



THE SEEDLING

The Newsletter of Burnaby and Region Allotment Garden Association

December, 2015

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER	
Membership Renewal Dates*	Jan. 9 & 10
Deadline for Nominations for the Board of Directors	Jan. 8
AGM*	Jan. 16
** Please note changes in dates and locations **	

NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD POSITIONS

BARAGA members can submit nominations for Board positions to Camilla Dietrich no later than January 8, 2016 using the info below:

By Mail: 214-67 Miner Street
New Westminster, V3L5N5

By E-mail: camillamdietrich@gmail.com

Nominations will also be taken at the AGM.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

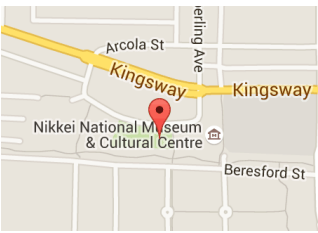
Please note the following important changes for 2016 membership renewals and AGM.

You should receive your membership renewal in a few weeks. You can submit your renewal in two ways:

- Mail your completed form and payment.
- Bring your form and payment to the BARAGA office on **January 9th or 10th from 11:00 am – 4:00 pm** for processing.
- Make sure to complete your form carefully or your renewal may not be processed.
- Deadline for membership renewal is **January 31, 2015.**

AGM

Where: Alan Emmott Centre
6650 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby



***Parking lot and street parking available
4-minute walk from Edmonds station***

When: January 16, 2016
1:00-3:00 p.m. (*doors open at 12:30*)

What: You will be getting an AGM package with your membership renewal forms. Please read over the agenda, minutes and motions and bring your package with you to the meeting.

A BIG LOSS FOR BARAGA



The following is a copy of Luigi Aiello's obituary:

It is with profound sadness and broken hearts that we announce the passing of Luigi Aiello on

October 8, 2015 at the age of 69; born on June 4, 1946 in Amato, Catanzaro Italy. Beloved by all who knew him, Luigi will be greatly missed by his mother Maria; father Francesco; sister Raffaelina (Bruno); his nieces and nephews, Dolores, Thomas, Chiara, Philipp, Maria, Xavier, Sandro and Paola; and numerous family, cousins and friends, both here and in Italy. He was loved by all who knew him for his kind heart and generous spirit. Luigi was an active member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish. Luigi was especially delighted and proud to serve as Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus—Father Peter McGuire Council #4615.

One of Luigi's many passions was gardening. Uncle Luigi would often tell us that his garden was a living canvas for creative collaboration. He loved spending time with his fellow garden enthusiasts at Burnaby and Region Allotment Gardens Association. In his garden grew personal pride, community spirit, as well as the abundance of fruits and veggies. His labour of love overflowed to everyone he met. Luigi's passing has left a void in the hearts of all he touched.



BARAGA has planted a Quince tree in memory of Luigi. Please visit the tree just west of the office to pay your respects.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings friends and fellow gardeners,

It is time to say goodbye to the 2015 garden season and look forward to the New Year.

This past year has seen several challenges to our gardening community - a record-breaking dry spell in the summer, which destroyed most of our donated plantings in the Bee Meadow and created some stress for some summer crops. Finally, the growing season is over for most of us, except perhaps Dullss and a few other diehard gardeners who somehow always manage to squeeze the last bit of growing from a reluctant winter. These folks are always an inspiration to us mere mortals at the gardens.

On a sad note, our community also suffered the sudden and untimely loss of one of founding members and friend, Luigi Aiello. Luigi was a dear friend to many of us at the gardens and always ready with a smile and generous with advice to anyone who asked. I, for one, never missed an opportunity to get his advice on grape growing and garden management. He loved BARAGA, and served on the board for many years as the director for inspections. If I confided in him about a particular problem I faced, he would find a way to cheer me up and not take it too seriously. In 2014, after a series of vandalising attacks on my wife's plot, I was feeling a bit disheartened and disappointed. It was Luigi who reassured me and convinced me to continue as president, "You must not quit now" he said, "the cowards who did this cannot and should not be allowed to win". That, and the love and support of so many of our garden community, have kept me going longer than I had intended to.

Friends, life is fragile and we can all learn from the Luigies of this world to be kind to all who share this garden and help our neighbours when we can. Let's work together to create a

strong and vibrant community. We come to this community garden so we can enjoy the community as much as the gardening. We have one of the most richly diverse community gardens in the Lower Mainland. That makes us unique and a source of inspiration to many other aspiring garden clubs in the region.

I am proud to have served this community for the last four years, and now it is time to say goodbye. It is time to step aside and let the next generation of ideas shape the future of this organization.

My best wishes to all for the holiday season,
Happy gardening, Abdul Majid

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Ann Talbot

At the November meeting, the Board of Directors at BARAGA made and passed the following motions:

MOTION: *All \$100 deposits paid for community service hours not completed in 2014 will be returned.*

MOTION: *Members who have not completed their 2014 and/or 2015 Community Service hours are forgiven.*

In the minutes, you will see: *The Directors had a long discussion regarding the status of community service compliance. Community Service was made a mandatory part of membership at BARAGA at a past AGM. The administration and tracking of these hours has become an issue. Recently fifteen members have been paid back their refunds (\$100) upon completion of their community service hours; thirty-five members still have not paid their \$100, another 31 people have never paid nor put in hours. The total is 66 members who are in fault for 2014. According to Roman's records there are over 150 who have not done volunteer hours for 2015. This has been a difficult situation for both members and the board to deal with and it was generally agreed that the*

situation is unfair to those who have completed their community hours. The Board extends its heartfelt thanks to those members who have completed their community service hours and applaud their sense of community involvement and participation; however, the Board is potentially faced with cancelling over 200 memberships in 2016. After much discussion, it was felt by most Directors that cancelling that many memberships was not acceptable and a new system needs to be put in place.

This was a very difficult decision for the Board as it contradicts the policies agreed upon by the membership and it creates a very unfair situation where some members feel they have a sense of entitlement to their plot rental without any contribution to the BARAGA community - and other members who feel it is their duty to appreciate and enhance the privilege of gardening at BARAGA.

There are also many members whose personal situations make it difficult to devote service time to BARAGA. Some members have health issues, personal family issues, or emergencies; it has been lovely to watch our community gather round to help these fellow gardeners. This has inspired a 'Good Samaritan' program that we would like to incorporate into next year's community service - if you can help a neighbour with his/her community service hours, then please do so!

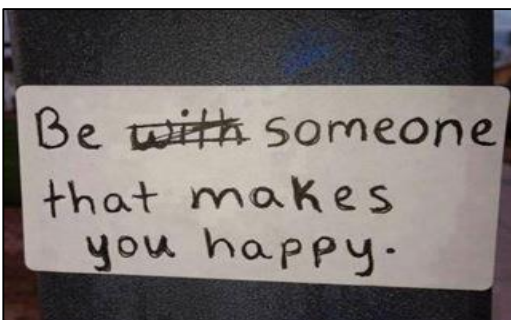
The board will be presenting a motion at the AGM to re-instate the 'pay-or-contribute' policy for community service hours. It is hoped that this will be far more manageable for all involved and will help to cover costs for on-going maintenance. The following is a draft of the motion that will be presented at the AGM. **PLEASE NOTE**, it is a revision of the draft that was sent to the membership, but carries the same basic message:

Community Service is an integral part of membership in a not-for-profit society, especially one that aims to manage a large tract of land in a sustainable and economic fashion

without full or part-time staffing. In the past, BARAGA has tried various schemes to meet the need for labour to complete required tasks around the garden, including mandatory service hours. At the January 18, 2014 AGM a report from the Ad Hoc Committee was presented and a motion to remove the \$35.00 rebate for volunteer hours was passed, making service hours mandatory as an amendment to the Handbook. This has created an antagonistic situation in the garden between members and between members and the Board.

*The Board fully recognizes the need for labour and wants to make it clear to members that insufficient funds exist (without a significant increase in membership fees) to maintain the gardens. Therefore, those members who, in the spirit of a Community Garden, want to continue to volunteer six (6) hours of their time will have no increase in **next year's plot fee over and above what might be voted upon by the membership on a yearly basis to support the gardens.** Those who were not able to contribute six (6) hours of time during the year, will be invoiced at the **end of the year an additional plot charge of \$100.00.***

MOTION: Members can pay \$100 for a full plot and \$50 for a half plot in lieu of contributing six (6) hours for a full plot or three (3) hours for a half plot of community service hours. This additional fee is payable by November 30th.



LONG-RANGE PLANNING SURVEY

Andrea Tylczak

As part of a BARAGA long-range planning exercise undertaken by the Board of Directors this autumn, the Directors put out a survey to ask members what was important to them at the garden. There were 27 survey responses.

INITIATIVE

Most of the respondents wanted to see BARAGA provide members with more education about gardening; in particular, over 50% wanted BARAGA to provide more education about sustainable gardening. Over 50% also favoured moving toward an all-organic garden. The survey did not find a strong desire for BARAGA to interact more with the community, except that about one-third of the respondents favoured having more educational plots for schools. Of the 27 respondents, five specifically mentioned that they wanted to see the community composting get going. Other suggestions included bulk purchase of gardening supplies (soil amendments, etc.), an increased seed sharing effort and more education on water conservation.

TOOLS AND GROUNDS

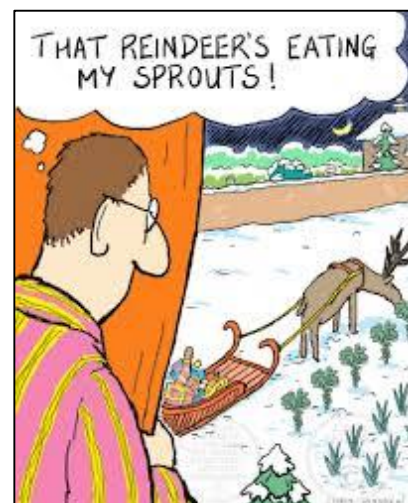
Although there was not a strong desire for improvements to the grounds, several respondents asked for the pathways to be levelled. Several respondents also wanted to have more fruit trees in BARAGA common areas. One suggested setting aside a common area specifically for fruit trees. Of the 27 respondents, six expressed a desire to get rid of the bees/bee meadow. Several members suggested fencing the grounds. The majority of respondents wanted more access to wheelbarrows. Respondents raised concerns about members not taking due care of the wheelbarrows, regular wheelbarrow

maintenance, susceptibility of wheelbarrows to breakage, and about members keeping BARAGA wheelbarrows on their plots. Weed-whackers and rototillers were the most desired tools that BARAGA could have for members to share. A chipper was also suggested. However, respondents expressed concern about access to the shared tools and about whether members would care for the tools responsibly. About 60% of respondents want BARAGA to hire paid help in the summer, full-time or part-time, to maintain the grounds. Another 16% want the hired help only if government funding is available. However, respondents also commented that if members had more access to the riding mower, the members would be able to do much of the grounds work as part of their community service hours. Other suggestions included eliminating the use of all gas-powered tools and getting rid of the dumpsters and making members dispose of their own garbage (although almost 30% of respondents said they would be willing to pay a higher plot rental fee if they could throw whatever they wanted in the dumpster with no restrictions).

GOVERNANCE

Although governance is outside the scope of the long-range planning exercise, the survey included several questions about how BARAGA should be run. There is always controversy in this area and the survey seemed a good opportunity to "take the membership's pulse". Eighty percent of the respondents felt that the rules in the Bylaws and Handbook should be enforced, but most felt that special circumstances should be taken into account. Respondents suggested that steps prior to termination should include directors working with members to solve the problem and more education of members. Two respondents

suggested fines. Most felt that plot termination was appropriate for serious violations such as damaging another gardener's plot. For plot cancellations due to plot inspections issues, nine of the respondents felt that special circumstances should be taken into account. There were different opinions on whether it is the responsibility of the plot holder to inform the Directors of special circumstances or whether it is the responsibility of the Directors to go to the plot holder. Five felt that three inspection letters were sufficient before a plot is cancelled. Another five felt that a plot should never be cancelled due to inspection issues. One respondent suggested that plot inspectors should work with members who had plot inspection problems and another suggested that BARAGA should just keep sending inspection letters. On the other hand, another respondent commented that we have a long waiting list and neglected plots should be given to people who want to use them. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents said they would be willing to pay a higher plot rental fee to avoid doing community work hours. Two members wanted BARAGA to leave people's greenhouses alone.



GREENHOUSES & STRUCTURES UPDATE

Glenn Helmlinger

“Yesterday”, nobody cared too much about your greenhouse and shed at BARAGA except perhaps a neighbour who was either envious or thought it was an ugly eyesore. There were always concerns about size and shadows, and some rules have been in place, but that was about as far as it went.

“Today”, everyone cares about your greenhouse and shed! Is there glass? *Don't you know that glass is now considered dangerous? Something has to be done about it! Your greenhouse is too large! The City of Burnaby only allows 10 x 10 structures without a permit. I can't build one your size anymore so you need to take yours down because it is not fair you have a larger shed than me! It should be grandfathered you say? We'll see about that! You can keep it until you need to do a repair, like replacing the plastic...*

The world has changed and BARAGA is not immune to it. Gardeners had relied on their own common sense, safety, and built greenhouses and sheds to a size and standard that was generally accepted by our garden community. Now, there is more oversight, scrutiny, regulations, and enforcement. What was once common practice is not in line with existing City bylaws. This is not a good situation because it severely restricts what can be grown, the growing season, and how much can be grown, as well as suitable shelter for equipment, comfort and enjoyment. What to do?

BARAGA is not in a position to risk damaging the good relationship we have with the City of Burnaby. The successful BARAGA community garden model serves as an example to other cities and Burnaby receives good recognition for this. It is in the interest of Burnaby and

BARAGA's membership to work together to ensure our mission can be fulfilled effectively without unintended restrictions. A dialog needs to take place so the City of Burnaby can better understand some of our gardeners' needs and how that could fit within their own framework and bylaws.

Before talking to the City of Burnaby, we first need to know what types and size of structures we find acceptable, taking into account offsets, height, and other factors. A working consensus has been reached among BARAGA directors. The City of Burnaby will need to be informed why greenhouses larger than 10 x 10 are important for growing a variety of plants, protecting those plants against blight and other issues, extending the growing season and enhancing yield. If you have any additional reasons for greenhouse size and use, please put them in writing and share your knowledge. The structures issues will not be resolved quickly, but finally having a strategy is very positive and exciting.

HANDY GADGETS FOR GARDENERS

David Tamblin

Some people can get by with whatever is at hand. Other folks like to have a tool that is exactly right for the job. The devices discussed below are to be found in many nursery and hardware stores. Many of these items make useful gifts for your gardening friends, for the garden fanatic in the family, or even for yourself. **December 25th** is not far off!

Thermometers – soil, compost, and air including min/max. Conway Lum (Garden Works, Mandeville) offers two cardinal rules for spring planting. 1. The first cold weather crops can be planted when daytime air temperatures reach 10 C. 2. Hot weather crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers can be planted when the soil warms to 10 C or above.

This requires a more specialized thermometer that can be stuck in the soil a few centimeters to get an accurate reading. Both conditions can easily be judged by an experienced gardener, but it is nice to have the reassurance of getting it right with an instrument that makes no pre-judgements. Soil thermometers usually have a scale from -10 to 110 celcius which makes them useful for reading the temperature in a compost pile as well as in soil. At about \$10 price this is a worthwhile tool. There is also a special thermometer available to measure both the maximum temperature and the minimum temperature – a very useful instrument costing about \$15 – specifically for greenhouses.

Moisture Meters, includes measuring rainfall. The long, dry summers we have experienced recently demand supplementary watering of crops. At the same time, we need to use water efficiently and not waste it. One obvious way to accurately tell if plants are getting the moisture they require is to use a moisture meter. Stuck in the soil at root level, it will quickly give a reading of how much water is present as a percentage. Since such meters can penetrate more than 12 inches into the soil, it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of deep watering.

pH Meters Once in a while, a gardener needs to get a reading of the pH value (acidity/alkalinity) of the soil. Unamended BARAGA soil tends to be much more acidic than most vegetable crops can grow in, so the pH needs to be adjusted periodically. Adding lime every three years is recommended. However, if a gardener wants to know exactly where he/she stands, there are meters available for less than \$20.

Soil Test Kits The pH factor is only one of several that are important to crop growth. Knowing whether there is adequate NPK also

matters (N is nitrogen, P is phosphorus, and K is potash). Fertility does not drop from heaven like rain. The soil constituents removed from the soil by growing crops need to be replenished. Exactly how gardeners do this is very much their own decision, but many will lean to compost and organic fertilizers. But, the gardener occasionally needs reassurance that his/her method is working. One way to do this is by testing the soil. By using an inexpensive kit (10 tests for less than \$20), the soil basics can be checked, and, if necessary, a remedy for imbalance devised.

Sundials This may appear to be frivolous but time can fly by while having fun at the garden and knowing the time may be important. In the age of the cell phone, many people have dispensed with their watches. Sundials once set up also serve as simple reminders of which direction the sun is coming from and how long the shadows are, important considerations when planting crops. Sundials can be quite artistic and valuable and are not really suitable for an unprotected area. However there are cheaper models and some can readily be dismantled and safely stored.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ramiro Coto, Flower Beds

Glenn Helmlinger, Community Composting

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SEEDLING EDITOR

This newsletter was edited by Ann Talbot with the help of Carly Franklin. I hope you enjoy this issue. Please feel free to e-mail me at seedling@baraga.ca

FACEBOOK

Just a quick note to add to this newsletter. There is a BARAGA Facebook group called Friends of BARAGA. It currently has 54 members and, from a quick look at the posts, is a good resource for asking for advice and sounding off about what is happening at the garden. This is a 'closed group' so you will have to request permission to join. Eleni Harvalias and Jonathan Candy have offered their time to host this page. You can join the group by visiting:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/146218968736245/>

