

# Point Loma-OB Monthly

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**OB'S 'CROOKED TREES' GET  
POST-HOLIDAY PURPOSE** *Page 4*

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# Terrestrial history is heard through fallen-tree art at Liberty Station

BY REGINA ELLING

When a tree falls in the forest, there may not be anyone around to hear it. But when a representation of a fallen tree lands at Liberty Station, the sounds of children's laughter and adult appreciation definitely can be heard.

"Archive and Witness," created by Trevor Amery, a San Diego sculptor and multimedia artist, is the newest work to join "Installations at the Station," an exhibit of outdoor art at Liberty Station, the former Naval Training Center in Point Loma.

Located outside the Dick Laub NTC Command Center on the lawn next to Solare Ristorante, the piece consists of a framework of redwood timber beams in the shape of a fallen tree trunk, with a eucalyptus cap at one end. The artwork was unveiled to the public Dec. 22. Addition of the eucalyptus end cap was delayed because of rain.

"For the past few years, I've been working with the idea of different geological processes, especially with trees," Amery said.

He has long been interested in dendrochronology — the dating of events and the study of environmental change through annual growth rings on trees — as well as the physical processes of erosion, transformation and entropy.

For this piece, he said, he was thinking about transformation.

"When logs fall in the forest, it's not the end, it's the beginning; a starting point," Amery said. He added that his piece takes the form of an abstract nurse log, or fallen tree in a forest, because of the poetic role it plays in the ecosystem.

"Through the nurse log's decomposition and decay, it provides ecological facilitation to seedlings, a home to animals and insects and a nourishing environment for the growth of a myriad of species over time," he said.

The redwood pieces and the 6-foot-diameter eucalyptus

trunk slice used for the art were sourced from trees originally planted in San Diego's Balboa Park by Kate Sessions, the botanist, horticulturist and landscape architect who was known as the "Mother of Balboa Park."

"I love the history. The tree rings in the trunk both hold and show all the transformation and changes in the climate and in the city of San Diego for the past 100 years. They are the archive and the witness," Amery said.

He was able to find the wood through a partnership between San Diego Urban Timber and Forever Balboa Park. SD Urban Timber works with organizations throughout the county to collect local timber, mill it and sell it to locals. Forever Balboa Park advocates for the park and sustaining its legacy.

For Amery, 38, connecting to his father, Douglas, through his art was an unexpected bonus.

"My dad was stationed at Liberty Station in the Navy back in the day," Amery said. "It was really fitting to hear that I would be creating a project on the grounds where he was stationed decades ago."

Amery said he actually developed the concept for this piece a couple of years ago, when the call for artwork originally went out from the NTC Foundation, which develops and operates the Arts District at Liberty Station. However, the "Installations at the Station" project was put on hold due to COVID-19, as funds were redirected toward supporting Liberty Station's tenants during the pandemic.

"I felt very fortunate they reached out to see if I would still go through with it," he said.

"Archive and Witness" is Amery's first formal outdoor public artwork. Building the piece took about 2½ months, which he described as "pretty intense, with some long nights."



COURTESY OF TREVOR AMERY

Sculptor and multimedia artist Trevor Amery shows his creation "Archive and Witness," the newest work in the "Installations at the Station" outdoor art exhibit at Liberty Station.

SEE TREE ART, 16

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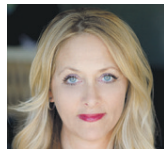
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“The tree rings in the trunk both hold and show all the transformation and changes in the climate and in the city of San Diego for the past 100 years.”

TREVOR AMERY

#### FROM TREE ART, 14

“Working at that scale, figuring out the problems, has been a challenge,” Amery said. But he added that he’s very excited to see the finished piece.

Amery was going through some transformations of his own while working on the piece; he and his girlfriend bought their first house together.

“In addition to working on the project, the house needed renovating and we were working on everything from drywall to repairing ceilings,” he said with a laugh.

Knowing the artwork would be at the former home of “Nikigator” also added some pressure, Amery said. “Nikigator,” resembling a sort of friendly, mosaic-covered serpent, was a large, colorful sculpture created by late artist Niki de Saint Phalle, known for making larger-than-life creations covered in mirrors, glass and polished stones. “Nikigator” was on

view at Liberty Station while its home at the Mingei International Museum in Balboa Park was under renovation.

“For several years we were home to ‘Nikigator.’ The piece was in a beautiful space and adults and kids could interact with it,” said Lisa Johnson, president and chief executive of the NTC Foundation.

Youngsters have already been seen playing on the new installation, Johnson and Amery said.

“One of the surprises to me — that I’ve been really happy to see — is so many children climbing on the piece before it was even finished,” Amery said. “I had really big shoes to fill after the ‘Nikigator’ left, and I’m honored to be following in her footsteps.”

Johnson said Amery’s artwork will be at Liberty Station for at least a year. Each piece is reevaluated on a yearly basis.

“Many of the art installations are interactive and perfect spots for taking



COURTESY OF MATTHEW COURT

“Archive and Witness” by artist Trevor Amery consists of a framework of redwood timber beams in the shape of a fallen tree trunk.

photos,” Johnson said. “Also, each piece has a unique QR code. By scanning the code with a mobile phone, guests can learn more about the artwork, see a map of the pieces, take part in an art scavenger hunt and even receive coupons for free items.”

To see all the current installations on display, visit [ntcfoundation.org/art-in-public-places/installations-at-the-station-2019](http://ntcfoundation.org/art-in-public-places/installations-at-the-station-2019).

Amery hopes to give talks about local woods and present some workshops at the site. In the meantime, he’s enjoying the sounds of youngsters interacting with the art.

“I really love pulling up and seeing 15 or more kids climbing and playing on it,” he said. “I just love that it has this human touch and in the end, it will gain its own history.”

To see more of Amery’s work, visit [trevor-amery.com](http://trevor-amery.com).

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#### FROM PICKLEBALL, 6

California from New York and played against some of the best people in the country. I got my butt kicked.

“It’s for all people, and you get to really use your mind, not just your strength.”

The two soon realized they wanted to be more than just players — they wanted to advocate for pickleball and help the sport grow.

Staying focused on their vision for a central pickleball facility, they have been meeting regularly with San Diego parks and recreation officials.

“There is very much a need for a large facility in this region,” said Noli Zosa, a city Park and Recreation Board member. “I can’t think of a better place to play than San Diego, especially since it is primarily an outdoor sport.”

Zosa added that the sport has taken off during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among senior citizens and aging tennis players.

“It’s for the greater public good to have more pickleball courts. Other major cities are building facilities and we are lacking,” he said.

In an effort to convince the city that there are large numbers of pickleball advocates, Shinzaki and Boyland are compiling a mailing list of players. As of January, they have more than 4,000 names. They’ve had a YouTube

video made detailing their plans. They’ve also started a website and a Facebook page.

They have a formal meeting scheduled with District 2 City Councilwoman Jennifer Campbell’s office in mid-January and a tentative meeting with the San Diego mayor’s office, plus formal presentations to the Mission Bay Park Committee in early February and the Robb Field Community Recreation Group in early March. They expect to have hundreds of pickleball supporters at each presentation.

“San Diego city has told us that the process requires several entities to be on board in lockstep,” Shinzaki said. “It would require a local CRG [a community recreation group overseeing a park space] to recommend the project. It would also require the support of the local City Council representative, along with time for public comments and support from the local community.”

After those steps, the Park and Recreation Board would vote on the overall plan for a pickleball facility, he said.

But Shinzaki and Boyland acknowledge they have their work cut out for them.

“We’re such a big city,” Shinzaki said. “In reality, we need probably 1,000 courts. Stefan and I want to make a tiny dent in this growing issue and build 20 to 50 courts.”

To learn more about the pickleball facility that Boyland and Shinzaki propose, visit [pickleball-sd.com](http://pickleball-sd.com) or [bit.ly/34UhF7D](http://bit.ly/34UhF7D).

**Online video:** See a video about the Robb Field pickleball proposal with the online version of this story at [pointloma-obmonthly.com](http://pointloma-obmonthly.com).