

Arbor Day 2008: A Walk in the Park

On April 5th in Warheim Park, community merchants, neighbors and the Belknap Neighborhood Association (BNA) were Louisville supporters of a worldwide tree-planting effort – “Plant for the Planet” – the United Nations Environment Program’s (UNEP) Billion Tree Campaign. The campaign encourages individuals, communities, businesses, civic organizations and governments to reforest the planet. The Belknap effort originated in the fall of 2006 with a local tree hugger and news junkie neighbor, Stephen Spanyer, who noticed a Reuters press release on Yahoo! News from an environmental conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Spanyer brought the concept to the BNA in December of that year and helped shape it into the 2007 BNA Arbor Day celebration in partnership with the UNEP Billion Tree Campaign. That beginning year Urban and Community Forester Peter Barber helped hand out over 200 trees. At the 2008 BNA Arbor Day, which again took place in Warheim Park, Chief Forester Robert Bean joined from Elizabethtown to answer questions, give professional advice, and oversee the distribution of 675 native Kentucky tree seedlings.

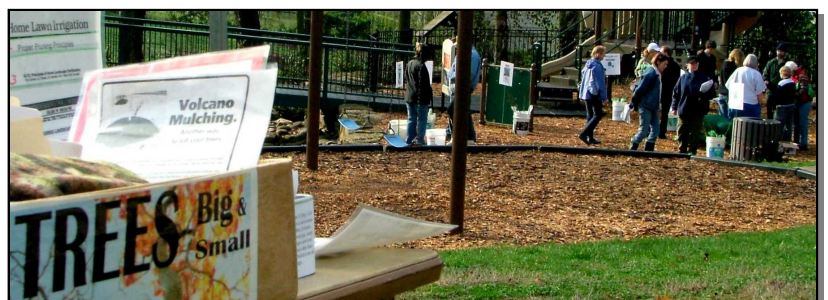


Warheim Park was inundated with visitors. The Arbor Day Committee had been working since December 2007 to prepare. Visitors were greeted at the entry to the park by festive balloons from the Blossom Shop and the BNA’s volunteers. They shared information about the Association and encouraged visitors to become active members in the BNA. They also took donations for the Warheim Park Fund.

Next on the route was the UNEP Pledge Table. Visitors who came for the free trees signed their names to a list under the UNEP pledge stating they would care for the trees. This form with signatures was to guarantee the planting and maintenance of the tree seedlings to maturity.

Further down the winding path into Warheim Park, the Master Gardeners greeted guests. They supplied a wealth of information with helpful pictures and displays for each of the specific trees offered. Available for the asking was information on how to plant trees in this region, how not to plant a tree, when and how to prune, and generic maintenance recommendations. The Master Gardeners offered the latest horticultural and scientific advice in handouts, charts and posters to enable tree recipients to obtain the best growth. These plant expert volunteers were working to achieve community service credit hours for the Master Gardeners Program offered by the Jefferson County Cooperative Extension, chartered by the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University as land-grant institutions.

Tree seedling distribution was at the bottom of the path on the wood-chip covered park playground. Chief Forester Robert Bean oversaw the proper method for handling the delicate bare-root seedlings. Forester Bean is the top tree man for the sixteen counties from Bowling Green to Louisville that make up the Kentucky Division of Forestry’s Central District. He arrived from Elizabethtown to work the six-hour event. As visitors had further questions,



he certainly had the best, most current answers. Forester Bean had plenty of boy scouts on hand to assist in teasing apart the bundled trees – oaks, hickories, Kentucky coffeetrees, bald cypress, redbuds, and persimmon. The trees were given a good soak, then wrapped in damp newspaper before being slipped into green, Sunday-edition cover bags provided by the Courier-Journal, and placed into the hands of ready recipients.



The scouts, from local Troop 40, arrived early and rotated shifts throughout the day. One marked a route with balloons from the Douglas Loop to Warheim Park. Others helped Fred Maurer, Chair of the Arbor Day Subcommittee for Setup-Breakdown, to raise tents, place tables and chairs and haul water in buckets. They made themselves available to anyone needing help, and in so doing worked towards their community service merit badges.



The Warheim Park gazebo, at the furthestmost point along the walk, offered a pleasant space for tree recipients and guests to socialize and read up on trees and planting information. There was a good spread of food for the workers and plenty of cookies and fruit for the scouts. Refreshments were provided by private donors and home cooks as well as through donations from Antiques at the Loop, Anna Shea's Antiques and Collectibles, the BNA, Kroger's, The Bakery at Sullivan University, Heine Brothers at Douglass Loop, and The Pink Door Noodles and Tea Lounge.

At the end of the day Spanyer tallied the number of good trees handed out. At the beginning of the next week, the remaining trees were taken to the Olmsted Parks Conservancy, opposite the Louisville Zoo, and their staff heeled in the seedlings until land, time and volunteers could be organized to transfer them to Louisville Metro Parks. To close out the 2008 event, Spanyer, Chair

of the Arbor Day Committee, sent the conservative count to the UNEP Billion Tree Campaign of 775 trees planted through the auspices of the BNA as a community group.

We did it!! Mayor Jerry Abramson stopped by in a white metro car for a tour of the park and the process, and visited with volunteers and visitors. Neighborhood efforts this year resulted in some 675 trees handed out to signers of the UNEP pledge and about 110 oaks, hickories and persimmon trees eventually set into Cherokee Park along the slopes to the run between Hogan's Fountain and Chauffeur's Rest. The UNEP Billion Tree Campaign hopes to plant seven billion trees by the end of 2009. Join us next year in Warheim Park for a celebration of Kentucky State Arbor Day – Saturday April 4, 2009 – and take home a native tree to Plant for the Planet!



Arbor Day Funding

| | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Cash Expenses | \$310 |
| Trees | \$210 |
| Printing, Refreshments | \$100 |

Cash Donations

| | |
|---|-------|
| BNA for trees | \$120 |
| BNA for discretionary spending | \$40 |
| Individual donors (private) | \$100 |
| J Combs-Durso for trees | \$20 |
| J Francis for trees | \$30 |
| S R Spanyer for trees | \$20 |
| H & B Werle for trees | \$30 |
| Business donors | \$50 |
| Highlands Kroger's gift card for food | \$20 |
| Antiques at the Loop | \$10 |
| Anna Shae's Antiques & Collectibles | \$20 |

“In Kind” Donations

Balloons from the Blossom Shop
Bread from The Bakery at Sullivan University
Coffee from Heine Brothers at Douglass Loop
Tea and cocoa from the Pink Door
Plastic bags from the Courier-Journal

Time & Quality Donations

Chief Forester Robert Bean
Boy Scout Troop 40
BNA Volunteers
Warheim Park Board and Members
BNA Board and Members
Master Gardeners
KY Dept of Forestry in Frankfort & Elizabethtown
Jefferson County Cooperative Extension
Olmsted Parks Conservancy
Metro Louisville Mayor
All those individuals who planted and are nurturing a tree
UNEP Billion Tree Campaign

Special thanks to BNA Arbor Day Committee members Bill Braunstein (refreshments, ombudsman), Nancy Carrington (BNA volunteers), Jack Francis (communications, publicity), Carol Lehman and Phyllis Fitzgerald (Master Gardeners), Fred Maurer (setup, breakdown), Barry Whaley (scouts); and Warheim Park Board members Richard Perkins and Hal Warheim.

Submitted by Stephen R. Spanyer, BNA Arbor Day Committee Chair – compiled from personal notes, BNA newsletter staff writings, Arbor Day Committee writings, and online material from <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/jefferson/whatisces/> and www.unep.org/billiontreecampaign

Jack Francis photographs, web design at:
www.BelknapNeighbor.info

