

# TLC Abkhazi Garden September 2024 E-News

## Zoning Success at Abkhazi Garden



TLC Executive Director, Dianna Stenberg presented at the City of Victoria Public Hearing on September 12 for the rezoning of Abkhazi Garden and a transfer of densities to Aryze Developments. In a vote of 8 to 1, city councillors approved the zoning changes.

Abkhazi Garden, (1964 Fairfield Rd and 507 Foul Bay Road) is now designated in Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space Urban Place. The rezoning allows for the existing garden, restaurant and gift shop as permitted uses in the Abkhazi Garden Heritage District.

The transfer of densities will further protect Abkhazi Garden from development and allow Aryze to develop family housing in the neighbourhood. Monies raised from the transfer of densities will go to honour a commitment made by TLC to its past creditors.

## Open House on Grandparents Day – Sep 8



Every year we have an Open House on Grandparents Day to encourage intergenerational visits in the garden. We were delighted that our gate greeter volunteer, Judy, brought her granddaughters for a garden tour. This year we added in games (Corn Hole and Connect Four) on the South Lawn. This young man was playing corn hole while he waited for his grandfather to arrive.

## Fall Plant Sale 2024 Fundraiser – Sep 8



We started **Fall Plant Sales** in 2021 at our Open House and we have increased our sales each year. We brought in bulbs for sale this year and we have some left to sell at the gate.

### 2021

Attendance – 277

Sales – over \$800

### 2022

Attendance – 312

Sales - over \$2500

### 2023

Attendance – 465

Sales – over \$3000

### 2024

Attendance – 388

Sales – over \$4000

\*Please note that taxes are not included and expenses are not included.

Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers who helped with this fundraiser! **Abkhazi Garden has the best volunteers.**

## Recognizing International Day of Peace With Music



Four choirs performed at our International Day of Peace event on Sep 21.

It was a beautiful day in our garden and the music enhanced the peace and beauty of the garden. It was magical!

Many thanks to the Joy of Life choir (shown here), the Vancouver Island Chamber choir, Ukrainian Children's Choir and the Kalyna Ukrainian Choir for some unforgettable harmonic performances.

Image by Draga Jovic.

## Special Visitor – First Site Manager of Abkhazi Garden



Mona Braschuk was the first Site Manager of Abkhazi Garden and she has lots of fond memories of this garden starting before her position of site manager.

Her favourite memory was meeting Peggy Abkhazi in her garden on a Mother's Day tour. Mona described Peggy as a garden Gnome with a kerchief on her head.

Peggy took Mona's hand and led her through the rhododendrons. Mona shared that "Peggy was sweet and happy to share her knowledge."

## Peggy and Muriel's Friendship



After Peggy's adoptive mom died in China, Peggy met Muriel Mackenzie and they became very good friends.

Muriel moved from China with her husband and two daughters, Maureen and Elizabeth to Victoria. They resided at 424 St. Charles St. Peggy came to stay with the Mackenzie family after Peggy's internment in China.

Peggy was a 'Dragon Aunt' to Maureen and Elizabeth and was fond of their children.

Photos pp 118, 145 from A Curious Life courtesy of Susan Hamersley

## Special Visitor – Muriel's Granddaughter



Susan Muriel Hamersley is a granddaughter of Muriel Mackenzie and daughter of Maureen Hamersley. She was treated to a High Tea by Barb in the home of Nicolas and Peggy Abkhazi that Susan knew well.

Susan found the tearoom familiar but smaller than she remembered. She talked about the grand piano in the corner and the heated floors. When Susan was about 17, Peggy taught her how to make a consume soup. St. Jacques Coquille and Zuccotto (an Italian dessert with cake and ice cream) in the kitchen. Peggy also introduced Negroni cocktails to Susan.

Susan loved Peggy to bits and found her to be a phenomenal person who was so interesting. Peggy really encouraged Susan to get out of Victoria and to travel the world. Susan took her advise and went travelling.

## More Dresses for the Abkhazi Collection



Peggy gave Susan Muriel Hamersley's mother, Maureen Hamersley, some of her evening gowns.

Susan has donated these gowns to the garden and our site manager, Cherie, is asking the Costume Museum to take them on and to display them with the Abkhazi Collection of cocktail dresses.

The dress shown here was worn to the Centennial event at the Union Club in 1967.

Photo Courtesy of the Uvic Archives



Princess Peggy Abkhazi at the Lieutenant-Governor's Ball, early 1960s. FIONA HYSLOP



Peggy wore the blue dress pictured here to the Lieutenant Governor's Ball in the early 1960's.

In 2026, we will be celebrating 80 years of Abkhazi Garden and the Costume Museum at Government House will be displaying the Abkhazi Collection again.

Hopefully these evening gowns will be on display too as well as the Georgian Uniform for Nicolas.

P 198, A Curious Life, photo courtesy of Fiona Hyslop

## True or False – Prince Nicolas was the last Prince of Abkhazia



Photo courtesy of Zurab Ivanishvili

**The answer is false.** Prince Nicolas Abkhazi was born in 1899 in Georgia to the Georgian noble family of Konstantine (Kote) Abkhazi and Elene Ioseliani.

The Abkhazi family were descendants of the Georgian princely family of Shervashidze who for centuries ruled one of the Georgian provinces called Abkhazia. In the XVII (17<sup>th</sup>) century the ancestors of the Abkhazi family moved from Abkhazia to Eastern Georgia. At this time, they changed their last name to Abkhazi in honour of their homeland in Abkhazia. P6,7 Nicolas Abkhazi booklet 2020

Nicolas grew up in a palace (ruins seen here) in the village of Kardenakhi in the Katheti Region of Georgia.

## Read the Book, Tour the Garden



A local book club chose Katherine Gordon's book, 'A Curious Life' to read. After they read the book, they came to visit the garden.

One of the club members felt the biography of Princess Peggy Abkhazi wasn't her favourite book but she loved coming to the garden as it gave life to the biography. She recommended that a read of the book should be followed by a visit to the garden.

"A curious Life" by Katherine Gordon, 'A Curious Cage' by Peggy Abkhazi and the Nicolas Abkhazi booklet are all for sale in the Teahouse Gift Shop.

## Two is Better Than One



Our handyman, Jim now has a partner in crime! I mean maintenance. Handyman Mark started working with Jim on all sorts of projects this summer.

One of their first projects was installing a new bench on the East Path near the Georgian garden. At our Open House many people had a chance to sit on this bench and take in a view from the top corner of the garden.

Jim and Mark are currently installing a sprinkler system in the service area and Jim has a list of things to work on this Fall and he is grateful for another handyman's help.

## Thank You Gate Greeters and Docents



Starting on October 1, we will transition to our Fall/Winter schedule. That means Abkhazi Garden will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and will be open from 11am-4pm Wednesday to Sunday. Please note that we will be open on Thanksgiving Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to thank our wonderful gate greeters and docents for welcoming visitors from around the world, sharing your plant knowledge, taking donations and helping with fundraising during our busy season.

Tuesday morning, gate greeters, Catherine and Sylvia (seen here) were roving ambassadors on International Day of Peace and enjoyed the choirs.

Our weekend gate greeters will continue on until December and our garden volunteers will continue on Mondays and Tuesdays. We are lucky and grateful to have such hearty volunteers at Abkhazi Garden.

2024 September E-News was prepared and produced by Cherie Miltimore, Site Manager & Volunteer Coordinator