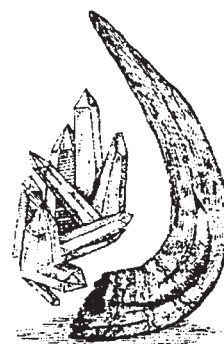




Applied BIODYNAMICS®



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Paul and Anne harvesting pumpkins

Community Farm of Ann Arbor: A Healing Center

Abigail Porter Interviews Paul Bantle and Anne Elder

The Community Farm of Ann Arbor, Michigan was inspired by Trauger Groh's visit to the area. Founded in 1988, it was among the first eight Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms in the whole United States. Unlike many CSAs that have become more like buyer's clubs over the last twenty-eight years, the Community Farm has stayed true to the origi-

nal impulse of a mutually supportive relationship between the members (shareholders) and the farm and its farmers. The members of the farm pledge their support for the farm, share in the risks and benefits and volunteer on the farm. Families pick up their shares weekly, join in seasonal festivities and bring their children to visit with the animals and take part in farm

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From the Editor

Dear Reader,

It is with both gratitude and sadness that I say good-bye after a decade of service as co-editor for the JPI newsletter. Though not a farmer myself, it has been a privilege to apply what talent I have to support biodynamic farmers and gardeners, whom I hold in very high regard. It has also been a pleasure to serve the JPI board and staff, in particular my newsletter colleagues Abby Porter and Bruce Bumbarger, whom I will miss working with. Happily, the biodynamic movement is clearly on an ascendant arc and I know that much good work is yet to be done by the existing JPI team and those who follow.

It was gratifying for me to include two pieces in this issue that have special meaning for me personally. The first is an article about fellow Californian Gena Nonini, who has been a mentor and inspiration – namely, about a new line of biodynamic spirits that she has added to her incredible repertoire of biodynamic fruits, nuts and vegetables. The second is a brief reflection on a visit to the Goetheanum in Switzerland, which is a global center for the anthroposophical movement that inspired biodynamics. I spent four days there in June to take a short course on the founding of the Anthroposophical Society with Virginia Sease and had the opportunity to drink in the splendid gardens, architecture and

culture there, not to mention the many artifacts left by Rudolf Steiner, one of my all-time heroes.

This issue also includes a special focus on community through an informative feature on how the CSA (community supported agriculture) model is used at the Community Farm of Ann Arbor, Michigan, an article on community building by our Executive Director, a reflection on CSAs in light of native wisdom and a tribute to biodynamic pioneer Trauger Groh, who helped to inspire the CSA concept. Please be sure to note several learning opportunities offered at JPI this fall and the Biodynamic Association's coming North American conference to be held in Santa Fe from November 16–20.

With many thanks for all you do and best wishes for the coming harvest season and many more to come!

—Hunter Francis

Farewell to Our Editor Hunter Francis

It is with sadness that we bid a fond farewell to Hunter Francis with this issue. We will miss his thoughtful, articulate and insightful articles that have graced our pages and enhanced the content. After ten years as west coast editor, and more recently additionally as interim managing editor, he is leaving us to pursue other interests. Over the years, Hunter has covered a wide range of subjects and has interviewed many of the long-time leaders of the biodynamic movement and shared their insights with us. Although much of the focus has been on the vineyards, consultants and farms on the west coast, Hunter has

Applied Biodynamics

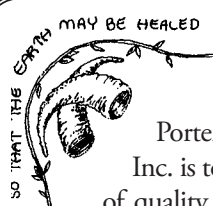
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The Editor, *Applied Biodynamics*
Josephine Porter Institute, The Village Green,
201 East Main Street #14, Floyd, VA 24091
Phone: (540) 745-7030; Fax: (540) 745-7033
info@jpibiodynamics.org
www.jpibiodynamics.org

Editor – Hunter Francis
Co-Editor – Abigail Porter
Layout – Bruce Bumbarger

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Mission

The mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. is to heal the earth through production of quality biodynamic preparations based on the spiritual scientific discoveries of Rudolf Steiner and to advance education and research in biodynamic agriculture.

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taken us around the world starting with his first interview in 2006 with Peter Proctor of New Zealand and his restorative work in India and later to the Mediterranean and the Slow Food Movement. We wish him well in his future adventures and discoveries and hope that from time to time he will honor us with a sharing of his experiences.

When I was asked to join the *Applied Biodynamics* staff in 2011, I didn't have much experience writing and I have to admit that I was a bit intimidated by Hunter's credentials as director of the Center for Sustainability in the College of Agriculture at Cal Poly and many years of writing experience. I wondered if I would be able to live up to the standards he had set. Needless to say, Hunter always made me feel welcome and part of the team. For that I am grateful. It has been a pleasure and honor working with him.

On a happier note, in our next issue, we will introduce new members to our team that will add diversity to our content. Stay tuned.

—Abigail Porter

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Community Farm of Ann Arbor: A Healing Center

life. Chickens, goats, cows and bees are part of the rich farm experience. Decisions on the budget and critical issues are made at monthly and annual meetings, remarkably by consensus of all the members. This process has been facilitated by the current farmers, Anne Elder and Paul Bantle, who previously had ten years of consensus building experience in a cooperative bakery. In addition to the basic shares, the Community Farm has added optional shares for flowers, fermented vegetables and biodynamic preparations that include compost and preparations made on the farm supplemented with preparations from the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics (JPI). To further their

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*)



Community Farm of Ann Arbor

educational mission, classes are offered, and they host numerous field trips for the very young through college age and beyond.

The resilient Community Farm has survived and thrived despite two location moves in the early years, the loss of aging membership from their original devoted core group, and declining membership from the increased competition from the additional CSAs (they were the only CSA for the first twelve years) and farmers markets in the Ann Arbor area. They have met these challenges by securing an 89-year lease and raising \$60,000 to preserve the farm in a land trust. They also formed a non-profit arm, Chrysalis Biodynamic Agricultural Learning Center, to generate funds for their educational programs. Through fundraising and educational outreach in the area, Chrysalis is able to bring in additional support for the farm and offer its educational programs to a broader audience. Their mission is "...to share agricultural understandings through demonstrations, lectures and practical applications using Biodynamic farming methods... The Community Farm of Ann Arbor, by partnering with the Chrysalis Biodynamic Agricultural Learning Center, is furthering its purpose of demonstrating to the community at large the advantages of socially and environmentally responsible agriculture and providing a living model of a community-supported enterprise."

Fundraising has always been a part of the farm's life rather than taking on the burden of indebtedness with loans. Members have raised funds for machinery, a well and a new barn roof through garage sales and bake sales. Members even raised \$20,000 towards the down payment of their farmer's home. More recently, the Community Farm has partnered with community-minded Zingerman's of Ann Arbor for fundraising. (Zingerman's started as a delicatessen and has grown into a Community of Businesses employing over 500 people. Most of the businesses are partnerships between Zingerman's and motivated employees. Zingerman's is known nationally for its gourmet foods and its business practice trainings, which focus on "triple bottom line" and "open book management", collaboration and community giving). In September, the Community Farm through their

non-profit arm, Chrysalis, will have their annual fundraiser, a musical and community event at Zingerman's Cornman Farms to raise money for their student internship program.

Paul Bantle and Anne Elder have been with the farm since its inception, first as members and frequent volunteers and then becoming the farmers four years later. They have been instrumental in creating a vibrant and peaceful healing oasis in a fast-paced, chaotic world. Their work has been inspiring and transformative, touching thousands of people who have visited or worked on the farm. Through their bounteous, enlivening food, outreach and healing educational programs, the farm has become well-known and much loved in the larger surrounding community. Their devotion and heartening work has created a model of partnership, agriculture and community for future generations. Annie and Paul radiate joy, enthusiasm, love and compassion. It has been a pleasure talking with them.

At the end of 2017, Paul and Anne will be retiring and passing the work on to younger farmers. A search committee is currently interviewing potential farmers to carry the Community Farm of Ann Arbor forward. We wish them well in their search for knowledgeable, warm, loving people.

Abby Porter: *What was the motivation for starting the CSA? How did it start?*

Anne Elder: The Community Farm of Ann Arbor was founded in 1988. The two founding mothers, Cindy Olivas and Marcia Barton were dear friends of ours from Ann Arbor. They left Ann Arbor and went to Kimberton Hills Camphill Village and studied for 2–3 years, and then came back to Ann Arbor where they were already loved by many people. Shortly after they returned, there was a big public event with a panel of organic farmers who spoke of the plight of the small organic family farmer and how hard it was. Trauger Groh was there and he said “there are alternatives” and he spoke a little bit about starting a CSA. Then he asked, “are there people here that think it is a good idea?” The audience enthusiastically responded with “Yes!” Then he asked if there were people who were willing to come to a meeting tomorrow and work on this. Again there was an enthusiastic “Yes.”

The next day, there was a meeting and about half of those people showed up. We already had two farmers, Cindy and Marcia. We talked about finding land and building the community. Then we met the next day and about half of those people came again. There was a search group to find the perfect site. We did that and we had the two farmers, and then we gathered the community together and that was the birth of this CSA.

AP: *Was this your first introduction to biodynamics and Steiner? Did you come from a farming background?*

AE: It was the beginning of my learning of it. How about you Paul?

Paul Bantle: Our paths were a little bit different at that point. Annie and I were co-workers at a whole grain bakery that had been started back in the '70s. There was a nationwide movement of these whole grain bakeries, especially in university towns. I grew up half an hour from here in Adrian and we had a nursery and greenhouses. So I grew up in a rural landscape with farming. And Annie worked at a truck farm with a roadside stand when she was a senior in high school in New Jersey. We both had an interest in food and agriculture from a young age. Our daughter home-schooled in the earliest part of her life and then she was in a nice public school near our home for a year, but she didn't prosper in that environment. We had a good friend who was at the forefront of starting the local Waldorf school in 1990 and she suggested we bring her and check it out. So it was all coming together at the same time.

AE: We weren't the main farmers for the first three years but we were volunteering there a lot and learning about biodynamics. While our daughter was in the Steiner School in Ann Arbor, along came a wonderful family that were anthroposophical doctors. They settled into the area and became our doctors! They are still here, *an amazing couple!*

PB: The Anthroposophical Medical Group came together in about 1998–99. They modeled their medical practice after community supported agriculture. We have a member-based medical practice where we are all part of a patient organization. We pay an annual pledge towards the practice and then we have unlimited visits with our physicians.

AE: If you have good health, you don't need to go there that often but you have still made your pledge. Then if you are in bad health, that money that the healthy person didn't need goes to aid the sick person.

AP: *That is such a good idea. There needs to be options to the current insurance system. So you are involved on several fronts with community-supported organizations. I noticed on your website that the farm is now located in Chelsea. When did you move?*

AE: The first farm site was in Ann Arbor. It had been farmed by an older organic farmer who had farmed the land by himself for years and years and he was exhausted. He rented us his land and he was really happy that we were going to come and do biodynamic practices on his farm. When the CSA was in its first year, it was so exciting, hundreds of people came and they wanted to see and learn about it and participate in it. We had just so much life and vitality; at the end of the year, the farmer said “this is fantastic and seeing all this life, I have become awakened

again and I actually would like my farm back”. So we had to find another site. We picked up our compost, our equipment and our greenhouse, and moved it to another site about fifteen miles away. We were on that land four years and then that land went up for sale. In the fall of 1992, we had to move *again!* Now we are on our third place and in 2004 we secured an 89-year lease. We worked with the land trust in our area and had a bunch of fund-raisers to raise \$60,000 on behalf of the land trust for the easement to pay the owner for the development rights. The land is now preserved in perpetuity!

AP: *Nice. It must be a relief to know that you won't have to move again and that the land is protected. Do you live on the property?*

PB: We live right down the road in an old farmhouse just a half-mile from the farm, so we can walk and Annie rides her bike a lot. We farm four acres at our home location. The main Community Farm property is ten acres with barns, and then we have a hay field that is two miles away that is twenty-five acres. Back in the 1990s, the two women that own the field gave it to us to farm after seeing the difference between conventional agriculture and what we were doing. We have an acre and a half in the middle of it that we can do field crops like potatoes, squash and pumpkins. Each year they get a share of vegetables from the farm.

Meeting the Challenges

AP: *Nice arrangement. How many CSA members do you have now? Was it much larger in the beginning?*

AE: It was larger when we first started. We were the first CSA in Michigan, the only one in this area and the eighth one in the whole country. And now all these years later, there are over fifty-five CSAs just in the Ann Arbor area and many more farmers markets. In the first years, membership grew to around 130 shares. Then in the 1990s, our peak was 117 shares with a waiting list. This year we are at 65 shares but that serves about 110 households.

AP: *The dramatic increase in competition must have made it more difficult. How do you meet the challenge of the declining membership?*

PB: It is definitely more difficult. Like the medical group, our farm was predicated on associative economics. So right from the beginning, with the CSA form, the whole idea is that the membership is invested in the budget itself that runs the farm, they participate in monthly meetings, they volunteer on the farm; so it is very engaging. They pick their share up right on the farm. We don't take it to drop spots. We have maintained that model for all these years.

AP: *That's pretty unusual. Many of the CSAs I am familiar with are more of a subscription-based buyers club with drop*

points. Many of the members never visit the farm. How do you create an environment where people want to be there?

AE: That's so true. And that *is* the problem right now. After all these decades have passed, the CSA form has morphed a lot. It used to be people would gather together and support the farm, share in the risks and celebrate the bounty together. It's such a lovely concept. And now, it's pretty much a prepaid subscription vestibule. A lot of the *heart* is left out. At our CSA, people come and they meet the farmers, they touch the soil and visit with the animals, they smell our sweet compost that we spread. They actually get very much in touch with good healthy biodynamic agriculture.

PB: So consequently, to go back to the question you asked about the competitive nature of the marketplace, it is much more difficult for us now to find young new members than it was fifteen years ago. There are way more choices that are way more convenient and often much cheaper. A lot of people are trying to fulfill the ethical impulse in their heart to be a part of the CSA movement. All these other CSAs offer that appeal, but they may not really understand the underpinnings. Not that it's wrong, it's just different. It means that we have to do a *lot* of education to reach new people.

AE: I also think that our society is speeding up. It might be worldwide, I don't really know but right here things are moving faster. People are driving faster, everything is



Farm members help with the weeding

happening faster, and people are so much busier than ever. So the idea of people getting their raw produce and taking it home, scrubbing it, putting it in the fridge for the week, preparing it into meals is becoming a harder and harder situation for people. So if they can pick up a box that is just what they want, often scrubbed and bagged, that's what they are going for.

AP: *Do you also do farmers markets or only the CSA?*

AE: Pretty much just the CSA. In the last couple years, we have been going to some markets to do outreach. We take a little bit of our produce, more of a display, to bring people into the CSA. We spend a lot of time on education and that is part of the farm's mission, to be an educating system.

Educational Endeavors

AE: We do the fundraisers, we do the farming and then we do the field trips. One of our favorite field trips is the ninth grade class from the Rudolf Steiner School. For six years now, the ninth grade class comes for ten days. They put up tents behind our house and then they walk down to the farm everyday and spend a full day of farming with us. They walk back and cook a dinner behind our house with produce from the farm, hang out, make a fire, sing songs, and then head into their tents. They get up the next day and do that for ten days. They make most of their own meals and then we do a few meals down at the farm: pizza in the oven that Paul built, they bake bread from the flour that we

“Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility – these three forces are the very nerve of education.” – Rudolf Steiner

AP: *It seems like there has started to be a shift towards more awareness about food and how it is grown. Michael Pollen has really been promoting connecting with your food, knowing your farmers and cooking from scratch with the whole family involved.*

AE: I do think that Michael Pollen and influences like him are happening. It's almost a counter-culture. The young people that prepare their own meals, they are so hip right now.

AP: *With the additional efforts, do you have enough new members to keep the farm going?*

PB: What we have been doing these last four years is we utilize the non-profit educational arm of the farm (Chrysalis Biodynamic Agricultural Learning Center that was formed in 2011) as a way of augmenting the farm income. In the earliest years, we folded all of our field trip activity and other educational activity right into the cost of the farm. Shareholders in the farm supported all of the field trips and other education activities. We never charged a fee for the field trips or other activities for well over twenty years. Then when we started the educational arm, the idea was that it could help generate new income streams that would support that activity, and we could separate most of it out from the share cost. So we do fundraisers for those activities now. The problem is that Annie and I are in our 60s and we are spread way too thin trying to run the two organizations. And really, Chrysalis needs an administrative body that has the skill set to run that kind of an organization. The fundraisers have helped us bridge the challenging periods, but it is not a long-term sustainable approach. Annie and I are basically running out of juice; we are over-utilized and we plan to retire at the end of 2017.

mill from the wheat we grow. We do a couple other meals at the farm together, but the rest of them they do themselves in the cooking area they set up behind the house.

AP: *What a wonderful experience for them!*

AE: They are not supposed to bring any electronic devices. For the first day or two, many of them are miffed, or they are uncomfortable, or they are bucking the whole project. At the end of the ten day period, there is pretty much 100% joy and happiness. Their hearts are touched. Their minds are awake. They become changed beings.

PB: This ninth grade class has been together for a whole year but often they haven't coalesced. They haven't jelled as a unified group. Invariably by the end of the field trip, they are one extraordinary organism. They all attest to that, *the kids do*, not just the teachers.

AP: *That is really impressive. What a transformative experience. How many kids are in this group? Do students from public*



Ninth grade field trip baking bread in outdoor oven



Third Grade Farm Block: Steiner School children with compost

schools come for field trips as well or mainly just from the Steiner school?

AE: Anywhere from twenty to thirty are in the ninth grade class. It is required as part of their high school curriculum. Other classes come from the Steiner School as well as from public schools. The big trick is that funding keeps getting cut in the public schools. Now, often when teachers want to get a bus to come for a field trip, they have to do something special to raise the money for the bus. It has been a big struggle in the last couple years, so we have less from the public schools. Often though, the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor will come out with a number of different classes for field trips on our farm.

AP: *You are really reaching a wide range in ages providing them with a different perspective on food, agriculture and community.*

PB: That is what our farm has provided in our area. We are now seeing the grandchildren of these folks coming to the farm. It is multi-generational. Our core group at our farm is anthroposophists. There are a lot of teachers.

AE: That is probably the biggest difficulty with our farm. Now in its twenty-eighth year, this [original] core group of members is twenty-eight years older. They are committed to biodynamic agriculture and support it all with their hearts, but some of them are seventy years old now and they don't eat as much food. So now we have to go for a whole new generation of people with brand new values. It's tricky because a number of years ago the Rudolf Steiner School expanded and they realized that if they held really tight to Waldorf values, they would be limiting the families that would be interested in the school. They broadened the enrollment, so now there are a number of parents that really don't know much about Steiner or anthroposophy. And they don't know anything about biodynamic agriculture.

PB: I would say too, what we have seen over the years on the farm, pretty consistently and it is similar in the schools, if you get a sensitive person with their heart and soul open and they go into the high school and just walk around in that atmosphere and see the art, they want their child to



Paul teaching about bees and natural honeycomb formation on beehive frame

experience that environment. And it seems with a lot of people who have open hearts, when they get on the farm, they immediately recognize that there is something special going on. So a lot of times, people will come to the farm then they will bridge to the school or vice versa. They will get into the school, they don't know why they are there exactly other than it feels correct. After a few years, they will start exploring a little more deeply. A lot of times, the initial impulse doesn't have anything to do with Rudolf Steiner or his message to the world.

Fundraising

AP: *Tell us about your fundraising efforts that support your educational programs. I saw on-line that you had a crowd-funded Kickstarter in 2013 called "Peas Turn up the Beet". Did that model work for you? I heard it is a lot of work.*

PB: It worked and it *was* a tremendous amount of work. At that point, we were trying to empower or engender more responsibility in the younger people engaged in the farm. That was a vehicle that they understood and could relate to. It worked very well in that regard. We had people that really stepped up and participated. We met our \$9,000 goal plus. Then, we used the funds to support a concert.

We brought in two young, very progressive musical groups from Michigan who talk about agricultural issues in their music. It filled the venue, a state-of-the-art venue for our area for that kind of music. It was full, 400 people plus all the young people that were involved with agriculture in Detroit and all over southeastern Michigan who were sponsored by other people so they didn't have to pay. It was a cultural undertaking as well as a fundraiser. It was really cool, but as you started out, it took a ton of work. Ultimately, we made \$20,000, which was quite adequate for the undertaking. We have had four fundraisers in four years, each of a slightly different nature. The first one was at Cobblestone Farm in Ann Arbor and we served a beautiful dinner. We partnered with Zingerman's who provided the entrée and then we rounded out the meal. We rented all of the dishware and the linen, everything. The next one was the Kickstarter year. The following year, we did a very small event where we invited sixteen specific guests to a barn right around the corner from the farm and we hosted a very elegant meal. The next year was the big one at Zingerman's event center. So they were all a little bit different, but Annie is always in the middle of the food preparation because she is fantastic at it.

AE: And Paul always heads up the logistics and the fundraising because he is very good at that. We have been raising funds pretty much since the farm began. The two women who started the farm wanted to sell their equipment when they left. We didn't have funding for that so we held a garage sale and took people's pledges and were able to pay the farmers. Over the years, we needed to put a well in on the land and re-shingle the roof of the barn, so we held garage sales and bake sales for that. Then, when we did the land preservation with the land trust in 2004, we had to raise \$60,000. We had a number of concerts and garage sales for that.

PB: It has never been just share-based. It always requires that extra effort to make it tick. On the plus side of it all, there has been a tremendous amount of community building and education. We are so well knit into our community. This year we are doing another Zingerman's partnership fundraiser and we don't need to re-invent any of it. It's all in place.

AP: *What a fortunate partnership. How did that relationship with Zingerman's come about?*

AE: This man, Kieron Hales came over from England, and his sister and her family were members of our farm. He lived with them when he first came from England. He loved what we were doing and he loved the biodynamic aspect. He loved that we were in touch with the members, that we embraced the families and took the children in with the animals. He just loved the Community Farm of Ann Arbor. First he cooked at Zingerman's restaurant and when we had bounteous produce we took it into the restaurant.

PB: And he would buy it at top dollar, he didn't skimp. He would say he knew it was worth every penny.

AE: Then when Zingerman's bought their farm and built the event center, he took charge of that and continued his love for our farm. So, that one person has been a big part of our connection with them. But Paul is a very charismatic, loving, sweet, tender person and people love working with Paul. And he loves working with them. Everyone at Zingerman's knows Paul and know how kind and sweet he is and therefore love our farm as well. So having really kind, friendly, loving, tender farmers is essential to keep a CSA vibrant.

PB: I think you understand the nature of Anne Elder, right Abby? The field trips are wonderful to be a part of just to see Annie and the children. They are all lit up together with joy. It's what the children need; they need that kind of loving attention.

Consensus

AP: *I am intrigued that your CSA is run by consensus of all*

Verse for Farmers

Seek the truly practical material life
But seek it so that it does not numb you to the spirit.
Seek the spirit but seek it, not in passion for the
super-sensible,
But seek it because you wish to apply it selflessly in
the practical world.

Turn to the ancient principal,
Matter is never without spirit and spirit is never
without matter
In such a way that we say
We will do all things in the light of the spirit,
And we will so seek that light of the spirit that it
evokes warmth for us
in our practical activities.

Rudolf Steiner

the members. How do you get so many people to agree and work together?

PB: Annie and I worked at that bakery together for ten years, the collectively run bakery. You have to work your kinks out when you work in a collective you know. There were six bakers and we made all the decisions at weekly three-hour business meetings, all by consensus. Even on our shifts we had to work by consensus. It was hard work.

AE: And now as the Community Farm of Ann Arbor, we have business meetings and monthly meetings and our decision making at the farm is by consensus. Sometimes it has been with over a hundred members. It's incredible. At the end of those meetings, people say "I never knew you could do this, and that people work with each other and share their ideas." It's amazing. Just shockingly, wonderfully amazing.

PB: And sometimes it is an absolute nightmare. Sometimes people will come and they have a heart of gold but they are totally uninformed about the farm and our situation. You can't marginalize them; you have to figure out a way to be inclusive. We search for the insight and wisdom of all participants at any given meeting. We encourage participation whether or not the individual is in agreement with the larger number of people in the circle. We seek compromise or welcome an individual to stand aside when they are moved to do so. Our bylaws do allow for consensus minus one on an urgent topic and after a certain period of discussion we can call for $\frac{3}{4}$ majority as well. In our



Stirring preps with farm members

twenty-eight years we have never drawn on the consensus minus one or the $\frac{3}{4}$ majority.

AP: *It sounds like what you are doing is a model for how more things will need to be going into the future.*

AE: I hope it comes to that, but it will require people slowing down, taking their time. It's part of our job to show people the beautiful things that are happening.

Biodynamic Preparations

AP: *Tell us about your biodynamic practice and your use of the preparations.*

PB: We use all of the preparations and we make horn manure (BD #500), horn silica (BD #501), barrel compost, nettle (BD #504) and the valerian (BD #507) preparations. Compost is made throughout the year and we prep the piles with the compost preparations as the building process is completed. We apply horn manure and barrel compost in the spring on all the fields as they are opened up. This happens over a three to five week period. These applications happen again in the fall. We use barrel compost when tilling in cover crops. We were head over-heels about cover crops and rotation to build fertility: clovers, winter rye every year in the fall, oats, vetch and buckwheat. Buckwheat had an amazing impact on the heavier soils in the earliest years. Horn silica is sprayed multiple times throughout the year as plants develop to maturity. *Equisetum* (BD #508) is used in the greenhouse and on plants in the garden when called for. We spray out milk and honey when needed and use the tree paste in some years. The tree paste is amazing. We've seen that. It really heals the bark of trees. And we use the

valerian in the spring and fall when frost threatens. It has wonderful properties for warming when there is danger of frost hurting blossoms.

The two women that went to Kimberton Hills and came back and started the farm had a lovely relationship with the folks back in Kimberton Hills, including a connection to the people that managed the herd. In 1991, Kimberton donated a calf to our farm. Aldebaran was this calf's name and she lived with us for nineteen years. She had many calves so we have this whole lineage of cows going back to Kimberton. All of our compost and many of our preparations were predicated on this relationship.

EA: Even just having one or two cows makes such a difference. You don't ever want to lose touch with the beauty of a good cow and the beauty of their poop. We go in everyday and we can see her health. From that beautiful poop, we can then grow biodynamic produce for our cow and that produce is strengthened from the compost that is enlivened by their poop. It's just a beautiful cycle.

PB: They're eating all of our vegetable scraps. It's quite wonderful.

AE: I would like to tell you about my favorite preparation. I don't know if that's really fair because I love applying all of the preparations, but my favorite one to participate in is the Three Kings (gold, frankincense and myrrh). On New Year's Eve, we have an alcohol-free "gathering of the heart," and light our whole house with candlelight. Children, parents and older folks come. As we grind for an hour, we share stories of hope and love, and that gets into the grind, of course. Then, on Three Kings Day (January 6), we go out and stir, with families joining us. We spray around the perimeter of the farm, our hay fields and our house land. Then, we go to the Steiner School, to the Anthroposophical Medical Group and to the Steiner Institute in Ann Arbor. All of those places get sprayed. When we spray, I always call



Aldebaran's daughters eating vegetable trimmings

out to the elementals and we all make this promise that we will protect the land and keep it safe and lovely, as best we can for them. You know you are making a promise to the great spirits and you've got to keep that promise. It is such an honor to make that connection.

AP: *That is so beautiful. Thank you for sharing that story.*

PB: I would like to add in too that when we came to this land in '92, we just started using the preparations right away. We never looked back. JPI has played a phenomenal role all these years in giving us support. In the earliest years, we had many supportive conversations with Hugh Courtney that inspired us to work with the preparations. We wouldn't have made ends meet without it. We totally relied on JPI preps in the earliest years. It was critical when we arrived on this land when we were pretty new to biodynamic agriculture. Our intellect was never going to grasp what was going on but we had to see. We decided to just do it and see where it takes us. It was the initial commitment and sticking with it and it has been born out through experience. Thank goodness that impulse took in your mother's being and she lived it out, and the preparations have been made available throughout this country all these years.

AP: *What changes have you experienced over the years?*

AE: The soil has improved amazingly well. When we first came to this farm, it had been fallow for many years. Before that, it was pasture for horses so it had never been farmed with conventional chemicals. But the soil was compacted in many areas and was pretty tough. Over these decades of applying the preparations and the compost and silica preparations, the soil has become beautiful and soft all over the farm. We have seven fields, all with somewhat different soil types and they have all vastly improved.

PB: We've had many people comment on the sweetness of the vegetables and we have even been accused of sprinkling sugar on the strawberries. Keeping quality is another big one we hear about. Many people comment that they just cannot believe how long these vegetables keep, from the greens to the sweet fruits, garlic and the winter storage fruits and vegetables. People who don't even know anything about biodynamic agriculture, it's what they say that tells you that they have an experience of it.

AE: Many people will come to the farm and say they don't really understand it, but when they get out of the car and walk on the farm, they feel different. They feel better. I attribute that to the preparations.

PB: We have actually come to appreciate that these farms are really healing centers. Now, the word 'farm' is useful and it is well understood, but these farms go way beyond that. We also very much appreciate and think it critical that Steiner suggested that farmers should take up meditation.



Co-worker squaring the compost pile

AE: I think it was essential that it wasn't going to be a question for us. When our farm was established, it was in our mission statement and bylaws that we would be a biodynamic farm and using the preparations. We didn't ever ponder if we needed to do this, or whether it was worth it. So all we saw was improvement from the very beginning.

AP: *Now that you are planning to retire at the end of 2017, what are your plans for the future?*

AE: We will continue to serve with our whole hearts our community wherever we are living.

PB: We would love to have someone for future farmers of the Community Farm that are trained in biodynamic agriculture and have some experience in running a CSA. The search committee is now empowered by the farm membership to screen and select possible candidates; this process is underway. We hope there will be some overlap in 2017 so we can share our experience with them. There's lots of information about this position on our website.

AP: *Thank you Annie and Paul for taking time from your busy summer schedule. It has been an honor interviewing you and I wish you the best in finding the right people to continue your vibrant and healing community farm model for future generations.*

For more information about the farm and the farming opportunity go to Community Farm of Ann Arbor website: www.communityfarmofaa.wordpress.com

In Memory of Trauger Groh (1931–2016)

JPI gives thanks and special recognition to Trauger Groh who died on July 27. Trauger is known around the world for his pioneering work in community supported agriculture (CSA). Before coming to the United States, he had initiated the movement of converting farms from private ownership into charitable ownership. Buschberghof was the first of many farms that followed that example in Germany. In 1986, Trauger partnered with Lincoln Geiger and Anthony Graham to establish Temple-Wilton Community Farm in Wilton, New Hampshire – one of the oldest continuously operating CSAs in the United States. Two years later, Buschberghof became a CSA as well.

Trauger is also known for co-authoring two books with his long-time friend, Steven McFadden, entitled: *Farms of Tomorrow* in 1990 and *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited* in 1998. Over the past 26 years, these books have been translated into German, Japanese, Korean and Russian. And they have earned the trust of thousands for their practical instruction as well as sound economic, philosophical and spiritual advice on how to establish and operate CSAs.

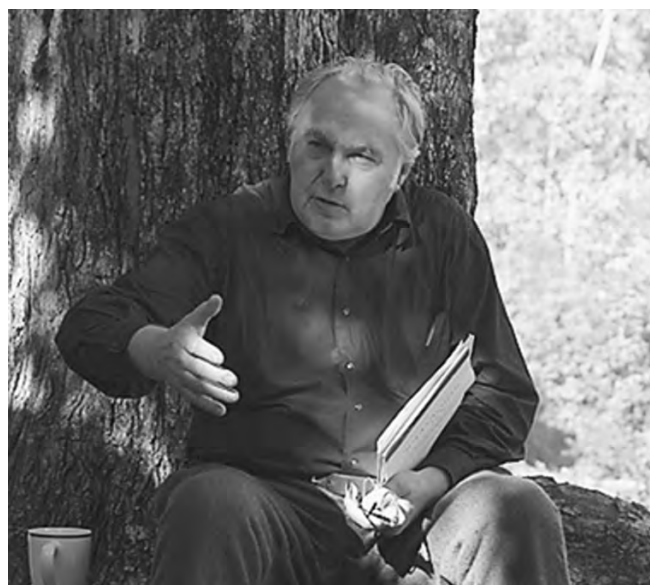
At the time *Farms of Tomorrow* was first written, there were only seven known CSAs operating in the United States. However, according to Table 43 of the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, that number grew to over 12,600 CSAs in 2012 and has received continued projections of growth.

In addition, URGENCI – The International Network for Community Support Agriculture – shows that CSAs (known by different names in different languages) are now also present and growing in Canada, Africa, Asia, Europe and South America.

Without a doubt, the roots of the CSA movement have grown deep and wide over the past decades, despite the fact that small farms are continuing to decline in number. And truly, the success of this movement is built on the “community support” of thousands of farmers and communities who have come together to pioneer this new social and economic model of farming.

We take this time to honor the life to Trauger Groh. He was a true visionary and one of the first to articulate the many core ideas that make CSAs such a healing force for the land, plants, animals and mankind – now and for the future.

Whether you have met Trauger or not, whether you are part of a CSA or not, we believe at JPI that we all owe him a debt of profound gratitude. Because of him, community supported agriculture and the biodynamic movement are stronger. And because of him, we have a more solid base of knowledge and experience upon which to move forward and bring the healing and sacred role of agriculture to others.



From Steven McFadden

With sorrow, I note the death of my friend and colleague Trauger Groh, 84, of the Temple-Wilton Community Farm in New Hampshire, the oldest continuously operating CSA in the USA. To honor Trauger (1932–2016) and his many contributions to the world at large, and in particular to farm communities around the world, I offer the following appreciation. It's something I wrote earlier this year for the Biodynamic Association.

An Excerpt From Trauger Groh, *Agrarian Adept*

In the late 1980s, I had the good fortune to meet Trauger Groh in New Hampshire, and to engage wholeheartedly with him on the subject of farms and the fundamental role they play in human existence. It took only an hour or two for me to recognize that I was associating with an Agrarian Adept. The word adept derives from Latin, *adeptus*, meaning one who has attained the highest level of knowledge and skill in a field of endeavor. In olden times, the term was applied to accomplished alchemists, or in a general metaphysical sense to an initiate who had mastered the Mysteries. To me, it seems altogether natural and fitting to attach adept as an epithet to convey respect to both Trauger and his wife Alice Bennett Groh, and to his longtime agrarian compatriots, Anthony Graham and Lincoln Geiger. Together they helped initiate a profound form of healing for land, plants, animals and people: community supported agriculture (CSA). This form will endure, I feel, to benefit future generations.

For the rest of the article and to learn more about the remarkable life of Trauger Groh, see: www.chiron-communications.com/r-i-p-trauger-groh-agrarian-adept/

Prepping for Resilient Community: Grafting to Our Native Rootstock

Steven McFadden

As the Sun approached Summer Solstice, my friend Stephen Clarke stopped by to visit. He sat with me at the picnic table by our garden. In the afternoon light, we talked. Stephen spun out for me the tale of his recent journey up onto the Colorado Plateau near the Lukachukai Mountains, close by the imaginary straight line that legally, if not naturally, separates Arizona and New Mexico. Among many elements, this part of the Navajo Reservation is a place of high elevation, white reeds, rich farmland, uranium, tangled history and big sky.

Stephen made his journey to sit with some Navajo friends as part of a week-long *Naddáa* healing ceremony. He's an astute observer of matters physical and metaphysical, one of the founding parents of both the Taos and the Santa Fe Waldorf Schools in New Mexico, and also the former proprietor and master mechanic at Mozart's Garage. In telling the tale of his visit to Lukachukai, he mentioned how the community of people came together in hard work and good fellowship to abide with one another over a week and to make ceremony expressing timeless ways and courtesies, all woven together within a group energy field of respect and humor many times larger than themselves. "Native people know how to cooperate in community," he told me. "It's silent, it's unspoken, but it is known and known implicitly by everyone. I see that as the Christ energy in expression. Not as a thought or a feeling, but in action. That's it for sure. I could see it once again as I sat among the people. The Christ spirit lives in the ethers – the biosphere – as it circulates among people and the natural world."

When I heard Stephen share his observation, it summoned for me the seed thought expressed in Matthew (18:19-20) "*...if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them... For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*"

"Sure," he agreed. "That fits. Native people know already that the spirit lives in the land and in their relationships with one another. As part of their way, for thousands of years they have had the understanding of spirit life on a practical level." "There's a western axiom that 'the map is not the territory.' But that's not so in traditional Native contexts. The land itself is the map and that land map is also indivisibly the territory wherein life unfolds. Physicality and spirituality are not separated by concepts or perceptions, to be worshiped in a metaphysical superstructure, high off the ground but are appreciated as one interpenetrating and mutually revealing reality. Native people have the land as source of spirituality and as the reference point for their spiritual lives."

Stephen's story put me in mind of community supported agriculture (CSA), the movement that started some thirty years ago in the USA with the inspiration of anthroposophic and biodynamic understandings, ideals and techniques. I've been involved as a reporter and participant since the start, and thus had a chance to observe the development of CSA over three decades. Over that span of time, many thousands of people in all parts of the world have come to recognize in CSA a vehicle for approaching land, food, labor, environment and community in a healthier way. But as of late, the community dimension, and the intrinsic aspect of relationship to the land, have often been marginalized. Efficiency has assumed primacy with institutional efforts to employ CSA as a "market strategy." In my view, treating CSA as a "market strategy" is not only antithetical to the initial impulses, but also woefully inadequate to the challenges of our time.

Our era is sharply marked by the mounting, menacing clouds of climate chaos, paralleled by dramatic and urgent shifts in global politics, economics and social relations. Much more than a market strategy is required. I remain steadfast in my conviction that CSA can play a key role in addressing these issues. It's time to expand exponentially the CSA vision and reality to hundreds of thousands of community farms around the world, and time also to evolve consciously the community and the associative economic dimensions of CSA.

As Stephen related, Navajo relatives in Lukachukai – with grace and spiritual intelligence, via basic interactions with each other and nature – demonstrated their understanding and appreciation of community and spiritual realities. It's their way. And their way is part of the strength of the rootstock: the native spiritual, cultural and agricultural knowings that have been cultivated and developed in North America for 30,000 years or more.

A rootstock is part of a plant, often an underground part, from which new above-ground growth can be produced. Grafting refers to the process by which a plant, sometimes just a stump with an established root system, serves as the base onto which cuttings (scions) from another plant are joined. The cultural ways that arrived in North America from Europe, Africa, Asia and the far south, have never been deliberately grafted on to the rootstock. Instead, there has been a concerted, systematic, violent and tragic attempt to annihilate the rootstock of native wisdom through protracted campaigns of genocide, wholesale landgrabbing, and systematic treaty violations. That pattern has generated a massive energy field of karma, as yet unreckoned.

A successful, healthy, conscious grafting of the world's cultural and spiritual ways to the rootstock of Turtle Island (North America) would, I believe, yield an abundant harvest of goodness, including more respectful and appreciative attitudes toward the land that sustains us all, as well as the agriculture systems we employ to bring forth its bounty. Biodynamic agriculture and the preparations can play a key role in this critical matter.

The initial Biodynamic perceptions and preparations were indigenous to Europe. Now the perceptions and preparations are global, and they are employed in many different ways in many different geographical and cultural contexts, including of course North America. The Biodynamic impulse can, I feel, benefit enormously from being more deliberately and skillfully grafted with the rootstock of native knowings. Both will be strengthened. This kind of healthy grafting is certainly a prominent theme in the 2016 North American Biodynamic Conference set for Santa Fe, and rightly so. Much good is likely to arise from this sharing and reciprocity.

But beyond the 2016 conference, fundamental grafting and community questions need to come more into focus. The questions are not just philosophical, but also practical. Considering the status of climate change, they are also urgent. Is there, or could there be, a biodynamic preparation that aids, nurtures and supports the cultural, agricultural and spiritual grafting of the world's wide array of cultural and agricultural traditions to the native rootstock and wisdom ways so inseparably a part of North America? And what kinds of biodynamic preparations could help magnetize the land and thereby rightly draw to it the interest and dedication of diverse groups of people (communities) who will willingly take on responsibility for caring for it as a farm? In other words, how might biodynamic understandings and preparations continue to foster the growth and healthy development of CSAs, which can help make an important, positive difference as we all seek to reckon with the momentous changes afoot?

I talked briefly with JPI's Board President, Pat Frazier, about some of these questions. Speaking by cell phone after just having finished her milking chores, she suggested that as far as community and cultural grafting go, there are indeed intriguing possibilities that could be taken up by biodynamic researchers. But in the present, she said, a good starting point is with a familiar preparation that's already been developed: barrel compost. "Barrel compost is oftentimes created in community," she said. "It just lends itself to that. It's easy to make, it joins people together, and it's transferable to community because once the compost is dug out of the pit you can store it, and then share it widely."

My sense is that both kinds of preparations – a grafting

prep and a community prep – could help usher us to the level of strength, courage, intelligence and will, necessary to meet the challenges of our era.

Steven McFadden will be presenting "CSA Farms: Awakening Community Intelligence" at the North American Biodynamic Conference – Tierra Viva in Santa Fe, New Mexico this November. He notes, "So many of the biodynamic ideas that distinguished CSA in the beginning have been – in so many cases – over-ridden by entrepreneurs and extension folks touting it as a 'marketing scheme.' In my workshop, I want to reaffirm the core ideas and emphasize how increasingly important they are as we encounter mounting environmental, economic and social challenges."

Trauger Groh and Steven McFadden co-authored the original book on Community Supported Agriculture, *Farms of Tomorrow* in 1990. It was revised in 1998 as *Farms of Tomorrow Revisited* when Steven went back to farms in the original edition to see how they had developed and what they had learned over the past eight years. A lot it turns out. McFadden also authored *Call of the Land: An Agrarian Primer for the 21st Century* (2nd Edition 2011). He recently moved to Santa Fe and his website is: www.chiron-communications.com.

Available from JPI

Farms of Tomorrow Revisited, written by Trauger Groh and Steven McFadden, is available at JPI for \$12.00. For this and a wide range of other titles, go to <https://jpibiodynamics.org/>.



Reflections on Biodynamic Community Building in New Mexico

Patricia Frazier

My neighbor state, New Mexico has always had a tender spot in my heart. Having lived and farmed in Colorado most of my adult life, New Mexico represents a refuge of beauty, spiritual renewal and warmth in the depths of winter, found in her warmer climate south of here. Her red rock canyons, abundant hot springs, clear starry skies and beautiful mountains are food for the soul and full of indigenous wisdom from her centuries of stewardship by Native elders. So, when the Biodynamic Association (BDA) chose Santa Fe, New Mexico as the site for their upcoming national conference, I was happy to know the conference would be so close to home and was excited to meet fellow farmers there.

One fellow farmer, Melinda Bateman, of Morning Star Farm in Arroyo Seco, just outside of Taos, was already well known to me. Melinda has joined biodynamic workshops here in Western Colorado for a few years, making preparations at Peace and Plenty Farm and attending several Enzo Nastati seminars in Paonia, Colorado. Melinda has a small market farm and serves the Taos community with biodynamically produced food from her 7,000 foot elevation. It is a challenging growing environment with a short but intense season. Melinda has created harmony with the forces of nature there with a large season extending greenhouse, crops appropriate to the season, and well-intentioned and regular biodynamic practices on her land. Her luscious garlic is to die for and her greens have graced the tables of Taos restaurants for over twenty years. On a small but productive piece of land, Melinda farms mostly as a sole proprietor and apprentices interns in the intricacies of high desert farming biodynamically. This is a very unique skillset here in the US and one that will hopefully develop more fully as a result of the influence of the Biodynamic Association's national conference in November.

As a sole proprietor, Melinda has been active in seeking the fellowship of other biodynamic practitioners here in Colorado, but due to the distances between communities in New Mexico, she has related the difficulty in establishing real community there. Similarly, when the Biodynamic Association began its exploration of biodynamic practitioners in the surrounding community to support the conference with local knowledge, there were but a few to meet. A new opportunity for community building was born.

Community building is an activity within the biodynamic farming community that is essential to biodynamic practitioners and consumers, and reflects the origins of the movement. Unlike the sheer numbers of organic farmers in our communities these days with multitudes of web based

blogs, supportive publications, grower cooperatives, and many market farms, the growth of biodynamic agriculture in farming communities has been slower to be realized. There are a number of factors for this slow but steady increase in awareness. One factor is the high level of integrity in farming practices required of a farmer in biodynamic agriculture. A friend of mine, Brook LeVan of Sustainable Settings in Carbondale, Colorado put it this way:

“Biodynamic agriculture is beyond organic. The standards we are adhering to for Demeter Certification of our farm are tough but fair. The standards require us to make long lasting changes in how we view and support our farm organism. But the change in me as a farmer is the most profound. I know now that we are farming with angels.”

That statement has always had a profound impact upon me as a farmer because it calls into awareness the life force beyond our fertility inputs, NPK measurements and percent organic matter. This life force knits that of human beings with the life force of the mineral, plant and animal world in sometimes incomprehensible, but nonetheless powerful ways. The recognition and acknowledgement of these forces of life requires a discipline of observation and faith in the farmer developing over time and in communion with other farmers and our communities who share these insights and values. The result of developing these awareness skills is a profound respect and strong nurturing behaviors for our farms and communities. We protect our farms, plant communities, animals, air and water so that our food can be of highest quality to support further human development of these faculties of awareness.

Another factor responsible for the slow but steady, grassroots growth of biodynamic agriculture is the difficult but necessary development of a common language between communities of knowledge. Development of a language between the conventional scientific community and the unconventional qualitative, life force-based biodynamic agricultural community that can articulate outcomes of biodynamic practices requires awareness and communication. This kind of awareness and communication happens best on the ground and within human interaction. Outlined within these two factors is the case for active community building by biodynamic practitioners who are willing to take the time to interact and educate others about the unique gifts that biodynamic agriculture offers to the healing of our earth.

To facilitate this community building exercise, an intention

was set between Melinda Bateman of Morningstar Farm, Pat Frazier board president of Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics (JPI), and Robert Karp, Co-Director of the Biodynamic Association, to lead a field day at Melinda's farm in Arroyo Seco, New Mexico at the beginning of this farming season. The intention of the gathering was building community and support for the creation of a local biodynamic group to further biodynamic agriculture education in the region. That region includes Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico and all surrounding communities within several hundred miles. The Biodynamic Association and the local Western Colorado BD group promoted the gathering over the three months prior. Attendance was varied and enthusiastic ranging from back yard gardeners to biodynamic farmers; and from author Steven McFadden to experienced local biodynamic compost maker Maggie Lee. Teachers from the Santa Fe Waldorf School, young farmers, biodynamic apprentices and enthusiastic participants in agricultural advocacy and intentional communities from Santa Fe and surrounding communities rounded out the attendance.

The day was spent in many hands-on activities from compost building and inoculation with biodynamic and homeodynamic preparations, a spray of an Enzo Nastati inspired preparation – Purifier/Harmonizer spray – over the entire farm, and group meditation circle led by Robert

Karp following the sprays. In the afternoon, a discussion about next steps for solidifying the relationships and community was held, and all shared a beautiful, local meal. Solid commitments by the local group were made to continue several biodynamic community activities throughout the summer and fall leading up to the national conference. Since the gathering, there has been a meet-up and preparation making activity this summer, and another is planned for late September where BD #500 (horn manure) and barrel compost will be made and sprayed at various locations in and around Santa Fe as an intentional gesture for continued support and recognition of the awareness being cultivated for biodynamic agriculture in the Southwest region of the US.

I hope you can join us in Santa Fe for the Biodynamic Association's National 2016 Conference, "Tierra Viva: Farming the Living Earth" where the impulse to strengthen biodynamic agriculture will continue to grow. There will be many types of educational offerings from indigenous wisdom of the Americas, to social justice and policy advocacy, to practical hands-on education in applying biodynamic agriculture practices for beginners to advanced practitioners. Stop and visit us at the JPI Booth. If community building is of interest to you, a workshop held by Barefoot Farmer Jeff Poppen, Pat Frazier, Nashville area activist Hilary Higginbotham, and Jim Fullmer, Executive Director of Demeter USA will outline practical steps



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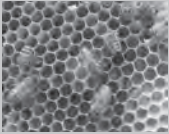
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and experiences of building community in areas of the country where strong biodynamic communities now exist. In addition, members Lloyd Nelson, Patricia Frazier and Brook LeVan of the Western Colorado BD group will lead a hands-on preparation making workshop as a full day pre conference event. Registration and description of the full conference is now available at www.biodynamics.com on the conference page.

Dandelion Thank You

JPI would like to extend a special thank you to all those who helped to collect dandelions for us this year. Your contributions are deeply appreciated by us all!

Terry Williams - Woolwine, VA

Dr Kathy Howell, LPC - Dawsonville, GA

Helen Belcher - Woolwine, VA

Alex Wilson - Floyd, VA

Patricia Smith - Newport, VA

Muriel F. Brigouleix - Lancaster, PA

Michael Douglas - Siquim WA

Ray Warner, Encinitas, CA

For the Michael Age

We must eradicate from the soul
All fear and terror of what comes towards Man
Out of the future
And we must acquire serenity
In all feelings and sensations about the future
We must look forward
With absolute equanimity to everything that may come
And we must think only that whatever comes
Is given to us by a world directive full of wisdom
It is part of what we must learn in this age,
Namely to live out of pure trust
Without any security in existence.
Trust in that ever present help of the spiritual world.
Truly, nothing else will do
If our courage is not to fail us.
And we must seek this awakening within ourselves
Every morning and every evening

—Rudolf Steiner [from lecture series 1910]

Marian Farm Biodynamic Spirits

Hunter Francis

Often when we think about biodynamic products, we think about food such as fruits and vegetables and perhaps wine. Now, however, other biodynamic spirits are finding their way on the market. One innovative producer of quality biodynamic spirits is former JPI board member, Gena Nonini of Fresno, California. Gena is a multi-generation farmer who established Marian Farms on a portion of her parents' family farm in 1990. The farm currently comprises forty acres of vineyard, eighty acres of almonds, eight acres of citrus and four acres of mixed vegetables. In 1995, hers became the first biodynamic-certified vineyard in the country. The citrus followed in 1998 and the almonds in 2003. For many years, she ran a CSA (community-supported agriculture) program using produce grown on her farm.

Gena's decision to get into the spirit business happened somewhat by accident, and as she says, at the confluence of a "perfect storm" of events. 1998 was an El Niño year in California with much more precipitation than usual. At the same time, she had made the decision to farm everything on her farm biodynamically with minimal inputs that year. In the vineyards, she chose to use no sulfur to control mildew. The vineyard at that point had only been in production for six years. Unfortunately, because of the wetness and the



Marian Farms owner Gena Nonini with distilling manager Kerrigan Harms at the Fresno Food Expo

fact that she is farming surrounded by conventional acreage, mildew spores were proliferating in abundance in her area. Her grapes were severely affected by mildew and the

quality of the grapes produced was not good enough to sell in the table grape market nor to make raisins with. Additionally, prices for grapes were beginning to dive as a result of globalization and the consequent ability of buyers to source grapes from cheaper international markets. As a result, Gena was forced to sell the grapes into the distillery market. At the same time, it just so happened that Richard Katz of Flower Essence Services (FES) was looking to purchase biodynamic alcohol for his flower essences and he contacted Gena. In the end, Gena decided to turn her grapes into wine at a Fresno area winery and then to take the wine to the Bay Area near San Francisco to distill it into medicinal alcohol. This was the beginning of her production of high proof medicinal alcohol, which she continues to this day.

By the early 2000s, the winery that she was working with closed and the contract distilleries that she was using had more business than they needed, so she couldn't contract with them anymore. She decided to build her own distillery and in 2005 she produced wine and distilled that crop in her own on-farm facility. All of the wine that she produced went into medicinal alcohol that year. The medicinal spirit business was continuing to grow and in 2006 she decided to take some of the alcohol and put it up into oak barrels to make brandy on the farm. Gena uses French oak barrels. It is the aging process in wood that gives brandy its color. The exact type of barrel used affects the taste of the brandy produced and the environment in which the brandy is aged also influences the final flavor profile. In Fresno, because it is very hot, there is a lot of evaporative loss from the barrels. In the industry, they call that loss the "angel's share." Gena thinks that it is the environmental conditions on her farm that help create a uniquely rich flavor profile.

In 2007, Gena had the opportunity to take on an extra eighteen acres of vineyard, eight acres of which produced seedless Muscat grapes. She decided to produce pisco, a type of brandy that is made from Muscat grapes and that is not aged in barrels (hence its color remains clear). She now produces a California-style pisco that she calls pisquita. Because of modern trade agreements, an alcohol called "pisco" can only come from Peru, in the same way that champagne and cognac can only come from France. In 2010, Gena decided to produce an orange liqueur similar to curaçao. The orange flavoring in this distillate is derived from hand-peeled oranges grown on her farm. The peels are steeped in alcohol to extract the oils. A simple biodynamic sugar from South America is added to the curacao to sweeten it. Like the pisquita, Gena's farmhouse curaçao is not aged in barrels and therefore retains its clarity.

All of the Marian Farm distillates are made from grapes and all of the wine used for distillation is produced via wild

fermentation. This means that no outside yeast is added during the fermentation process. Only the yeast that is present on the farm is allowed to ferment the grapes. With the exception of sugar, all of Gena's raw materials come from her own farm and all of the distilled products are Demeter certified biodynamic. Currently, three distilled beverages are available through the Marian Farms website: the pisquita (40% alcohol), the curaçao (27% alcohol) and a barrel-aged brandy call Espirito de la Vallada that is aged for a minimum of five years in French oak (40% alcohol).

Gena is also now in the process of developing another orange liqueur, but one that is put into French oak barrels to create a dark Grand Marnier-style product. She is also developing an almond liqueur similar to Amaretto, which is a grape-based distillate with a flavor profile enhanced by an extract from almonds, and a rum made from biodynamic sugar.

For more information on Marian Farms and all of its products, visit www.marianfarmsbiodynamic.com



The Marian Farms still

A Visit to the Goetheanum Garden Park

Hunter Francis

This spring, I had the good fortune to visit Dornach, Switzerland, which served as Rudolph Steiner's principal residence during the latter part of his life, and which still serves as a global center for anthroposophy today. Dornach is approximately six miles south of Basel in the foothills of the Jura Mountains. The property was donated to Rudolf Steiner for use by the General Anthroposophical Society and now comprises just under thirty acres. It is crowned by a majestic building that Steiner named the "Goetheanum" after Johann von Goethe, the great German poet-scientist who inspired much of Steiner's own writings on science. That building and many others, the grounds, gardens and workspaces are sometimes collectively referred to as the Goetheanum as well, a venue that has been the home to a vast array of meetings, conferences, trainings, artistic events and interchanges of all sorts for a century now. It is the home to various "sections" (cultural branches) that focus on research and study of a number of disciplines, such as the arts, agriculture, medicine, and the natural and social sciences. Together, they are part of a planetary network of people dedicated to understanding and drawing from the spiritual foundations of life's many activities. One of Rudolf Steiner's great concerns was that the fruits of anthroposophy and

spiritual science not only be understood intellectually, but that they penetrate our feeling life and souls and be applied in a living way in all that we do. This thought was shared in a lecture in November, 1923 at the time Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society. With a proper, holistic approach to anthroposophy, he said "feeling and sensitivity can radiate into us... in order to bring us to our true humanity, our actual humanness [and to] true human love."

In 1924, Steiner gave a series of lectures (at an estate in what is now Poland) that contained recommendations for the practice of agriculture and that comprise what is today known as the *Agriculture Course*. Here again, the intent was help us participate with nature and with the cosmic/spiritual world in a living way that would lead to healthier crops, animals and human beings. Of course, the farmers and gardeners at the Goetheanum seek to embody this approach to agriculture and the result is a setting that is vibrant and uplifting. During my visit to the Goetheanum, I spoke with the head farmer in charge of overseeing agricultural/horticultural activities there, Benno Otter.

Benno has worked at the Goetheanum for over thirty-four years and oversees a staff of approximately ten employees and two apprentices. Together, they manage a working



Row crops in the Goetheanum Garden Park



Statue in the Goetheanum Garden Park

biodynamic farm and the beautiful grounds surrounding the Goetheanum building, collectively referred to as the Goetheanum Garden Park. They have three cows, four calves and six sheep, which are rotated around the property to help maintain its grasslands and open spaces. A row crop vegetable growing area contains about fifty types of vegetables. There are also areas for cut flower production, perennial beds and orchards of approximately 150 mature trees. Fruit and nut trees are scattered around the grounds and are especially beautiful during blossom. There is also an assortment of berries. All unused plant materials are recycled at an on-site composting area. In addition to production, the Garden Park serves as an outdoor laboratory for a wide range of research and as an educational setting for classes, tours and interpretation.

One of the things that strikes an American visitor used to seeing lawns around public buildings is that many areas are left seemingly “wild,” with grasses and wildflowers allowed to grow to fruition. This is part of an intentional strategy to provide habitat for beneficial insects. At the Garden Park,

a balance between aesthetics and productive use is sought and the result is a unique atmosphere that has a natural feel to it. Interspersed among cultivated areas there are special “theme” gardens for medicinal (healing) plants, dye plants for color and even a scent garden. The gardens provide a home to a butterfly program (and refuge) and a space for handicapped people to work. They are currently working on new garden features and renovations with the help of artists and landscape architects.

Biodynamic preparations have been used on the grounds since 1924 and today the Goetheanum produces all of the preparations it uses, which includes the growing of all of the herbs needed. BD #500 (horn manure) is sprayed three times per year and is stirred by hand in vats of 60–80 liters (15–20 gallons). Preparation making is taught and the Goetheanum’s Agricultural Section is currently doing world-wide research on how people use preparations across the planet. Some of the preparations are sold to hobby gardeners and new farmers. (Large Swiss farms find support in regional preparation-making groups.) In addition to preparation sales, some of the garden produce is sold to the public. The staff also earns money by outsourcing its landscaping services to area residents. Conversely, there is an arrangement whereby area residents can “rent” some of the garden’s cherry trees, which I thought was an interesting idea. All of these activities help supplement Goetheanum financial support for the Garden Park.

All of the above activities help to create the perfect setting for the Goetheanum and, indeed, a true farm individuality. The Goetheanum building itself is striking and well worth the visit. Its massive concrete forms were inspired by Rudolf Steiner at the end of his life to mimic surrounding limestone landscape features. They contain captivating works of art by Steiner himself, notably stained glass windows and an enormous and awe-inspiring wood statute entitled “The Representative of Humanity.” The building contains a huge theater adorned with beautifully colorful artwork depicting the history of humankind, a smaller theater, lecture rooms, offices, art exhibits, a bookstore and a café. It also contains a large (1:20 scale) replica of the “first” Goetheanum, an exquisite wooden building that preceded the current Goetheanum, which was tragically destroyed by arson on New Year’s Eve 1922/23, shortly after its completion. That heart-wrenching loss added special meaning to the official founding the next year of the Anthroposophical Society and the laying of the groundwork for the new Goetheanum, which in my mind, stands among humanity’s great triumphs.

For more information go to www.goetheanum.org

Save the Date

**September 21, 22, 27 and October 10, 11, 18 and 19:
Volunteer Days at JPI**

Join us at JPI as we prepare our fall preparations. As a national provider of biodynamic preparations, we will need to stuff hundreds of cow horns this fall to meet our customer demand for BD #500 (horn manure) in 2017. We would be most grateful for your help and offer good fellowship, complimentary refreshments and the opportunity to learn. See sidebar for details.

September 23–25: Understanding and Making the Biodynamic Preparations

This workshop will give both beginners and experienced farmers a solid basis for understanding the major ideas and principles of biodynamic agriculture. Learning the spiritual foundation for a necessary renewal of agriculture is the call of our time. Join biodynamic practitioner and teacher Gunther Hauk as he shares with us over 40 years of experience. Cost: \$195. Spikenard Honeybee Sanctuary in Floyd, VA. Visit www.spikenardfarm.org for registration and more information.

October 1: Autumn Biodynamic Practices Workshop

Chesapeake Biodynamic Network (CBDN) will host a workshop that will include making horn manure (BD #500), sharing the barrel compost made in June, a stir and spray and the use of BD preparations through winter. Christian Community Parish, College Park, MD. Contact Michael Judge for more information: mjudge2000@gmail.com

October 13: Cosmic Agriculture Lecture

Cosmic Agriculture: Absorbing Observations on Natural Rhythms with Jeremy Tackett, head farmer of Flying Pig Farm. Experience and explore your relationship to the universe through “Spiritual Science.” Appropriate for all adults. Sunwater Spa, Manitou Springs, CO. Repeats every month in 2016: 9/8, 10/13, 11/10 and 12/08 from 6:30 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. \$20. Purchase tickets at: <https://clients.mindbodyonline.com/classic/home?studioid=174834>

October 14–16: Fall Intensive – Full Biodynamic Preparation Making

Workshop will cover these preparations: BD #501 horn silica, barrel compost, *Equisetum* and stinging nettle as well as harvest/storage/use of preps 500, 503, 505, 506. \$750 (includes continental breakfast, lunch and dinner). Sustainable Settings in Carbondale, CO. For more information or to register for any class call 970-963-6107 or e-mail rose@sustainablesettings.org.

October 22: Thresh and Winnow – Harvesting, Cleaning and Storing Seeds

Did you know that clean, properly stored seeds can remain viable for decades?

Volunteer Days at JPI for Fall Preparations

Join us in Stuffing Cow Horns for Horn Manure (BD #500)

September 21, 22 and 27; October 10, 11, 18 and 19

As a national provider of biodynamic preparations, JPI will need to stuff hundreds of cow horns this fall to meet our customer demand for BD #500 (Horn Manure) in 2017.

We would be most grateful for your help. We offer good fellowship, complimentary refreshments, and the opportunity to learn:

- How to properly stuff horns
- How to select a good burial site
- When and how long to bury BD #500
- And when and why this prep is used

Our volunteer days in October will also include opportunities to help with BD #503 (chamomile) and bd#506 (dandelion) preparations.

Contact the office for details and to RSVP (540) 745-7030, Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm; e-mail cbowman@jpibiodynamics.org



In the this installment of Seed School at the Pfeiffer Center, Shanyn Siegel will explain and demonstrate various techniques for harvesting, drying, and cleaning seeds. Bring your own seeds to clean and share! The Pfeiffer Center in Chestnut Ridge, NY. For more information on registering: www.pfeiffercenter.org/workshops_and_events/register.aspx

October 28–30: JPI Fall Workshop on Biodynamic Composting with Bruno Follador

“Developing Dynamic Ways of Seeing and Working with Compost and Ehrenfried Pfeiffer’s Chromatography” at the JPI Farm in Floyd, VA. For more information on Bruno Follador and The Nature Institute, please visit:

natureinstitute.org/soil/index.htm. See page 23 for details
November 16–20: North American Biodynamic Conference
The Biodynamic Association (BDA) invites you to attend the North American Biodynamic Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 16–20, 2016 – the foremost opportunity on the continent to learn about biodynamics and innovations in regenerative agriculture. The biennial conference draws hundreds of farmers, gardeners, educators, activists and food lovers from across North America. The theme of the 2016 conference is *Tierra Viva: Farming the Living Earth*. For more details, visit www.biodynamics.com and see sidebar.

November 29–December 2: Acres U.S.A. Conference
The annual Acres U.S.A. conference sets the standards for innovation and learning in sustainable agriculture. Farmers and consultants from every side of eco-farming come together to share their experience and expertise. Attend the non-stop event, learn the latest in cutting-edge technology and methods, and return home ready to make your farming operation the best it can be. Omaha, Nebraska. Look for the JPI booth at the conference! Visit: www.acresusa.com

February 1–4, 2017: PASA's Farming for the Future Conference

Join the Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture at their signature event. Widely regarded as the best of its kind in the East, this event brings together an audience of over 2,000 farmers, processors, consumers, students, environmentalists and business and community leaders annually. Features speakers on biodynamics. State College, PA. See: www.pasafarming.org

ONGOING

Chesapeake Biodynamic Network (CBDN), College Park, MD

Meetings, networking, *Agriculture Course* study and biodynamic workshops held monthly on Saturdays at the Christian Community Garden Grounds next to the University of Maryland at 4221 Metzert Rd in College Park, MD. Contact Michael Judge for the schedule at mjudge2000@gmail.com.

White Rose Farm, Taneytown, MD

Educational food and farm events, festivals, celebrations and biodynamic farm days. For details, please visit www.whiterosefarm.com

Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, Floyd, VA

Classes in sustainable beekeeping and biodynamics. Apprenticeship/internship opportunities. Please visit www.spikenardfarm.org

The Triangle Biodynamic Network, Hillsborough, NC
Biodynamic lecture study, stir and sprays, and gathering

to exchange ideas and projects. Second Saturday of the month. Contact: Jon Lyerly: Jelyerly2@gmail.com

Fellowship of Preparation Makers Conference – Save the Date!

March 2–5, 2017

The Fellowship of Preparation Makers have held conferences annually to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences from some of the most dedicated and experienced preparation makers in North America. In March 2017, the Hack Farm of Ontario, Canada will help host the next Fellowship conference. In the past, the conferences have usually focused on one preparation, in order to get a deeper understanding of it. Now that the Fellowship has had a conference focused on each preparation, the next focus will be on quality and quality testing. The 2017 Conference will focus on BD # 500 (horn manure) and quality testing.

In 2011, the Hack Farm and the Biodynamic Society of Ontario co-hosted that year's conference, where the subject was the compound preparations, including barrel compost and prepared BD #500. Costs for the event were kept as low as possible and participants were assisted with lodging arrangements. In spring 2017, a similar event will be facilitated. The conference planning committee is now working on the schedule and speaker selection, which they hope to finalize in November. On Thursday, March 2, there will be an opportunity to touch and assess all the preparations. Conference facilities planned for have a capacity of approximately sixty participants.

It has often been thought that when preparation makers from across the continent gather in small groups, the Archangels participate in the work, bringing wisdom and inspiration. Such gatherings are truly special and they strengthen our resolve to keep on working away on our chosen paths. Stay tuned for more details!

From the JPI Office

Three Kings Preparation

To insure timely delivery, please order by December 16.

JPI Office Holiday closings

November 24 and 25, 2016

December 26–January 3, 2017

JPI Fall Workshop: October 28–30 – Developing Dynamic Ways of Seeing and Working with Compost and Ehrenfried Pfeiffer's Chromatography

With Bruno Follador from the Living Soils Initiative at The Nature Institute

High quality compost is the foundation of fertility for most biodynamic farms and gardens. Learn how to monitor and balance the moisture, heat and air to avoid the loss of valuable nitrogen and other nutrients through volatilization and leaching. See the life processes of breakdown and build-up to colloidal humus expressed in Pfeiffer's chromatograms. This exceptional workshop will include hands-on activities with the composting process such as:

- How to mix the material
- How to understand on a practical level C/N ratio
- How to set a windrow or compost pile

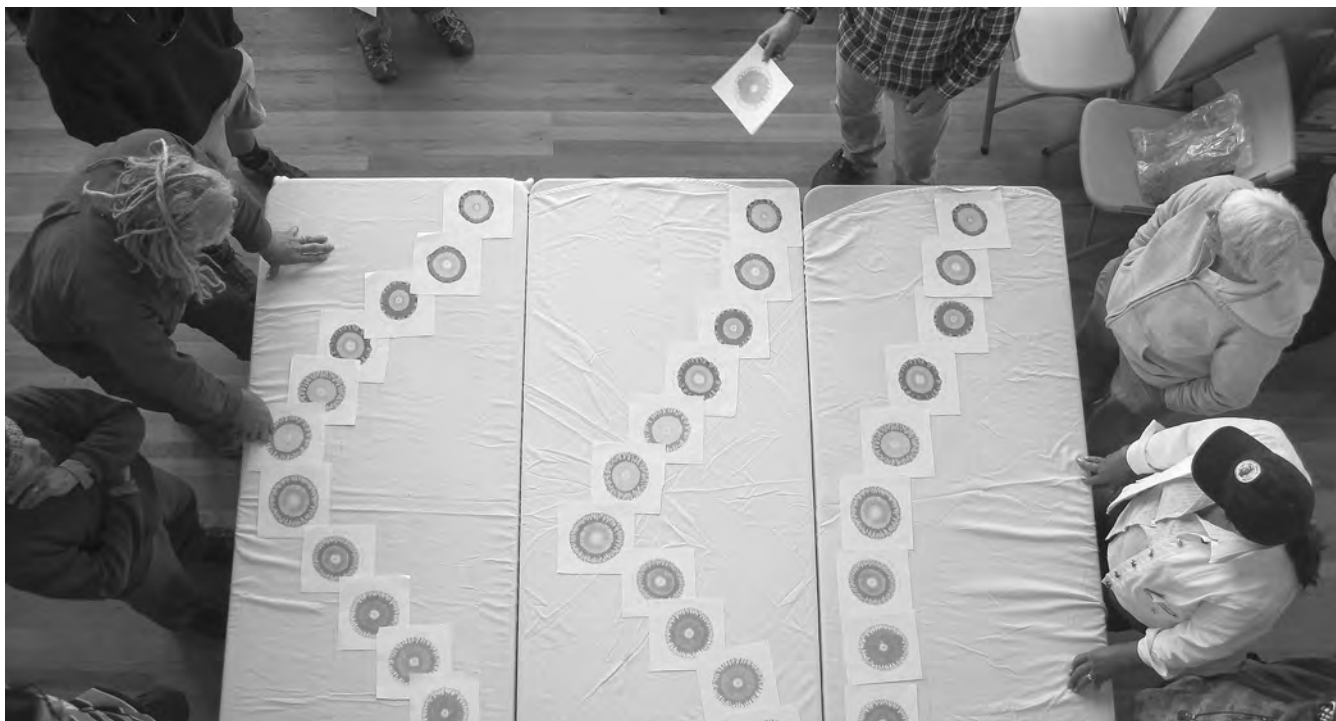
- When and how to turn a compost pile
- How to recognize the signs of the different composting phases

Workshop Registration Fee:

- Early Registration Fee (by Friday, October 7th) – \$195.00
- Late Registration Fee (after October 7th) – \$235.00

Registration fees includes Saturday Lunch

For more information or to register call the JPI office 8:00-5:00 Eastern at (540) 745-7030 or e-mail Cynthia at cbowman@jpibiodynamics.org



Students putting Pfeiffer chromatograms in sequence to reflect the life processes of healthy compost, and the stages it goes through from breakdown to build-up of colloidal humus.

Out of Print

The following titles are out of print:

Soil Fertility, E.E. Pfeiffer

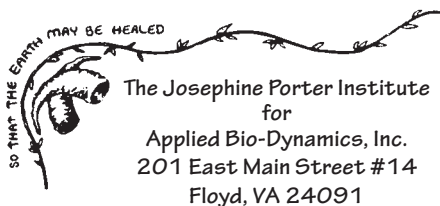
Agriculture: Spiritual Foundations for the Renewal of Agriculture, Rudolf Steiner (Creeger/Gardner translation)

Still available at JPI:

Agriculture Course: The Birth of the Biodynamic Method, Rudolf Steiner (Adams translation)

“A healthy social life is found only when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living.”

Rudolf Steiner, *The Fundamental Social Law*



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