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KERRY CAVANAUGH

Woman tries for knockout in fight with 'killer trees'

Darlene Corby is so frustrated with the city's refusal to trim or remove the towering eucalyptus trees from the parkway in front of her house that she's considering posting signs reading, "Killer trees! Don't walk down this street."

Corby has good reason for concern. Twice, 2-foot thick branches have dropped onto her Woodland Hills property. The first time, in 2009, the limb crushed her Ford Focus. The second, in late August, collapsed her car canopy and covered her front yard and deck.

Yet, the city of Los Angeles still refuses to trim the tree. Twice last year, I wrote about efforts by residents of Lopez Street, where Corby lives, to persuade the city to remove — or at least prune — the giant eucalyptus trees growing on the landscaped apron between the sidewalk and the street.

Despite repeated requests to its Urban Forestry Division, the city has left the trees in place, untouched.

Officials say the trees are healthy and don't need to be removed. They also say the city lacks the money for preventative trimming that might protect residents like Corby.

Four times in the last 18 months, the eucalyptus trees have dropped giant branches on Lopez Street. One crushed the car owned by Corby's next-door neighbor.

The city has the responsibility for street tree maintenance, but budget cuts shrunk the Urban Forestry Division from more than 200 employees to fewer than 100 and the department can respond only to emergencies.

In a sign of how short staffed the department is, the city sent one employee to remove the 20-foot-long branch from Corby's yard last month.

The city still maintains liability for any damage the trees cause, but Corby's experience demonstrates it won't always pay up.

After the branch destroyed the windshield and dented the roof of her car in September 2009, Corby filed a claim for \$4,000 — based on a body shop estimate of the repair. The City Attorney's Office denied the claim, saying the city had received no complaints, nor had prior knowledge that the tree posed a dangerous condition, and therefore wasn't liable.

But that doesn't ring true to Corby's neighbors who said they've been complaining to the city about the trees since 2005.

Nevertheless, Corby had no choice but to file suit against the city in Small Claims Court. On the day of the trial, the judge offered the parties a few minutes to reach a settlement. By then it was November 2010 — a year and two months after the branch fell — and Corby was tired of fighting. She accepted \$2,000, but held out hope that the city would do something about the tree.

Ten months and another fallen branch later, Corby is getting desperate. She's willing to pay half the cost of removing the tree — likely several hundred or even \$1,000.

"I just want this tree gone," Corby said. "I have to protect my life and property somehow."

Kerry Cavanaugh is a columnist for the Los Angeles Daily News. She can be reached at kerry.cavanaugh@dailynews.com



Andy Holzman Staff Photographer

Firefighters stand near a U.S. flag that was hung from ladder trucks during a commemorative ceremony Friday. The event honored those who died during the 9-11 attacks and those who tried to save them.

9-11 — A DECADE LATER

L.A. RECALLS OUR HEROES

By Rick Orlov Staff Writer

Joined by the brother of the pilot of a plane hijacked on Sept. 11, Los Angeles officials on Friday remembered the victims of the terrorist attacks and honored the firefighters and police who came to their aid.

City Hall was draped with a large American flag and 10 U.S. flags were positioned along the south steps of City Hall.

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa told the audience, filled with police officers and firefighters, that it was the efforts of the public safety community that served as a source of pride and security for the city.

"Ten years ago, the country and our world were changed forever," Villaraigosa said. "It is a day, for time immemorial, that is seared into the hearts and minds of all of us."

Villaraigosa praised the work of the first responders in New York City.

"These were people with families of their own, who could have walked away," Villaraigosa said. "Instead,

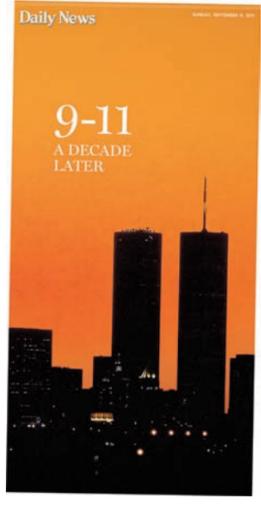
they rushed in to the burning towers . . . first responders do not choose which calls they get. They respond."

Los Angeles sent teams of firefighters and police officers to New York City to help in the rescue operation.

Also speaking was Bradley Burlingame, whose brother Charles was the pilot on American Airlines Flight 77, which crashed into the Pentagon.

"Ten years ago, my wife Diane and I woke up and she had the news on," Burlingame said. "My brother, we

9-11 A6



Tribute section coming Sunday

A decade after the Sept. 11 terror attacks, the Daily News looks at how the tragedy has changed Americans and the rest of the world.

Inside today

While most American adults recall exactly where they were when they learned of the attacks, children are learning about it as part of history. **A3**

Nearly a dozen L.A. firefighters finish their bicycle trek to New York just in time for the 9-11 anniversary. **A3**

FOR MORE ON THE 9-11 ANNIVERSARY, INCLUDING PHOTOS, GO TO **DAILYNEWS.COM**

YOUNG AT ART



John McCoy Staff Photographer

Cooper Berella, 12, points to a painting in his showcase of artists. This one includes him as part of the subject matter. He's hugging a bear. Cooper is curating the show.

Northridge boy, 12, curates exhibition

By Christina Villacorte Staff Writer

It was the eve of his 12th birthday, and Cooper Berella was opening packages with barely contained excitement — not at the prospect of getting toys and videogames, but examining paintings, photographs and sculptures to display.

"Just look at all these pieces — they're outstanding," he raved.

Instead of begging his parents to throw a party, the Northridge boy had asked if he could curate an art show, as he had also done for his 11th birthday.

"Stop It!!" opens tonight at **ART A8**

If you go

The "Stop It!!" art show opens at 6 p.m. today at the Munky King Gallery, 7308 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles. Call 323-938-0091 or go to munkyking.com/gallery_home.php

Blackout a reminder

Power outage a reminder of power grid vulnerabilities. **A5**

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NFL IN L.A.

Senate approves bill aiding stadium

FOOTBALL: Legislation would fast-track legal challenges to project.

By Dakota Smith Staff Writer

The state Senate approved special legislation Friday designed to expedite construction of a football stadium in downtown Los Angeles, saying it was willing to bend California's environment laws in order to generate thousands of jobs.

Senate Bill 292 fast-tracks legal challenges to construction of the 72,000-seat Farmers Field stadium. Approved by the Assembly on Wednesday and passed 32-7 on Friday afternoon, the bill now heads to Gov. Jerry Brown for consideration. He has not indicated whether he will sign it.

"The sheer scale and magnitude (of the project) will be felt statewide from an economic point of view," said state Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Van Nuys, who sponsored the bill. "We will feel that bump throughout the state."

Anschutz Entertainment Group said its \$1.3 billion project would generate as much as \$40 million in tax revenue annually for the state and city of Los Angeles. The developer plans to raze the West Hall of the Los Angeles Convention Center, and use the site for its state-of-the-art stadium. AEG would rebuild the Convention Center hall nearby, along with a parking garage.

AEG estimates it will result in 12,000 construction jobs and 11,000 permanent jobs, an enticement for the region where the unemployment rate remains stuck above 12 percent.

AEG President and CEO Timothy Leiweke has said for months that the fast-track bill was critical to attracting a National Football League team to the stadium and Los Angeles.

The vote "sends a very, very strong message to the NFL that

AEG A8

Related story

When the NFL and players struck a deal to end the league's lockout, they didn't just save the football season, they saved the most profitable sport in America. **A8**

Obama: 'Time for gridlock, games over'

President Barack Obama says there's "nothing radical" in his \$447 billion proposal of tax cuts and new spending but House Republicans pledge an immediate review of his plan. **A7**



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