

Troy Gardens Gazette

Harvest · Harmony · Home

WINTER 2004 VOL. 3 No. 1

Walking the Walk



The main sign, centrally located at Troy Gardens, welcomes people in English, Spanish and Hmong.

**New Signs Mark the
Sol Levin Memorial Trail
Through Troy Gardens
New Features
Enhance the Landscape
FTG Walks the Walk
of Its Mission
Turn the page and
see for yourself!**

If you can, take a walk around Troy Gardens before the snow falls. You'll find that the landscape has been changed in wondrous ways. Stroll past the Community Gardens, and a nice lawn opens before you, perfect for a safe game of tag or fetch, a picnic, or just a time-out kicking back and watching the sun cross the sky. North of the lawn, huge boulders form a tiered garden at the "crossroads" area where the busy front half of Troy Garden flows into the tranquil back half. This public garden will be planted with traditional herbs and medicinal plants by the Hmong community next spring. Keep walking north, past demonstration gardens including a conventional herb garden, a prairie flower garden, and an edible forest. Colorful, newly installed signs throughout the site tell visitors who we are and what we're doing. Look for a young burr oak tree, the only tree in the middle of the prairie, and you will find the prairie grotto. This sunken circle, surrounded by great boulders on a floor of small blue stones, is a quiet place for sitting, talking, and reflection.

If a long walk is not on your schedule, open this newsletter and take a virtual walk around Troy Gardens. The signs point to something positive in our future.



The late Sol Levin, founder of the Madison Area Community Land Trust, engineered the purchase of Troy Gardens and inspired the revolutionary collaboration of people and organizations that makes this entire project possible.

FRIENDS OF
troy gardens



Funding hope for the future We salute our supporters!

Bradshaw-Knight Foundation
 Capital Times Kids Fund
 City of Madison Community Enhancement Program
 Evjue Foundation
 Madison Community Cooperative
 Madison Community Foundation
 Quixote Foundation
 Williamson St. Co-op Community Reinvestment Fund
 Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
 W.K. Kellogg Food and Society Initiative
 Friends of Troy Gardens members

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New Funders in 2005

The American Girl's Fund for Children for our Kids' Gardening program.

The Therese Foundation for our Farm and Field Youth Training Program in Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Areas Restoration.

The Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Program for our Natural Areas Restoration Program (previously managed by the Urban Open Space Foundation from 2002-2004).

Thank you!

Special Thanks

Mendota Mental Health Institute for being a generous landlord offering Rent Assistance for FTG offices, and for permitting Troy Farm to use a cooler on its premises.

Jason Garlynd's Horticulture class at Oakhill Correctional Institution for providing all the plants used in Troy Kids' Garden for the past two years.

Marcia Yapp, professional photographer, Troy neighbor, and first-year community gardener, for letting us use her great images of Troy Gardens.

The Friends of Troy Gardens Board of Directors

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Executive Director's Report



*By Sharon
Lezberg,
Executive
Director,
FTG*

We make the road by walking.

I've always liked that phrase, attributed to the late Myles Horton of the Highlander Research and Education Center in Tennessee.

Myles Horton was a pioneer in adult education for social change.

He believed that if everyday people could come together to discuss problems and share their experiences they could solve their problems.

How simple and profound! I've always believed that Troy Gardens could be a place where people from all walks of life come together as equal participants in reconstruction—of a place and of our lives.

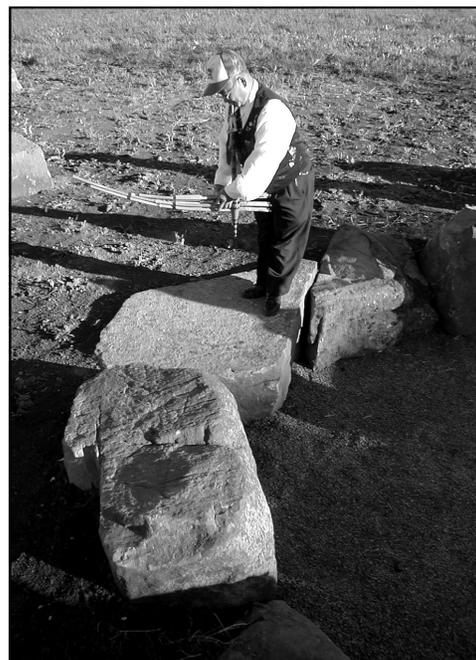
Our prairie restoration project is a metaphor for our own personal and collective reconstruction. By working together, we will squelch the weeds that overtake our fields, and put in place a more wholesome and abundant ecosystem. Our community gardens, childrens' garden and community farm are metaphors for the reconnection of our souls and our bodies. The hard work that we put into growing our food, our sweat and tears, nourishes our families, our minds, and our community.

We are making the road by walk-

ing at Troy Gardens. We are making Troy Gardens by doing, and by being attentive to the needs of those who use the land—people, plant, and animal. The path that we tread is what we are becoming.

I hope Troy Gardens inspires each of you who sets foot there, each of you who is contributing to our process, as it inspires me. I believe that, inspired by this remarkable place, our successes at Troy Gardens can be multiplied on many levels within our communities.

I invite you to become a part of the Troy Gardens community. If you like what we are doing—join us! We need you. We need diverse voices, faces, hands, and minds to shape the road we are walking. And we feel quite certain that you will be rewarded with bountiful harvest for mind, body, and soul.



Mr. Thao dedicates the prairie grotto by playing the *qeej*, an ancient Hmong bamboo and wooden mouth organ. Mr. Thao honors us with his music and intricate traditional dance for FTG special occasions.

FTG Seeks Skilled Volunteers

Volunteer Coordinator: put your people skills to work to help us build our volunteer base. We are seeking an individual who will visit with neighborhood groups, gardening clubs, girl and boy scout troops, and other organizations to line up volunteers for on-going and one-day activities during the gardening season (spring through fall).

Education Series Coordinator: FTG is developing an education series for 2005. We need someone who can help us develop outreach materials about this series, as well as line up some educators for special sessions.

Membership Development: The success of FTG depends on being able to bring in new members who share our commitment to the land and to our programs. Help us reach new members through letter writing campaigns, informational visits to neighborhood groups, and tabling at events.

Community Outreach Coordinator: Many of our nearby neighbors do not know about Troy Gardens and the programs we offer. Help us find ways to learn about our neighbors concerns and issues, and to reach out to them through Troy Gardens programming.

We also have opportunities for people to help us develop outreach materials and site signage. If you have a skill, talent, or other way that you'd like to contribute to FTG, please let us know—it takes a community to grow an organization. Contact Sharon at sharon@troygardens.org



Troy Natural Areas Restoration Manager Briana Meier has worked on this project for the past three years. She guided the establishment of the prairie, herb garden, edible forest, and prairie flower gardens. Briana organized the hundreds of volunteers who have reshaped the landscape at Troy. She also guided the development of the new signs throughout the site.

By Briana Meier

On the October Saturday that was the last of the Urban Open Space Foundation-sponsored volunteer days in the Troy Natural Areas, I awoke to the sound of raindrops steadily tapping on the driveway. I felt a bit sunken at the thought of closing this year with such a fizzle.

I drove to Troy Gardens and waited in a thick mist to see how the day would take shape. A few minutes later Steve Ziegler showed up and we began wondering aloud how we were going to get all of those plants (nearly 200) into the ground.

But then, the rain let up.

Good weather returned, as if it had never left. Steve Lendved, devoted volunteer and FTG board member walked over with his dog, Gracie. Over the next half-hour, some 14 people assembled in the muddy morning sunlight. Members of the student chapter of the Sierra Club rode their bikes from all over town to help out. New faces like Laura Witzling joined long-time volunteers like neighbor Mary Pelzer to dig and plant in the muddy clay soil of the new edible forest.

We planted nearly all of the trees and shrubs we had placed out there previously. At the end of the day we retired to the new prairie grotto. The group relaxed as Steve Ziegler told the story of how the gathering area came to be.

As Steve talked, I looked around and took in the burr oak settling into its new home, the giant stones forming a welcoming circle, the tender new prairie plants taking root and the giant maples fading to brilliant orange and yellows.

I watched Steve Ziegler and thought of how he had taught me to look at landscape. I listened to Steve Lendved tell the group how he had gotten involved to help take care of the place he and his dog walk every day. He thanked

the other volunteers for their help and I smiled to see the leader he has become.

I was sitting next to Dave Jarosinski on the bench he built, and I thought of my first impressions of each of them, these stewards who have helped Troy Gardens grow since our first volunteer day two and a half years ago.

We closed the day with a picnic of homemade chili and apple crisp. As we ate I thought about how these stewards and the other friends of Troy Gardens have become my teachers and my friends, and of how very grateful I am to work on this project. We are all lucky to have such a place as Troy Gardens, where not just now, but for as long as we can make always last, children will play, canine and human companions will wander, and a culture of stewardship, participation and gratitude will grow.



The Troy Prairie sign. The signs throughout the site were built by Michael Burns, MB Metalworks, LLC. They were designed by Zucker Design. The illustrations on the signs were created by John Miller.



Kids from Mendota Elementary School learn to make pickles.

By Sharon Lezberg

For the past two years, the Friends of Troy Gardens has been collaborating with several other non-profit organizations to develop a project called “**Healthful Foods, Healthy Communities (HFHC)**.”

This fall, together with Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch (the farm-to-school project of the REAP Food Group), the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC), and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Nutrition Education Program (WNEP), we have officially launched the project!

Healthful Foods, Healthy Communities has a couple of big goals: to increase the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables available to the people in the Northside community, to offer opportunities for kids and adults to learn about food production and preparation, and to raise awareness and knowledge about healthy food choices. The

Friends of Troy Gardens has been doing some of this through our current projects—Troy Community Farm, Troy Community Gardens, and Troy Kids’ Garden.

HFHC is a three-year project funded by the **Madison Community Foundation** and the **Bradshaw-Knight Foundation**, with additional support from the **Quixote Foundation**.

HFHC programs will be working with teachers, parents, and students at **Blackhawk Middle School** and **Mendota Elementary School** on food preparation, nutrition and food system education, and gardening activities. Students will be exposed to healthy, local foods and given the opportunity to learn with their tastebuds.

Blackhawk Middle School has been chosen by the Madison Public Health Department as a pilot school for their Nutrition Environment Improvement project. **Fawn Houck**, FTG’s Farm and Field Coordinator during the summer months, has been hired to work with Blackhawk teachers and the Madison Public Health Department to develop food system and nutrition education efforts at Blackhawk.

Fawn will be working to bring the strengths

and resources of all the coalition organizations to the Blackhawk community. She can be reached at fawnh@reapfoodgroup.org.

Megan Cain, FTG’s Kid’s Gardening Program Coordinator, is spearheading efforts at Mendota Elementary School. Together with WNEP’s nutrition educators **Laurie Bauer** and **Heidi Platt**, Megan has been creating and leading lessons for the second and third grade classes at Mendota. So far, students have learned about pumpkins and parts of plants, held apple tastings, and learned how to make nutritious veggie wraps.

As we head into next summer, we’ll be planning education activities for gardeners, farm members, and youth participants at Troy Gardens. Volunteer help and advice is appreciated every step of the way. Contact FTG (see pg. 2) if you’d like to become involved.



Chef Rafe Montello teaches youth about cooking fresh food this summer as part of Troy Gardens’ Farm & Field Program.



MACLT is building nine homes at Camino del Sol, an affordable neighborhood near Troy Gardens. These homes will sell for \$135,000, with \$75 per month in ground rent. The first three homes, pictured above, will be completed by Thanksgiving 2004, the second three by Spring 2005, and the final three by Summer 2005. For more information, contact Mary Myers at 280-0131, or email her at maclt@chorus.net.

The Madison Area Community Land Trust, which owns the 31 acres of Troy Gardens, leases 26 acres to FTG, on which we have our Farm, Community Gardens, and Natural Areas Restoration. These acres will never be developed into any other uses. On the remaining five acres, the southeast quadrant of the property, MACLT will build 30 townhouses. Ground-breaking is likely to begin in 2005.

This Land Trust project will offer a range of both affordable and market-rate townhouses and a common house.

The housing site plan follows a number of community meetings. It aims to provide homeownership opportunities for lower income residents in a set-

ting that is in harmony with the natural beauty of the gardens.

Of the 30 units, six will be four-bedroom homes and 20 will be three-bedroom homes. The remaining four units will be barrier-free two-bedroom homes. Living area in the three-bedroom homes will be approximately 1,600 square feet. The project also features a common house where residents can have gatherings and share meals together.

The townhouses will be clustered around two large common courtyards, and each unit will have a small private yard as well. Each homeowner will be guaranteed the opportunity to rent a garden plot in Troy Community Gardens.

Of the 30 homes, 20 will be priced affordably for households with incomes at or below 80% of the Dane County median household income. Prices are currently expected to be in the low \$100,000s for the two-bedroom units and the \$130,000s for the three-bedroom units. One-

and two-person households will be eligible to purchase the affordable units if their annual household incomes do not exceed \$40,250 and \$46,000, respectively. Three- and four-person households could earn up to \$51,750 and \$57,500, with household income levels for larger households scaled up into the \$60,000s and \$70,000s

according to household size.

Like all Land Trust homes, the affordable units will remain affordable for subsequent homeowners through a purchase contract that limits the resale price to the original owner's purchase price plus a limited portion of the appreciated value.

The ten market rate units are expected to cost about \$190,000 for a three-bedroom home, but will not be subject to the resale price restriction.



Architect Jim Glueck describes the Troy Gardens Land Trust housing project to interested people at a community design forum held by MACLT this past July.

Troy Garden Journal



By *Marge Pitts*

MY LITTLE GARDEN

November, 2004

The scarecrow president, erected four years ago on a poor excuse for a pole, seems to have taken root in the big garden that is my nation. I didn't put him there, but there he stands, pointing in all directions, thinking everything that flies is a crow.

Crows must be intimidated, is the only thought in the scarecrow's straw brain. They must not be allowed to land in the garden. They must not be permitted to glean morsels from the rows bursting with food.

The birds of many colors wonder what the big deal is, as they fly away in alarm to find what living they can in the ditches and brambles. The real crows gather in the treetops, new crows settling in all the time, watching with clever and amused patience as the scarecrow swivels his windmill arms.

That's the big garden for you. It could be a paradise but it's not. It

could get much worse before it gets a bit better.

I occupy a small place in the big garden, but within my small place I have the consolation of a little garden to tend, here at Troy.

When the big garden starts looking bleak, I stop craning my neck to count crows and turn my face to the soft rows of my little garden.

In the fall, my flowers and vegetables let go of their green life, to rustle brown and skeletal in the cool dry breeze. I can see the soil again, plump and comforting as my mother's cheek.

There's no scarecrow in my little garden. Birds of many colors are welcome to stop here for whatever they can find, as they make their journeys in obedience to the forever changing seasons, mandated by the Creator when It set the tilted earth to spinning with the sacred commandment: What Goes Around Shall Come Around.

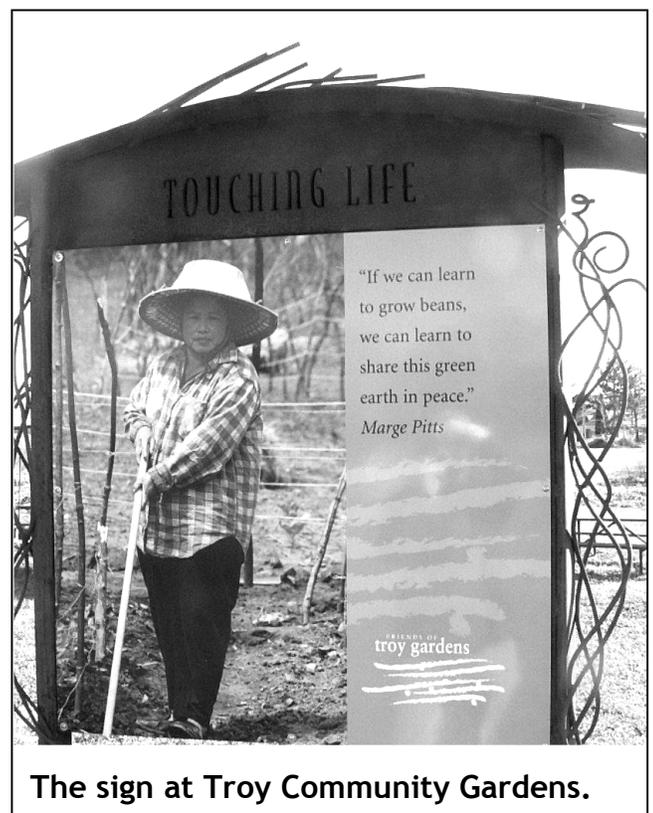
I planted garlic this fall in my little garden. I put down a fresh layer of compost, then broke apart this year's garlic bulbs and planted clove by clove along the row. Then I put another layer of compost on top. I'll give these rows a few weeks for the sunlight to sink in and the cloves to start enough roots to get them through the winter. Then I'll bury

the rows with a blanket of rotting leaves, brown and orange and smelling like pipe tobacco.

No matter how bitter this winter gets, my little cloves will be okay. Next summer, they'll produce green life above the soil. Below in the dark compost they will increase, and a year from now each clove will have become a bulb.

Such is the foundation of an authentic spaghetti supper, or a gradual revolution.

No matter how long the scarecrow stands in the big garden, even if we're in for the worst winter in anyone's memory, I'll be okay. As long as I have life above the soil, I'll be tending my little garden, letting the sunlight sink in, putting my faith in the divine commandment that is so perfect it works both ways: What Comes Around Shall Go Around.



The sign at Troy Community Gardens.

The Friends of Troy Gardens

Room 171, Building 14
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Madison, WI 53704

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
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Friends of Troy Gardens Annual Meeting

Monday, December 6, 6pm-9pm
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church,
2126 Sherman Ave.

**Potluck supper—Cooking Demonstration with Chef Robert Hughes—Silent Auction—
Fun for kids and grown-ups!**

Bare feet on warm soil in the summer garden—one memory no child should grow up without.



JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING and help us give Northside kids memories and lessons that will shape their lives forever.

YOUR SUPPORT AND INPUT ARE THE



Yes! I want to join the Friends of Troy Gardens

Members receive our quarterly newsletter as well as notices of volunteer opportunities, educational programs, and community events at Troy Gardens.

Sign me up! I want to

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Propagate | \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Harvest | \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transplant | \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustain | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plow | \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Preserve | \$200+ |

The Friends of Troy Gardens is a non-profit corporation. Your gift is fully tax-deductible. Please make your check payable to: **Friends of Troy Gardens** and mail with this form to

FTG
Room 171, Building 14
3601 Memorial Dr.
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Preservers receive an FTG T-shirt and a copy of *Troy Garden Journal* by Marge Pitts



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