



Bond Brungard/For the Journal

Maria Reidelbach stands in front of her 13-foot-tall creation, Chomsky the garden gnome, at Kelder's Farm on Route 209 between Kerhonkson and Accord. Chomsky might just be the world's tallest garden gnome according to Guinness World Records.

GOOD LIFE

IN THE MID-HUDSON VALLEY

Local garden gnome might be world's tallest

The Hudson Valley has its share of peculiar personalities, such as Ed Wood, the eccentric filmmaker who was born in Poughkeepsie. Now Chomsky, at 13 feet 4 inches possibly the world's tallest garden gnome, can be added to the list.

There was a small gathering last week to witness Chomsky's designation as world's tallest garden gnome for the Guinness World Records.

Chomsky is the featured roadside attraction at the Gnome on the Grange Mini Golf at Kelder's Farm on Route 209, between Kerhonkson and Accord.

Maria Reidelbach, the gnome's

creator, stood in front of Chomsky next to a very tall yard stick to help the garden gnome qualify for his world class status, which she said has been assured by Guinness officials.

"They agreed," she said. "Nobody has chased the record yet. We're a shoo-in."

Chomsky came upstate after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. At the time, he was a topiary figure on a pier in the Tribeca district in lower Manhattan. The pier was a community gathering point for residents and artists, such as Reidelbach, but following the attack, the pier served as a morgue and a point of embarkation for those fleeing the chaos.

Eventually, the site was cleaned up and the neighborhood transformed, and Chomsky was homeless.

"He was gentrified out of New York," Reidelbach said.

She came upstate to find a new home for Chomsky, and Chris Kelder, who allows visitors to pick their own fruits and vegetables on his farm and has a petting zoo and other attractions for children, proved to be willing partner.

The pair built a mini-golf course, and Chomsky was transformed from a furry topiary figure into a concrete gnome to qualify for his world class status.

Pam Duke, the supervisor for the Town of Rochester, which is home to the hamlets of Accord and part of Kerhonkson, is impressed by the initiative of Reidelbach and Kelder.

"I think it has a lot of potential," she said. "It's more than just a gnome."

Visit www.gnomeonthegrange.com.

Good Life is a collection of observations about life in the mid-Hudson Valley. Your input is welcome. Call 845-437-4883. This Good Life by Bond Brungard, for the Journal.