

A Good Samaritan

by Structural Mover Staff

In September 1995 Barry Swanson, a small business owner and employee of Anheuser-Busch, met Arthur Banks, 71, a York County Virginia gentleman who had been moving houses for over 50 years. Swanson had purchased a house and wanted to have it elevated because of the lowlands where the structure was located. A check with the local Chamber of Commerce referred him to Mr. Banks. The two men immediately became good friends.

This article is about a man who had absolutely nothing to gain financially in return for his acts of compassion, concern and action to help a friend. It, in fact, personally cost him financially as well as large amounts of time from his own business.

Living and working a lifetime in the same community and surrounding area made Mr. Banks a well-known individual who raised or moved structures. He has no company name and is simple referred to as Arthur Banks.

On 18 September 2003, an act of nature, Hurricane Isabel, paid Arthur and his neighborhood a devastating visit flooding a wide southeast area of the State of Virginia. Property damage was extensive. Houses were blown away or destroyed beyond repair and literally hundreds of houses were flooded. There is a well known saying: "One person's loss is another person's gain". Well, this certainly seemed to be a situation where Arthur Banks could gain, and rather handsomely, from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Isabel. There was one large problem, proper equipment.

You see Arthur Banks started his business on, and was continuing to use, 40 year-old railroad jacks that could not meet the needs or timetables of his potential customers. For eight years prior to the arrival of Isabel Arthur had been casually investigating the latest and best equipment he needed to raises structures but somehow the equipment marketed to him was outdated by the time he purchased it or just wouldn't do the job. As he had done on several occasions, Banks turned to his friend of nearly a decade to seek advice on what equipment he needed and where could it be located. After hearing of the predicament Banks was in Swanson decided it was time to



Arthur Banks, Barry Swanson

take Arthur into the 21st Century.

As a small business entrepreneur Swanson had attended several trade shows over the years pertaining to testing for the brewing and environmental industries and believed there would be similar organization that conducted trade shows pertaining to the structural moving industry. He was correct but it took him a few week of research before he narrowed the list to two reputable companies that manufactured such equipment. Lance Renshaw of Modern Hydraulics, Inc., West Chicago, Illinois informed Barry the structural moving business really didn't have trade shows but the companies in the business held membership in an organization that some manufacturers displayed at the organization's annual conference. After Barry explained to Lance he wanted to see the equipment first hand and provide Arthur Banks and opportunity to obtain personal education about the equipment and the association, Lance encouraged Barry to contact IASM.

It was the first week in February 2004 when Barry contacted IASM Staff Executive Gene Brymer to explain what he was attempting to do. It was immediately apparent Barry was already and becoming more frustrated with the information he was receiving. His initial question had been "How much is the registration fee for someone to attend the Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida?" When he was told \$300.00 per person for a member of the Association and \$400.00 for a non-member he exclaimed, "Look, I'm just trying to help a house mover find some equipment that will help him maintain the work he has on the books. We

can't pay \$400.00 for one day to see the equipment." Gene encouraged Barry to persuade Mr. Banks to become a member at \$250.00 and that would immediately save him \$100.00 on the registration for the entire conference. Or, if the visit would be only for one day the non-member fee would be \$200.00 per person or \$125.00 for a member. After a lengthy conversation, Barry decided it was time for Arthur Banks to take his very first airplane ride to the IASM Conference in Orlando but only for one day, Saturday, so Arthur could see the equipment he needed. "With eight months of work backlogged Arthur won't leave during the week", explained Barry, "because he doesn't want any of his customers to become angry with him for leaving town during the week when they feel he should be raising their houses. They are tired of living in the small trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA)."

Two weeks later Arthur decided going to Orlando to see and possibly purchase equipment he needed that could possibly turn things around for his company was the thing to do even though he had no desire to get on an airplane. He also decided his brother Stanly and son Reggie should accompany he and Barry to the Conference. They likewise had never flown before. Barry made all the arrangements for the four of them to visit the Saturday Products & Services Exposition at the Holiday Inn.

Arthur and his party received as much information as he wanted from the various manufacturers he visited. All four were pleased with the reception they received from IASM staff, vendors and members. Before leaving Orlando Arthur was convinced a unified jacking system would be like his first plane ride, something new and exciting but absolutely necessary. One week later Mr. Banks placed an order for a unified jacking system. It is due to arrive the second week of April. Now Arthur Banks will be on a better footing to compete with other IASM members in the area.

Barry Swanson didn't leave things there. He called up IASM again and paid for a 2004 membership in the Association for Arthur Banks. Barry Swanson is a genuine Good Samaritan.

