

Community Trees Survive and Prosper:
By Joan Spalding

In the late 90's members of the newly formed Evergreen Chamber Community Relations committee took on the project of finding a new community tree. The tree many of us remember that shone its lights across the lake was now too big to access. Chamber chairpersons, Ted Mann, Nancy Brown and Terry Hoffman all worked with the Parks and Recreation director, Dick Wulf and Spalding Trees to find the replacement. This quest went on for two years. One year, there were no lights shining at the lake.

News stories were written soliciting donations but nary a tree was to be found until Ted Mann and Dick Wulf spotted a tree at the soon to be built Buchanan Recreation center that was slated to be cut down. Could it live? The tree towered thirty-five feet tall with immense roots lying on the ground that literally had to be chain sawed. It took a full day to tie the tree, treat it for transplant shock and get it ready for transport. The next day the new community tree was installed. Transplanted with a 12,000 lb. root ball, the tree was moved down the road to its new home at Evergreen Lake. Four large stakes and double wires held it into the ground against our blustery winds.

Evergreen now had a new community tree planted in front of the Lake House with plenty of room for growth but it had to go through many tribulations to get its growth started. The winds whipped out branches, the large roots that had been cut had to be treated in order to grow new healthy roots and an accident occurred when Christmas lights were hung causing the 4-foot top to break off. But it survived, and today, is a healthy sister to its neighbor the Earth Day tree planted two years ago.

The forty-three foot Earth Day tree, also due to be cut down, came from a yard of a recreation department employee. The soil it was growing in was prime, black dirt that formed a good ball; it was an easy dig for Spalding's tree spade.

Together the two trees form a beautiful entry to the Lake House and a tribute to community members from the Chamber and the Recreation Center who were foresighted enough to save these trees so we all can enjoy them.

Evergreen has had others in the past that were visionaries in saving trees. Old-timers remember the Alf Means Meadow filled with beautiful ponderosas before Albertsons was built. Tanoa development chose to save as many trees as possible and the bike path in the 100-year flood drainage is filled with trees from the meadow.

Today, once again the Evergreen Chamber will have a part in planting a community tree. The new community tree will be planted by the Welcome to Evergreen sign on Highway 74 by El Rancho. A cooperative effort with the Chamber's Leadership committee, Evergreen Rotary, CDOT, and Spalding Trees will replace the tree currently by the sign that has been killed by magnesium chloride, the road de-icer that seeped into its root structure. The new tree will be planted high on the hill in back of the sign away from the dangers of the road de-icing. Water will be donated by Water Boy, a local water company

and provided through a tank and a drip irrigation system. Spalding Trees will donate the 16 foot silver blue spruce, grown for the last 10 years in their tree field.

As part of the planting process, Spalding Trees will treat the tree with their 3-process growth stimulant program, install a drip irrigation system and mulch the tree. Perhaps during the holidays the phantom decorator (you know who you are) will provide Evergreen commuters with a treat from a bygone era.