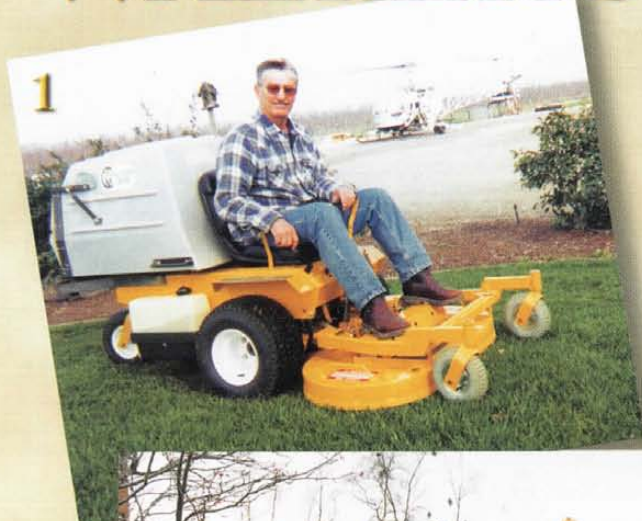
OTHER PRODUCT OPTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS



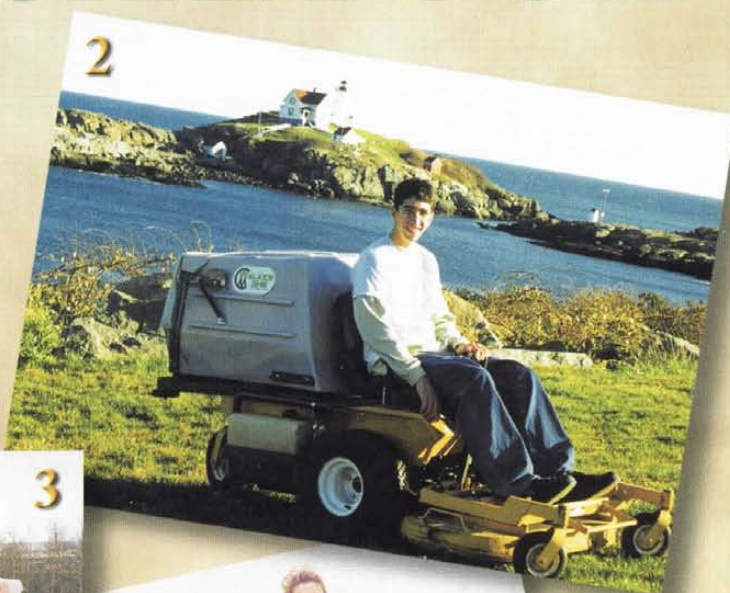
Stevens
Mechanical
Deck Lift

| ITEM | P/N | DESCRIPTION |
|-------------------------------|---------|--|
| Big Catcher Option for MC | MCGHSA | Factory option to install large 9.5-bushel catcher assembly (same as available on models MD/MT), includes stronger mounting brackets and bumper assembly to handle extra weight. |
| Case-Hardened Blower Assembly | 6542-15 | Dealer-installed upgrade, case-hardened steel housing and fan increases wear resistance when mowing in areas with abrasive soil and sand. |
| Stevens Mechanical Deck Lift | 8645 | Kit installs lift lever and linkage to raise and secure deck in "transport" position. |
| Improved Dump Bag | 5598 | New material and construction for improved durability. |

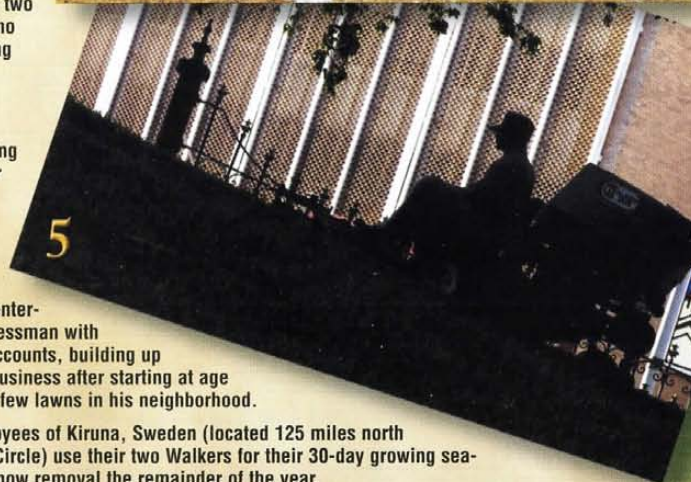
WALKER SCRAPBOOK



1. Maybe the best-looking 1988 Walker around — helicopter company owner Mike Eccles of Stockton, CA sits proudly on his Walker S/N 88-4169 which is maintained to "aircraft standards" by his two mechanics who enjoy restoring high-quality machinery.

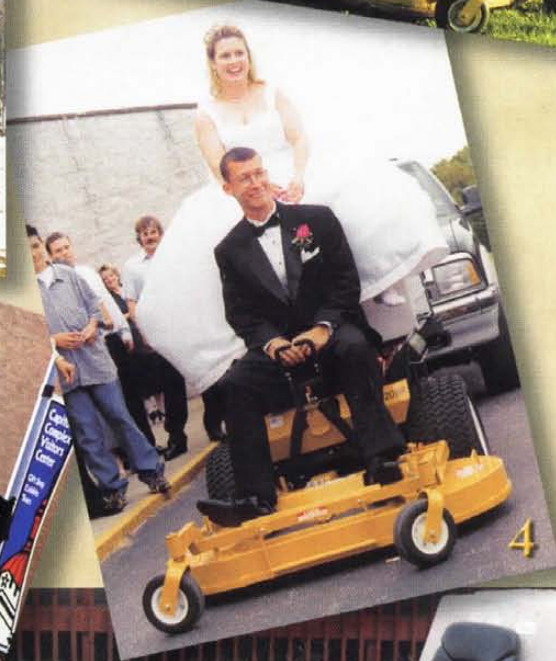


2. Not just another smiling Walker owner — actually, 16-year-old Jeremy C. Reynolds of York, Maine is an enterprising businessman with 55 mowing accounts, building up his mowing business after starting at age 10 mowing a few lawns in his neighborhood.



3. City employees of Kiruna, Sweden (located 125 miles north of the Arctic Circle) use their two Walkers for their 30-day growing season and for snow removal the remainder of the year.

4. Walker Wedding Bells — Brian Rafferty and his new bride Amy were surprised that the "get-away car" from their wedding was a Walker Model MT. Brian is a crew chief/foreman for Grasshopper Property Maintenance, Inc. in Millersburg, Ohio.



5. Walker operator Mauricio Maldonado is silhouetted by early morning light as he mows the 22-acre grounds of the Texas Capitol building in Austin. (Photo Credit Associated Press and Wide World Photo)

6. Farmer/rancher Daryld M. Williamson of Sturgis, SD used his abilities as a former airplane mechanic in WWII to build a 96" deck for his 1996 Walker. The two additional 30" decks are powered by a 12-hp Briggs and Stratton engine.

