



On two weekends in October, volunteers helped Graeme Wiltrout, at left, complete his Eagle Scout Service Project, a quarter-mile Education Trail at Provolt Recreation Site.

Photo: Graeme Wiltrout.

Eagle Scout project creates education trail at rec site

BY JANELLE DUNLEVY

On October 18, Graeme Wiltrout, a senior at North Medford High School, completed his Eagle Scout project at Provolt Recreation Site. Graeme came to the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council (APWC) wanting to plan a project that would positively impact an outdoor recreation area and opportunity. The APWC knew exactly where he could help.

The fledgling Provolt Recreation Site (see related article) is a local diamond in the rough with a wealth of community ideas and dreams just needing the right “nudge” to come to fruition. Graeme, with leadership skills honed through his involvement with Troop 5, Wild River District, Crater Lake Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), was just the nudge needed to launch what is hoped can be an era of youth volunteerism at Provolt through construction of the planned “Education Trail” at the site.

With guidance from the APWC, Graeme prepared a proposal for a trail development plan and presented it to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Grants Pass Field Office for approval. Graeme worked in conjunction with the APWC Provolt Project Manager, Caleb Galloway, and the BLM Recreation Planner, Shawn Stapleton, to complete plans and make preparations for a concerted field-installation effort.

Over two weekends in October, Graeme, with the support of his family, organized work days at the recreation site. Each day an average of nine volunteers helped build the quarter-mile trail. Volunteers also placed bark mulch on the trail, cleared brush, limbed branches, removed trash such as old, deteriorated irrigation pipe, and cleaned and painted wood preservative on the picnic tables. More than 160 hours were invested by Graeme, local BSA scouts, the Applegate community, APWC, BLM, and family volunteers.

“The new trail is a focal point that draws people as they begin their adventure at the recreation site. It is really nice to have a visible project completed by volunteers to kick off the planning and project implementation here,” said Janis Mohr-Tipton, an APWC board

member, long-time Applegate resident, and chair of the Cantrall Buckley Park Enhancement Team.

This project is the first of many projects being planned. “There are some additional low-cost projects we hope to rally the community volunteers to help us on in the near future, including expanding the walking trails, exerting more elbow grease to pull invasive weeds (i.e., starthistle), planting willow and cottonwood to improve the beaver food banks along the river, and maybe even planting some pollinator gardens,” said Liz Shen, co-chair of the Provolt Volunteer Team, a group of volunteers working with the APWC and BLM to help jumpstart projects and funding efforts at the Provolt Recreation Site.

Graeme’s project is an example of how we can all work together to accomplish a great project, with minimal funding and lots of enthusiasm. There are plenty of opportunities at Provolt for more Eagle Scout Projects, and we can guarantee that such projects will benefit the community, a requirement for successful Eagle Scout service projects.

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Soar like an Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout service projects must be evaluated primarily on impact—the extent of benefit to the religious institution, school, or community, and on the leadership provided by the candidate. There must also be evidence of planning and development.

In 2019, 61,366 Scouts earned the Eagle Scout rank. From 1912 to 2019, 2,598,999 Scouts have earned the Eagle Scout rank. In 2019, eight percent of all Scouts BSA earned the Eagle Scout rank. In 2019, the average age of youth earning the Eagle Scout rank was 17.3 years of age.

An Eagle Scout Service Project challenges a scout to plan, coordinate, and lead a significant project that benefits his or her community.

—Information from scouting.org

BOOK REVIEW

Lost Children Archive

Valeria Luiselli

Alfred Knoff Doubleday, New York, 2019

“Whenever the boy and girl talk about child refugees, I realize now, they call them ‘the lost children.’ And in a way, I guess, they are lost children. They are children who have lost the right to a childhood.”

—Valeria Luiselli

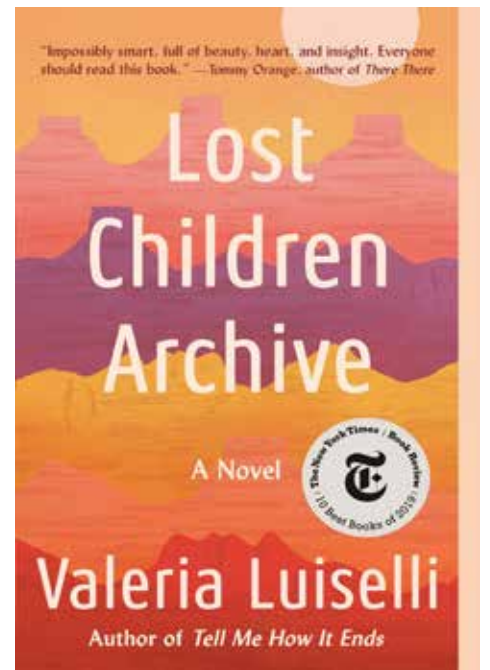
BY CHRISTINE LORE WEBER

It is several months since I read this book, and it continues to haunt me. Luiselli calls it a novel, but was it really fiction? Often it read like a series of essays disguised as a novel. Maybe it asks the reader to consider the very nature of reality: What is true and what is not? How do realities get lost, especially innocent realities, pure realities? Can what we think to be true simply disappear like the author’s anachronistic Polaroid photos that almost develop, but then white out in the sunlight?

Almost nothing is so horrifying as the thought of losing a child. Children can be lost in so many ways, ways that seem to multiply in today’s world. Valeria Luiselli’s book acts as a hall of mirrors in which many of these ways reflect off one another. Perhaps she meant it to be a meta-novel in which genres overlap, a kind of pentimento of reality’s reflections that we see as story, as essay, as history, as bibliographical references, even as Polaroid images that all together attempt, if possible, to tell the truth.

The story begins with a present-day combined family. Divorce provides the dark background on which the mirrors of loss will be hung. It is a happy family, though, as reflected in the first mirror. The parents have jobs they love, recording and archiving voices and sounds of the city of New York. In that city alone hundreds of different languages are spoken as mother-tongues. This must be archived, must not be lost. “Must Not Be Lost” is the core theme and wistful fantasy of this ultimately gut-wrenching story. What have we retained of all that ever was on earth? Is it not simply an archive?

The family of four sets off across America to document and possibly to find what is lost. He will document the stories and what remains of the voices of the lost Apache nation. She will document the voices of refugee



children held at the border and will attempt to find two specific children who disappeared while trying to join their mother, already established in the United States. The archivists’ boy and girl in the car’s back seat take polaroid pictures and become the mirrors reflecting the journey, the stories, and ultimately, the lost children themselves.

“The story I need to tell is the one of the children who are missing, those whose voices can no longer be heard because they are, possibly forever, lost. Perhaps, like my husband, I’m also chasing ghosts and echoes. Where are they—the lost children? And where are Manuela’s two girls? I don’t know, but this I do know: if I’m going to find anything, anyone, if I’m going to tell their story, I need to start looking somewhere else” (p. 146).

As the journey progresses, the mother/narrator reads to the boy and girl from a red book of stories of immigrant children. The stories act as a trope, an extended figure of speech, a book within a book, another mirror that reflects the entire journey of being lost. “Lost” becomes, in the reflections back and forth of all the ways one might enter the lost lands, a truly universal experience. What will be lost next? Family? Country? Home? Identity? Culture? Life itself? Once childhood is lost—the childhood of a person, a nation, a culture, life, earth itself—how shall it then survive except as an archive? And who will read that document?

“Sometimes a little light can make you aware of the dark, unknown space that surrounds it, of the enormous ignorance that envelops everything we think we know. And that recognition and coming to terms with darkness is more valuable than all the factual knowledge we may ever accumulate” (p. 60).

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