

Community Forest News

City of Bath, Maine

Newsletter of the Bath Community Forestry Committee ♦ 1 Oak Grove Avenue ♦ Bath, Maine 04530 ♦ 1-(207)-443-8345 ♦

Autumn- 2014

Forestry Committee

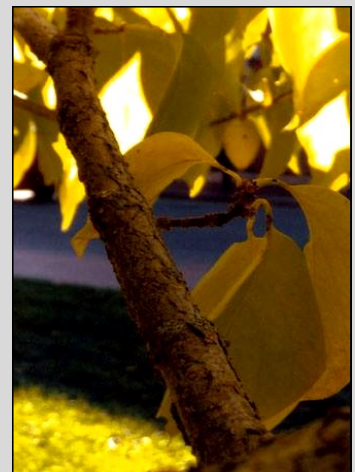
Photography Contest Winners 2014



"Waterfront Park" by
Kevin Thibodeau



"Yellow" by Kathleen Webster



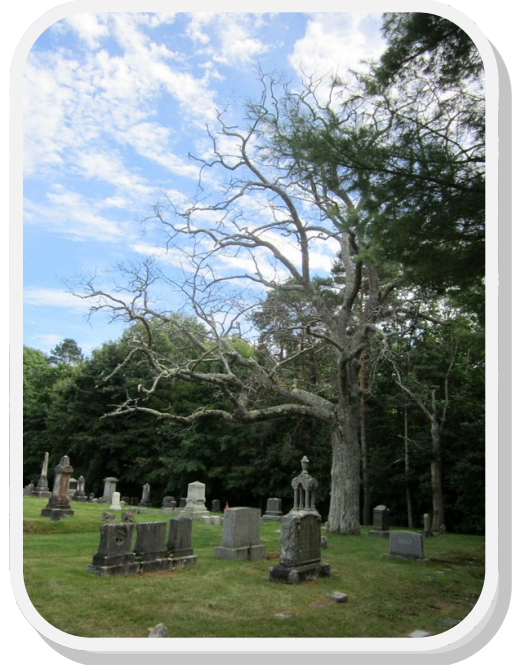
"Reaching" by Calla Barton

2014 Morse High School seniors conduct risk assessment study of Oak Grove Cemetery

Nine high school students have confirmed what most of the City parks and cemetery employees and Tom Hoerth, the City Arborist, already know. Oak Grove Cemetery is slowly losing its great old trees. Current Bath residents will be the generation to see "out with the old and in with the new".

Past generations have celebrated the majesty of the great oaks, maples, beeches, and pines that have graced the Oak Grove acres over the last century. But as time marches on, so must the plan to replace those beloved trees that have for years sheltered bereaved families of members lost to war, disease, and old age.

Last April, Carolyn Nichols took members of her high school senior class to evaluate the condition of Oak Grove West's trees. Under the instruction of Mr. Hoerth, the seniors underwent an educational session on risk management to determine how dangerous a tree may be to not only the environment, but also to people and property. Decisions of whether a tree is "risky" depends on an evaluation of what is reasonable and proportionate to the specific conditions and situations of any given tree. This is called "tree risk assessment" according to the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).



Serious injury from dying or dead trees is a rare occurrence. Tree failures occur when forces applied to the tree will exceed the strength of the tree or its parts. For example, hurricane-force winds, heavy snow, or freezing rain can break a healthy, defect-free tree. Tree risk assessors form opinions about what is likely to occur in the future based upon their experience in the field. These assessments are then provided to a tree arborist to help make decisions about tree management.

The basics of any tree risk assessment depend on risk; targets of the failure; human bodily injury; harm to property; disruption of activity in and around the site; likelihood of an event; and the consequences of an event.

The Morse High School students, armed with GPS, evaluated the entire West portion of Oak Grove Cemetery looking at seven criteria: 1) targets of falling trees/limbs; 2) tree parts likely to fail; 3) likelihood for parts to fail; 4) likelihood of tree/part to impact target; 5) likelihood for tree failure impacting specific target; 6) estimated consequences of failure per each failure module; and 7) designated risk per each failure module.

See **Risk**- page 4



TREES AROUND BATH – Paper Birch

Paper birch, also called white or canoe birch, is best known for its distinguishing bark. *Betula papyrifera* is an attractive landscape tree appreciated for its brilliant yellow fall color and graceful branching that provides winter beauty against grey skies. This attractive landscape tree grows at a medium to fast rate, depending on conditions, and can reach 60-70 feet at maturity. When grown in the open, paper birch limbs may extend almost to the ground if not pruned.

Since young, pyramidal-shaped paper birch trees are red to dark brown they are often overlooked in the forest. It is not until they mature that the bright white and curly bark appears. The bark is a protective layer and should never be removed from living trees. The broadly triangular leaves alternate on the branch and grow approximately 2-3 inches long. Both the male and female flowers occur on the same tree. The flowers open in the early spring before the leaves.

The paper birch is a tough tree that can survive under many urban conditions and in Maine the weather conditions put the frail looking tree through many tests of endurance. For best growth, plant in full sun and in a moist, but well-drained soil that is acidic (pH 5.0 to 7.0). Watering is essential when young and is recommended during drought situations. The “paper birch” gets its name



American Forest Photo

Paper birch *Betula papyrifera*

Photo by George Waldman

from early settlers, and “canoe birch” gets its name because the bark was used by northern Indian tribes to make canoes. Historically, paper birch was one of the most valuable tree species in Maine. In the past, the wood was used for clothespins, yarn spools, toothpicks, paper roll plugs, dowels, furniture parts, golf tees, pulp and firewood. Today, most of these products are made outside of the United States.

Paper birch trees exist throughout literature, poetry, and verse and are often emblematic to the North American forests where they bend and glitter in the sun after an ice or snow storm. Paper birches will add an ever changing array of beauty to any landscaping project.

The Kennebec Company, Bath businesses, residents and volunteers bring in the green for Bath's trees at Harvest Dinner in October at the Bath Freight Shed

What makes for a great event? Wonderful food, good company, a great cause, and fun items to auction off. Green was the theme to support Bath trees and yellow was the color of the night sky when the Bath Community Forestry Committee held its first fundraising dinner at the Bath Freight Shed on October 8th, the night of the second blood moon of 2014.

The dynamic team of Aaron Park of *Henry & Marty Restaurant and Catering*, the music of *The Jen Tonics* with Tom Hoerth, the humor and talent of host, John Ater, and the generous sponsorship of *The Kennebec Company* helped earn \$7,000 for the BCFC.

“Bath businesses and residents really pulled together to make this event happen,” said Elizabeth Haskell, chairman of the BCFC. “All proceeds from the dinner and auction will go toward our continuing effort to protect and preserve the urban forests of Bath,” she said. “Tree protection and preservation takes place in a quiet, slow process, not always visible to residents until the trees are gone. I think a primary visual example of lost trees is the clearing at the old Holiday Inn site.”

“We are facing the potential loss of thousands of trees when the Emerald ash borer arrives in Maine. Replacement trees will be needed when diseased and damaged trees have to be removed. This money will help us expand our educational process, purchase trees, and up the awareness of Bath's tree canopy,” said Ms. Haskell.

The Kennebec Company and the City of Bath will be primary players in helping the BCFC and Tom Hoerth, the city arborist, establish a long-range tree replacement plan for the future tree canopy in Bath.



Ken Strainic of *The Kennebec Company* visits with Daniele Lambrechts, a local Bath artist who donated one of her brilliant paintings to the BCFC auction.

Photo by George Waldman

“To protect, to expand, to preserve, and use wisely, the forestry resources and green-spaces found within the City of Bath, Maine.”

2014 Photography Contest receives 35 brilliant entrees; next contest in May 2015 to celebrate Arbor Week

The Bath Community Forestry Committee's 17th Annual Photography Contest was held at the Bath Freight Shed in November. This year's winners are:

Robert F. Lawson, First Place Adult
Kathleen Webster, Second Place Adult
Anna McDougal, Third Place Adult

Kevin Thibodeau, First Place Student
Arielle Leeman, Second Place Student
Calla Barton, Third Place Student

Nancy Scott, Judge's "Spirit" Award

The BCFC thanks the three judges who participated this year for the first time. Michael Doucette of *Just Framing* in Bath. Mr. Doucette has an eye for beautiful and well composed photographs after decades of work in the art framing business.

Victoria Jackson is the founding member of the *Centre St. Arts Gallery*. Her experience in the arts have included graphic design, contemporary and figurative art, and painting.

Heather Perry is a renowned Maine photographer who photographed the book, *"Confluence-Merrymeeting Bay,"* written by Franklin Burroughs. She is also a biologist and underwater photographer. Her stock imagery is represented by the National Geographic Society.



Robert F. Lawson's, **"Flame off the Portico"** was the overwhelming favorite of this year's contest judges. Brilliant orange leaves through white pillars.

As in past years, winners of the contest went home with great prizes from an all-star group of sponsors: the *Admiral Steak House*, *Bart & Greg's DVD Explosion*, *Beale St. BBQ*, *Bull Moose Music*, *Henry & Marty Restaurant & Catering*, *Just Framing*, *Now You're Cooking*, *Skillin's Greenhouses*, and *The Shelter Institute*.

In just five months, the BCFC will be holding its 18th annual photography contest in May 2015. The BCFC's photography contest will now, and in the future, become a major feature of Arbor Week celebrations in Bath. (In Maine, Arbor Week is celebrated during the third full week of May.) Along with the BCFC's annual landscape awards, the photography contest will welcome spring with a variety of photos taken throughout the year and not just in the peak fall season.

"We have wanted to produce a calendar for many years," said Elizabeth Haskell, BCFC chairman. "Fall is an extraordinary time of the year to capture amazing images, but the other seasons are just as photogenic, especially for capturing the beauty of a tree's changing characteristics," she said. "Hopefully, Spring will bring a wider variety of submissions."

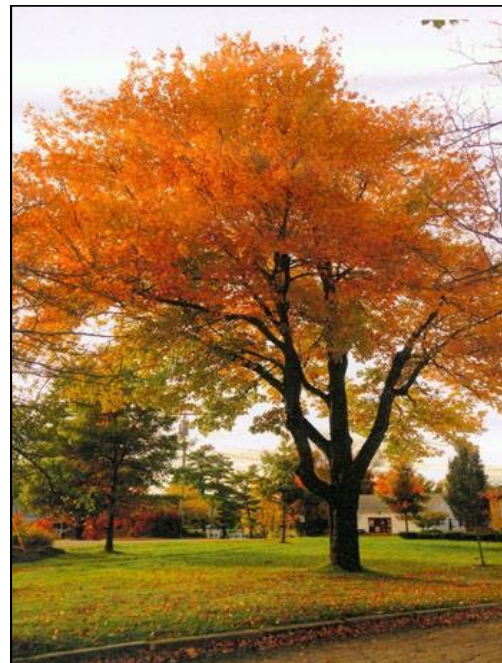
All photos will be on display at the Bath Freight Shed through mid December and can be seen in color on the City of Bath's website at bathforestry.com. There is also a color copy of the newsletter on the site.



Left: **"Tree of Life"**
by Anna McDougal

Bottom: **"Shrubs at Patten Free Library"**
by Nancy Scott

Right: **"Pure Delight"**
by Arielle Leeman



Risk continued from page 1

Most of the trees evaluated were Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), White spruce (*Picea glauca*), Blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*).

The study found that the majority of targets would be headstones, monuments, and cemetery roads with the higher risk areas being the ponds and roads where visitors, walkers and bikers may be present. Of the 132 trees assessed, 62 had dead branches, but were observed as having low-moderate risk overall because the likelihood of any falling branch impacting a person was very low. The impact, however, in the same area could have a moderate to high risk on headstones, cemetery roads, and signs.

Unfortunately, the higher risk areas are the parts of Oak Grove with the highest usage—the pond areas facing Oak Grove Avenue. There

is a low-moderate risk of falling limbs to impact visitors to the ponds. However, in the likelihood of a falling branch, the likelihood of it hitting someone at the exact time it falls is low. Many of the cemetery trees are showing signs of failing. Dead branches, crown dieback, and weather-related damage are leading to decay and rot which will eventually kill the tree.

Many remedial and preventive actions are available in reducing risk associated with older and damaged trees. Retaining trees is an option an arborist has in managing low risk areas such as cemeteries. One option is to prune dead, dying, and weak branches. Structural support systems can also be installed to limit movement of certain tree parts. Modifying a site often improves conditions for trees such as providing necessary drainage to an area that is too wet. And, in some circumstances, dead and decaying trees can be retained to provide wildlife habit.

Careful consideration must be given to all risk factors, but especially to retaining a dead tree if that is the option chosen.

Tree risk assessment is a young science and there is still much to be learned. Tree risk assessors perform assessments with limited information about the structural condition of the tree itself and the environment that affects it. For instance, root decay may be present but not visible. Similarly, abnormally strong winds that create loads greater than the tree can bear are not always predictable.

It takes experience, education, and training to conduct risk assessment. The Morse H.S. students provided Mr. Hoerth a database to start his long-range plan for Oak Grove.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR Fall/Winter 2014

December 10, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Friends of Merrymeeting Bay, The Value of Honey Bees to Maine, The Old Goat (upstairs), 33 Main St., Richmond, ME with Tony Jadczyk, Maine State Apiarist. Contact Dup Crosson, 666-1118, or fomb@comcast.net for more information.

January 3, 2015-9:00 a.m.—noon BCFC Annual Bird Watch at Butler Head off Varney Mill Road. Meet at the kiosk approximately 1/8 mile down Butler Head Rd. at parking area. Snow or shine or cold or blizzard—nothing will cancel event.

January 14, 2015-2:00 p.m. Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Board of Pesticides Control, Augusta Civic Center, Augusta, ME. Open forum and board meeting. Agenda will be posted on 1/8/15. Contact anne.chamberlain@maine.gov for more information.

February 1, 2015 -Viles Arboretum, 153 Hospital St., Augusta, ME. The 11th Annual Super Bowl Sunday Table Tour—snowshoeing, hiking, skiing and the best culinary delights from restaurants and food providers around Augusta. Trails open at 11:00 a.m. \$20/person and \$10 for children under 10. Toddlers free!

Keep Bath Green and Growing!!

BCFC, 1 Oak Grove Ave., Bath, ME 04530

Support Bath's trees! Your contribution will be used wisely and be greatly appreciated. Forward to the address above. Make checks payable to BCFC and denote on the check if it is for the Trust Acct. or the Operations Acct.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Bath Community Forestry Trust Levels

___ \$300 Chestnut ___ \$100 Hickory ___ \$50 Hazelnut ___ \$25 Beech
___ Other

Bath Community Forestry Committee Operations/Tree Care Levels

___ \$300 Oak ___ \$100 Elm ___ \$50 Maple ___ \$25 Pine
___ Other

___ Check here if you wish to volunteer on future projects. Thank you.

Elizabeth Haskell, Chairman
Andrea Babbitt-Wood
Steve Balboni, Ex-Officio
Thomas Barrington
Lori Benson
Bruce Brennan
Wendy Everham
Thomas C. Hoerth, Ex-Officio
James Hummer
Aron Park
Mary Earl Rogers
George Waldman
Terry Hanna, Staff Assistant

2014 Committee Members

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