

MAYOR'S NOTES

Schilling Family Bequest

For its entire existence, Altamont has been defined by and has been enhanced by a strong sense of volunteerism in its citizens. For over 50 years, the Schilling family has personified that sense of volunteerism. At the September 2 Village Board meeting, Keith Lee, volunteer coordinator of the Park Committee, announced a gift of \$5,000 from the family of Phyllis Schilling, a long time Village resident and champion of Altamont's gardens and streetscapes. The gift is to be used to maintain and provide on-going landscaping of Schilling Park on Maple Avenue.

Phyllis Schilling served as village trustee from 1983 – 1998, and joined the Albany County Cornell Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener program in 1986, applying her knowledge to developing the village's green spaces. The gazebo in Orsini Park was replaced in 1978, and as part of the village's centennial celebration, Phyllis organized volunteers to plant and landscape the park. Through the Master Gardener program, she organized "Twilight Garden Tours" of the gardens of Altamont in 1990 and in 1997. She headed the effort to design and plant the entrance to the Benjamin M. Crupe Bozenkill Park and collaborated with NYDOT to select the tree and replacement plantings after the road reconstruction.

She supported community efforts to have the green space at 149 Maple Avenue declared "forever green" by the Village Board, in May 2003. In March, 2004 the tennis court was removed, and based on input from a November 2004 public meeting, she developed the plan for planting the entrance garden and installing an iron arch to define the park space. Phyllis supported the request of a local day care center to provide space for a "tot lot" playground and figured prominently in organizing a quilt raffle that raised seed money to develop the playground. Carl Schilling, her youngest son, installed the pavilion in the center of the park along with other Village volunteers. The gardens have been expanded, and a labyrinth using stones unearthed from the Bozenkill Creek have been installed in recent years.

At the May 2010 village board meeting, the park on Maple Avenue was officially named *Schilling Park*, in honor of Phyllis and the entire Schilling family for their contributions to the village. Designating this treasured community space as "Schilling Park" was a fitting tribute to the Schilling family's many years of public service to Altamont and to one which has exemplified the best of Altamont's community spirit.

"The gift of the Schilling family in Phyllis' memory," reported Mr. Lee, "is a welcomed resource that will support the continued beautification of Schilling Park, and is an appropriate recognition of Phyllis' tireless advocacy for the Village's public spaces."



