

Homer Garden Club

Newsletter

The Harvest Dinner and Meeting will be held September 23, 5:30 pm, at the Methodist Church.

September 2012



Borland Garden

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Harvest Dinner and Meeting to be Held September 23, 5:30 pm, at Methodist Church

It's *Harvest Dinner* time already!! We will be meeting again at the Methodist Church, in the Fellowship Hall, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm Sunday, September 23rd. The club will provide the beef roast and, as always, the balance of the meal will be potluck so be sure to save some tasty veggies to share!

Here is the schedule:

- 4:30-5:00 Set up the Hall
- 5:00-5:30 Members arrive and deliver food to the kitchen
- 5:30-6:30 Dinner
- 6:30-7:30 Meeting (Election of Officers) with the balance devoted to sharing our summer's experiences
- 7:30-8:30 Cleanup

The entertainment will be a slide show of pictures from Gardener's Weekend and other events from the past year (thanks to Michael Linden, our Historian). If you have any pictures that you would like to share, you can email them to Michael (homerlinden@gmail.com). This is always such a nice way to catch up with friends after a summer of gardening.

I'm planning to send an email to members who expressed an interest in helping with this event when you renewed your membership last year to make sure that we have a setup crew as well as cleanup afterwards covered. If you would like to help, please give me a call. We would love to have you!!

Julie Parizek, Social Chair

Home: 226-3276

Email: jparizek@acsalaska.net

REMINDER!!!!

Garden Club dues are due October 1. You can mail them in with the enrollment sheet on page 8 or enroll at the Harvest Dinner. If you don't pay your dues, you will not receive the newsletter.

President's Report

by Jack Regan, President

A SIGNIFICANT TRANSITION

Homer Garden Club founding member and mentor to many Homer gardeners, Rita Jo Schultz, has blossomed into a new role. She has sold Fritz Creek Nursery to Dutch Boy Landscaping and the nursery stock will be transferred to the planned new 100 foot greenhouse along the Sterling Highway just north of Homer. Rita Jo will devote her efforts to the commercial production of peony stems but will take time out to appear at the new Dutch Boy Landscaping greenhouse to answer questions about the plants and will also be available by email. Dutch



Boy Landscaping proprietor for the past four years, Daniel Stanislaw,

plans to expand his current list of employees from 10 to 13.

Previously Dutch Boy Landscaping focused mainly on lawn maintenance for more than 75 Homer locations. Services will be expanded by providing nursery plants and more landscape installations. Daniel will be attending the October Homer Garden Club meeting to be introduced to the members and will be giving a short presentation on winter tree protection.

Special Presentation by Dr. Bob Bors on Fruit

by Neil Wagner

The Homer Garden Club is co-sponsoring a visit by fruit research specialist, Dr. Bob Bors of the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Canada. Our club, along with the Central Peninsula Garden Club and Pioneer Fruit Growers in Anchorage/Valley, is bringing Bob to Alaska because of his cold climate fruit growing and fruit research expertise. Dr. Bors will be in Homer on Thursday the 27th through Saturday the 29th.

Dr. Bob Bors is an Assistant Professor in the Plant Science Department at the University of Saskatchewan. He teaches Fruit Science, Plant Propagation, Greenhouse Management, Biotechnology and Introductory Horticulture courses and is in charge of the northern-most fruit breeding program in Canada. Recent releases from the breeding program include three apples, five cherries, seven haskap, and seven 'Under the Sea Coleus' varieties. A few dozen of his fruit articles can be read at <http://www.fruit.usask.ca>. Bob received his undergraduate degree in Horticulture (Fruit Science Option) at the University of Maryland. He spent three years as a technician at the University of Maryland working on raspberry breeding and tree fruit production. He then spent three years at the USDA working on biocontrols of post-harvest fruit rots. He attended graduate studies at the University of Guelph where he obtained a PhD interbreeding strawberry species. Current research priorities of his breeding program include maintaining a prairie gene bank and breeding haskap berries, grapes, and apples. A dozen other fruit crops are bred on a smaller scale. Bob won a campus-wide award for Outreach at the University of Saskatchewan in 2009 and gives about 20 invited lectures annually for various groups in North America. Bob has cooperative projects in Russia, Norway, Mongolia, USA, and most provinces in Canada.

DR. BORS' PUBLIC HOMER SCHEDULE

Thursday 9/27

2:00 pm Tour of Dave Schroer's orchard

Friday 9/28

3:00 pm Tour of Walter Johnson's orchard

7:00 pm Lecture at college: 1) Planning, Planting and Pruning Trees and Small Fruits

Saturday 9/29

1:00-2:00 College lecture -2) Secrets of great fruit production in cold climates

After lectures we can carpool and drive to a group orchard tour at Del Schmidt's old place and then Jesse Beaver's out East End Road

4:30-6:00 College lecture -3) Apples, Berries and Cherries

After lecture Pot Luck at Jack Regan's.

***Dr. Bors is interested in seeing what we are growing here!

Are you interested in having Dr. Bors do a private visit to see your orchard and/or berries? Email me at neil@sustainablehomer.org or call 235-6953

Treasurer's Report

by Peggy Craig, Treasurer

June, July, August 2012

Income

Membership	\$290.00	
Books	420.00	
Plant Sale	3,082.50	
Gardeners' Weekend	5,896.00	
Donation	20.00	
Total Income		<u>\$9,708.50</u>

Expenses

Meeting	74.99	
Plant Sale Expenses	329.09	
Gardeners' Weekend Expenses	884.23	
Gardeners' Weekend Lecture	4,188.49	
State AK Biennial Report	25.00	
P.O. Box Rental	116.00	
Bank Fee	1.30	
Dr. Robert Bors	190.20	
Total Expenses		<u>\$5,809.30</u>

Beginning balance 6/1/12	\$11,074.95
Income	9,708.50
Expenses	<u>-5,809.30</u>
Ending balance 8/31/12	<u>\$14,974.15</u>

The Plant Sale netted \$1,873.41



ANNUAL ELECTIONS

At the Harvest Dinner Celebration, members will share the bounty from their gardens and will elect the board for the upcoming year. The Nominations Committee has forwarded a slate of candidates for the members to consider. Also, candidates can be nominated from the floor during the proceedings.

Our current board members have agreed to continue serving if they are re-elected.

The candidates designated by the

Nominations Committee are:

- President.....Jack Regan*
- Vice President.....Neil Wagner*
- Recording Secretary-Jessica Ryan*
- Treasurer.....Peggy Craig*
- Past President.....Brenda Adams*
- Social Secretary....Julie Parizek*
- Publicity.....Kyra Wagner*
- Historian.....Michael Linden*
- Data Base Mgr ...Barb Kennedy*
- Newsletter Editor...Paula Riley*

We would like to thank the mem-

bers of the Nominations Committee, including Chair Cathy Ulmer, Ty Gates, and Caroline Venuti for their work in constructing the slate of candidates for our election.

Remember, these are just the individuals who were selected by the Nominations Committee and indicated they are willing to serve in these positions. All positions are open to nominations from the floor at the time of the September Harvest Dinner meeting.

Gardeners' Weekend Great Success

by Roni Overway

The 6th annual Gardeners' Weekend, held August 4th and 5th, was an unqualified success! Coming on the heels of a record breaking winter and a very long, cool spring, the utter beauty shared by all the owners of our featured gardens was truly inspiring. We can't stress enough what the hard work and dedication of these very special gardeners means to us and our entire community.

Two talks by this year's featured speaker, **C. Coleston Burrell**, were very well attended. He presented two informative sessions at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center, one focusing on perennial combinations and one on sustainability. The garden tours, running from 11 until

Saraphine Bailey, Millie Lewis, Sharon Froeschle and Joan Splinter. In 2013 the committee will welcome a new member, **Jessica Ryan.**

Further thanks go to the volunteer hosts and hostesses, without whom the garden tours would not be nearly as organized or nearly as fun! **Rosie Burgess, Barb Kennedy, Karen Howorth, Julie**

food coming! To **Francie Roberts, Paula Riley, Sharon Wilson, Kate McNulty, Carrie Reed and Sandy**



Early, thank you for helping out with the lectures and for your willingness to be called when we needed help with things that have a way of popping up unexpectedly. Thanks too for helping out with the time-consuming but necessary projects like map folding, photo copying, and getting out the posters and brochures.



Parizek, Beth Schroer, Ruth Dickerson, Connie Smith, Judy Dickson, Jack Regan, Neil Wagner, Betty Siegel and Connie Fordham's daughter, Carmen, who filled in for her mom. Thank you one and all for an amazing job of making each

Thanks again go to **Marianne Aplin** and her willing staff at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center and **Wayne Stanley** for providing venue security (and figuring out the coffee pots!)

5 on Sunday, drew 350 visitors and when it was all over we found that we had 26 new members, a record! We welcome all of them to the Homer Garden Club and look forward to their participation in various club activities. **Bill and Dorothy Fry** were their traditional hospitable selves during the grand finale at the winery.



Our ticket-selling team consisting of **Elaine Grabowski and Fran Darner**, who take care of the city hall sales, **Sue and Lee Post and the unbelievable staff** of the Homer Bookstore, and **various volunteers** at the Homer Chamber of Commerce also deserve our gratitude. Ever efficient and smiling, their contribution is essential. We truly are indebted to them for continuing to shoulder this important aspect of our event.

We were also fortunate to have had club volunteers ready and willing to step up to the plate to help out with this incredible event. Kudos to the weekend committee: **Brenda Adams, Roni Overway, Lorna Olson,**

garden visit a special treat. To **Lorna Olson's** Bear Creek helpers **Paula Riley, Lorraine Haas, Vonda Nixon, Sharon Wilson and Carrie Reed**, thank you for keeping the reception running smoothly and the

None of our willing volunteers are compensated in any way for their efforts; it's obvious that they

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Gardening—It's More Than Just a Pretty Tomato

By Jessica Ryan

There's more behind my dedication to gardening than the satisfaction gained from looking out over rows of broccoli and onions and peas, or laying claim to the first tomatoes of the season. I grow the bulk of my own food due to rising concerns about the overall state of food production and transportation-dependance in this country, and the impacts of current agricultural practices on the environment.

On any given day this summer, the newspaper headlines appraise us of an extreme drought throughout much of the lower 48. states Following on the heels of an almost non-existent winter and the hottest July on record, below average precipitation has resulted in extensive crop failure along a swath of the nation that extends from Georgia to Nevada and from Texas to South Dakota. The cost of food is already edging up in response. For example, a 50 pound bag of organic whole wheat flour cost me \$56 last fall, and will set me back \$81 today. Thanks to a productive garden, my grocery shopping is mainly limited to the products I can't grow or raise; olive oil, oats, nuts, and flour, plus the occasional grapefruit or bunch of bananas. But I often wonder how families who depend exclusively on grocery stores manage to cope with the relentless increase in food costs.

Couple this with Alaska's innate vulnerability when it comes to food shipments from the lower 48. Our stores carry only a purported three to five day supply of food. A scant buffer if we were, for some reason, cut off from the supply line.

And then there's the questionable quality of commercially raised foods. The acceptance and widespread use of herbicides and pesti-

cides is coming under greater consumer scrutiny. Movies, like *Vanishing of the Bees*, which I watched last night, reveal the extensive use of systemic pesticides, so named because they become part of a plant's system and can't be washed off, as topical pesticides can. These chemicals have resulted in the collapse of hundreds of thousands of bee colonies across the nation. Clearly, this impacts both

the availability of honey, and the production of the many fruits, nuts, and vegetable crops bees pollinate. But even more alarming from a human consumption perspective, honey from hives in regions where systemic pesticides are used, tests inordinately high in residual pesticides. Is a chemical that creates confusion, erratic be-

havior, and death in bees, especially in second-generation bees raised on tainted colony honey, and lingers in everything it's applied to, something we really want to feed our children?

Through gardening, I can grow an

abundance of heirloom vegetables that have not been genetically engineered, and eat foods that have traveled only the distance from my garden to my kitchen. Some 50 feet, rather than the approximately 3,500 miles most of the produce in

the local Safeway store travels. Even without a carbon calculator to tell me how many pounds of carbon are released into the atmosphere in order to

transport an avocado from Peru to Alaska, I know the climate impact is costly, and so I generally do without.

Of course I garden too because I love that a tomatillo seed I planted in March grows in vines up a lattice in my high tunnel into something approaching tree size by August, and delivers into my palm hundreds of tangy fruits delicately wrapped in their own paper casing. I love that these same fruits will blend with the tomatoes and onions, garlic and peppers I also grew and alchemise into a spicy, bubbling pot of salsa that, once in jars, will sustain me for months.

Gardening for me, and for many organic, heirloom gardeners, is something of a subversive act. I have found a way to circumvent big agriculture. I am a crusader for home gardening, and over time, I have found a niche among fellow gardeners in Homer's cliquy community. We touch each other on the arm at First Friday art shows to say hello, and discuss blossom end



Jessica Ryan's garden



Jessica Ryan's high tunnel

(Continued on page 7)

By the time you read this Jack Frost may have nipped your potatoes. Meanwhile it's raining today and I'm thinking about lessons from the summer.

I've learned that with lots of work our gardens & high tunnels can produce a lot. The fresh corn & tomatoes are hard to beat, but my new goal is to try methods that produce fairly well, - without taking all my time. There is a lot of Alaska to explore in the summer and we want to get away more often.



The Earth boxes I built last spring produced better tomatoes and only had to be watered after several days of sun. Next year I will not plant as many and will leave a good foot in between them so I'll have fewer tomatoes to prune but with bigger fruit.

My Red Chesnok Purple stripe and Siberian Marbled garlic did well this year. It helped to plant them four inches apart in a fertile raised bed.

I mulched them well last October and had thick sprouts coming up in early June. I'm drying out my cloves now in preparation for planting a bigger crop for next year. I'm drying and saving the seeds of my best varieties of tomatoes - Purple Russian, Yellow and Red

Romas, Golden Nugget, Black Cherry, Early Girl, Goliath, Cosmonaut Volkov, Debaro, Fantastic, Brandywine and Polar Beauty. Those 12 will drop it down from my 20 varieties this season. Meanwhile I'm bringing basins of them in as they ripen to eat or make sauce out of.

Stewed with our garlic, onions, and herbs and canned they will be a delight to open this winter and have over spaghetti squash or kale.

My 110 corn plants did well with Earlivee, Sugar bun & Sunglow all producing nice ears from the end of July through early



September. With high tunnels, growing good corn isn't hard but probably not commercially viable. I probably will not try experimenting with Indian and popcorn again. They both need longer seasons.

The winter squash did pretty well in the high tunnel but next year, like the tomatoes, I'll leave more space (like 8 feet) in between. Pruning back the extra squash vines seemed to help in much the same way as pruning tomatoes. Spaghetti squash is always the over-achiever but Blue Hubbards are my taste favorite.

My 16 varieties of potatoes are doing well. After I harvest I'll invite friends over for a taste test and select the best ones to keep for seed. Our seven varieties of onions are coming along with the same varieties doing better in the high tunnel than outside. I'll comment more on those after harvesting.

Fall is in the air and I look forward to seeing Dr. Bors visit next week. Enjoy your harvest.

Gardeners' Weekend a Success

(Continued from page 4)

recognize what a special opportunity they have to help the club in such a visible and obvious way. We greatly appreciate their willingness to spend some of their precious summer hours doing something that enhances the garden club's image and the Gardeners' Weekend experience for all of us.

Of course, without gardens there would be no tours! So, thanks again to this year's wonderful owners: **Bob and Lyni Borland, Teena and Pete Garay, Jessica Ryan, Shirley and Harry Forquer, Maryann and Genny Lyda, as well as the South Peninsula Hospital, its auxiliary and its garden designer, Brenda Adams.**

Gardeners' Weekend 2013 (August 3rd and 4th) is already in the planning stages. If you would like to nominate a garden you feel is worthy of inclusion please do let us know. You can call Roni Overway at 226-3404 or Brenda Adams at 235-3763.

Coleston Burrell

by Brenda Adams

It's always fun to learn more about our Gardeners' Weekend speakers than simply their resumes and gardening prowess. This year's speaker, Cole Burrell, is no exception. For one thing, he took advantage of the opportunity of being in Alaska by staying in Homer for four days and attending every Gardeners' Weekend event. He then visited Denali and Les Brakes' Coyote Gardens in Willow and flew to Nome to spend some time birding. It was fun to host a guest so interested in all things Alaskan.

He was a delightful house guest who reveled in the fresh Alaska seafood and garden produce we served. He clearly loves food and was open to trying anything we offered. He was also an interesting and interested dinner conversationalist, an art that sadly seems to be on the wane.

Saturday we all stayed up until after 2 in the morning talking about and listening to jazz. He has an

incredible collection of female jazz singers from the generation after Ella and Edie. These were the unlucky artists who had made a successful album and were just ramping up their careers when Beatlemania struck the US and wiped jazz off the charts. His enthusiasm for these talented but little known folks was infectious.

Cole is also a voracious reader and had no dearth of authors to suggest.

One notable example is P. D. James, an 80 year old British woman who has written more than

twenty books, many featuring her fictional Detective Adam Dalgliesh of Scotland Yard. Ms. James turns a phrase in that uniquely British style. Her books are available at the Homer Bookstore – as are some of Cole's.



Photography is another passion for this multi-faceted man. Although I was familiar with his excellent photography in his gardening books, watching the patience and care with which he framed each shot in the gardens of Homer was extremely educational.

In all, it was a real treat to spend time with our guest speaker, Cole Burrell. By the end of his visit I felt I had a new gardening friend, one

that I looked forward to crossing paths with again.

Gardening—It's More Than Just a Pretty Tomato *(Continued from page 5)*

rot on the squash, the assault of slugs this summer, and the pleasure of the first fat artichoke harvested from the garden.

Vegetable gardening is a way to cope with what will surely be a

volatile future. It's a way to gain a bit of security when economic stability is uncertain worldwide. And it is the best way I know to hunker down and do something productive, positive, and hopeful in the face of all that is wasteful, negative, and disparaging in the world today.

So if I hand you a perfect red tomato, be assured that it's a sign of friendship. And if I can offer advice on how to grow your own vegetables, it's because I want you to find the satisfaction and peace of mind that only a day in the garden can offer.

Committee Members and Chairpersons Needed!!!

When the committee sign-up sheets come around this year, please consider volunteering to be one of the chairpersons for the various committees. Specifically, chairs, as well as members, are needed for the Baycrest Garden and the Plant Sale committees. This is your club. Help it be all it can be.

REMEMBER: Dues are now due October 1st. Members are encouraged to have the newsletter sent to them via e-mail as it is much less expensive for the club and you will then receive it in fabulous color.

THE HOMER GARDEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Date: _____ Membership Type: Basic (\$10) __ Supporting (\$15) __ Business (\$25) __

Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

May we send your Newsletter via E-Mail? Yes ____ No ____

Are you interested in vegetable gardening ____ ? flower gardening ____ ?

How would you like to participate in the Garden Club?

(please check any activities you may be interested in)

Meeting Refreshments Board of Directors Nominating Committee Newsletter
 Programs/Speakers Spring Plant Sale Harvest Dinner Pioneer Garden
 Baycrest Garden Gardeners' Weekend

Please make check payable to "Homer Garden Club" and mail, along with form, to:
Homer Garden Club, P.O. Box 2833 Homer, AK 99603

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