

'Green thumbs' find park plots are fun

The garden plots at Alton Baker park, according to plot holder Daniel Lund, are excellent ways to affect a "basic change in one's state of mind, for anyone who is interested in getting out of the city and into the country." Lund, a former Lane Community College student, calls it "a big step forward...back to nature!"

Unfortunately, all 140 spaces offered by the Lane County Parks department are all taken up and no more will be available until next year...unless you're already on the waiting list. Even then it's still doubtful. The plots, 20 by 45 feet, were rented for \$5 a year and all of them were gone soon after they were publicized several months ago.

Lund, who works at a golf course, stresses that "I live in an apartment and we (he and his wife Rhonda) like to garden a lot. So far it's really been a lot of fun and we'll get some food for just a little bit of dirt underneath our fingers. I've never had it so good, I'd rather garden here than in my own back yard...it's just fun to talk to all of the people here."

"This idea," Lund said, "shows that a lot of people want to garden

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and they have the instinct to do so. All they needed was the opportunity to get out and do it." The county provided that opportunity, and the gardeners have demonstrated the creativity.

Joe Triole, a mill worker, says gardening is "really just fun. I've never had a garden of my own before so I'm doing it for entertainment, to learn a little bit about gardening and to get outside." Triole is also an apartment dweller and along with girl friend Debbi Heath, a sophomore geography student at the University, they spend about 4 to 5 hours a week of work on their garden plot.

"I've never done anything like this before," says Dan Dubach, a graduate student in juvenile corrections. "At least not since I was a child. These spaces are pretty big plots and it would be interesting to see someone who really knew what was going on. I'm doing it now just as an experiment, and will do it every year after if it works out right."

To get started on his garden Dubach needed a rake, a hoe, a hose, a small shovel, a large shovel and about \$10 worth of seeds. That's all most people at Alton Baker needed when they started. Fertilizer, chemicals and anything else are extras.

Tom Madden, a graduate student and teaching fellow in English, says that he and his family got involved in the project to "have fresh vegetables to eat and because we like to work in a garden. We just wanted to get out on our own in the garden and see what would happen."

Madden's wife, Suzanne, adds that "this is really quite a noble experience. It's our first year at this sort of thing and we really enjoy it."

Suzanne continues, saying that, "we're not in this thing for profit or gain. We want our children and even ourselves to re-experience gardening and all that it has to offer. It's a creative thing and I think that's an important aspect of life that everyone should know about. How to do it too..." The Madden's children, Moira and Sara couldn't agree any more.

Unlike the other four garden plotters that were talked to, Jerold and Janet Williams are not apartment people but they enjoy gardening equally as much. Mr. Williams is a Library Coordinator for the Springfield School System and Mrs. Williams is a former school teacher; both are from England.

Mrs. Williams says that "the main reason we got involved into having one of these garden plots was because we've always wanted to have more space to work with. We have a little garden at home but we're hoping to have a little bit more fun out of this one."

"We've had \$5 worth of fun so far," she says. Most of the people at Alton Baker haven't really spent that much money...mostly its been a lot of hard work and loads of fun.

An interested-by-stander at the garden plots walked up and down the rows at Alton Baker and had but one thing to say. "It's sort of a rat race within a rat race...a way to systematically get back to nature."

The idea is working out quite well...but he couldn't have put it any better way. Hopefully, these gardeners hope that more land, more plots and more opportunities to return to nature, through gardening, will soon be available.



Photo by Wes Loder

Everyone can get into the action at the Alton Baker Park garden plots. If you missed out on getting a plot this time, you might want to make a reservation for next year. All the plots were taken up this year in just a few weeks.

Cook says McCall doesn't 'understand his tax plan'

Waving a Dept. of Revenue research report over his plate of cold eggs, Sen. Vernon Cook (D-Multnomah) said Saturday morning that his 14-year-old son understands the proposed school tax plan better than the "poor Governor."

Sen. Cook's remarks came during a press breakfast held by opponents of the "McCall" tax plan which is scheduled to go before the voters on May 1.

The Senator from Gresham had a series of objections to the tax plan, and he took the occasion to bring them to the public's attention.

"We can start every discussion of this tax plan with that old Abbott and Costello routine, 'Who's on first base?'" Cook said.

Cook and other opponents to the tax plan have complained loudly that the plan as amended in the

Legislature is "a mess of confusion." Although refraining from identifying sole blame for the mess on Gov. McCall, Cook said that "the poor Governor really doesn't understand his own tax plan."

Senator Cook has some definite feelings about the tax plan. "The statement (by pro-tax plan supporters) that everyone will gain by the Governor's tax plan is patently false," Cook said.

"In my opinion," the Senator said, "not more than 40 per cent of the tax payers will save money over the next two years and the other 60 per cent will pay more."

Cook objected to what he claimed were "inaccuracies" in the research report issued by the state Dept. of Revenue. He was particularly piqued by the three examples in the book which attempted to describe individual cases of taxpayers faring under the new plan.

"All of these people save money," Cook said. "Why didn't they show one that didn't?"

Another recurring argument advanced by Cook is the title of the plan — known to the public as "the Governor's tax plan." Cook said that this amounted to an unfair "argument of authority."

Rep. Stafford Hansell, a Republican from Umatilla County who runs a hog farm with his brother, feared that Oregon would lose doctors and other high income professionals if the tax plan is approved. High incomes would be taxed the severest under the proposed system of school finance.

"My reason for opposing this," Hansell said, "is because it's a poor bill."

Another opponent to the plan, Rep. Sam Johnson (D-Redmond), emphasized that the campaign against the tax plan is not financed by moneyed interest. "We have no checks from corporations or companies," Johnson said. "The campaign started with \$50 from each of the 35 representatives and senators who voted no on the bill." Johnson said that there has been no single contribution over \$100.

Two themes of interest to the tax plan opponents are local control of schools and equalization of taxes for school districts across the state. These seemingly contradictory interests were repeated throughout the three hour public forum held after the press breakfast.

"If you vote for this," Johnson said, "It will be the last time you'll vote for local control."

Johnson also felt that the plan, if approved, might lead to statewide negotiations for teachers salaries.

Also attending the forum were two proponents of the plan, Dean Ellis, legal counsel to the Senate Revenue Committee, and Waldo Carlson, of the Dept. of Revenue. They spoke in favor of the plan and explained the projected distribution of the money.

Ellis noted that the tax plan, as passed by the Legislature, is minus a section authorizing funding. If the plan is approved by the voters, a separate bill authorizing funding will have to be approved by the Legislature.

Sen. Cook predicted that the tax plan will be defeated by the voters. "I think the people of this state are too honest to be duped by this con-man trick," he said.

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