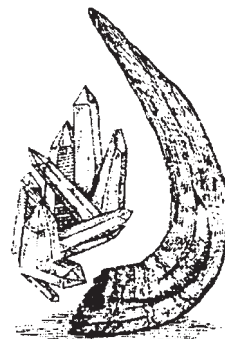


Applied BIODYNAMICS®



Spring, 2006

Newsletter of the Josephine Porter Institute • Woolwine, Virginia

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If once the foundations of traditional culture are lost – a process which is becoming more evident in all spheres of life as the fundamental trend of the twentieth century – then no turning hither or thither, no probing, no clever thinking things out, discovering and applying, will help. All study and all that we may do remain mere patchwork as long as the one great task, the creating of a new culture, is ignored, is not recognized.

If the new work we do is not be the mere appending of the thousand and second case to the thousand and first, but rather the means of gathering and presenting a body of knowledge imbued with life and the capacity to develop, then a way can be found out of our difficulties. If we provide some one particular foodstuff, grow a specific plant variety of grain, indeed, if we do something which in its details fills our day as an agriculturist, it will all remain patchwork if these efforts are not based on a fundamentally different attitude, on our part, to the problems of life and growth – an attitude which allows us to perceive life and growth as an organic whole over the entire earth.

—E. E. Pfeiffer

Soil Fertility, Renewal & Preservation, Lanthorn Press, Sussex, England, 1983, pages 182–183

Notes

Environmental remediation helps to improve everyday situations, so the soils and plants do not have to face a harsh, life threatening onslaught. While not your typical agricultural advice, in this issue Hugh Courtney answers your most frequently asked environmental and gardening questions with biodynamic solutions.

They happen any place, anywhere – disasters. You may not want to hear another Katrina story, but this one you must. The only consistent biodynamic practitioner in the entire state of Louisiana for the past twenty years, New Orleans resident Rita Amedee does her “prep work” to heal neighborhoods and the surrounding areas with the help of others. We are fortunate to have in these pages Rita’s first hand account of the real facts of the storm, the aftermath, and the use of the biodynamic preparations coming to the rescue in a city that indeed can most use this kind of “first-aid.”

Blessings in all your biodynamic works.

—Patricia Smith, Editor

Fall Prep-Making Workshop

JPI’s Fall Biodynamic Preparation Making Workshop, including harvesting of the sheaths, will be from Thursday, October 19 to Sunday, October 22, 2006. The workshop will focus on BD #500 (Horn Manure), BD #502 (Yarrow), BD #503 (Chamomile), BD #505 (Oak Bark), BD #506 (Dandelion) and Biodynamic Compound Preparation (a.k.a. Barrel Compost).

Applied Biodynamics

Applied Biodynamics is a quarterly publication of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics Inc. (JPI). The subscription price of \$30.00 per year helps support JPI research and development. Back issues are \$7.50 each.

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Layout by Bruce Bumbarger

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The cost of the workshop is \$500.00 which includes a breakfast bar, sit down lunch and dinner for all four days. Deposit for the workshop is \$100.00, non-refundable. Attendance at a previous workshop entitles you to a \$100.00 discount. Register by October 1st and receive an additional \$25.00 discount.

For further information, contact JPI at (276)930-2463; fax (276)930-2475 or e-mail: <info@jpibiodynamics.org>.

Annual Biodynamic Conference: August 17–20, 2006

Make your plans now to attend the Annual Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association Conference at Hawthorne Valley Farm in Ghent, New York. The theme of this year’s conference is “Building Sustainable Communities – Agriculture as Foundation for Social Change.”

Tour Hawthorne Valley Farm and other thriving local biodynamic and organic farms. Enjoy delicious biodynamic and organic food from Hawthorne Valley’s own dairy, bakery, and vegetable gardens and from other farms in the area.

Presentations and workshops will explore:

- growing and transforming living food as farmers, gardeners and processors;
- bringing food from farm to table as distributors;
- supporting and learning about those who are meeting our needs as consumers.

Request an informational brochure and registration form from the Biodynamic Association; (888)516-7797; or check website for details <www.biodynamics.com/calendar.html>.

Mission



The Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Bio-Dynamics Inc. (JPI), was founded to produce quality biodynamic agricultural preparations based on the spiritual-scientific research of Rudolf Steiner.

It serves as a living memorial to Josephine Porter, a pioneer for this work in America.

The mission of JPI also includes education and research in biodynamic agriculture. JPI undertakes these tasks so that the earth may be healed.

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Answering the Call, Finding a “Cure” with Biodynamics

Each year, JPI receives a number of queries for application of the biodynamic preparations for a variety of uses, including non-agricultural. Some of these pertain to environmental problems that need to be corrected when perhaps, nothing else will remedy the situation. JPI Executive Director Hugh Courtney answers these questions and others.

Oil Discarded

I discovered the previous owner had dumped used motor oil on the land for a number of years. How can I remedy this?

Short of removing the oil-contaminated soil to the maximum extent possible, this is a most difficult situation. Healthy soil can absorb and digest or breakdown minute quantities of motor oil without any long term negative effects on the soil. However, when we are talking about a remedy for massive amounts of motor oil accumulated over many years, it would take many years as well to achieve a thorough healing of this soil area through treatment with the biodynamic preparations. Certainly a constant and consistent application of Barrel Compost and BD#500 would go a long way to address this problem. If at least some of the soil could be removed and subjected to a composting process with BD#502–507 or the Pfeiffer BD Compost Starter, a digestion of the motor oil could eventually be achieved. A less direct solution would be to remove some of the contaminated soil and distribute or scatter it over a very wide area, thereby so diluting the contaminated soil that the soil over which it was distributed would be able to digest it as mentioned above. Of course, the land where such distribution might take place should have also been brought

back to a healthy or living state with the biodynamic preparations. In one sense of the word, removal of the soil to a landfill is simply transferring your problem to an already overburdened part of the earth.

Railroad Ties and Pressure Treated Lumber

How can I treat railroad ties used for raised beds for vegetable and herb production?

In the first place, by the time most railroad ties arrive to the point where they would be used in a landscape situation, the potentially noxious substances, mostly creosote, have long since leached out into the gravel underneath the railroad tracks where they started their journey. In the second place, if one is using the nine biodynamic preparations in a diligent and harmonious fashion, it is unlikely that any plants grown in such soil will take up any unhealthy substances. Alex Podolinsky in Australia supposedly completed plant tissue tests on crops grown in biodynamic soils as well as samples from the same crops grown on neighboring chemical soils, and found that certain nitrates (I believe) which showed up in the chemically-cultured plants did not show up in plants grown on the biodynamically treated soils. Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to research the particular citation where he describes this.

How to treat pressure-treated lumber used in raised beds for vegetables and herbs?

Again, the alarms raised about pressure-treated lumber should be examined closely. While health problems may be caused if one's skin is punctured by a splinter from such wood and constant bare skin contact may also be a problem, it would be useful to search the literature to see how many studies have clearly looked at the question of soil contamination resulting from noxious leachates derived from landscape timbers. In any case, the same use of the biodynamic preparations recommended above for railroad ties may well apply to landscape timbers. It would be of great value if this question could be adequately researched.

Using the Pfeiffer BD Field Spray for Garden and Houseplant Applications

The Pfeiffer BD Field Spray seems to be described mostly for dealing with plow down of a green manure crop. Can it also be used for my vegetable, herb and flower garden or even for my houseplants? If so, how would I measure it out for less than an acre?

A unit of the Pfeiffer BD Field Spray, which weighs two

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD #500 – Horn Manure

BD #501 – Horn Silica

BD #502 – Yarrow

BD #503 – Chamomile

BD #504 – Stinging Nettle

BD #505 – Oak Bark

BD #506 – Dandelion

BD #507 – Valerian

} Compost
Preparations

BD #508 – Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

ounces, has a volume measure of approximately 20 level teaspoons. One can achieve best results with it if it is pre-moistened for 6 to 12 hours before adding more water and spraying it out. If your garden is a fifth of an acre (43,560 square feet equals one acre) in size, which is approximately 8,000 square feet, or an area 80 × 100 feet, then you would need to measure out 4 level teaspoons and moisten it slightly to a paste-like consistency the night before you will use it the next morning, or the first thing in the morning if you wished to use it in the late afternoon after a day's work. If your garden is a smaller size than the example above, you would measure out proportionately less of the BD Field Spray. Thus out of one unit of the BD Field Spray, you could treat your garden several times during the growing season, which would prosper your plants enormously. One should be careful to keep what remains of the BD Field Spray completely dry, since once it is moistened it will need to be used within the first 48 hours or so for best results.

If you would like to provide a helpful tonic for your houseplants, you could, the night before, take as little as a ¼ or ⅛ teaspoon measure, place it in the bottom of your watering can, and add a small amount of water. Fill your watering can with water the next day, and water all your houseplants with this tonic, which will make them very happy.

Although the Pfeiffer BD Field Spray was originally intended for soil application in larger scale farming operations, especially where a green manure crop is involved, it can benefit plants not only as a soil feeder, but also as a foliar feeder. Truly, the usefulness of this product based on the biodynamic preparations is a long way from being fully explored.

Adapting Conventional Plants to BD

For those plants from conventional sources, how do I help to transition these to my biodynamic garden?

We are often faced with a scarcity of organically grown plant starts for our vegetable, flower and herb gardens, and larger ornamental shrubs or fruit trees which have had an organic start in life are also quite rare. The possibility of finding such items which have had the benefit of biodynamic treatment is virtually non-existent. Many of us who now count ourselves as biodynamic growers certainly didn't start out our gardening career in biodynamics, but became acclimated to the nuances of biodynamic agriculture over time and perhaps later in life than we might have wanted. So too, do many plants need special care and treatment with the preparations to overcome the disadvantages they incurred in life from either chemical or organic upbringing. The important point is to provide these plants with a healthy exposure to the nine biodynamic preparations as soon as one can man-

age. For most plant starts which arrive already in soil in planting containers, a thorough initial watering in with the Pfeiffer BD Field Spray or else a combination of BC (a.k.a. Biodynamic Compound Preparation or Thun Barrel Compost) followed by BD #500 will go very far to convert the plants to the biodynamic alertness desired. Fairly early in your program to acclimate the plants to biodynamic culture, you can also add at the next appropriate time an additional watering in of BD #508 (fermented version suggested). Later on after the plant has thoroughly established its root structure in its new location in your garden, and is mature enough, spray the plant with BD #501. By this time, the plant is ready to receive the regular care you have planned for the rest of your plants which have already been thriving on biodynamic treatment. If you are dealing with bare root plants, such as fruit trees, or bulbs, a root dip of clay and manure, well-moistened with either the Barrel Compost/BD #500 or Pfeiffer BD Field Spray along with a good dose of fermented BD #508 shortly before placing it in its planting hole will provide an excellent start in biodynamics.

Treatment of water screened (non-sewage) sludge from a municipal authority

While JPI has not dealt with treating sludge using biodynamic preparations, questions pertaining to this can be referred to L. A. Rotheraine at (814)362-5394 or visit <www.rotheraine.com>; under subject heading of Soil Reclamation, click on "Sludge to Fertile Soil" and "Success Story." In treating sludge, L. A. has used BC, BD #500, Pfeiffer BD Field Spray and BD #507 with positive results.

Viability after Stirring

How long do the preparations remain potent after stirring?

In all honesty, the answer to this question can only be provided based on hearsay. The usual statement made of BD #500 is that it needs to be applied within four hours after stirring or its effectiveness is lost. When it comes to BD #501, the application window is reduced to as little as one or two hours. Maria Thun states that her BC (Barrel Compost) formula is viable for up to four days after stirring, because of the pre-potentiation that has taken place in the making of this preparation. No research data has been published by Maria Thun, to my knowledge, to substantiate her statement. The (X)500 (or pre-potentized #500) was developed in the hope that this same four-day period of potency might also apply to it, but the necessary research to establish this, although long proposed, has not yet been done.

The Pfeiffer BD Compost Starter and BD Field Spray

are deemed to lose their viability within 24 to 48 hours after activation. This latter statement is based on indications inherited from Margaret Selke of the Pfeiffer Foundation, without having been provided the actual research data. Interestingly enough, actual experience in using a compost tea essentially consisting of the wash water derived from cleaning the machines after making each batch of Compost Starter or Field Spray has yielded very positive improvements in soil fertility. This improvement in soil fertility has sparked interest by neighboring farmers who want to know what has caused such improvement, and has taken place despite the fact that the Pfeiffer wash water has been stored in barrels for several years.

The bottom line is that actual research needs to be done, and such research that may have already been done, needs to be published and made available more widely. Unfortunately, the necessary funds for such research do not seem to manifest.

Though no concrete data exists for the potency time of preparations after stirring/diluting with water, an overview is offered here:

- BD #500, Prepared 500: 4 Hours
- (X)500: 4 Days
- BD #501, BD #501(F), #501(5x): 1 to 2 Hours
- BD #502, BD #503, BD #504, BD #505, BD #506: 1 to 4 Hours

- BD #507: Reuse/Stir
- BD #508: Reuse/Stir
- BC: 4 Days
- Pfeiffer BD Field Spray & BD Compost Starter: 24 to 48 Hours

[Data for potency times compiled by JPI staff member Catherine Kazlo.]

Sources for Basalt Powder

Planning to make Barrel Compost (BC)? Basalt powder is one of the ingredients used in Barrel Compost, also known as Biodynamic Compound Preparation. We suggest these sources:

- Agri Minerals
Las Vegas, NV
(702)256-2990
- Nuthin But Rock
Paw Paw, MI
(269)674-3078

Note: The seven page recipe for Maria Thun's Barrel Compost (its original name is the "Cowpat Preparation") is available from JPI for \$4.00 plus postage and handling.

Rita Amedee

Katrina in vitro

I was asked to write of my experience of Hurricane Katrina and its relationship to my biodynamic practice. I found it was impossible to do without including some explanatory notes on social and political points that have come to light during the last nine months of federal, state, local and independent studies.

The Evacuation

On Friday, August 26, 2005, my husband Roy and I were on a Gulf Coast beach, anticipating an end of the summer weekend with friends. White sand, clear bottle-green water and a sunny, cloudless sky looked promising. For several days, we had been watching a tropical depression in the Caribbean, one of many during the summer. On Thursday, it had intensified to a Category 1 hurricane named Katrina. Once making landfall in Miami, it was reduced again to a tropical storm. The typical summer weather patterns prevailed, with a strong high pressure system moving into the Gulf, forecasted to steer the storm on a north or northeasterly trajectory. The National Hurricane Center initially

predicted only a seventeen percent chance of the storm reaching as far west as the New Orleans area by Monday, so things were under a "wait and watch" advisory.

Saturday morning dawned with clear, flawless weather, but we heard disturbing news – the storm's trajectory was changing, and in the warm Gulf waters, Katrina was intensifying to hurricane strength again. An atypical sense of alarm swept over me – I wanted to go home to complete hurricane preparations and consider evacuation if necessary. After unsuccessfully trying to convince us that we should weather the storm where we were rather than heading back towards the storm's path, our friends urged us to at least use their home in Baton Rouge (ninety miles northwest of New Orleans) if it became necessary. We drove home along the scenic beach highway, passing grand, 100-year-old homes from Biloxi to Waveland, weekend retreats from the hot, humid summers in New Orleans. In less than 72 hours, most of them would be gone, nothing left but slabs. Once home, we sat glued to hurricane coverage, watching

the trajectory that still put Katrina east of New Orleans. She had not intensified, but her size had increased so that predictions of high winds and storm surge would affect areas well away from the eye. We decided to leave in the morning if her path hadn't altered.

By Sunday morning, Katrina had sucked up the warm Gulf waters and was intensifying. Mayor Ray Nagin ordered the first mandatory evacuation of the city.

Voluntary evacuations are typical and many people leave each season if hurricanes threaten. Mandatory evacuations are usually only directed at those people outside flood protection or in low lying parishes to the south. A mandatory evacuation follows a disaster plan that allows low lying parishes to get on the road in an orderly sequence to avoid traffic gridlock. Ultimately, the evacuation got over one million people or ninety percent of the population of the greater New Orleans area to safety; unlike the debacle in Houston for Hurricane Rita, where evacuation routes became parking lots.

Roy and I brought in lawn chairs, pots, birdfeeders and anything that could become a projectile, secured windows and doors and packed the car with two cats, our suitcases and "the box", which contained a few family heirlooms, photos and important papers. "The box" was packed each May and resided in a corner of the living room through hurricane season. I walked through the garden one last time, touching trees, smelling rose bushes. I had spent almost ten years loving this little yard [60 ft. x 70 ft.] on reclaimed swamp. It had given me not only food, flowers and herbs, but peace, happiness and healing insight. There was no "box" for it. It would have to stand in the face of whatever happened. Finally, we disconnected appliances, turned off the gas and closed up the house to begin the journey to Baton Rouge. It was the first time either of us had evacuated in our lives.

The Levees

New Orleans is surrounded by a system of levees, floodwalls and drainage canals which, along with other Gulf region projects, are designed, built and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers, a federal agency. These are meant to protect the city and insure the viability of the economic contributions we provide to the nation annually, including:

- \$30 billion in petroleum
- Twenty-one percent of the nation's natural gas
- Four hundred million tons of waterborne commerce (the world's busiest waterway)
- \$4.4 billion in commercial/recreational fisheries
- Forty percent of the salt marsh in the contiguous U.S. supports vast environmental benefits to wildlife and

plant species, and historically has served as a natural buffer against storms

The levee systems of the Mississippi stretch 1,000 miles from Cape Girardeau, Missouri to the Delta. The system protects cities along the river from flooding, but it also starves the Delta of the silt from tributaries of the 41 states that drain into the river that would normally continue to feed it. This, along with dredging and canal building to support oil and gas, has been, in part, responsible for incredible destruction of our wetlands. Over the last fifty years, more than 1,000 square miles has been lost – the equivalent of a football field every thirty minutes, or the size of Manhattan annually. Since 2001, under the Bush administration, there has been a 44.2 percent reduction of funding requests for levee and wetlands protection, despite increasingly dire predictions from scientists and environmentalists that current flood protection and wetland restoration was woefully inadequate. Quoting from a recent article, "The Army Corps of Engineers. . . estimated the likelihood of levee failure in New Orleans at 0.5 percent, or once in 200 years."¹

The Storm

Katrina did not hit New Orleans, but made landfall some thirty miles east at Buras, Louisiana. It was a Category 3 hurricane at that point, with most of the New Orleans area experiencing only Category 1 to 2 winds. As she moved on to pummel the Gulf Coast, we breathed a sigh of relief. What happened next has been investigated by the Corps as well as independent engineers and scientists from around the country. The scenario is chilling. Without the protection of the wetlands to dissipate it, the storm surge was funneled up the MR-GO (Mississippi River Gulf Outlet). A controversial Corps project of 1965, MR-GO is a 200-meter-wide canal that leads from the Gulf directly to the intracoastal waterway at the back door of New Orleans. This increased the surge's height 20 percent and its speed 100 to 200 percent. Under this intensified assault, twenty breaches on the MR-GO levee inundated St. Bernard Parish and parts of eastern New Orleans, while three breaches in the Industrial Canal devastated the Lower Ninth Ward. Meanwhile, storm swollen Lake Pontchartrain waters flowed into the London Avenue and 17th Street Canals, where floodwalls failed despite water levels within "safe tolerance." By the evening of August 30, eighty percent of New Orleans was under water. On April 5, 2006, Lt. General Carl Strock of the Corps, would testify before a Senate subcommittee, "We have now concluded we had problems with the design of the structure."² An investigation of the levee failures headed by Robert Bea, a University of California, Berkeley professor for the National Science Foundation

stated, "This is the largest civil engineering disaster in the history of the United States."³

In Baton Rouge, Roy and I watched the televised aftermath in horror. Chaos and human suffering were staggering. Pictures of the inundated Lakeview neighborhood were numbing – members of our family owned seven homes there. My stepson, Chris, left his wife and three-week-old son with relatives in Raceland to join hundreds of other locals to search and rescue with their fishing boats while awaiting federal emergency assistance. His report afterward was grim. He also confirmed that his home and six others were indeed lost. He wasn't able to reach my neighborhood, Lake Vista, which lay between Lakeview and Lake Pontchartrain. Media reports were confusing and inaccurate. Phone service and communication was almost impossible. We had no idea how our own home had fared.

The Return

On September 13, Roy and I returned to New Orleans to determine the fate of our home. Within a week after the storm, we had pooled our resources and bought a house in Baton Rouge that we shared with his parents and his 93-year-old aunt (they lived one house apart for 51 years and had never flooded) along with his brother and his family. The rest of our immediate family was scattered elsewhere. We had heard reports that parts of Lake Vista had also flooded. We approached New Orleans from the west, through Jefferson Parish. When we arrived at the Orleans Parish boundary, we were diverted to ride directly on the top of the spine of the wide earthen levee that fronts Lake Pontchartrain. To our right, Lakeview was still under several feet of water; giant pumps were gushing an endless flow of foul, dark water over the levee into the lake; large equipment worked on the gash in the 17th Street Canal. The smell was almost unbearable. As we rode along the lakefront, the destruction was endless. Giant swathes of snapped trees were being cut down and large equipment cleared debris. Concrete benches, once anchored facing the lake on one side of Lakeshore Drive, were now on the other side. The road was buckled and missing pieces. Military presence was everywhere, helicopters flew overhead. The sights, smells and sounds were so overwhelming and unnatural that by the time we turned onto our street, my heart was pounding and the hair on my forearms was standing on end. As we swerved around debris in the street, I realized it was totally dry. We had gotten no water. Our roof was in shreds, our iron fence lay in tangles and half of a pine tree lay in our now black pool (after many weeks without circulation and salt treatment to maintain a correct pH balance to prevent algae and bacteria growing, the salt water swimming pool



An area of the Lower Ninth Ward that was sprayed with biodynamic preparations during the Easter Pilgrimage in April. Photo © Margaret Runyon

had become anaerobic) but the house was intact. Only later did we learn that flood waters had come within three blocks of our house.

The day was hot, sunny and seemed unnaturally bright; I realized much of the canopy of giant oaks and magnolias in the neighborhood had been sheared off. As I headed to the yard, I was startled by the infusion of pure energy I felt as I approached. Drove of dragonflies darted above the ponds. Fish swam dreamily, undisturbed. The songbirds singing was angelic. In the midst of breathless destruction, the inbreathing/outbreathing pulse of life here was palpable. I do not intend to suggest an overly "magical" quality to biodynamic preps. The fact that most of my plantings survived despite drought conditions for three weeks when water service was not yet available is a testament to their effect.

There is an article by Dennis Klocek in *Lilipoh*, Winter 2005, that cautions us in researching the realm of elementals against "... a tendency to believe that what is 'experienced' by the researcher in the physical world is a communication from a being living in the spiritual world." I cannot claim something as profound as having a "spiritual imagination." (My inner development can seem woefully flabby and out of shape!) Mine is simply an observation that use of biodynamics, however small, is significant. In juxtaposition to the surrounding discord, the harmony surrounding me was apparent and I was so grateful to be in tune with it.

The Renewal

I've had an Associative Contract with JPI for twenty years or so, though I have been a lazy gardener, not expanding my use of the basic preps or documenting any research. I've had "stir buddies" off and on, but mostly it's been a solitary occupation on a small scale. I remember a quote by Hugh Courtney to the effect that once you set your hand to the plow, there's no going back. I began to think of it more as

the “tar baby effect”! Every year I have felt inspired to renew my contract. And later every year as I sit stirring preps, most likely sweating in tropical heat that pops up brazenly regardless of season, I find myself impatiently looking at my watch (“It’s only been fifteen minutes!?”), and I tell myself maybe this will be the last year. Certainly one person on such a small scale is hardly of consequence. But gradually, something changes in the quality of the sloshing water and by the time I’m finished spraying, I feel some elusive alchemy has taken place that I can sense and I am rededicated again. I cannot tell you why it happens, but I can witness that it does.

My home lies positioned so that, in order to get to areas that have services (gas, food, etc.), I must drive for miles through what amounts to a wasteland of destroyed, abandoned homes and suffocated, gray landscapes in what was one of America’s most verdant, vibrant cities. There are estimates that New Orleans will ultimately lose 40,000 trees – those not already down and chipped up will slowly die within a year from standing in brackish, toxic water for weeks. My experience served to galvanize my belief that biodynamics could play a role in healing the city literally from the ground up.

I started spraying with BC [Biodynamic Compound Preparation] and BD#500 in the dead zones in October and was even able to spray the breach in the 17th Street Canal before it was cordoned off from public access. What started as one individual’s project gradually included three people, then nine people to participate in the spraying. Thanks to my friend, Margaret Runyon (flooded, rescued and living in Atlanta) and her colleagues on the Central Regional Council [of the Anthroposophical Society in America], who sponsored a Healing Easter Pilgrimage down the Mississippi River and to the Gulf Coast, an unimaginable event took place. On Holy Saturday, along with Common Ground, an organization of volunteers restoring an organic community garden, a group of more than forty people stirred and sprayed almost six acres of the city with four different preps [BC, BD#500, BD#501 and fermented BD#508], and formed a biodynamic compost pile for the garden. Other incredibly healing events took place during Easter week as well, ending by spraying the four preps [BC, BD#500, BD#501 and fermented BD#508] and creating sacred landscapes in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. The energy of this group was inspiring. I hope this deed was a catalyst to draw more people to biodynamics and have them recognize its relevance to applications besides the farm and on whatever level of involvement one can offer.

I’m truly grateful to the folks at JPI for their support and encouragement, especially Hugh Courtney for his guidance and for kindling a fire in me with his writing. When you

read Hugh, you HAVE to put the book down and go DO IT!⁴ Thanks to everyone in so many places that have held New Orleans in their hearts and sprayed with us wherever they were. And the folks who participated in the Easter Pilgrimage have my deepest gratitude and admiration for all they did.

Postscript nine months after Katrina

- Two thirds of the people who left New Orleans have not or cannot return yet.
- The death toll stands at 1,577 in the New Orleans area.
- There are 481 people still missing.
- When I stand in my garden, I can hear the heavy equipment and scraping of metal as the Army Corps of Engineers works to repair the failed floodwalls and levees.
- Hurricane season starts June 1.

I direct you to four websites for more info:

- <www.pbs.org/now/science/neworleans.html>
- <www.levees.org>
- <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hurricane_katrina>
- <www.nola.com>

Suggested Reading

For a fascinating and perceptive book on the Mississippi River, its levees, and the long history of human efforts to tame it, see, *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America* by John M. Barry (Published by Simon & Schuster, NY, 524 pages). The problems brought to the forefront by Katrina have been with us for a very long time.

Notes

- 1) Breslau, Karen. 2006. A Question of ‘When’. *Newsweek*, 24 April.
- 2) Walsh, Bill. 2006. Corps chief admits to ‘design failure’. *The Times-Picayune*, 6 April.
- 3) Marshall, Bob. 17th Street Canal levee was doomed. 2005. *The Times-Picayune*, 30 November.
- 4) Referring to the introduction which Hugh Courtney wrote for *What is Biodynamics? A Way to Heal and Revitalize the Earth* by Rudolf Steiner (Published by Steiner Books, available from JPI for \$18.00 plus postage and handling).

Rita Amedee has practiced biodynamics in New Orleans for twenty years. She strongly believes that the mutual support between JPI and her small beloved garden through her Associative Contract has been vital to her practice. When not in the yard, she is an RN, herbalist and flower essence practitioner.

[Postscript: Rita’s hope is to target the neighborhoods on a whole, with

local individuals and also members of Common Ground to spray the biodynamic preparations as much as physically possible. Besides prep spraying, she is spreading the word through education and information about biodynamics in her locality.

After Hurricane Katrina, the resident status of the seven-member

Anthroposophical group in New Orleans so far: three live in the city, three are planning to return, and one has permanently relocated. The New Orleans Anthroposophical group had only gained official recognition from the Anthroposophical Society in June 2005.]

Easter Pilgrimage

Dear Hugh,

On behalf of all who participated in the Central Regional Council's pilgrimage to New Orleans and Ocean Springs (and as a direct beneficiary of work done in New Orleans), thank you so much for your interest in, guidance, and ongoing support of our post Katrina earth healing efforts. This was an amazing journey on many levels – all of us felt overwhelmed with images and experiences. . . which could have been paralyzing, but biodynamics empowered us to do something!

We stirred preps in the Common Ground Community Garden in Gentilly on the afternoon of Holy Saturday, and then broadcast them over four sites in the 9th Ward, the garden itself, the yard and environs of a “certain shotgun house” in Mid-City, and around the lagoon in City Park. During those same hours, a group of 17 individuals met at Lake Itasca, the headwaters of the Mississippi to stir, pray, sing, and spray there. This in concert with those you encouraged to do likewise all across the country.

It was a lovely echo then on Tuesday to stir and spray again on the Gulf-scourged land at Shearwater – a celebration of renewal (Easter!) that would have made Walter Anderson proud.

We wish you could have joined us in person for the pilgrimage, but your contribution was invaluable nonetheless.

We look forward to coordinating future efforts!

With warmest regards,

Margaret Runyon for the CRC

[Note: Lake Itasca is in Minnesota and Shearwater is located in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. The artist, naturalist and writer Walter Anderson (1903–1965) resided for most of his life in Ocean Springs.]

Prep Fund for New Orleans

If you would like to support the ongoing Biodynamic work in New Orleans, make your donation payable to “JPI” and mail to: New Orleans BD Prep Fund, JPI, P.O. Box 133, Woolwine, VA 24185. Your tax deductible contribution will be applied as a credit, thereby helping to defray the costs of the preparations. Thank you for considering this healing and beneficial activity for New Orleans.

Saying Goodbye

Dear Readers:

Since the beginning of the year, chronic neck and shoulder pain have made my ability to work on the newsletter quite a challenge, so with regret, this will be my last issue as editor for *Applied Biodynamics*. For my circumstances, this was not entirely a result from editing and writing at the computer and working a “desk job.” I have a history: a neck injury from nearly twenty years ago, and a shoulder injury using a mattock last fall further exacerbated the situation.

Since JPI is my regional group, there will be some volunteering in my future. In fact, I began as a volunteer at JPI to learn about biodynamics in 1997, and in the same year started as a staff member assisting with prep making; in late 2000, my position changed to editing the newsletter from home. So nine years and twenty-four issues later, I have completed the circle.

It has been a gift to be in this job to correspond with so many people who share their love of and dedication to biodynamic farming and gardening. I would like to thank all the contributing writers who have made this newsletter a working and practical resource for biodynamics. Thanks to all of the individual contacts and groups who are part of the “Finding Biodynamics in Your Locality” listing and of course to fellow JPI staff who all work towards the common goal of education and distribution of biodynamics. To Hugh Courtney, who never fails to be the infinite source of biodynamic information as our unofficial executive editor and the second set of eyes before the newsletter gets published. Thanks to Bruce Bumbarger who continually gives the newsletter a classic layout.

I look forward to getting up to strength again. With this issue, it's as if I am working at a pearl diver's pace, taking the plunge for one last time into “computer world” and “editing world” to get this newsletter to you. In the meantime, thank goodness for those shoulder and neck saving pre-potentized preps like (x)500 and 501(5x) to help us accomplish our biodynamic tasks with reduced stirring times of twenty minutes!

The work goes on – biodynamics heals all.

—Patricia Smith

*We should always try to have thoughts that are permeated
with impulses of will. We should consider what we can
really do for the moral betterment of human life in general.
This can arise from Spiritual Science.*

Rudolf Steiner – *Agriculture*, p. 121



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