SISTER CITY NEWS

(The following is part of a regular feature offering news of Arlington's sister city.)

Teosinte, Arlington's sister city in El Salvador is preparing to celebrate the second anniversary of the villagers' return from refugee camps to repopulate the village. Rick Rabin, a member of the Arlington-Teosinte Sister City Committee, left on Aug. 15 as part of a delegation of citizens from Arlington, Watertown, Lexington and Cambridge to visit Teosinte and join in the celebration.

Rabin will present the villagers with proclamations from the Arlington Board of Selectmen and the Massachusetts Legislature signed by Rep. Bob Havern and Mary Jane Gibson. He will also present them with a letter of greeting from Senator John Kerry. In addition, people in Arlington donated a variety of medical supplies, clothing, school supplies, and money which Rabin will bring to Teosinte.

A send-off party for the delegation was held on Aug. 2 at the home of Cindy and Harvey Silver of Arlington. The 30 guests attending made banners to be carried in celebrations in Teosinte and Watertown's sister village of Tremedal with greetings in Spanish and English and drawings ranging from doves to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Photographs were taken, letters to the villagers were written for Rabin to take to Teosinte, and Salvadoran and Guatemalan crafts were sold to raise additional funds for the trip.

Rabin hopes to actually get into Teosinte. Arlington's first delegation to El Salvador in April 1989 was prevented from entering the village by the military. However, villagers were able to leave Teosinte and come meet the delegates.

It appears likely that the delegation will be allowed into Teosinte. We recently received an informative letter from Sylvia Gregory, an American conducting a dental care project in Teosinte with some funding from the Arlington Sister City Project. Gregory reported that unlike conditions in 1989, it is very easy now to get visas and move about in El Salvador.

"The community has special hopes that someone [from Arlington] will go down to celebrate their second anniversary of their return to Teosinte on Aug. 17 with them," Gregory writes. "The community has suffered terribly since November 1989," she continues, "People are really discouraged and disillusioned. They need our support now more than ever. It means a tremendous amount of time to them to have someone visit from another country and to thus know they have not been forgotten."

The children of Teosinte wrote to express their delight at receiving a banner made by students at the Dallin School, as well as drawings from students at the Brackett and Bishop schools.

The Arlington-Teosinte Sister City Project is preparing for a busy fall. Rabin is expected to speak about his trip to Teosinte when he returns. Rabin would be happy to speak about his experiences to church groups, Sunday school classes, school groups or community groups. In addition, we are hoping to line up places to sell Guatemalan and Salvadoran crafts to raise funds for agricultural projects in Teosinte. Finally, we are planning a booth for Arlington Town Day. If you are interested in any of these projects, please feel free to call Judi Paradis at 646-3976 or contact us at P.O. Box 311 Arlington, 02714.