

CHINQUAPIN GARDENS NEWS

Official newsletter of the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board • Chinquapin Park, Alexandria, Va. • Fall 2007

THANKS FOR ANOTHER GREAT SEASON!

AS CHAIR and vice-chair of the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board, it gives us great pleasure to be a part of a unique experience — a little bit of country in the city. We are happy to participate on a board that with your support will be the pride of the city.

We are coming to the end of the 2007 gardening season — and what a season it has been! We personally think that the weather was reasonably cooperative, and from



what we experienced and heard from most others, it was a successful growing season.

The ninth annual picnic, held in August, was a smash. Appearances by Mayor Bill Euille, Vice-Mayor Del Pepper and City Councilman Justin Wilson and his son Eli added to the community spirit of a growing event. (See right.) We received wonderful coverage in the *Alexandria Gazette Packet*. Next year will be our 10th annual picnic — so let's make that the best event ever!

One of our gardeners, Megan Foxall, has offered to collect recipes for a Chinquapin Garden Recipe Book. (Wouldn't it be nice to have that in place for next year's picnic?) To participate and share, please send your recipes to Marlin at the e-mail address at the end of this column and he will forward

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NINTH ANNUAL PICNIC ATTRACTS A CROWD

THE NINTH annual Chinquapin Gardens Picnic, held Aug. 11 at the Chinquapin Park pavilion, was a tremendous success. The picnic, sponsored by the Chinquapin Gardens Advisory Board, included a potluck lunch, cookout, tomato taste-off and recognition of some of Chinquapin's best gardens.

Special guests at the picnic included Alexandria Mayor Bill Euille, Vice-Mayor Del Pepper and City Councilman Justin Wilson.

Euille congratulated gardeners for their work at Chinquapin Park and said that Alexandria has a goal of creating more such community gardens for residents.

"We want locally grown fresh things," Euille said. "There is no better place than Alexandria."

The picnic's annual Tomato Taste-Off attracted entries from Chinquapin's gardeners. Volunteer judges tasted each tomato, awarding honors for best tasting, biggest, overall and weirdest.

This year's taste-off contest winners, as chosen by judges Del Pepper, Jordan Wright and Maxine Sorenson were:



Biggest Tomato

Charlie Kellett

Best Tasting

Wayne Bowman

Best Overall

Wayne Bowman

Weirdest Tomato

Martha Brown

Awards were also given out during the picnic in recognition of this year's outstanding gardens. The winning gardens were chosen by a group of Chinquapin gardeners for their exemplary appearance and maintenance. Thanks go to board members Margie Lomax and Alex Lathers for their help in picking the winning plots.

More photos and the names of the winners of this year's outstanding and best garden awards are on Page 3 of this issue.

Special thanks were given to the board and to the Picnic Committee — Martha Brown, Lori Hartmann, Kathryn Brown and Margie Lomax — for organizing the event.



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them to her. Send us recipes of dishes you brought to the picnic, or just favorites featuring produce you grow at Chinquapin.

Our Web site, www.chinquapin.org, is becoming a marvelous new tool for our community, thanks to Roy Wright and Michele Late. Visit the site for copies of this newsletter, contact information, a list of upcoming board meetings and more.

Our monitoring teams continue to play an important role in maintaining the gardens. We appreciate those who came out to serve on the teams this year. And a special thank-you to John Walsh, Alexandria's horticulturalist, who is doing a mammoth share of the communication with gardeners and the necessary follow-up. As a result, the overall appearance of the gardens is greatly improved from previous years. We know that gardening takes a lot of hard work — but isn't that what it is all about? Remember: The end of the season clean-up is now upon us!

(Nov. 30 is the last day for gardening.)

We look forward to the development of a proposed partnership with T.C. Williams High School, hopefully by next season. It will promote involvement of students in gardening and the use of community gardens, including gardening as part of the curriculum. This endeavor is being led by gardeners Charlie Kellett and Chuck and Jeanette Cisney. If you'd like to help, let them know. (See story, below.)

We are still seeking ideas about how to make improvements to the gardens and welcome yours. If you have not done so already, please be sure and send your e-mail address to the board so that we can communicate directly with you. (Because of privacy reasons, the city is unable to give out this information without permission.) Be assured that your e-mail address will be used strictly for Chinquapin Gardens business and

won't be shared, so please send us your address. Also, the board has set up a bank account with donations from board members to help pick up some of the expenses we've been covering on our own, such as supplies for our annual picnic and Web site costs. We are

encouraging gardeners to make a \$5 donation to support these costs. If you'd like more information, contact Marlin or Kathryn.

We hope you are all looking forward (as we are) to another great gardening season next year! Please spread the

word to those who would like to try out their green thumbs. The renewal and registration process will begin soon, so look to your mailboxes for an envelope from the city.

We wish wonderful holidays and a happy new year to you all!

— *Marlin G. Lord, chair*
mglaia@aol.com

Kathryn A. Brown, vice-chair

— "WE PERSONALLY THINK THAT THE WEATHER WAS REASONABLY COOPERATIVE, AND FROM WHAT WE EXPERIENCED AND HEARD FROM MOST OTHERS, IT WAS A SUCCESSFUL GROWING SEASON."

PROJECT AIMS TO BRING GARDENING TO STUDENTS AT T.C. WILLIAMS HIGH

SEEDS OF an exciting initiative between Chinquapin Gardens and T.C. Williams High School planted this summer are beginning to take root.

The initiative, currently in the planning stages, is designed to link garden activities with classroom lessons by allowing high school students to work and maintain garden plots at Chinquapin. As envisioned, students will be able to work with their teachers to choose and plant crops — and even sell them at local farmers' markets.

According to Charlie Kellett, one of the Chinquapin gardeners who is developing the project, the initiative will allow students to "develop a deep understanding and appreciation of how nature sustains life."

Through hands-on experiences, students will gain understanding of cycles, from the life cycle of a plant to the nitrogen cycle, Kellett said.

Students will also be able to form relationships, both social and biological, as they work with their classmates, teachers and community gardeners to prepare the soil for planting, manage their plots and tend their crops.

Under plans for the initiative, teachers would provide students with instruction in support of garden activities, such as plant and soil structure and function, composting and vermiculture. Such experiences foster a better understanding of the natural world, according to Kellett.

"Students will be able to learn about the connection between what they eat and where it comes from, with the goal of fostering environmental stewardship and healthy diets," he said. "Equally important, students will cultivate a sense of civic responsibility through participation in our community garden."

To get involved or offer suggestions how to "fertilize" the initiative,

e-mail Charlie Kellett at charlie_kellett@yahoo.com.



PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR'S POTLUCK PICNIC



Nov. 30 is the end of the gardening season

IT'S THE END of another great gardening season at Chinquapin Park. As we gear up for cooler weather, don't forget to prepare your garden for winter as well. All gardeners are required to clean up their plots by **Nov. 30**, the official end of the gardening season at Chinquapin.

As noted in the Chinquapin Garden Plot Regulations, all dead plants and debris must be removed.

Gardeners who have not tidied up their plots will be notified and may be ineligible to register for a garden plot at Chinquapin next season. (The next monitoring team will visit the gardens in early December, so there is still time for you to do last-minute clean-up!)

All stakes, tomato cages, fences and other supports must be taken down, and gardeners are encouraged to take them home. Any cages that are left must be neatly stacked and secured. Be sure to store materials away from the edges of your plot to ensure the safety of all path users.

Please be sure to dispose of all spent plants and produce, as brush and rotting vegetation can attract rodents.

Registration for the 2008 gardening season will begin in a few weeks, so be on the lookout for your renewal letter in the mail.

With your help, we'll be ready to start another great gardening season next year!

2007 Chinquapin Outstanding Gardens

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| AB1 Grace Owusu | JK3 Tony Mauro, | QR9 Charlie Kellett |
| BC2 Megan Foxall | Kathy Cullinan | RS3 Lisa Guli |
| BC3 Ramon Kazanjian | JK5 Elizabeth Good | RS4 Doyle Bartlett |
| BC4 Lynn Gas | JK7 Sue Noisaguan | ST7 Susan Miller |
| FG1 Jim Kunder | KL2 Mary Fox | ST9 Chuck Cisney |
| GH1 Dana Demitro | KL5 Jean McKean | TU3 Robert Robinson |
| GH3 Junior Bridge | MN1 Jules Evans, Carl Gatlin | TU5 Ana Gonzalez |
| HI3 Margaret Slipek | MN5 Trish Lese | UV1 Antoinette Kropf |
| HI4 George Robertson | MN7 Victoria Walchak | UV5 José Damaso Lovos |
| HL2 Billy, Brenda Alger | OP7 Maxine Sorenson | UV7 Bianca Beeks |
| IJ2 Julio Mina | QR4 Mary Green | VW5 Steve Lowe |
| IJ4 Susan Collier Apgar | QR5 John Hoffman | VW7 Margaret Schierhold |

