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San Luis Obispo Chapter  
California Landscape Contractors Association  
Representing the Landscaping & Irrigation Industry

## **Annual Fishing Charter**

Join the CLCA San Luis Obispo Chapter for the annual fishing charter, and a day of sun and surf with your colleagues on Friday, April 30, 5 a.m. to 2 p.m. We'll be heading out on The Patriot from Patriot Sport Fishing, 3975 Avila Beach Dr. in Avila Beach in search of rock cod and crab. Boarding is at 5 a.m. sharp. We'll leave the dock at 6 a.m. and return at 2 p.m.

Fees include your spot on the boat and bait. Rods and fishing license available for an additional fee. Food and drink available for purchase-cash only. Fish cleaning is included, but tipping the crew is customary. No ice chests, fire arms, alcohol or illegal drugs, please.

For more information, contact Mike Kneeskern at [MKNEESKERN@SITEONE.COM](mailto:MKNEESKERN@SITEONE.COM) or call 760-520-5412

Space is limited, so register today at <https://bit.ly/3clb2eA>.



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# Just Wait for it to Blow Over

Steven Cesare, Ph.D. The Harvest Group, Landscape Business Consulting | [harvestlandscapeconsulting.com](http://harvestlandscapeconsulting.com)

A business owner from California called to discuss a claim of sexual harassment. At a crowded trade show attended by numerous vendors, business partners, and competitors, one of the business owner's female employees was walking through the crowd, when a male attendee "more than patted her on the butt." Startled, she turned around quickly, only to realize the aggressor was an employee of one of the Company's key clients. His glance was indirect; words were not exchanged.

Upon returning to the Company office, she notified the human resources manager who informed the business owner. He called me seeking guidance.

The Company Employee Handbook contained a straightforward Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, which included offensive behavior committed by a third-party (e.g., vendor, contractor, visitor) against a Company employee, as part of its definition of "unwanted sexual behavior."

I advised him to meet with the victimized employee with human resources in the room, review the written claim she had provided, express sincere disgust toward the action, and take appropriate action to prevent reoccurrence.

That's when the owner got nervous.

"Appropriate action," in my mind, constituted the business owner writing a formal letter (i.e., documentation) to the owner of the harasser's company explaining the situation to that owner, expressing disapproval of the offensive action directed toward his female employee, demanding a formal apology, and requiring a commitment from the other owner refusing to allow the harasser any future contact with the victim. A pretty standard response pattern: Completely in line with the Company's Anti-

Harassment Policy, characteristically indicative of an owner defending employees against unjust actions and demonstrating righteous support to the victimized employee.

"But you see, Steve, that owner is one of our key clients. He pays us a lot of money. Something like this could jeopardize future business between our two companies. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

I completely understood what he was saying. I reminded him of his principled position as a role model within the Company, connected the ethical line from the Anti-Harassment Policy to his intrepid honor in standing tall in defining moments of this sort, and his anticipated chivalrous support toward the victim seeking public protection.

After a lengthy pause, the owner said "Let me think about this for a while. We shouldn't just jump in and stir things up. If we just see how things go, maybe it will just blow over as time passes."

Which is exactly what he did.

A missed opportunity: For the business owner's character, the Company culture, and accountability against the harasser.



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# How CLCA Makes Us A Better Contractor

By Alex Salazar, Business Development Manager at Groundcare

Have you heard the expression, "What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail?" It's a loaded question that usually leads nowhere. Eight times out of ten you begin daydreaming of building a spaceship or a time machine. Best-selling author on marketing and leadership, Seth Godin, says a better question to consider is: "What would you do even if you knew you would fail?" In other words, what is something that means so much to you that you would sacrifice part of yourself for it?

If I were to attribute Groundcare Landscape's success over the last few years to something, it would be to the heart my brothers and I have put into it. The success of the business is very meaningful to all of us. There are other reasons we have been successful too. Among the top five I would say is our active

involvement in the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA). The CLCA is a not-for-profit trade association that was formed in the early 1950s to protect and champion the scope of work allowed under the C-27 (landscape contractor) license.

## Being Active

The decision to be active in this trade association is what makes a difference for us. There is an old saying that comes to mind... "You only get out of something what you put into it." Well, simply put, we're putting into the association by being active volunteers. CLCA has hundreds of members throughout the state. Only a fraction of those are active volunteer members. These are the people that help keep the organization alive. We joined CLCA in November 2013 and made the decision to be active members four years later. We've seen the fruits of this commitment in the success of our company ever since.

My brothers and I each serve in different chapters within CLCA. Francisco serves as President for the San Fernando Valley Chapter. Omar serves as President for the

Kern County Chapter. Ivan serves as Secretary for the Channel Islands Chapter. I'm serving as Chairman



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of the Board for the Los Angeles/San Gabriel Valley Chapter. This year I am also serving on the CLCA state board as Secretary/Treasurer. Needless to say, we are committed and as active as can be!

## Volunteerism

As a family we learned the importance of volunteering early on. My father, Javier Salazar, helped create and lead a volunteer group that accomplished great things for his hometown in Mexico. Over a span of three years, they remodeled the junior high school in their community and installed a new potable water deposit that has provided 24-hour clean water for the last 20 years. Most of the organizing and fundraising was done here in Los Angeles and our dad made sure we participated. We would print and sell tickets and organize all sorts of fundraising events. Because of this, we witnessed their accomplishments as teenagers from beginning to end. We learned how good it felt to give back and volunteer.

Being a part of CLCA makes us feel good. We feel like we are giving back into the industry that provides for our livelihoods. The CLCA also allows us to work collaboratively on local volunteer projects to better our community. We have received local and state recognition on several humanitarian projects that we've had the honor of being a part of.

## How CLCA Makes Us Better

Imagine attending a class in school as a freshman where your classmates are as smart or smarter than you are. It is a mixed class of freshmen and seniors. The seniors know the material better because they've been exposed to it longer than you have. They have solved problems you haven't even learned of yet. You are all there because you enjoy the class. The Freshmen are learning something new, and the seniors learn more while also helping others. All want to be successful. That's how the CLCA is.

We don't compete in the local CLCA chapters. In fact, most of us cover different areas in the region. Also, for the most part, we each have a different specialty inside the trade. This makes it easy to share work scenarios with each other and help one another solve problems. Many of the conversations have to do with small issues like "what's your favorite irrigation controller?" or "how does your team start their mornings?"

Sometimes small things turn out to be big. For example, when we were curious about using a business software to help manage our company, we learned



Team building strategies at the Chapter Presidents Council Meeting.

about LMN from a peer. At the time, it was a total game changer for us. It taught us to build company budgets and to price jobs accordingly. This was leaps and bounds ahead of simple pricing where you priced your labor at X per hour because your competitor did. It also provided a definitive answer to the question: "How low can I price my work?"

Being a multi-owner company and learning how to interact with each other in a more professional manner has been transformational. Our local chapters have taught us how to properly run board meetings. In turn, we've implemented board meetings into our company and find that having them at least once a month keeps us more organized and on track. Knowing our officer roles helps each of us to prepare for meeting discussions. Taking minutes of the meeting keeps everyone accountable. There is a comfort in knowing that everything is recorded and can be referenced at any point in the future.

During times of uncertainty, we tend to lean into things that we know and people we trust. In the past year, our relationship with CLCA has proven to be imperative to our success. We have been able to lean into the organization when we needed guidance. I am grateful for all the work our peers have referred to us as well as the support they have offered when we needed it. We look forward to much more learning and growing as individuals and professionals!

If you'd like to learn more about CLCA, visit [www.clca.org](http://www.clca.org).

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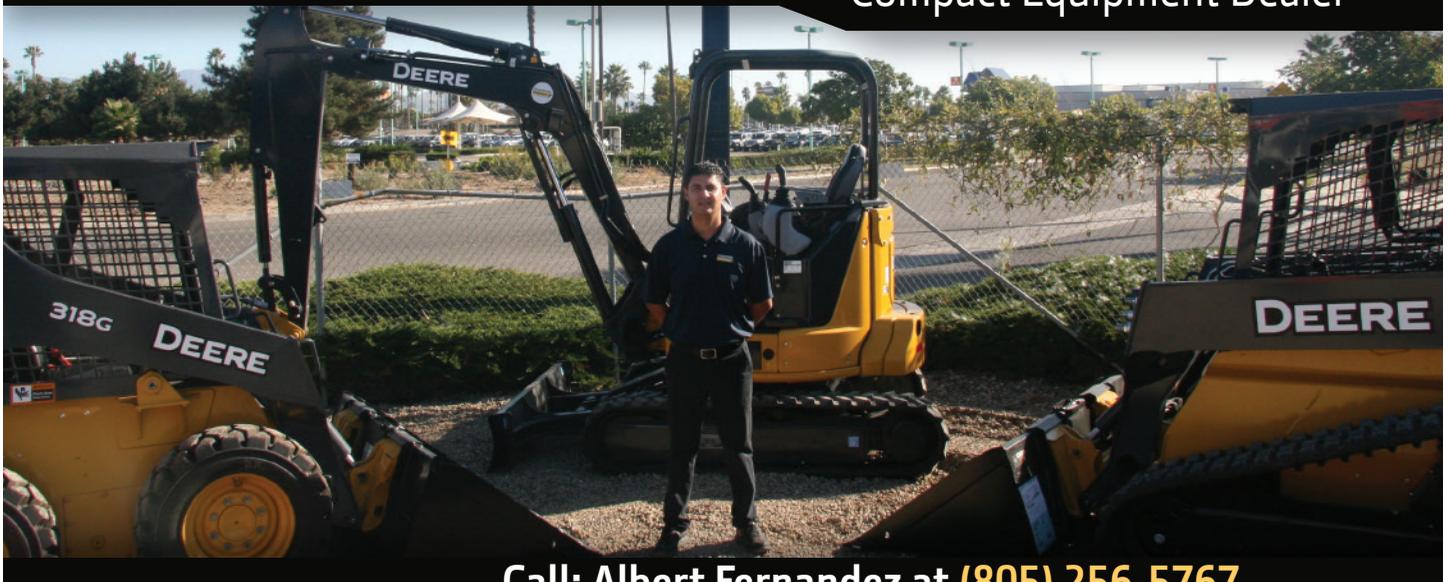
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