'Adopt-a-lot' program saves food dollars

By Deborah R. Feaster
AFRO Student Intern

In springtime, signs of the warmer weather can be seen all around. Many people take advantage of the weather to do their spring cleaning. Others make house repairs that could not be done in the cold weather. Still others use the sunny warmth to prepare their gardens for a season of bountiful productivity.

A program which helps city residents to have productive gardens year round is the Adopt-A-Lot program which is run under the Department of Public Works.

The program, which began around 1973, allows city residents to "adopt" city-owned lots. Any individual, community group or church group may contact the AAL officials to request the use of over 700 city-owned or privately-donated lots.

Vince Magliano, co-ordinator of the program for over three years, said requests should be directed to him at 396-4508. Applications are considered all during the year, should specify the lot's location. Magliano must then check the location to make sure the lot is owned by the city and has not been designated for some other use.

If the lot is not planned for some city project, the applicant is given a permit of use. Magliano then sends a clean-up crew to clear the lot. He said leaf mulch and woodchips are supplied and sometimes seed, donated from commercial seed companies. When it is available, fence materials are supplied.

But even though gardeners are free in their choice of gardening uses for the lots, there are a few conditions to which they must agree.

AAL lots may not be used for profit, such as selling the vegetables grown, parking lots or setting up a business. And the original purpose of the program, to beautify the city, must be upheld.

Some of the residents who take on the adopted lots plant flowers; the majority, though, use the lots to grow vegetables. Some gardeners even use the lots to simply grow grass. "A lot of these lots are right next to a person's home, and they just want to make it look like it is a part of their property," Magliano said.

Various city agencies interact with the AAL program. One such program, Baltimore Urban Gardening (Bug) helps many of the area gardeners with questions and problems. The Baltimore Urban Gardening and Nutrition Program is sponsored by the University of Maryland Co-operative Extension Service.

According to Debra Petway, co-ordinator of BUG, the program is part of the Mayor's Urban Gardening Task Force. This group, made up of various city agencies, tries to involve city residents in urban gardening.

Others who benefit from the use of AAL lots and the services of BUG, are participants in the Youthworks program. Ms. Petway, said these young people, 16 to 19 years of age, work 15 hours a week, during the summer at various activities, one of which is gardening. Using AAL lots and educational guidance form BUG, they produce vegetables on their worksites which they give to persons with low and fixed incomes.

Jackie Keller, of BUG said area gardens—backyard, container, Youth Incentive and AAL—all produced at least $76,000 worth of produce in the past year.

Bertha Blackmon, a supervisor at Youthworks, adopted a large lot on Guilford Ave., as a project for the 10 Youth Incentive workers in her charge.

She said there were a few problems at first. At first we were confused; we had never planted before," she said. "But we got help from Urban Gardens. We did pretty good."

The group developed a good rapport with their neighbors. They'd see us out there working every day, and come over and talk to us and let us use the water from their houses, she said. Ms. Blackmon also said some of the neighbors even came into the garden and helped plant es

The group worked on their cabbages, corn, lima beans, string bean and other vegetables all summer. When it was ready for harvest, they opened the garden to their neighbors. "We let the community come in and pick some vegetables. The Youth Incentive workers took some home too," she said. "They'd bring their little bags or little boxes. No-one was really greedy, they'd leave some for someone el

She believes th planting a garden an growing some of you own food is beneficial to individuals and their communities. She said, "It makes a community look better, and it's something worthwhile to do. You save money on vegetables . . . and there is a sense of pride in growing food too."

Cancer lecture set

The Maryland division of the American Cancer Society will sponsor a symposium on "Sexuality of the Cancer Patient" on Saturday, June 6, 1981, at the Baltimore Hilton Hotel, 101 W. Fayette St.

The symposium is open to the public. Registration fee is $25 per person, which includes lunch and all meeting expenses.

For additional information, call the American Cancer Society Maryland division, at 828-8890.

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General Assembly loses on welfare issue

By John W. Freece

The 1981 General Assembly tried hard to force the state to raise benefit payments to welfare recipients until they equalled actual need, but the effort was in vain.

At first, a bill was passed in committee that would have required the governor to finance such a program. Finally, the bill was amended to require the governor to do so if the funds were available.

Hughes vetoed the bill Tuesday anyway, saying it would have required Maryland to spend millions of dollars on welfare during the next decade—money he said the state simply does not have.

"I will not sign a bill which would falsely raise the hopes of countless numbers of Maryland citizens when I know that the necessary revenues to sustain those hopes are not available," he said.

The governor, on the day he was to leave on a trade mission to Europe, finished his 1981 legistative business by vetoing 24 bills for policy or constitutional reasons and 71 others because they were duplicates.

He also signed 313 bills into law, raising to more than 800 the number of bills made into new laws this year. Included were measures to build a toll bridge across the Choptank River, to ask bond holders for permission to remove tolls on Interstate 95 in Harford and Cecil Counties, and to prohibit banks from charging credit card customers annual membership fees.

Hughes also signed into law a bill banning news cameras and tape recorders from criminal trials in Maryland, although he vetoed one that would have extended the prohibition to civil cases as well.

The governor also signed a bill that repeals the controversial Public Service Commission law that had permitted large utilities to file for and receive speedy rate increases. The new law restricts use of the so-called "make-whole" provision to the smallest utility companies.

Among other vetoed legislation was one bill that would have authorized construction of a dual lane portion of Route 15 in Frederick Co. as a toll road, and another measure that would have given the state the right to appeal rulings of a trial court suppressing evidence vital to the prosecution of violent crimes.

In a lengthy veto message accompanying the welfare benefits bill, Hughes said he had no choice but to veto it because there is no source of funds to pay for the welfare increases—a boost he said could cost the state nearly $100 million a year more by 1986.

"Increasing welfare grants remains a commitment of mine, but without sufficient revenue sources, such increases cannot be made," he said.

Signing the bill without money to finance the program "will not satisfy the human needs of those unfortunate citizens who must look to that state government for help, and it will not satisfy me", he said.

Hughes agreed to the bill to construct a toll bridge across the Choptank at Cambridge, but vetoed similar legislation involving Route 15 because he said the State Highway Department already plans to construct that road beginning in 1984.

In addition, he said turning the section of Route 15 between Thurmont and Lewiston into a toll road would require other unanticipated major highway design alterations, such as closing of access roads than now intersect with Route 15.

Hughes signed legislation that will increase state funding for community colleges and for public education in certain "targeted" jurisdictions.

Maryland law regarding low and high level nuclear waste disposal will also be modified in another bill signed by the governor.

In vetoing the bill that would have given the state the right to appeal rulings regarding the suppression of evidence, Hughes said, "through implementation of this procedure may seem equitable at first glance, it could be utilized in a fashion that would serve to frivolously obstruct the timely disposition of criminal cases, and would serve to place an even greater burden upon the already overburdened Court of Special Appeals.

LPN course at Essex Community College

A course introducing LPN's to the functions of a charge nurse in nursing homes and extended care facilities will be held at the Essex Community College Wednesday, June 3.

LPN Charge Nurse responsibilities include coordinating staff activities, as well as planning, implementing and evaluating certain aspects of patient care.

This one-day course helps to provide LPNs with principles of management and nursing process basic to the function and responsibilities of a charge nurse.

Charlyn Cassady, R.N., B.S.N. and Carla Miller, R.N., B.S.N., will instruct the course. For further information contact the Heath and Education Council at 686-3610.

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