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A Newsletter for the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council

2008 New York ReLeaf State Conference

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL New York ReLeaf State Conference is here!

July 24-26, 2008

The premier educational urban forestry event in the state will be held at Cornell University, a leader in horticultural research and learning.

Beginning Thursday afternoon with the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council's Board Meeting, the conference runs through Saturday afternoon and includes tours, field trips, classroom and field learning and many opportunities for networking.

Who Should Attend: Foresters, green industry professionals, volunteers, community tree board members, elected officials, etc.

Credits Available: SAF, ISA, DEC PESTICIDE, LA, CNLP AND CMA

Confirmed speakers include: Keynote Speaker George Gonzales, L.A. Urban Forester; Matt Arnn, U.S.D.A. Forest Service; Andy Hillman, Ithaca City Forester; Neil Hendrickson, Ph.D.,

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Susan Kalin Receives Otty Award

Our Town, the largest community newspaper on the east side of Manhattan, each year salutes a few New Yorkers for their notable civic contributions. The award, affectionately called the "otty" stands for "Our Town Thanks You."

Susan, in the April 10, 2008 issue, was awarded first place in the category of Community Builders. Susan passionately protects and campaigns for the trees in New York City. She considers herself a "street tree advocate" and works tirelessly to protect existing trees and initiate new plantings.

Susan has been an active ReLeaf and Council board member for many years and serves as the NYC Region 2 Council board representative. She also was a major contributor to the 2002 Conference Planning process and will continue in her efforts in the planning in the 2009 conference which will be held in the New York City area.

Congratulations Susan!



Nina Bassuk Honored

Scott Arboretum bestows the 2008 Scott Medal and Award

Most people in the field of urban forestry know the name, Dr. Nina Bassuk. Even if they don't, they probably use planting and tree care methods she developed.

Last March, Nina, surrounded by friends and colleagues, was presented the prestigious Scott Medal and Award for her ground breaking contributions to the science and promotion of urban tree selection, planting and care to maximize the health of trees and their contributions to society.



Nina, with her former student, Jamie Blackburn. Jamie is now the curator of Woodland Gardens at the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Her accomplishments are too many to cover in this small space. She is a researcher, author, teacher, ambassador of urban horticulture, and past Council President.

The Scott Medal and Award was established in 1929 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding national contributions to the science and art of gardening.

Congratulations Nina!

About the Council

The New York State (NYS) Urban and Community Forestry Council is a volunteer group, organized to advise and assist the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in executing its Urban and Community Forestry policies. The NYS Urban and Community Forestry Program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that fosters comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York to create a healthy urban and community forest and enhance quality of life.

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Message from the President

As I thought about what to share with our members for this Urban Forestry newsletter, I could not help but remark on what a marvelous season it has been for our flowering trees. I have had so many residents comment on how exceptionally beautiful their municipalities were this year, especially just in time for all of our state and local Arbor Day celebrations. It was a wonderful season for those who work so tirelessly all year on educating the public as well as planning, planting and maintaining our state tree populations.

We all are aware of the value of our community trees as detailed in our editor's article on Urban and Community Forestry in this newsletter (Page 4). Gloria Van Duyne prepared this article for a local paper and I asked her to include it in our newsletter as it is an excellent summary for us to share with our municipalities, organization and other individuals.

Since our last letter, much has occurred. On March 10, for the second year, both the NYS DEC and our Council had informational booths and attended the annual Forestry Awareness Day held at the Legislative Office Building in Albany. The purpose of this special day was to

promote healthy forests and their value through wise utilization of this sustainable resource.

Our Web Site Committee has recommended various improvements which will be incorporated shortly. When these major revisions are put into place, please always feel free to submit any comments you may have. It is a member web site and we strive to make it as meaningful and helpful as possible.

Finally, Region 7's ReLeaf committee has been working very hard on finalizing our 16th annual conference which will be held at Cornell University in Ithaca on July 24th through July 26. I'm sure it will be a wonderful educational opportunity for us all.

Patricia Tobin



Gloria's son, Jack, enjoying one of his trees before the leaves came out this spring.

Did you know, . . . every day we use and consume thousands of products made from trees.

Here are just a few: bowling pins, musical instruments, baseball bats, chopsticks, snowshoes, highway guard rails, birdhouses, fishing boats, lobster pots, bookcases, garage doors, park benches, merry-go-round horses, beehives, wine racks, handrails, yo-yos, fuel for meat smokers, spices (bay leaves, cinnamon, cloves, etc.), cola and other nuts, turpentine, and Taxol, an anti-cancer drug.

Contact Us

Council website:
www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com
Council email:
treeinfo@nysurbanforestrycouncil.com

Second Lives for Our Trees

Some community trees come down in storms or need to be removed for various reasons. Many people and communities have used the wood from these trees to make fine furniture, benches for public parks and even signs and sculpture. The following are just two stories of such reuse.

Locust Legacy

"We work with boards from these trees, to fulfill their yearning for a second life, to release their richness and beauty. From these planks we fashion objects useful to man, and if nature wills, things of beauty. In any case, these objects harmonize the rhythms of nature to fulfill the tree's destiny and ours." - George Nakashima, *The Soul of a Tree*

On January 19, 1996 a wicked storm uprooted several black locust trees in the yard of Carol Wock who lives on a windy hilltop in Saratoga County. The winds lifted part of Carol's perennial beds skyward on the roots of trees in a way not intended by any garden designer.

At the time Carol was president of the Landis Arboretum Board of Trustees. Carol's across-the-road neighbors, Fran and Herm Finkbeiner, also Landis members and members of the Northeastern Woodworkers Association (NWA), sympathized with Carol's predicament....and suggested that perhaps members of the NWA might salvage part of the trees and find a use for the wood.

In May 1996 NWA members Ron DeWitt from Salem NY, who owns and operates a portable sawmill, Jim English, also an arboretum member from Canajoharie, Earl Liberty from Albany, and Herm Finkbeiner, sweated, sawed and carried boards for drying. They were stacked and stickered, and after two years of drying, the wood was ready for use.



Herm made a potting bench (left) from the retrieved locust wood and donated it to be raffled for the benefit of Landis Arboretum. He also made

a workbench which was shown and raffled at the NWA Woodworker's Showcase in Saratoga Springs in 2000. Black locust is very attractive and suitable for making sturdy objects. It is even more rot resistant than cedar. But the heavy, dense wood is very difficult to work with and requires true commitment and skill.

The locust trees which were part of the attraction of the property when Carol bought it were used to create beautiful and useful items. Fortunately, many black locusts still remain.

Fran Finbeiner

Rebuilding a Ship

There is a remarkable project, under way since 2006, to build a replica of the Dutch ship, the *Onrust*, which was built by Captain Adreaen Block and his crew in 1614. Their ship, the *Tyger*, had been destroyed by fire. The *Onrust* (Dutch for "Restless") was the first decked vessel to be built entirely in America. The ship was 42 feet long and capable of carrying 16 tons.

This project is rich in American, nautical and archeological history. It is also one of the most successful volunteer efforts I've ever seen in my twenty years of being involved in not-for-profit organizations. New Netherland Routes, Inc., the not-for-profit created to oversee the *Onrust* project, has brought together 130 volunteers for a 3-year project to rebuild a ship that will eventually be used as a floating classroom.



Shipwright, Gerald DeWeerd, marks the "Sisters" swamp white oak.

The most striking aspect of this project is the acquisition of the wood, most of which has been donated. The stories seem endless.

The majority of the wood for this ship must be white oak. A 400 year old swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*) was donated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in Latham after it was blown down by high winds. Its wood will be used for futtocks, transom pieces, and deck planks. When someone stands on the deck, they will be standing on 400 year old wood!

At least eight 300-year-old oaks were obtained as a result of their accidental removal during the building of a new development in Latham.



Greta Wagle, site manager and V.P. of New Netherland Routes, Inc., stands by what will be the two masts.

The masts were found on Craig's List, an online classified service. The transom had been found just before it was turned into a bar. A good price was negotiated. A woman with a 19th century farm called and offered anything of value to the project from her 300

acres. A few hazardous trees from two cemeteries were offered and retrieved. And the list goes on.

New Netherland President, Don Rittner said, "It has been

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Urban and Community Forestry What is it and why is it important?

Forestry is traditionally associated with management of large tracts of timberland and smaller woodlots. A community forest is made up of all of the trees within a village, town, or city and can include trees along streets, on school grounds, in yards, parks, cemeteries, and undeveloped green spaces. The urban and community forest also contains wildlife, waterways, roads, structures, and people. In New York this is where most people work and live.

Urban forestry is the practice of creating and maintaining a healthy urban forest for the benefit of residents and the entire community. And there are many benefits. Urban trees are great at energy conservation. A tree that shades a building can reduce the internal temperature of that building and reduce air conditioning use and costs. An April 26, 2006 *Christian Science Monitor* article reported what happened when a Washington, D.C. woman lost her shade tree. City workers mistakenly cut down a 60 foot oak on the east side of her house. Besides the emotional distress of the error, her air conditioner started a couple hours earlier each day and her energy bills increased by as much as \$120 some months. Trees planted as windbreaks can save up to 25% on winter heating costs. In a study in Davis, California, trees in parking lots reduced asphalt temperatures by as much as 36 degrees Fahrenheit, and car interior temperatures by over 47 degrees Fahrenheit.

Trees also improve air and water quality. They reduce ozone levels by keeping temperatures lower. They remove particulate matter and other pollutants from the air we breathe. They reduce storm water runoff and remove pollutants from water.

There are even economic benefits. Trees can increase property values. Personally, I know the 100-year-old sugar maples in the front yard were a big plus when I bought my house. Trees can actually attract tourists and shoppers. Research shows that shoppers in well-landscaped business districts are willing to pay more for parking and up to 12% more for goods and services. Trees reduce runoff and erosion from storms by about 7% and reduce the need for erosion control structures. In urban areas with trees, the use of smaller drainpipes can save cities on materials, installation and maintenance.

Trees even improve our general health. Desk workers with and without views of nature were surveyed. Those without views of nature, when asked about 11 different ailments, claimed 23% more incidence of illness in the prior 6 months. Hospital patients recovering from surgery who had a view of a grove of trees through their windows required fewer pain relievers, experienced fewer complications, and left the hospital sooner than similar

patients who had a view of a brick wall.

I could go on and on about the benefits of trees in developed environments but I will end with the fact that they can reduce stress and improve learning. Americans travel about 2.3 billion miles per day on urban freeways and highways. Studies show drivers exposed to roadside nature scenes had a greater ability to cope with driving stresses. Symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children are relieved after contact with nature. Specifically, children with ADHD are better able to concentrate, complete tasks, and follow directions after playing in natural settings. The greener the setting, the more relief.

All of the above shows how important trees are in our communities. So why don't we just plant a lot of trees? We should. But trees are an investment in our community and like any investment we need to plan and manage it. We want to maximize the return on our investment. Planting trees in the wrong place or not caring for and protecting those trees will result in a lot of dead trees and wasted money.

First steps: A tree board can help. A tree board is a group of people responsible, usually by ordinance, for overseeing management of community trees. It can be made up of municipal staff, local citizens and/or tree care professionals. They can develop a tree ordinance which provides legal au-

thority for conducting forestry programs, defines municipal responsibility for public and private trees, and sets minimum standards for planting, maintenance and other management. There is no single ordinance that works for every community. Each community should determine its unique needs and how its tree ordinance will fulfill those needs.

Another key early step to take is to take inventory of your trees. You can't manage it unless you know what you have. Evaluating condition is important so you can prioritize maintenance and deal with trees that pose the greatest threat to human and property safety (greatest liability) first.

Developing a tree board, tree ordinance and tree inventory many seem like daunting tasks but they don't have to be. Help is available. Urban forestry workshops are given all over the state. A lot of information is available on the internet. And urban forestry professionals from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and private firms can provide a lot of personal assistance. Trees are worth the investment.

Gloria Van Duyne



One of the 100-year-old sugar maples in front of the author's house. Yard trees make up one component of the urban forest.

Tree City USA - Annual Recognition Luncheon

This year's luncheon provided informative speakers, recognition of accomplishments, delicious food and great company. This year there were 16 Growth Awards, a new record!

Besides the good food and all the recognition, I hope to build better relationships with the villages and towns we serve. The Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) regional staff help build the bridge between the state forestry office and the work being done on the ground.

Congratulations!

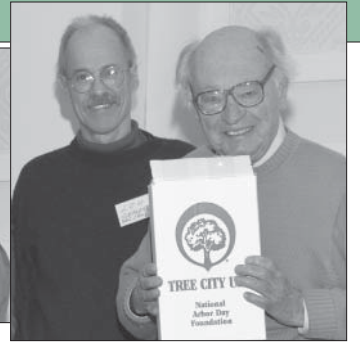
Mary Kramarchyk



James Farrel, 2008 winner of the state-wide Arbor Day Poster Contest with his parents.



Brian Zitani, town of Babylon



Lou Sebesta, DEC and Dr. Fred Hubbard, village of Hastings-on-Hudson

Chris Mercurio, city of Rome and Mike Marsh, DEC



Mary Kramarchyk and Carol Pawelek of DEC, Brian Skinner, National Grid



Judith Berdy, Roosevelt Island Development Corp.



Francis Sheehan, Assistant Director, DEC Div. of Lands & Forests



Ed Longin, town of Cortland



Village of Warwick Trustee, Roger Metzger, Mary Kramarchyk and Lou Sebesta, DEC, and Mayor Michael Newhard

Yes. Count me in as a Council Member!

- Regular Membership @ \$20
- Student Membership @ \$10
- Not-for-Profit Organization @ \$50

(Please designate a representative)

- Small Business @ \$50

(Please designate a representative)

- Government Agency @ \$50

(Please designate a representative)

- Large Corporation @ \$500

(Please designate a representative)

In addition to my membership, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$_____.

TOTAL AMOUNT \$_____

Council Members receive discounts to the annual statewide conference and Council sponsored workshops. You are also supporting the dissemination of knowledge about tree care and the importance of tree programs for our health and well-being.

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Clip coupon and mail with your payment to NYS Urban & Community Forestry Council, PO Box 124, Cold Brook, NY 13324-0124.

ReLeaf Conference (continued from page 1)

Bartlett Research Laboratories; Nina Bassuk, Ph.D. Cornell Urban Horticulture Institute; Fiona Watt, Chief of Forestry-NYC Parks; Jerry Bond, Ph.D. Urban Forestry LLC; Chris Luley, Ph.D. Urban Forestry LLC; Professor David Wolfe, Climate Change, Cornell University.

Tours will include visiting Ithaca's vast collection of street trees (over 300 varieties), the Arboretum and Plantations on the Cornell University Campus and downtown Ithaca's porous pavement parking lot designed with structural soil and innovative green infrastructure.

For a full brochure and registration information, go to the Council's website at www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com or call NYS DEC's Urban Forestry Program at 518-402-9425.

Rebuilding a Ship (continued from page 3)

a remarkable experience to see how many people have come forward to donate oak to the project." More is still needed.

I did not have room to include the fascinating history of the Onrust and Captain Block. I highly recommend you visit the project's website at: www.theonrust.com.

Gloria Van Duyne



George Bowdish cutting the rudder from donated oak

Second Lives for Urban Trees: We want to hear from you.

Some community trees come down in storms or need to be removed for various reasons. Many people and communities have used the wood from these trees to make fine furniture, benches for public parks and even signs and sculpture. Tell us your story and you may see it here in *Taking Root*. (See stories on page 3) Photos (300 dpi) are encouraged. Please write to us to share your story at: Taking Root Editor, 6660 State Route 10, Sharon Springs, NY 13459, or email globug111@hotmail.com.

Has your community recently embarked on a major tree planting program? Developed a master plan? Please keep us posted on you community's successes and include pictures (300 dpi). You might see your project in a future issue of *Taking Root*. Send your story to our editor. See page 2 for contact information.

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NYS URBAN AND COMMUNITY
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