



## Trail Crew Alumni Association Update

Updates for alumni and current crew.

February 2016 (a little late)

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John Lamanna  
Trail Crew 1977-1980



Trail Crew Chainsaw Training  
by John Lamanna

### Leadership for Trail Crew...

So, you're going to be a Crew Leader this coming season or maybe you are already one. Good for you, the experience will stand you in good stead for whatever you end up doing after your trail crew days are over. Enjoy the experience and know that leading crews on the A.M.C. Trail Crew (T.F.C.) will put you head and shoulders above your peers who don't have the benefit of that experience. It sure helped me.

I started leading crews the fall of my 2<sup>nd</sup> year (1978). They didn't have anyone else so they got stuck with me. A few years later I was in the service in the U.S. Navy Seabees, over the next 25 years (10 Active, 15 Reserves) I was in various leadership positions from Fire Team Leader on up to Line Company Operations Chief. I was a Chief Petty Officer (E-7) when I hit mandatory retirement, from the U.S.N.R. I've led logging crews, tree service crews, led crews on overseas contract work. Mostly I learned by doing the job, and by following the examples set by people who led me. The Navy and Marine Corp. also gave me some formal training.

I don't bring this up to brag in any way, because I'm not, and there's nothing special about my experience considering the trail of life I chose to hike. I'm just giving you some background so maybe you can get an idea of why I think about leadership the way I do.

Leadership, like most everything else, is a constant learning process.

*In the school of the woods ... there is no graduation day.*

- Horace Kephart

Below are some ideas on leadership to chew on...

So, there you have it, some thoughts on leadership for Trail Crew. I didn't make this stuff up. I just kind of adapted some of what I learned over the years from the Seabees and Marine Corp. and applied it to Trail Crew. I know, I say he and men a lot, but I'm not excluding the women, it's just the way I am so get over it. I would also say it's good to study the leadership examples of others. Sir Ernest Shackleton, Joe Dodge, Teddy Roosevelt and Gen. George Patton are some that come to mind.

**A last point** - As a Crew Leader, you directly influence the future of Trail Crew and how the Trail Crew is seen in the eyes of the public and the A.M.C. overhead. Trail Crew (T.F.C.) is traditionally

a high spirited group of go-getters and it is very easy to get swept up in the energy of crew, as you should. However, as a leader, never let your energy or enthusiasm take over your judgment and conduct. Try at all times to maintain good relations with the public, hut crews, Construction Crew and all the rest of the folks at Pinkham and Dodge. And ensure your crew does the same.

-Good Luck - Foo!  
-John Lamanna T.F.C. 1977-1980

## Primary and Secondary Objectives of Leadership

**Primary** - Mission or Job Accomplishment

**Secondary** - The Welfare of Your Crew

Example:

Get the section of trail rebuilt (Primary)

Train new crew in rigging skills (Secondary)

## Principles of Leadership

1. Know yourself and seek improvement. A good leader is humble. He knows he can always do better. By self-improvement he only strengthens the team.
2. Be technically and tactically proficient. You can be the best rock setter around, but how are your first aid skills? Radio (communication) skills? Camp skills?
3. Develop a sense of responsibility among your crew. This is part of delegating responsibility. Give your crew members ownership and accountability for certain tasks, by doing so you help to train future leaders.
4. Make sound and timely decisions. This is no easy skill to acquire. Sound decisions are based on good judgment, born of experience. The ability to deliver them in a timely manner is related to being as situationally aware as possible at all times.
5. Set the example. All organizations have standards that must be upheld. This is essential for morale and unit cohesiveness. Standard for work, conduct, appearance, whatever. When you set a good example your men will want to be like you and will spread your good example throughout the team.
6. Know your crew and look out for their welfare. When I was a Squad Leader, I had a notebook and I had a page in it for each guy in my squad. Things as simple as boot, shirt, pant size (for resupply), blood type, religion, marital status, kids, hometown, training schools attended, a lot of stuff. The point is I had some basic knowledge of these guys. This helped me fix problems and see things coming and take action. When things got tough I could more easily check on a guy's morale because I had more insight as to who he was and his concerns, beyond the obvious given the situation.
7. Keep your crew informed. Don't play "I got a secret." If your crew is informed about a job, a situation, project planning, they will have more of a stake in it, and the benefit is that may come up with some good ideas that you didn't think of.
8. Seek responsibility and take responsibility for your actions. Always seek responsibility and the accountability that comes with it. You will never develop as a leader waiting around to be told what to do. I made it my policy to always take additional responsibility so I could lead rather than be led by someone who might be dumber than me.
9. Ensure assigned tasks are understood, supervised and accomplished. This may sound kind of heavy handed but it need not be. This is an opportunity for you as a leader to learn more about leading, to train your crew, and build their confidence in their skills. An important point here is not to hover over your men. Give them an assignment, keep your finger on the pulse, and see what they do. Oftentimes their ingenuity will surprise you.
10. Train your crew as a team. This spreads knowledge throughout the crew, and prevents chinks in your armor if you are short-handed.
11. Employ your crew in accordance with their experience and capabilities. But must also let them work outside of their comfort zone, and yours, if they are going to learn new skills and grow as future leaders. As a leader you can't expect perfect as people learn new skills. So we are back at judgment, so pick your job assignments wisely.

## What are the Traits of a Leader?

1. **Dependability** - You can count on him in all times.
2. **Bearing** - A leader must not lose his head and is respectful of others. He is humble, with no swagger.
3. **Courage** - Physically, yes, but also he must have the courage to do the right thing even when he

- knows he may be ridiculed for it. He sticks by his guns.
4. **Decisiveness** - It's always good to be decisive, wishy-washy people are annoying, ineffective, and a pain in the ass at best. They are dangerous, at the worst. Again, decisiveness must be based on sound judgment, born of experience - a tough glass to fill.
  5. **Endurance** - Get tough! Mentally and physically tough people are harder to kill ... bottom line.
  6. **Enthusiasm** - This can be a tough one. In the military we had 'mandatory enthusiasm' I called it. Stupid shit like singing songs while we marched or ran and yelling our asses off counting jumping jacks - *Airborne! Oorha! Hooya!* I say, 'Screw all that.' And, I was a C.P.O., mind you. If you can't muster the enthusiasm for what you are doing from within your own heart, no amount of external peer pressure or group think will save you. It's all about heart. That being said, it's tough to be in a leadership position and have to enforce some chicken-shit policy or you are trying to do good things but get no support from your superiors. If you as a leader are not enthusiastic, then maybe the whole team has a problem.
  7. **Initiative** - A good leader looks for things that need to be done and acts on it. Do it now. This often prevents all kinds of problems. If you train your men this way, they learn to think on their feet, on their own.
  8. **Integrity** - Are you as good in the dark as you are in the light? In other words, will you always try to do the right thing, even when there is no reward for doing it and no one will know whether you did the right thing or not? It must be in your heart to do the right thing always.
  9. **Judgment** - Again, born of experience.
  10. **Justice** - A good leader does not play favorites. He treats all his crew fairly.
  11. **Knowledge** - Learn all you can about your job, associated jobs, the White Mountains, the trails, the history of the area, everything you can. Never stop learning and pass on what you have learned.
  12. **Tact** - And, we all know what a tactful fellow I am - Right?! Seriously...A good leader is tactful up and down the chain of command, as Trail Crew Leaders it is essential that you be mindful to exercise tact in dealing with the hiking public you may encounter.
  13. **Unselfishness** - A good leader puts the welfare of his crew before himself. He diverts praise for himself to praise for his crew
  14. **Loyalty** - A good leader is loyal to his crew and his outfit. He does not change flags on a whim to serve or advance his own interests. If there is a problem on the crew he keeps his opinions within the crew and doesn't talk badly about the crew to outsiders.

## Annual Reunion - Mark your Calendar!

Saturday, November 12th

Attend to hear about planning for  
the 100th Anniversary of Trail Crew (2019)!

Visit the Web site soon for complete information.



Visit TCA Web site - [amctca.org](http://amctca.org)