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Tierra Miguel: Sharing the Fruits of Biodynamics in Southern California

Hunter Francis

In light of the many interfaces agriculture shares with the ecological and social challenges of today, biodynamics has an unprecedented opportunity to bring succor to both the environment and human beings. The expansion of the biodynamic movement is particularly important at this critical time. Given the scope and complexity of the current crisis, there are more avenues than ever through which we can help. Since 1999, the Tierra Miguel Foundation (TMF) of San Diego County has served as an important provider of resources for biodynamic agriculture in southern California – particularly through its Tierra Miguel farm. The Foundation has been especially successful in forging innovative partnerships with a wide cross-section of stakeholders, including state agencies, indigenous organizations, and school groups, as well as with other farmers and local citizens. Relationships such as these serve a vital role in the expansion and acceptance of biodynamics. Tierra Miguel's inspiring ways of engaging the general public over the past decade offer lessons for others who seek to deepen their own connections with those who are new to biodynamics.

For eight years in the '90s, I lived in the San Diego area, mostly in the city and along a string of the scenic coastal towns to the north. On weekends, I enjoyed exploring the more remote regions of the county's interior. San Diego is a unique place because of the numerous microclimates it contains. I remember starting one day with a swim in the ocean, later building a snowman on top of a mountain, and ending it by sunset in a hot spring on the warm desert floor. I have heard that there are more bird species in that county than in any other in the United States; it holds a strategic spot in the migratory flyway.



Appreciating a biodynamically-grown strawberry

One of my favorite excursions was to head to the northeast quarter of the county to Palomar Mountain – famous for its historic observatory. It was on trips to Palomar that I discovered Pauma Valley, which offers direct access to the mountain. From my first exposure, I have always found it to be an enchanting place. The stony approach up the watershed beneath Pauma sweeps past majestic riparian areas lined with huge trees – oaks, sycamore, willows and the like. One passes farms and ranches cultivating a vari-

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Notes

Dear Readers,

In my short time as an editor for *Applied Biodynamics*, we have published two very special tributes to those who have crossed the threshold – Elizabeth Courtney and Peter DUKICH. Both individuals were amazing people who brought the highest life-commitment to biodynamic work. With this issue we are honored to publish a memorial for another biodynamic pioneer, Marjorie Spock.

Also in our spring issue, our editor Hunter Francis profiles the history and evolution of the southern California farm, Tierra Miguel, and Lloyd Nelson and Mark Proctor report on the 2008 Biodynamic Preparation Making Conference in Viroqua, Wisconsin.

JPI welcomes Jennifer Greene to the board of directors. Many know of her work in the field of water research, carrying on the drop picture method of testing water quality, originated by Theodore Schwenk. Ms. Greene is also an active member of the Natural Science Section of the School for Spiritual Science of the Anthroposophic Society.

Special thanks goes to the rest of the editorial team: Bruce Bumbarger who carefully prepares the imagery and lays out each issue, Patricia Smith for her excellent proofreading and editing skills, and of course, JPI's tireless

director, Hugh Courtney who, despite his full-time commitment to hands-on biodynamic preparations work, still finds time to provide valuable ideas and editorial input for *Applied Biodynamics*.

Rudolf Steiner, in his manual for meditation and esoteric exploration, *How to Know Higher Worlds*, suggests, "The ideal situation would be to pursue our esoteric training among green plants and sunny mountains, surrounded by the loveliness of nature's simplicity." Could it be that those fortunate enough to work with the land, either professionally, or for family and hobby, are in the best position to pursue self-development and explore spiritual realities? There is no better time to remember this than during the busyness of spring, when it seems that there is so much work to get done and we find ourselves feeling stressed. A magical antidote to this preoccupation with life's pressures is stirring a bucket of BD #500 or #501 for an hour in springtime – thoughts become still, and we can enter into the sublime experience of the process. And when we quiet our inner chatter, and listen – chances are – we'll find that nature just might have something intelligent to say!

Christy Korrow

Applied Biodynamics

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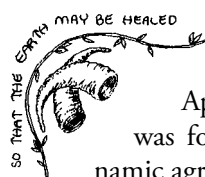
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Mission

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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Tierra Miguel

ety of specialty products, including subtropical fruits, aloe, nuts, ostrich, and even bison. As one makes the descent into Pauma's basin, one can't help being impressed by the grandeur of the oblong valley lined with steep orange- and avocado-laden mountains, and capped by Palomar Mountain itself. To me, there is something exotic about it, reminiscent of the mythic Himalayan foothill, Shangri-La. I remember the stunning sight of sun-drenched bougainvillea, the pristine scent of white sage and citrus, the hard lines of enormous agave plants, and the soft light that shines through patches of pine forest.

It was interesting to find out after the fact, and years later, that at the same time I was getting to know this special place, a group of anthroposophically-inspired San Diegans was being pulled together by destiny to found a biodynamic farm in the heart of that very valley. A serendipitous coming-together of these individuals occurred at an anthroposophic conference held in San Diego in the summer of 1999 entitled "The Spiritual Mission of the Americas." The conference attracted over four hundred people from around the world, including international anthroposophic leadership. Among the conference attendees, there was a group from southern California interested in biodynamic agriculture. With some members having participated in biodynamic study since the early '90s, the group emerged with the collective intent to establish a farm and supporting organization whose mission was to become "renewal of the earth and humanity through agriculture, education, and the healing arts." The Tierra Miguel Foundation (TMF) was founded on Michaelmas 1999, and in 2000, became the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization carrying this

mission – with the idea of a future Tierra Miguel Farm as its locus of activity and primary demonstration site. The name "Tierra Miguel" was chosen to pay tribute to Saint Michael (*San Miguel*), the Archangel referred to often by Rudolf Steiner and the original namesake of San Diego. (The name "San Miguel" was given to the region in 1542 by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European to explore its beautiful coastline. The name was changed to "San Diego" in 1602 by another explorer, Sebastian Vizcaino.)

The conference helped catalyze the initiative by calling attention to the need for a greater biodynamic presence in southern California. Comments made there by Manfred Schmidt-Brabant carried particular weight as he spoke to the unique spiritual geography of San Diego, an area which, according to him, had not yet received the resurrected forces that biodynamics brings forth. According to Beth Levensdoski, who has been involved in the legal and administrative affairs of the foundation since its birth and who serves as its current CEO and president of the board, "This was a call to action." Beth experienced this "birth" as a coming together of several threads, with the impetus of the conference as an important one. Another was the closing of a large biodynamic farm at about the same time in the Santa Barbara area that had been run by Steve Moore for over a decade.

The group in question was a natural recipient of the challenge. Largely thanks to the work of Peter Dukich¹ and his wife Charlotte, several people had gathered in San Diego for years to study biodynamics. This included Mil Krecu (who was to become the first farmer at Tierra Miguel Farm and the first treasurer of the foundation) and Rob Farmer (also a farmer, and the first president of the foundation). They were avid students of biodynamics, and first met in a study group Peter had formed in 1993. Of course, Charlotte and Peter had been active in the area much earlier, with Charlotte serving as president of the Biodynamic Association of Southern California from 1974–1990, while Peter was active in teaching throughout the state. Charlotte had helped bring Demeter to the United States in the mid-1970s; she worked with Dr. Maria Linder and Tim Smith to form the Demeter Foundation, a precursor to the current certifying agency, Demeter USA. By the time the Tierra Miguel Foundation began, other important members in the group included Charlene Orszag, who served as president of the foundation between 2001–2004, and Kathryn Rycroft, who was the founding board secretary. Kathryn brought an impulse for the healing arts into the initiative thanks to her many years of work in the Camphill movement. This interest was reflected by many of the others involved as they had either been involved in Camphill directly themselves, or had spent time working in other healing organizations and modalities.

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*)



Stirring biodynamic preparations

Inspired by Rudolf Steiner's appeal that the most important thing we can do as anthroposophists is to bring the biodynamic preparations to the earth, the group began to look for a home for the initiative – a farm. The desire to find a place for Peter Dukich on the land added to the urgency of this search. In the winter of 2000, an opening presented itself when Robert Farmer and Mil Krecu learned of a farmer, William Potter of Pauma Valley Organics, who was interested in leasing his strawberry fields. The fields had already been planted, but Mr. Potter wanted to find another party to steward them to fruition, and ultimately to market. Tierra Miguel agreed to lease the land, and began farming the parcel on Valentine's Day of 2000. This was the beginning of a complex transition of ownership and production practices (described in detail below).

From the start, it has been Tierra Miguel's intention to use and to demonstrate biodynamic agricultural practices. It has done this; however, the farm is still not certified biodynamic. According to Mil Krecu, the current farm manager, the biggest hurdle to this end is the lack of water in the region – only ten inches of rainfall per year. The need to irrigate pasture in such a situation presents a formidable task in terms of managing irrigation systems, something which the farm is not currently in a position to subsidize. Nonetheless, Tierra Miguel is certified organic by California Certified Organic Farmers, and plans to seek Demeter certification in the future.

The farm consists of eighty-five acres on the valley floor comprised of approximately twenty acres of wildlife habitat, a one-acre "experimental orchard" (containing peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots, pears, apples, mulberries, and jujubes) and eight to fourteen acres in production at any given time for row crop vegetables, strawberries, and herbs. Seasonal cover crops are used as part of an ongoing

crop rotation to make up a total of thirty acres of production area. The remaining land is comprised of residential buildings, storage and processing facilities, and garden and forested areas. The farm is bordered by the San Luis Rey River, which provides a safe corridor for wildlife. Sandy soils on the farm make retention of fertility difficult; this necessitates regular use of biodynamic compost. While the farm still makes some compost, most of its compost is purchased from the Van Oming Dairy in Lakeside, California. Owners of the dairy attended a TMF workshop on making biodynamic compost several years ago and are now helping the farm to meet the bulk of its fertility needs! This is but one example of many in which Tierra Miguel is sharing the benefits of biodynamics with the surrounding community.

Use of the biodynamic preparations includes sequential spraying with Barrel Compost (Biodynamic Compound Preparation) and *Equisetum arvense* (BD #508) at least three times per year. Horn manure (BD #500) is used a total of three to six times per year, while horn silica (BD #501) is sprayed more selectively given the arid conditions in the valley. The horn silica is used with a focus on fruits and herbs to build up sugars and essential oils. Both horn manure and horn silica are produced on site. The farm has an abundance of nettle and some yarrow. In the future, Tierra Miguel would like to start making some of its own compost preparations, so it is experimenting with growing some of the other herbs, such as chamomile and valerian. Oak trees grow in habitat areas on the farm, so procurement of oak bark on site is a possibility, although the species varies from that traditionally used.

Produce from the farm is marketed through a large, three hundred-member CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. In addition to serving as an important rev-



Learning to apply a field spray

enue stream, the year-round CSA provides the farm with a lively avenue for disseminating information on the benefits of biodynamic and organic agriculture. Of course, the quality of the produce is the best testimony, and it has been well received by subscribers participating from five neighboring counties: San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside. Nearly all of the produce sold through the CSA program is grown on the farm, with the exception of occasional certified organic citrus, avocados, and other specialty crops purchased from neighboring farms. Ensuring the farm is producing throughout the year makes for rigorous planning by the farm's management team. Winter and spring selections include many of the cool season crops such as the *Brassicas*, beets, turnips, leeks, and herbs. In the summer and fall, customers enjoy a cornucopia of warm season crops such as tomatoes, peppers, corn, squash, and melons. The farm delivers to "drop-off points" throughout southern California, something which requires a considerable investment of staff time. On site, the farm maintains a roadside stand which is popular with local residents.

One of the things making the Tierra Miguel farm unique is a groundbreaking farmland conservation arrangement that the foundation was instrumental in orchestrating. Shortly after TMF began to lease the land from Mr. Potter, he stated his intention to sell the land for development. The eventual \$1.91 million selling price of the farm was clearly beyond the means of the foundation. Given that the farm was located in a region experiencing extreme development pressures, Mr. Potter was approached by several buyers. Tierra Miguel Foundation directors looked for a way to conserve the land and keep it agricultural. TMF's intention was to remain on the land and continue to farm biodynamically. After much hard work and perseverance, members of TMF were successful in securing two separate grants to cover the costs of purchasing the farm in 2004. The first was a \$475,000 joint grant from the California Department of Conservation and the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service to create an agricultural conservation easement on the property. This easement ensures that the property will remain in agricultural production in perpetuity. The remainder of the money for purchase of the property was allotted by the California Department of Conservation alone in the form of a temporary fee title grant. A temporary fee title grant is essentially a loan without interest, and this grant gave TMF until 2006 to find a permanent buyer for the property, thus enabling repayment of the temporary grant. This was a landmark award because it was the first time the state of California had ever given money for a temporary fee title land purchase to conserve precious farmland.



Harvesting lettuce with Pauma Valley students

TMF sought to find the funds to purchase the land and return the grant moneys. Fortunately, since 2000, TMF had conducted an impressive outreach to the surrounding community. In addition to helping farmers and land managers with issues such as sustainable farming practices, habitat protection, water conservation and agricultural easements, the foundation had engaged local residents through health, nutrition and education programs in an effort to fulfill its mission further. A big boost to these community activities came in 2003, when TMF was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the California Endowment to develop a health education project known as the "Healthy Life Program." Money from this grant provided for a year's worth of on-farm visits from Pauma Valley public schools, family health festivals, assistance in setting up salad bars at the schools, cooking classes for parents and school children, and general health and fitness education. This resulted in a "massive collaboration" involving teachers, school boards, and health professionals. The benefits of this program, coupled with earlier outreach efforts, were felt beyond the confines of Pauma Valley as numerous school districts from around San Diego County either sent students to experience the farm first hand, or learned from the example by creating their own health programs using agriculture as the backdrop. Many Waldorf schools have continued to bring classes for yearly visits, and the Waldorf Institute of Southern California holds annual teacher training programs at the farm.

A key beneficiary of these early programs was the Pauma Band of Mission Indians for whom the valley is an ancestral home. These Native Americans, part of one of the largest tribes in southern California, were in a rather paradoxical situation at the time. On the one hand, they were emerging from a history of relative poverty. On the other, they were becoming custodians of potential wealth resulting from California's new Indian gaming laws. Maladies such as childhood obesity and diabetes were severely impacting their community, as well as other surrounding tribes. The Pauma Indian elders were especially interested in Tierra Miguel's programs and the proximity of the farm to their reservation. After many negotiations, they ultimately agreed to purchase the land including the required agricultural conservation easement, thus permanently preserving the farm for agricultural use.

This constitutes another very unique arrangement given the Indians' aversion to any limit on sovereignty over their lands. The agreement's culmination is a testament to TMF leaders. Chris Devers, Chairman of the Pauma Band remarked at the time, "The Pauma Band of Mission Indians has a long history and tradition of practicing environmental stewardship... Together the Pauma Band of Mission Indians and Tierra Miguel Foundation can significantly impact the health and well-being of the local community as well as modeling new possibilities for others throughout California." TMF currently is in a long-term lease with the Pauma Indians.

The Indians also provided TMF with a generous donation of \$350,000 to the farm and an educational/working grant to TMF in the sum of \$300,000 over ten years. The donation and grant are being used to support the work of the farm and to expand TMF's "farm to school" program, aimed at educating elementary and middle school students throughout San Diego County about biodynamic and organic farming practices. In the past, the farm to school programs have brought over 5,000 school children per year to the farm.

In addition to school groups, Tierra Miguel has hosted many community organizations, 4-H clubs, gardening clubs, and university students over the years. In the Spring of 2001, TMF greeted five interns from the Multinational Exchange for Sustainable Agriculture (MESA) program which provides international exchange opportunities for agriculturists in training. Participation in MESA was curtailed indefinitely after the attacks of 9/11. Nonetheless, TMF was able to provide training for graduate students from four countries with the highest of praise from the program participants and a superior endorsement by MESA. The farm has also received farmers and representa-

tives from educational and governmental institutions from Scotland, France, the Philippines, China and Thailand for informational exchanges. For domestic students, TMF has provided land for use by college students to conduct research into sustainable agricultural practices, the multiple uses of herbs (e.g. medicinal and agricultural, as well as for food), and biodynamic composting with herbal preparations to increase the nutritive value of foods. The work of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer has been carried forward on the farm to elucidate the nutritional benefits of biodynamic agriculture through workshops and other informational exchanges. One important connection has been with the Price Pottenger Nutrition Foundation (PPNF) in making the connection between nutrition and a host of related maladies such as obesity. Other research projects have included a conservation plan for an upland oak preserve, soil conservation, and wetlands restoration with native trees.

On an ongoing basis, TMF encourages community participation on the farm. The farm is available to the public throughout the year for tours, classes and demonstrations (by arrangement.) The first Saturday of each month is "Volunteer Day," a time when CSA and community members come to the farm to help the farmers. People from all walks of life have attended gatherings such as these and left with a new sense of connection to the land and to each other. As cofounder Charlene Orszag puts it, "A farm is a place where all members of a community, whoever they may be, can come together and share in the experience and bounty of nature." Classes in composting, biodynamics and gardening are regularly offered at the farm.

Tierra Miguel has won numerous awards for its groundbreaking efforts. In particular, TMF was awarded the Palomar Pomerado Health "Unity Award" in 2005 for its "Healthy Life Program" conducted with Pauma Elementary School to build lifestyle skills including: choosing to eat healthy foods; learning about the link between nutrition and health; obtaining diabetes and obesity testing; and becoming more physically active. The Pauma School was subsequently awarded the Governor's Gold Medal for its health programs of which TMF was a central part. As part of a "Smart Growth Awards Program" in 2007, TMF received the "Progressive Agricultural Sustainability Award" from the Urban Land Institute in San Diego for its education programs, farmland conservation and preservation, support for agricultural land use planning and reform, natural resource conservation, and support of the agricultural industry. The San Diego Women's Foundation, San Diego County Supervisor Bill Horn, and the San Diego Foundation have also given important recognition to TMF's work through grants for education and community involvement.

TMF was a founding member of the San Diego Conservation Resource Network which includes the environmental organizations within the county. A unique three-year program partnering with Los Angeles Unified School District, Center for Food and Justice, and Nutrition Network delivered several thousand CSA boxes to classrooms throughout the district. Activities and accolades such as these translate to great exposure for biodynamics as a whole in the eyes of the general public.

In October of 2007, Tierra Miguel and the surrounding community faced a daunting challenge. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land were consumed by a suite of aggressive forest fires in the southern California region. Of course, the fires did not stay in the forests, and in their wake they left a path of ravaged communities, businesses, and farms. Only two days after the fires started (there were several), 500,000 people were ordered to leave their homes. This constituted the largest evacuation in United States history, surpassing even that of Hurricane Katrina. The "Poomacha Fire," a conflagration on and around Palomar Mountain, burned 50,000 acres. This fire enveloped Pauma Valley to the north, south and east. Fortunately, Tierra Miguel farm was spared from the blazes, although surrounded by them. Nonetheless, the infrastructure sup-

porting agricultural operations in these areas was severely disrupted. This included roads, utilities, and many of the communities housing agricultural support staff. The Poomacha Fire was the last of the southern California fires to be extinguished, on November 9, 2007. A massive reconstruction effort in the region is now underway.

Tierra Miguel continues to lay a foundation for the important work in biodynamic education that must come if we are to meet many of our challenges in agriculture. For farm manager Mil Krecu, "It's about future generations, and making sure we will be able to pass healthy agricultural skills on to future farmers."

For more information about Tierra Miguel, or to learn about how you can help in its recovery from the devastating California fires, please contact Beth Levendoski at <bethlevendoski@tierramiguelfarm.org> or visit <www.tierramiguelfarm.org>.

Note

- 1) Peter Dukich was an inspiration to many in the establishment of the Tierra Miguel Farm, and he later became an *Emeritus* board member for the Tierra Miguel Foundation. His life is highlighted in "In Memoriam" in *Applied Biodynamics*, Issue No. 59.

Biodynamic Preparations Conference: A Conference Report

Lloyd Nelson and New Moon (Mark Proctor)

From January 25–27, 2008 a group of about 50 biodynamic preparation makers from across the country met in snowy, cold Viroqua, Wisconsin at the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School for the Seventh Annual Biodynamic Preparations Conference. The conference theme was "Dandelion Preparation – Cosmic Reality, Earthly Substance – Preparation Making in America: Past, Present and Future." Attending were representatives from many regional preparation making groups from across the country as well as individuals from remote locations. Also represented were the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association, the Demeter Association, and the Josephine Porter Institute. (Lloyd Nelson)

LLOYD NELSON

One of the best things about this gathering was getting together with many people who are doing biodynamic work in this country. The weekend was a great community builder. A very deep and meaningful relationship is built between people when doing this kind of work. Another highlight of this gathering were the moderators/facilitators – Brian

Wickert and Wali Via. Both men were very insightful, kept us on track, and kept the discussions in line. They helped the flow of discussions and created a wonderful atmosphere to develop the conference theme.

The conference began with a potluck dinner Friday evening. Then, Walter Goldstein gave a lecture and Power Point presentation on "An Attempt to Understand the Dandelion Preparation." Although all the compost preparations were covered, special attention was given to the dandelion and the mesentery, and how they work together to bring about BD #506 (dandelion preparation). This was one of the very best presentations on biodynamics I have ever attended. I hope Walter will publish this work, as it was very helpful and perceptive in broadening one's understanding of the mystery of the preparations and how they function. Especially pertinent was his assessment of the effects on human nutrition when food is lacking the cosmic connections brought about through the biodynamic preparations.

Saturday started with Harald Hoven's (Rudolf Steiner



Wali Via, active member of the Oregon BD group

College in Fair Oaks, California) presentation on the dandelion plant, followed by Hugh Williams' (orchardist from New York) talk about the animal sheath used to make BD #506 – the mesentery. After lunch, the group gathered for fun and games, delightfully led by Adrienne Caldwell.

We heard preparation making biographies of Wali Via, Hugh Williams and Hugh Courtney. They were asked to answer four questions: How long have you been making the preparations? With whom do you make the preparations? What drew you to preparation making? What do you see as the challenges facing biodynamic preparation making in the future? It was fascinating hearing these biographies, the good times, the struggles and the history.

Later, Hugh Courtney gave a hands-on demonstration of the mesentery sheath, and how it is used to make the dandelion preparation at JPI.



Brian Wickert, conference co-facilitator (left), and JPI director Hugh Courtney



Kitsy McHenry (left) and Ruth Zinniker conveyed their personal experiences with biodynamic pioneer, Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

Saturday evening, we developed a preparation making history circle with Brian Wickert facilitating. It started with Ruth Zinniker and Kitsy McHenry in the middle of the circle telling stories of their personal experiences with Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. From that point, the circle grew with people telling their stories in chronological order of when and with whom they first started making biodynamic preparations. A collective history of biodynamics in America came to life in this process.

Sunday morning, Wali Via from Wintergreen Farm in Noti, Oregon led us in several activities. The first exercise served to center us and bring us together. The group formed a circle, and one by one, each of us placed a handful of BD #500 (horn manure) that we had brought from home into a bowl in the middle of the circle. Next, Ruth Zinniker was asked to mix all the BD #500 together. Finally, one by one, we each went to the bowl and took a handful of this BD #500 blended together from all across the country to take home with us. Amazingly, the bowl, which should have been essentially empty, still had a substantial quantity of BD #500 remaining. It was as though everyone's contribution had somehow multiplied during this entire exercise.



Participants from across the United States brought some of their own BD #500 and it was combined in a bowl. Each person was asked to take some home. Matthew Baker enters the circle to take a handful.

Following that, in silence, we first thought about, and then wrote down questions we felt needed to be asked – questions about the future of biodynamics, about the future of prep making, and any other questions we felt needed to be asked.

After we formed our questions, participants read them aloud and placed them on the wall in a chosen category. No discussion or answers were allowed at this time – only questions. Let us hope this year brings some answers.

I have attended several of the future of the preparations conferences. This was the first time I know of that the group as a whole was able to ask the questions about the future of the preparations which they felt needed answer-

Questions Brought Forth at the Biodynamic Preparations Conference, January, 2008

- What must we do to act, rather than react, when steps are taken by governmental authorities to restrict production of the biodynamic preparations as has happened elsewhere in the world?
- What can help in the major question of succession of Hugh Courtney's work at JPI to ensure continuing availability of preparations for all?
- What needs are fulfilled by a central preparation-making facility? How will the facility be supported? How will the needs for preparations be met if a central source is no longer available?
- Are we able, in our current structure of the BDA, to address the needs and demands that young farmers are faced with on our continent?
- How can the BDA and other organizations best serve (support) preparation making and the regional initiatives that are either involved with preparation making for their regions, training initiatives, conferences, or workshops throughout the U.S.?
- How can biodynamic practitioners collaborate in ways that respect both the historic, traditional/orthodox biodynamics while nurturing and embracing fact based/reality based innovation, evolution, and action?
- How should Demeter deal with new preparations or Pfeiffer products (those beyond BD #500 – BD #508 and Biodynamic Compound Preparation (a.k.a Barrel Compost)?
- What can we do to foster a greater sense of biodynamic community in North America and truly grow biodynamics?
- How do we ensure the availability of sheaths?

ing. Some of the questions were the very same ones asked seven years ago – questions that helped initiate this series of conferences. At left below are a few of the questions from attendees.

In closing, Wali led us in singing rounds of Hallelujah from Pachelbel's *Canon*. The music we created was absolutely beautiful.

During our final meal together we all took part in a sharing table where people brought gifts from their farm, or things that had special meaning. One by one, as names were drawn, participants got to pick whatever gift drew their interest. As each gift was chosen, the giver told why it was meaningful and the receiver told why they picked it. The sharing table provided all of us a last chance to get to know one another better.

Lloyd Nelson is a board member at JPI and currently resides at Fox Hollow Farm in Crestone, Kentucky.

NEW MOON (MARK PROCTOR):

I saw my God in a lot of people's faces there. It was a beautiful thing to be a part of this group so interested and committed to the biodynamic preparations. This was my first biodynamic conference outside of those I had attended at the Josephine Porter Institute.

The questions about the future of preparation making, and ideas on moving forward in unity of the spirit, were very moving for me. I would like to say the future of the preparation makers is in the hands of the Creator now. I met some of the best preparation makers there, or so I was told. When praying in a good way around these special substances, things just happen – if you allow yourselves to be open in positive ways.

I was happy to see the compassion for JPI and the work done here. We shared in the hope that the biodynamic preparations, the Pfeiffer BD Compost Starter and the BD Field and Garden Spray now being produced at JPI, and perhaps, even new areas of preparations work, such as the Hugo Erbe preparations or the bison preparation, all may be carried forward into the future at JPI and elsewhere.

Thank you so much, Wali Via, Brian Wickert and the planning committee at Viroqua. I'll see you all again in the spraying of the preparations. Give thanks to the Creator always. How far can one's thoughts take these preparations? To the ends of the earth.

New Moon is a staff person at JPI.

Marjorie Spock: 1904–2008

Friend of Angels, Elementals and Human Beings –

Gardener, Eurythmist, Teacher and Student of Anthroposophy Crosses the Threshold at Age 103

Jennifer Greene

Marjorie Spock was the best northern climate gardener I have met. I think that the single attribute contributing to this can be summed up in one word: patience. She was often the last to get her garden in and the first to get produce. She understood the role of giving time to the soil so it could warm up. She didn't have row covers or use black plastic. Though she did have a greenhouse to start seedlings (and started some in the ground for later transplanting for putting by vegetables) the "earth had to be ready" for transplanting! This was not always easy to do because the gardens went right down to the water and were often engulfed with fogs. Marjorie also used the biodynamic preparations climatically and made a lot of BD compost, which was always one of the high points of our activities. The rows upon rows of vegetables were beautiful.

Marjorie shared her knowledge with all who asked for it, and was generous with the seedlings she grew. She marveled at the holes left in the greenhouse beds where the young plants had been dug out – along with the copious amounts of BD treated soil that went along with them! The greenhouse beds were composted and built up in the dormant time during summer, ready for use in the fall.

Marjorie also raised goats and had a thorough knowledge of the care they needed. They brought endless joy to her with their antics; I am sure she brought out the best in them.

When Marjorie was in Dornach, Switzerland, she lived next to Edith Maryon, who had worked with Rudolf Steiner on the great wooden carved statue, "The Representative of Man." Rudolf Steiner would come and visit his colleague during her last illness. There was a dog that followed him everywhere in Dornach. He would come to the garden gate, speak to the dog, open the gate, and go into the house. After fifteen minutes or so, he would emerge, open the garden gate, speak to the dog again, and off they would go – Rudolf Steiner and a very happy dog. The respect and love that Rudolf Steiner showed animals made a deep impression upon Marjorie.

I first met Marjorie in June, 1968 when I came to her home in Sullivan, Maine to speak to her about community building, nature and etheric forces, and Rudolf Steiner's *Foundation Stone* meditation. I came back during all my vacations to study anthroposophy with her and help her in the gardens. After my studies at Emerson College were

completed, I moved to Maine to work with Marjorie and Will Brinton, who had joined the farm and was beginning the Woods End Laboratory. The peak production and the high point of the farm occurred during Will's tenure there in the mid 1970s. It was a marvelous time with all kinds of study and a lot of research.

The following is from the obituary I wrote which appeared January 31 in *The Ellsworth American*.

Marjorie Spock died peacefully at her home in Sullivan, Maine on January 23, 2008 at the age of 103.

Marjorie Spock was born in New Haven, Connecticut on September 8, 1904, the second child, and first daughter of six children. The Spock family was prominent in New Haven, as her father was a corporate lawyer there and her older brother, Dr. Benjamin Spock, was later a world-renowned pediatrician, known through *The Baby Book*, which changed the way children were brought up and viewed, and known for his work against the Vietnam War.

At eighteen, Marjorie went to Dornach, Switzerland, to meet and work with Rudolf Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy. This had deep significance for her life, especially her study of the dynamics of human movement, through Eurythmy. After her final return to the United States, she received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Columbia University at the age of thirty-eight. During her studies, she began a prominent career as a teacher and the head of the Dalton Middle School and teacher at the Fieldston Lower School, both progressive schools in New York City. She also taught at The Rudolf Steiner School in New York City and The Waldorf School in Garden City, Long Island.

With her deep understanding of nature and as an avid biodynamic gardener, Marjorie's work took on an added dimension when, in the area where she and her friend, Polly Richards, lived on Long Island, New York, the government began aerial spraying DDT against the perceived gypsy moth epidemic. She and Polly, who helped finance the legal action, brought a case with ten other people against the United States government for the continued DDT spraying. Marjorie and Polly were formidable leaders for this commitment to the health of the earth. Organic, biodynamic food was a lifesaving matter for Polly, who was in ill health. For Marjorie, the concern was for her friend's health, and the constitutional right as a property owner to

keep her land as she wanted it, free of government infringement. This team was brilliant, committed and erudite. According to Marjorie, the “government ran roughshod over anyone who got in the way of the new technology. They brushed us off like so many flies.” The federal judge, appointed by President Eisenhower, threw out seventy-two uncontested admissions for the plaintiffs and denied their petitions. From the summer of 1957 to 1960, when the case reached the Supreme Court, Marjorie wrote a report to interested and influential friends of each day’s progress in and out of court, every evening after work. Rachel Carson heard of this and soon got these daily briefings because she realized that the testimony from the experts that Marjorie had found would be valuable for her own research. This case, along with a massive bird kill on Cape Cod, was the springboard for the writing of *Silent Spring*. Although the trial took only twenty-two days, towards the end, Rachel Carson asked Marjorie for the transcript. They became close collaborators and friends.¹

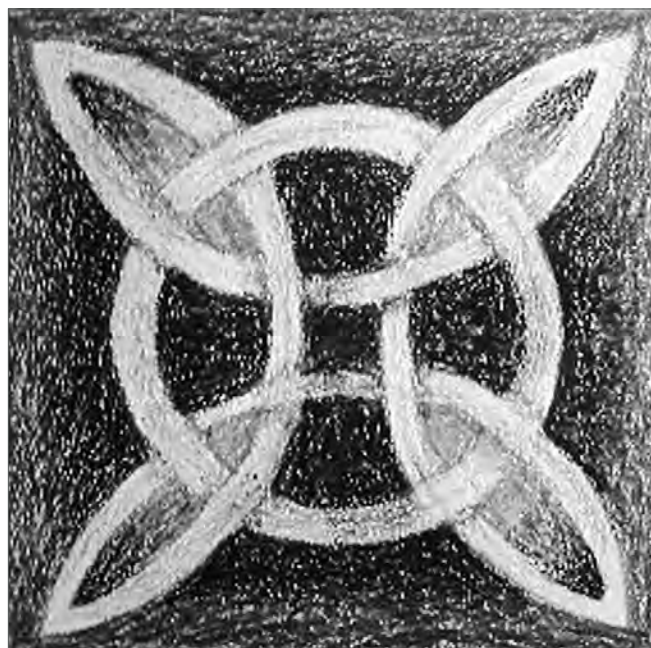
Though the plaintiffs lost the case, they won the right to bring an injunction in court, so that prior to a destructive environmental event, a full and proper scientific review had to be made. Marjorie always described it saying, “We lost the battle but won the war.”

This became the germinal legal action for the environmental movement in the United States. There has been continuous interest in this case since that time. Recently, Marjorie was interviewed for a documentary on Rachel Carson.

After the case, Marjorie moved to Chester, New York where she farmed, bringing biodynamic produce to a larger public. She worked closely with Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, the renowned soil scientist, and compost and farm adviser for the biodynamic movement.

As a beloved destination since childhood, in 1965, Marjorie moved to Maine, where she lived and worked for the next 43 years as an inspiring teacher, eurythmist, author, biodynamic farmer, translator, and mentor to the many people, young and old, who came to see her. Until January 17, a few days before she died, she held a study group, which has been ongoing since 1965, and to which people came from all over the state. Visitors from all over the world and wonderful neighbors were always heartily welcomed and experienced wide-ranging and deep conversations, wise counsel, and humor.

Amongst Marjorie Spock’s writings are *Teaching as a Lively Art* (her Master’s thesis), *In Celebration of the Human Heart*, *Eurythmy*, *To Look on Earth With More Than Mortal Eyes* and *Fairy Worlds and Workers: A Natural History of Fairyland*. The two pamphlets, *Group Moral Artistry I: Re-*



Circle and Cross – Courtesy of Van James

flections on Community Building and *Group Moral Artistry II: The Art of Goethean Conversation*, have had a readership around the world. Her love and understanding of the mystery of language can be seen in her article, “A B C D E F G: The Secret Life of Letters.”

In the 100th year of her life, Marjorie produced, directed and choreographed a video about eurythmy, which was filmed at Hammond Hall in Winter Harbor, Maine followed by two short eurythmy training films at 101 and 102 years of age.

The last few years were amongst the happiest and most productive, because of the loving help and care that Kim Smith gave Marjorie. Many around the world are grateful for this, as Marjorie was then able to work tirelessly for the understanding of the goodness of mankind and for the health of the earth.

Note

- 1) Information from private conversations and *Rachel Carson: The Life of The Author of Silent Spring*, Linda Lear (Henry Holt, 1997).

Editor’s note:

Many of Ms. Spock’s books are currently out of print. An Amazon.com search reveals that used copies of many of her books are still in circulation, and have increased substantially in value.

Of Farmers and Fairies

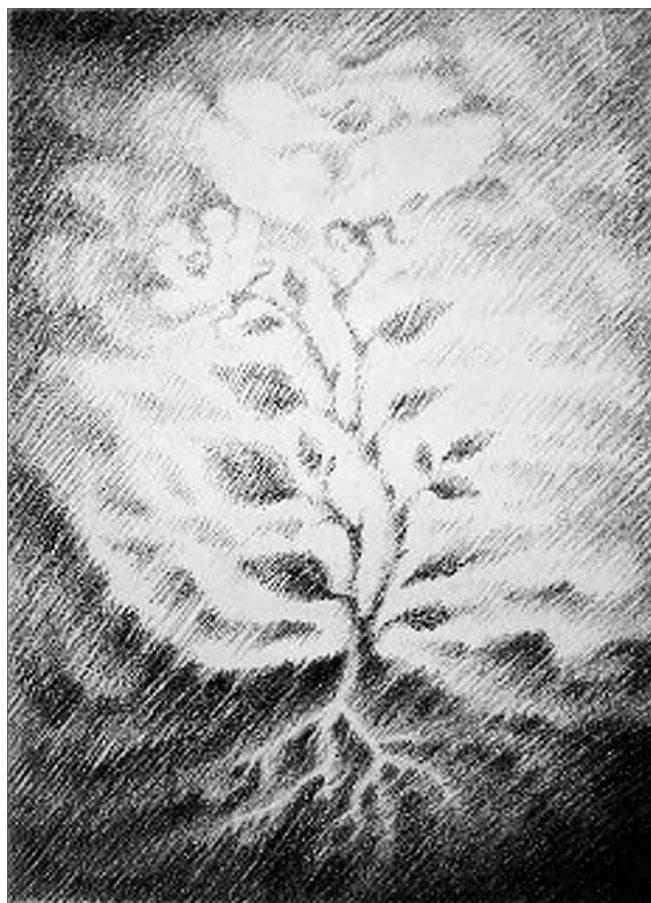
Marjorie Spock

It is not so easy for the people of our time to see the fairies. Yet there are four professions which offer their practitioners unique opportunities to know them. Farmers, fisherman, foresters and miners work not just at the threshold of fairyland, but well inside it, in the heart of nature where the Little People carry on their labors. So the miner delves in earth's rocky fastness where gnomes dwell and are constantly encountered. The forester or lumberjack spends daylight hours deep in woodland glades among gnomes and undines. The fisherman, abroad upon the waters, surrounded by fogs and spray and heaving billows, has undines all about, sylphs above. And who but the farmer toils in open country where all four fairy races do their work, sharing the care of fields and soil and crops and animals?...

...Of all four professions the farmer's is the most privileged. People think of this life as dull and narrow. But how could it be either? What is narrow about a life lived in the open between earth and sky? Or dull when the person living it can observe the happenings in both these regions of the universe and hourly witness the tremendous drama of their interplay? Farmers enjoy front row seats at ever freshly enacted miracles of growth; the world is in movement all about them. How then could they know and be oppressed by the stagnation, the heaviness of spirit that so frequently weighs down the city dweller?

The farmer's whole concern is with the living, constantly studying how it may be enhanced. Insightful farmers even learn to transform dead wastes to life by composting, mixing this quickened substance with their soil like bakers stirring yeast into their bread dough. Fairies are strongly attracted by this practice. They swarm to the farmer's aid and the farm prospers.

Taught by Rudolf Steiner, the biodynamic farmer adds a further lure. Four kinds of sprays are readied as enticements and spread in, on or above the fields at the proper seasons. To strengthen gnome activity in roots a spray made of treated cow manure is used (for gnomes and cows have a special affinity) and dug into the soil at planting. A spray of stinging nettle – nectar to undines – is applied when the sap runs, stalks shoot, and the first leaves begin unfolding their green petals. When the second set of leaves appears, sylphs are attracted by a spray of quartz made of crystals finely ground and activated, then loosed into the air above the fields in a sparkling vapor. This spray is also used after dark, wet weather to magnify sunlight and heighten chlorophyll production. Lastly, at the blossoming and fruiting stage, warmth is intensified and chilling averted by spray-



Flower in Light and Dark – Courtesy of Van James

ing a tea prepared from valerian, an offering to which fire-spirits swarm as bees to honey.

A farm where such practices are followed is one where human beings are in league with nature. It becomes part of the Land of Life, the Middle Kingdom. The soil teems with activity, plants thrive, animals prosper. Fairies abound there. And farmers whose intuition is open to their guidance may one day find their eyes opening too and begin to see the Little People working along with them.

Excerpted with permission of the publisher from *Fairy Worlds and Workers, A Natural History of Fairyland* (Anthroposophic Press), 27–28.

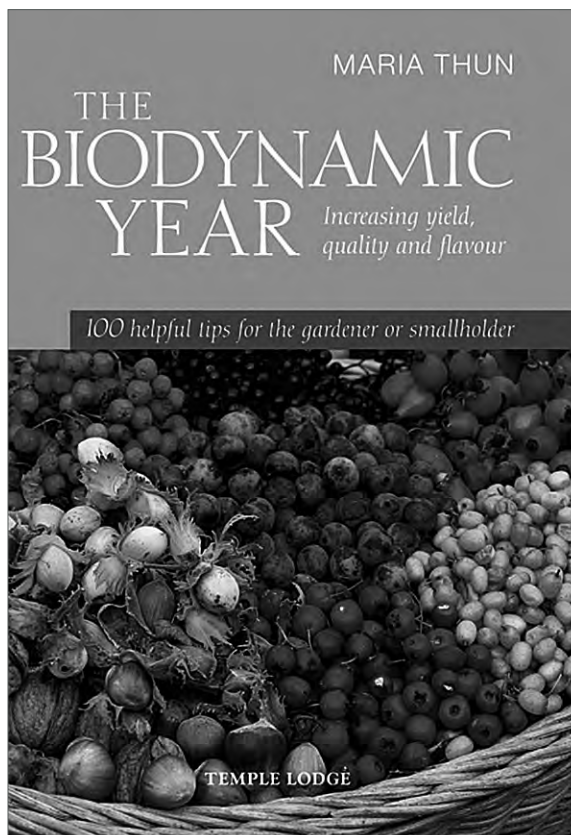
Editor's note:

Fairy Worlds and Workers, A Natural History of Fairyland by Marjorie Spock is out of print.

The Biodynamic Year: Increasing Yield, Quality and Flavour **By Maria Thun; Edited by Angelika Throll-Keller**

Reviewed by Hunter Francis

Maria Thun is a well-known name to biodynamic practitioners. For over fifty years, she has painstakingly researched many of the principles laid down by Rudolf Steiner, particularly those concerning the effect of planetary rhythms on plant growth. Her most recent book is a compilation of some of the best findings from her life's work, much of which has been published previously in her calendar, *Working with the Stars: The Sowing and Planting Calendar* (Floris Books). The new compilation provides an excellent overview of basic biodynamic practices, albeit a cursory one at times. This beautifully illustrated book is full of practical tips for the biodynamic gardener, and includes many charts providing information on how different plants relate to zodiac constellations and the earthly elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Use of each of the biodynamic preparations is explained, and a recipe for Barrel Compost is given. Ms. Thun's deep wisdom and anecdotal style make for a delightful read. The book is full of recollections from her childhood and her personal suggestions on everything from greenhouse practices to pruning to food storage. The hidden meaning of traditional holidays and festivals is touched upon, helping to explain the origin of time-honored customs in food cultivation. Dozens of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers are individually examined, shedding light on their unique characteristics and implications for stewardship. A helpful exposé of gardening practices includes soil preparation, cover cropping, and crop rotation. Most fascinating to me were the many interesting recipes, food preservation and foraging tips interspersed throughout. (Wild foods were not overlooked!) The book



concludes with an international index containing addresses for ordering biodynamic preparations.

Thun, Maria. 2007. *The Biodynamic Year: Increasing Yield, Quality and Flavour*. Temple Lodge Publishing: Forest Row, England. Available from JPI for \$32.00 plus shipping and handling.

Upcoming Workshops and Events at JPI

MAY 24, 2008: HOW TO HARVEST, MAKE AND USE THE VALERIAN PREPARATION (BD #507)

Lunch is included in the price. Cost: \$50.00

JUNE 21, 2008: HOW TO MAKE THE HORN SILICA (BD #501) PREPARATION AND THE MAKING OF THE YARROW (BD #502) PREPARATION.

Lunch is included in the price. Cost: \$50.00

AUGUST 23, 2008: ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE AT JPI
Refreshments served.

Visit <www.jpibiodynamics.org> to view the complete 2008 JPI calendar.

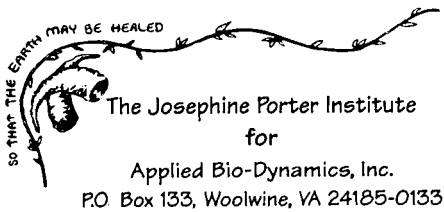
Other National Events

JUNE 6–7, 2008: “UNDERSTANDING BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE,” taught by JPI Board President, Gena Nonini, at Cal Poly State University in San Luis Obispo, CA. \$135.00. Details can be found at <<http://continuinged.calpoly.edu/wine.html>>.

JULY 6–11, 2008: “AWAKENING TO NATURE: BIODYNAMIC GARDENING AND NATURE OBSERVATION AS A PATH OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT” WITH CHRIS KORROW. Presented by the Center for Anthroposophy as part of their annual summer Renewal Courses for adults and teachers. High Mowing School, Wilton, New Hampshire; <www.centerforanthroposophy.org>.

“There is practically no field of human endeavor that does not relate to agriculture in some way. Seen from whatever perspective you choose, agriculture touches on every single aspect of human life.”

Rudolf Steiner – *Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture*, p. 14



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