

# ETF News

www.eugenetreefoundation.org

NEWSLETTER OF THE EUGENE TREE FOUNDATION

## 2008 Tree Planting Summary

By Jeff Lanza

During winter and spring of 2008, ETF and citizen volunteers, in partnership with the City of Eugene, participated in six unique projects that resulted in the planting of 228 new trees in our community. With all but a few exceptions, the new trees were planted on public property alongside streets, streams, or within city park lands. These efforts, combined with the four planting projects ETF undertook last fall, resulted in 450 new trees during the 2007-2008 planting season. Since our first tree planting project in the winter of 1999, ETF has now planted almost 2,000 new trees.

Listed below are brief summaries of the projects completed this past winter and spring:

### • Willakenzie Park

Thirty new park trees planted with help from members of the Willakenzie Grange, and local Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts as part of the recently completed improvements to this neighborhood park located in north Eugene.

### • Harlow Road, Phase IV

Fifteen new streetside trees. This was the final phase of tree planting along this busy arterial street that has resulted in over 100 new trees between I-5 and Coburg Road. Visiting Interna-



Mark Snyder

Thirty-one new trees were planted at several sites in the South University Neighborhood on Arbor Day.

tional Fellow from China, Dr. Linsen Zhao—who at the time was studying at the World Forestry Center in Portland—participated in the project to learn how Eugene's urban forestry and volunteer programs work with citizen groups to improve the environment.

### • A3 Channel & Roosevelt Boulevard, Phase II

One hundred new streamside and streetside native trees. This was another round of a multi-year effort with the City's Stream Team program

Story continued on page 4; for more photos, see inside

## A Hole in the Sky—A Hole in my Heart

### Reflections on the Removal of a Large Tree

By Whitey Lueck

An article in the summer 2008 ETF Newsletter—*The Removal of a Healthy Tree Should Always be a Difficult Decision*—announced the pending removal of a large, healthy, coast redwood tree (*Sequoia sempervirens*) from my front yard. The decision had been an arduous one, as the tree had become a veritable neighborhood monument and its branches provided a deeply shaded oasis for passersby.

But as the two-trunked redwood grew bigger, so did the risk of the inherently weak juncture of the two trunks failing during a storm, and one or both

of its huge trunks crashing down on nearby dwellings. In the end, I decided it was my responsibility—knowing what I know about trees—to say farewell to this gentle giant.

Because of the redwood's exceptional beauty, I purposely designed my entryway to include a slight jog which forced visitors to turn and "behold" the tree from beneath, in all its magnificence. And I designed a bench that encouraged them to linger longer and enjoy the tranquility of the special space the tree created.

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Mission Statement:

To enhance community livability for present and future generations through the collaborative stewardship of Eugene's diverse and vibrant natural landscape



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# President's Column



Hello, everyone!

I hope you had a great summer! For me—and probably for you, too—the season went by far too fast.

In July, during a visit to Europe, I passed through both Paris and London. As a tree lover, I couldn't help but observe the urban forests of these very

old cities and I noticed two interesting differences between Eugene and these two European metropolises.

Almost every available piece of open ground in Paris and London has a tree growing happily from it. European sidewalks are often a lot narrower than their American counterparts, yet large trees are found towering over the streets, arching clear over to the other side, with their canopies carefully pruned so the branches don't rub against the buildings. What an inspiration!

I automatically thought of Eugene and the number of empty spots we could fill with our Trees-for-Concrete program. With early and proper maintenance, the majority of the trees

could grow happily in relatively narrow spaces; competition for light would force the trees to grow like they do in a natural forest...the difference being that ours is an urban forest.

What was missing from both Paris and London, however, was tree diversity. Block after block saw me counting in Paris the number of pagoda trees (*Sophora japonica*); and London is full of (no surprise) London plane-trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*)! So, on that point alone, Eugene—with a great variety of trees along its streets—is doing great!

Alby Thoumsin, President

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## A Hole in the Sky—A Hole in my Heart

Over the years, many other people were drawn to the tree. For months, a letter carrier daily parked his vehicle and enjoyed his lunch in the tree's ample shade. More than one young mother nursed her infant while seated on the bench. And one day, I returned to my home to find a man—who apparently did not have a home of his own—sleeping beneath the tree; I didn't disturb him.

But it wasn't until the redwood's removal was imminent that I truly realized the magnitude of its gifts to so many people. I posted adjacent to the sidewalk a large, fluorescent-yellow sign that explained what was going to happen. And I delivered flyers to all the houses within about a one-block radius. In the weeks preceding the removal, scores of people stopped by to pay their respects.

Two days before the planned removal, as I headed out on an errand, I saw an older woman who passes my house daily on her walk around the neighborhood and I stopped to say hello to her. I asked her if she knew what was going to happen to the redwood. She did not, even though she had been walking within inches of the bright yellow sign for several weeks. I could tell that my revelation shocked her, but I left her alone with the tree and continued on my errand.

Early the next morning, when I went outside, I found an envelope taped to my mailbox beneath the tree. I sat down on the bench to read it:

*Dear Whitey,*

*Please accept my heartfelt condolences on the imminent demise of your beloved coast redwood tree. We all will miss it very much. I have always enjoyed looking at and smelling that beautiful and majestic tree...*

*I am, a grateful neighbor R.*

Here was written proof of how trees can affect people. This woman's words helped me to forget temporarily the somewhat heartless assertion of another neighbor a few days earlier who said, "Whitey, you may be the only person who really cares about this tree...most people probably don't even notice it."

In anticipation of the tree's removal, I dismantled the fence beneath it to permit the workers easy access for removing the redwood's many branches as they were sawn off and lowered to the ground. And I padded and covered the bench and mailbox—both anchored in concrete and unmovable—to protect them from accidental damage. Three tubs of still-vibrant impatiens got moved elsewhere. Understory plants that could be salvaged were transplanted. For the first time in many years, the area beneath the redwood no longer looked very inviting.

On its last evening of life, I placed ten luminarios—paper sacks weighted with sand, with candles in them—in a circle around the base of the redwood, one luminario for each of the ten years I'd lived with the tree. As the nearly full moon rose that evening over the ridge to the east, it illuminated the redwood's canopy from above, while the light from the ten luminarios rose from below to meet the moonlight. It was a fitting farewell to a beloved tree.

### Letters to the Editor

*We invite you to write to ETF and let us know how you feel about this article, other articles, or any other tree matter that's on your mind.*



Above, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts help out Willakenzie Park where thirty trees were planted. Right, one hundred trees were planted in Phase II of this multi-year project along A3 Channel and Roosevelt Boulevard. Far right, ETF's cadre of reliable volunteers at the final phase of the Harlow Road project in which more than one hundred new trees were planted between I-5 and Coburg Road over several years.

# A Different Defense

By Alby Thoumsin

Do you remember the last time you hurt yourself? If it's recent, you might still feel it; or maybe you're reminded of it by looking at an old scar. But trees remember their wounds forever because TREES DO NOT HEAL.

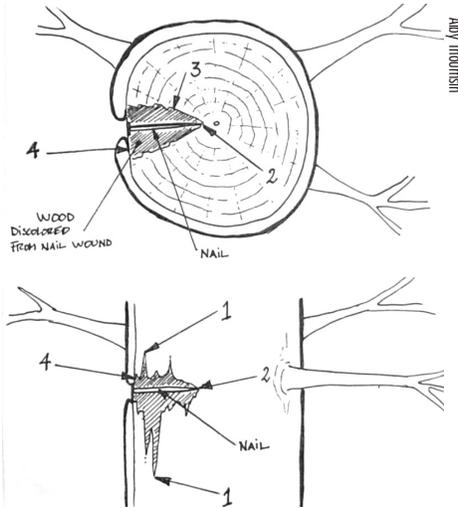
Unlike humans, trees do not regenerate new cells to replace the damaged ones. Instead, they isolate the wound by creating strong boundaries around any intrusion by a process called *compartmentalization*.

In the late 1950s, a man called Alex Shigo began dissecting trees to try to understand how they dealt with decay. His discoveries revolutionized arboriculture by helping arborists look at trees through a different lens. He called the process of compartmentalization CODIT (Compartmentalization Of Decay In Trees).

CODIT is fairly simple. Imagine pounding a two-inch nail into a tree, flush with the bark. Almost immediately, the tree reacts to the intrusion by creating three "walls" that try to delay the spread of decay through the tree. These three walls represent part 1 of CODIT. The first wall will delay the vertical spread of decay. Unfortunately, gravity and the longitudinal design of wood fibers make Wall 1 the weakest wall. We've all seen old hollow apple trees where Wall 1 crumbled a long time ago.

Wall 2 prevents pathogens from entering deeper than the length of the two-inch nail. And Wall 3 delays the radial spread. Part 1 of CODIT is also called the *reaction zone*.

The strongest wall is Wall 4, which is part 2 of CODIT—the *protection zone*, or *barrier zone*. Wall 4 "sepa-



rates the inner infected wood from the healthy wood that will continue to form after the barrier zone is completed" (Alex Shigo—*A New Tree Biology*). Over time, and depending on the tree species, a single nail wound can deteriorate and become a larger pocket of decay. The health of the tree also plays a huge factor in its ability to compartmentalize. If Wall 4 holds back the decay long enough, the amount of new wood increases and whatever cavity formed in the *reaction zone* (assuming that Walls 1, 2, and 3 failed) becomes

almost insignificant.

I have often been called to inspect a "rotten tree" only to find that the tree is fine except for a small amount of decay—not enough to present a hazard. However, large pockets of decay can be hidden behind a trunk that looks perfectly healthy. With some luck, an arborist can detect a decay column, especially if the trunk is hollow. By tapping the trunk with a rubber mallet, the hollow can be found fairly easily, which allows the owner of the tree to monitor its decline.

Some trees are better at compartmentalizing than others. The good ones are: oaks (*Quercus*), walnuts (*Juglans*), ashes (*Fraxinus*), black locusts (*Robinia*), true cedars (*Cedrus*), and sycamores or plane-trees (*Platanus*). The "weaklings" are: willows (*Salix*), poplars (*Populus*), birches (*Betula*), alders (*Alnus*), mountain-ashes (*Sorbus*), and horse-chestnuts (*Aesculus*).

My tip this time? If you still have some of that tar-like "wound dressing" or "tree wound paint" sitting in your garage, you'd be better off using it to patch your roof! Trees understood long ago that they didn't need humans to defend themselves.

Until next time!

*Alby*

Alby Thoumsin is a certified arborist.

## 2008 Tree Planting Photos



Planting photos by Mark Snyder



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## 2008 Tree Planting Summary

to improve water quality and stream-side habitat along this section of the channel located in far west Eugene.

• **Campus Re-Leaf, Alder Street**

Twenty-four new streetside trees planted between 15th and 18th Avenues along Alder Street. Multi-year program to establish tree canopy within neighborhoods on public and private property immediately adjacent to the University of Oregon campus.

• **Arbor Day** at First Congregational Church (East 23rd Avenue and

Harris Street)

Thirty-one new streetside trees planted as part of our *Trees-for-Concrete* project in the South University Neighborhood, with help from the following volunteer partners: the Lane County Chapter of the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association, Webelos Scouts, Cub Scouts, and First Congregational Church members. This marks the 29th year that the City of Eugene has received the Tree City USA award from the National Arbor Day Foundation. Also in the neighborhood on

this day, streetside and front yard native trees were planted at the Gutenberg College located at the northeast corner of East 19th Avenue and University Street.

• **Replacement/Infill** (various locations throughout Eugene)

Twenty-eight replacement streetside trees planted in multiple projects.

This fall look for announcement of tree planting and maintenance projects in addition to our second phase of work in Skinner Butte Park to restore Oregon white oak habitat along the south flank of the butte.

## LEGACY TREE UPDATE

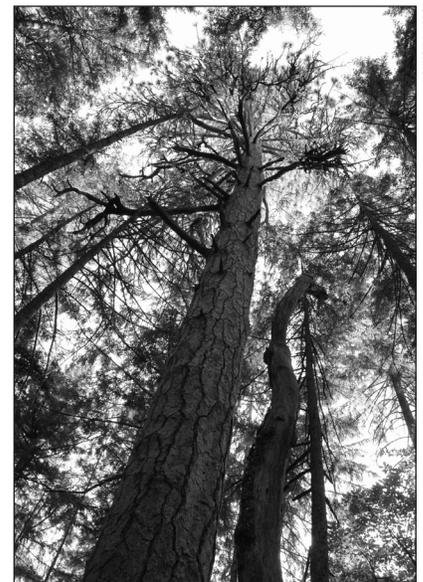
ETF's Legacy Tree committee has been quietly working these past few years to expand its list of exceptional Eugene trees. Trees nominated by the community are visited, researched, and evaluated by the committee to determine their contribution to Eugene's cultural and landscape history. As is evident from the Legacy Tree page of ETF's website, the stories of these trees and their surroundings are integral to the history and life of Eugene.

In the next few months, several new honorees will be announced and their profiles posted on our webpage. The committee recently completed a tour of this year's nominees and

spent a rousing session discussing the virtues of each tree or stand of trees. The result? A compelling group worthy of every Eugenean's attention.

We are all familiar with Douglas-fir and Oregon white oak, but do you know which is the *oldest* Douglas-fir within the city limits? Or which living tree on the University of Oregon campus is the *only* tree that pre-dates the University's founding? The committee has also visited wonderful examples of exotic species such as yellowwood (*Cladrastis*) and China-fir (*Cunninghamia*). If these trees are not already familiar to you, then you can look forward to an interesting new group of Eugene Legacy Trees!

— Phil Carroll



Scott Altemhoff

*The Mariposa Ponderosa, Legacy Tree #14, on Spencer Butte.*