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# Oak News & Notes

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL OAK SOCIETY, VOLUME 9, No. 2, WINTER 2005

## Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Live Oaks (*Quercus virginiana*)

*Coleen Perilloux Landry, chairman of the Live Oak Society*

**T**he devastation wrought by Katrina's category 5 winds are visible throughout the states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Some towns along the United States' Gulf Coast were completely wiped off the map. Everything in her path suffered from either the wind or the water that came in with a tidal surge.

An example of wind and water's impact is very visible at New Orleans City Park where I had the opportunity to personally tour the minute the water subsided some three weeks after the hurricane. The water was pushed in from the Gulf of Mexico via Lake Pontchartrain which found its way into the city of New Orleans through several broken canal levees. Not only was it salty water but it contained every pollutant collected through the streets of oil, gasoline, household cleaners etc. And, the live oaks sat in this water for weeks.

To my great delight the oaks were fine when I first saw them—almost all 1,000 of them in City Park had not only survived the wind and the water but had buffered the winds in parts of the Park such as **Storyland** and the **Carousel Gardens** and had actually protected the fun rides, children's fairytale figures, and fountains beneath them. The winds in excess of 115 miles/hour had given most of them a severe pruning and debris lay everywhere, but after weeks of observation I can see only one ancient oak that suffered damage; *The Walking Oak*, who lost one of its legs which rested on the ground from sitting in water for such a long time. Most of the trees still hold nice crops of acorns in their branches. Throughout New Orleans the live oaks are still beautiful and standing proud and were it not for the oaks, the city would be naked

indeed as so many trees of every kind were uprooted or broken in half.

Along the Mississippi and Alabama Gulf Coast the trees did not fare as well and about 15-25 per cent of the ones on the shore were washed away.

Hurricane Rita struck the southwestern part of Louisiana a few weeks later and again the winds and water literally wiped out towns. However, an aerial view of the town of Cameron shows the live oaks holding their ground.

The live oak has always been known for its ability to withstand hurricanes and there are stories throughout the years of people tying themselves to the branches of the oak or climbing into the crotches of the oak to save themselves. It is my thought that the majority of the live oaks who suffered the tortures of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will live to see another hurricane. They are the stoic trees of which great tales are told and great photos are made.





## Letter to the Editor

The latest issue of the Journal *International Oaks* is superb. I picked it up one steaming day last week and read it cover to cover. Highlights are many, and include: your photographic essay, Guy, on one of my favourite oaks, what you have called the "nearctic" oak.

The Gambel-Burr oak hybridization: utterly fascinating! It is a form of living archaeology --the species and possible reasons for their being there in that Cook County reserve - that was marvellous.

The latter 2 articles are ones that sent my mind into overdrive, and I am still thinking about their revelations. Who needs the Book of Revelations when one has these scientific marvels to mull over?

Tom Atkinson

## Membership Renewal

Renewal notices have been mailed to all members whose membership expires on 31 December 2005. Please complete the renewal form and mail it to Bill Hess (address: 299 Pond Road, Monterey, TN, 38574, USA) as soon as possible. If you are unsure of the status of your membership, please contact Dick Jensen (tel: 574-284-4674; e-mail: [rjensen@saintmarys.edu](mailto:rjensen@saintmarys.edu)).

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## Oak News & Notes

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# In Search of a Legend

Gene Hyde

*This article was originally published in the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council's September/October **Branching Out** newsletter. Gene Hyde is City Forester, City of Chattanooga; and International Society of Arboriculture, Southern, Tennessee Director. For more information on the Landmark and Historic Tree Register, visit: [www.tufc.org](http://www.tufc.org).*

Here in Tennessee we believe that a "Legend" is a story of life. It is based on unequal parts of fact, rumor, and local lore. Legends abound in the popular culture of America. The Great North Woods had Paul Bunyan. John Henry was a legendary steel-driving man somewhere in the Appalachians. Here in Tennessee we have the Birthing Tree. Known as a landmark to both residents and wayfarers in this region for well over a century and half, the "Birthing Tree" of McMinnville finally has been recognized for the community treasure that it has become. This huge, majestic, old tree is so named because the early pioneers would use this tree for

a meeting place and the women folk would give birth to their babies under the canopy. It was believed that such a birth would bring good luck and fortune to the newborn. The tree is located next to an old game trail which the Indians followed. Later this route was used by the pioneers as they migrated to the western territories between 1820 and 1850 in the period of time known as "Manifest Destiny". Another story of life is the forced migration of the Cherokee Nation in the 1830s. Sadly seven groups of this Native American tribe passed close to this tree along the Trail of Tears.

This white oak tree (*Quercus alba*) is massive and yet somehow quite elegant with sweeping branches that literally touch the ground. It measures 90 feet tall and has a DBH of 79 inches and a crown spread of 125 feet. One of the newly created McMinnville Department of Urban forestry's primary goal was realized in 2000 when the tree was accepted into the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council's Landmark and Historic Tree Register. Such an inclusion does not provide protection from a

developer's bulldozer. However it does celebrate the status of the tree and provides an undeniable weight of moral force and community support when such decisions regarding the future of the tree are made. Since 1990 the property ownership has changed hands several times, most recently landing in the hands of a developer who is building a dialysis clinic adjacent to the tree. Here is where the next story of the life unfolds. After hearing

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the history of the tree, the doctors of the clinic decided to donate a parcel of the land containing the tree to the City of McMinnville to guarantee its preservation. The doctors believe that the common thread of the dialysis clinic and the birthing tree is born on the spirit of hope and renewal of life. And keeping the tree in the place is "heap powerful medicine".

According to City Forester Nick Kuhn, "We're thrilled to know that we now have a chance to preserve this wonderful tree. It's quite a challenge but we believe that we're up to the task."

And like all good legends, this tree has its own song, a part of which is quoted below:

**Lyrics by Jason Gillentine**

*A Cherokee brave and his pretty young bride, traveled on the Trail of*

## IN MEMORIAM

Aydın Borazan was born in Kemalpaşa, a county of İzmir, Turkey on January 1, 1977. His father was a farmer and his mother a housewife. He also had two brothers and a sister. In 1994 he became a biology student at Abant İzzet Baysal University in Bolu, where he completed both his undergraduate and his Master's degrees. His thesis was about the morphometric leaf variation in oaks (genus *Quercus*) of Bolu. In 2002, he started his PhD studies and in 2003 wrote an article with his supervisor, Prof. Dr. M. Tekin Babaç which was published in *Annales Botanici Fennici*. In the same year he presented a poster titled **The Anatolian Diagonal and Its Possible Effects on Genus *Quercus* L** at the 4<sup>th</sup> International Oak Society Conference at King Alfred's College, Winchester, Hampshire, UK. In May, 2004 he married Gülgez Gökçe; however Aydın's marriage and career were tragically ended early this year by his death from a spinal tumor. He passed away in Ankara on February 19, 2005. All those in the International Oak Society express our heartfelt condolences to his friends and family.



## Book Review: *The Oaks of Rogalin*

Eike Jablonski, Luxembourg

*The Oaks of Rogalin* by Janusz Korpala: Deby Rogalinskie. Published by "Fundacja biblioteka Ekologiczna, Regionalne Centrum Edukacji Ekologicznej", Poznan 2003. 128 pages, 120 black and white photographs, hard cover. ISBN 83-901503-8-7, price ca. 30 Euros plus P & P.

Not much is known to Westerners about the ancient Polish oak forests. Janusz Korpala, a member of the Union of Polish Artists & Photographers, devoted more than 40 years of his life to photographing the ancient oaks of Rogalin. The album includes 120 black and white photographs of the "living dead" — the aged and declining oaks and oak forests of this Polish region near Poznan, on the shores of the river Warta. Some of the photographs are accompanied by short Polish poems.

I am deeply impressed by the beauty of Janus' photographs, showing an almost forgotten world of a Central European swamp oak forest more than a thousand years old. The

*The excellent pictures show the final stage of the witnesses of the millennium; the Rogalin Oaks will probably not last until the end of this new century.*

excellent pictures show the final stage of the witnesses of the millennium; the Rogalin Oaks will probably not last until the end of this new century. Many of them have already withered, and their photographs are the only documentary record of their existence. The attempts to reconstruct the oak grove by planting new seedlings have, unfortunately, proved rather un-

successful. This book is a rare document, which is both full of beauty and of sorrow. As the artist says in his foreword, "This album documents the tragedy and the inevitable end of this impressive landscape, the only one of its kind in Europe which may cease to exist already at the end of the 21st century. Indeed, I wish I were a false prophet."

*The attempts to reconstruct the oak grove by planting new seedlings have, unfortunately, proved rather unsuccessful.*

**Oaks of Rogalin:** A beautiful book made by an artist who surely devoted his life to oaks. Only 500 copies of this book have been printed. The author told me that he can make a special offer to the members of the International Oak Society and sell the book for its printing costs. You can send him an email to obtain a copy, via the following E-mail address: Beata.Kolodziejczyk@interia



## IN MEMORIAM



Patricia Tolson Tomlinson (1951 - 2005)

Pat Tomlinson arrived at Berry College in 2001 after a highly successful career with the US Forest Service at the North Central Forest Experiment Station in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. She was a native of Virginia, and earned a bachelor's degree from The College of William and Mary and a Master's degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. She then moved on to the University of California, Riverside, and earned her PhD in Botany, and followed that with a post-doc at the University of Florida, studying metabolism of citrus fruits.

Pat was a plant physiologist, with some 60 publications on stress tolerance, seedling physiology, leaf growth and differentiation, and fruit crops. She spent nearly 10 years in Rhinelander, studying the physiology of forest trees, especially oaks. At this point, as a research scientist (G-13), Pat began to feel a yearning to work with students again. To that end, she took temporary one-year positions at Charleston College and Washington and Jefferson College, to get the necessary teaching experience. To quote John Graham, Chair of the

*Continued on page 5, col. 1*



Continued from page 4, col. 3

## IN MEMORIAM

Department of Biology at Berry College: "When we hired Pat in 2001, she was burning to teach."

Pat became a member of the International Oak Society in 2001. She was a long-time student of oak physiology and development and had recently begun to focus on taxonomic/evolutionary questions. As a result she published a number of important research papers dealing with oaks. In closing, I ask each of you to consider the phrase, or should I say manifesto, that Pat always used to close her letters: "Keep smiling."



Continued from page 3, col. 3

## In Search of a Legend

*Tears. Waiting the coming of their first born child, their hearts so full of fear. So many had died but they struggled with pride, and they swore someday they'd be free. In the heat of the morn, their child was born, in the shade of the "Birthing Tree".*

*She's a mighty old soul with a heart of oak,  
She's an awesome sight to see.  
So proudly she stands upon the land,  
They call her the "Birthing tree."*

The Birthing Tree is located in McMinnville, Tennessee approximately 75 miles southeast of Nashville. All visitors are welcome, especially those expecting a baby.

## Fifth International Oak Conference Update

Dear Friends -- As 2006 draws near I'm sure many of you are planning to attend the Fifth International Oak Conference in Dallas, Texas. This past year has brought parts of Texas record heat and drought, while in 2004 we had near record rainfall, so one never knows what to expect. For those who plan to attend in 2006, I would suggest light to medium clothing, a hat, sunglasses and an umbrella or light rain gear.

The Pre-Conference Tour will be at the Texas A&M Campus/Dallas where we will see all of the oak species planted by the late Benny J. Simpson. There are many rows of oaks growing in the old research fields. Of course, you may pick-up as many acorns as you like. No telling what types of hybrids you will end up with. In the afternoon we will visit one or two other sites around Dallas.

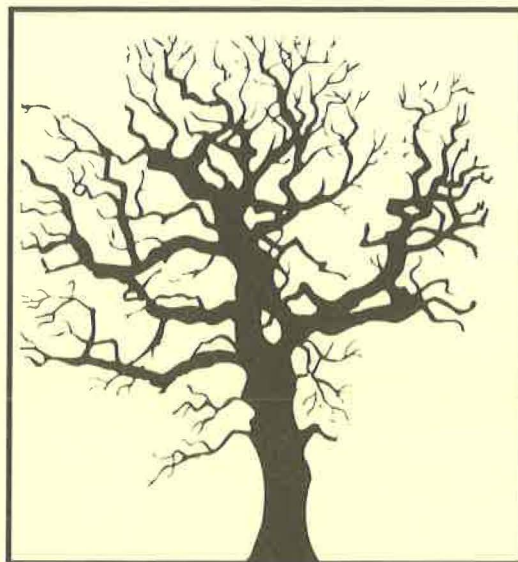
The Post-Conference Tour will take us to Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas. This great Arboretum is run by Dr. David Creech and has many exciting accessions from Asia, Mexico, the U.S. and other parts of the world. The University offers yearly plant sales and Garden Tours. Dr. Creech will lead us through a tour of their many exciting finds, so you will not want to miss this one. The next morning we will depart to Peckerwood Gardens near

Hempstead, Texas. Peckerwood Garden's founder John G. Fairy has one of the best gardens in the state of Texas. John has continually added oaks to his fantastic array of plants through many expeditions to Mexico. This garden holds many rare and unusual plants. Peckerwood is now part of the Garden Conservancy to help ensure its wonders will be around for future generations to enjoy and study. Of added interest, Yucca-do Nursery is right next door.

In January we will be mailing out the second Conference circular, which will include speaker topics, tour sites, and hotel information. You can also view this information on the Society web site (<http://www.saintmarys.edu/~rjensen/ios.html>) as it is posted.

*See you in Texas!*

David Richardson, Conference Host & Coordinator





## Board Election

The Fifth International Oak Conference is about a year away. During the general membership meeting held during each Conference, a vital item of Society business is the formal election of the Board of Directors. The entire ten-member Board is elected every three years. The vote itself will be conducted by mail during the summer of 2006.

This letter is a request and an invitation for the submission of nominations to the Board. Qualification requirements are only that candidates be members in good standing with a desire to serve the Society. The goal of the Society is to have a working Board that reflects the international makeup, and broad array of backgrounds, of the membership of our organization.

If you want to participate by serving as a Director, or know someone who would like the opportunity to contribute as a Board Member, please send names to the election committee. If you submit your own name, please include a biographical note of about 120 words, including background information, future goals, and services offered.

Correspondence should be sent to:

Diana Gardener, International Oak Society  
Election Committee  
P.O. Box 284  
Silverton, OR 97381-0284 USA

## Acorns Wanted

I need up to 10 lbs of viable *Quercus pubescens* (Downy Oak) acorns for the purpose of planting seedlings.

I will pay for gathering and shipping fees.

Wes Burton, email: [jburton@mccsc.edu](mailto:jburton@mccsc.edu)

## Library of Trees, Bur Oak Issue Enclosed

In the next issue of the Society's Journal, *International Oaks*, we plan to enclose a complimentary copy of *Library of Trees, Bur Oak Issue*. This document is provided courtesy of the National Arbor Day Foundation (NADF). Arbor day 2005 marked a special time to reflect upon the selection of the oak as America's National Tree. NADF thanks all the IOS members who participated in the online voting hosted by NADF to select the National Tree. NADF inspires people of all ages and walks of life to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. Please visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) to learn about their many programs services (also available via direct link from the IOS website:

[www.saintmarys.edu/~rjensen/ios.html](http://www.saintmarys.edu/~rjensen/ios.html)).

## We Want Your Articles

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