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Issue No. 98



In Memoriam: JPI Founder, Hugh J. Courtney
July 8, 1932 to June 15, 2020

From the Editor

Dear Reader:

It is difficult to lose anyone we love, but especially difficult to lose an elder, someone who not only has taught us how to navigate certain aspects of this life but also someone who is a living library of experience the likes of which we will never see again in this incarnation.

Biodynamic agriculture has lost its share of elders recently, both internationally and nationally: Peter Proctor two years ago in June 2018, and Pierre Masson in July of that year also. Then Alex Podolinsky also in June just over a year ago in 2019. And this year, very close to home, Mark Trela, who crossed June 25 and was, for many years, regional coordinator in Indiana for the North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program. This year Hugh Lovell also completed his earthly walk on August 25 in Georgia. And even closer to home, Hugh Courtney, founder of JPI, as well as beloved teacher, preparation maker, and deep anthroposophist, also made a June crossing—June 15. The departure of so many biodynamic elders makes me wonder how much the Spirits must need to intercede for Earth these days, so much so that our great ones are called over to work from the other side.

This issue of *Applied Biodynamics* is dedicated to Hugh

Courtney, without whom JPI would never have come into existence. His peers, elders in their own right, along with the waves of students who learned from Hugh either at JPI or later at his Earth Legacy Agriculture Farm come together here to share memories and appreciation for his tough love and his wisdom that helped them find their own biodynamic pathways to walk. You will also find Hugh's own words taken from the annals of *Applied Biodynamics*, which he created and for which he served many years as writer and editor.

Who can sum up a life as vast and influential as Hugh's? Perhaps JPI President Clay Wesson says it best, having told Hugh shortly before Hugh's passage that only a few people create something in their lives that live beyond them. Hugh Courtney definitely has done that, not only through the creation of JPI, but also through the training of those he taught to make the preparations and then sent out in the four directions, "so that the Earth may be healed."

—Mary Maruca

Front cover: Hugh Courtney, biodynamic wizard, rests in the Virginia countryside, while the energy of the land and its living organisms make themselves seen and felt around him as he contemplates the spring for 505 oak bark burial (notice the orbs). Photo courtesy of Abigail Porter.

Applied Biodynamics

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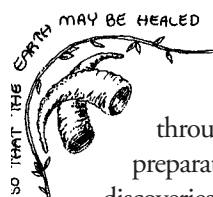
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Mission



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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In Memoriam: Hugh J. Courtney, July 8, 1932–June 15, 2020

Clay Wesson

It is with sadness that I am writing to honor the passing of Hugh J. Courtney, founder of the Josephine Porter Institute. Hugh was a dedicated preparation maker, who in his own words, discovered biodynamics a bit late in life. He often told about attending a biodynamic conference when Josephine Porter offered to teach those attending the conference how to make the preparations. Of the twenty or thirty people who expressed interest by raising their hands, Hugh was the only one who showed up when the time came.

Showing up seemed to be a theme not only of his life but also of those he impacted and inspired. Although I was not privileged to attend any of his storied preparation making workshops at the Courtney farm in Woolwine, his legacy lives on in those who did show up. Many have shared that they didn't quite know what impulse drew them to participate but, as you will learn in this issue of *Applied Biodynamics*, their lives took exciting new directions because they showed up to accept Hugh Courtney's invitation.

Hugh revered the preparations. In reality, he dedicated his life to "making the preparations available so that earth may be healed." Like others who have done battle to protect the integrity of biodynamic processes, Hugh could be direct and a bit gruff at times, thanks in part to an earlier life in the military. His outward forcefulness left me feeling slightly intimidated the first time I met him at the Fellowship of Preparation Makers conference held in conjunction with the 2014 Biodynamic Conference in Louisville Kentucky. I was unprepared for his pointed questions about our preparation making processes in Oregon. Although wrapped up in his questions, I also could sense the deep passion from which those questions arose.

No matter how forceful Hugh appeared, he had a huge heart filled with love for biodynamic care of the Earth. While he would state that mechanical stirring or flow forms were appropriate in some situations, he would always advocate the shared benefit and intent that came with hand stirring for the humans, elementals, and Earth. Often he encouraged stirring preparations toward the heart—right arm counter clockwise, left arm clockwise—for the hour of rhythm and chaos required to dynamize a chosen preparation. One could imagine that bringing the healing forces inward would allow a mutual healing for both the land and the individual.

As an individual, Hugh carried the flickering torch passed on by Josephine Porter at a time when biodynamic agriculture in America still was in the process of collectively kindling community, evolving to express the true warmth and potential of the healing force that it is. At the mere idea of Hugh retiring nineteen years ago, the biodynamic community realized, with a profound sense of urgency, how

critical Hugh was to our understanding of the preparations. To try to begin to fill the gap, the Fellowship of Preparation Makers became a reality. The impact of Hugh Courtney on biodynamic agriculture in the United States and beyond these borders cannot be overstated. Very few people create something during their lifetime that lives beyond them. Hugh Courtney accomplished that.

Having Hugh present at JPI's farm in Fall 2017, along with my mentor, Wali Via, I felt an urge to continue to create a sense of health between Hugh and the organization he founded. At that time, we held a ceremony on the farm that involved planting an oak tree, under the shade of which we eventually would be able to make preparations. Today I have deep gratitude that Hugh had the foresight to plant the seed that would become JPI, without knowing the yields it could produce for humanity.

Although I didn't know Hugh as well as other biodynamic elders, I cherish my visit to his farm in Spring 2019, as well as our time together at the Fellowship of Preparation Makers Conference earlier this year in East Troy, Wisconsin. Hugh had mentioned writing a book. So in April 2020, JPI entered into a mutual agreement to support it, providing Hugh with anything he might want from the archived writing he did for *Applied Biodynamics*. Hugh and I agreed that, though we might wish things had been a little different, acceptance is often the best path forward. Although Hugh has moved on from this life, I have no doubt he is offering support from the other side, both for our work and for the continued development of our hearts.

Wali Via took the last photo I have of Hugh only moments before Hugh and Larry Mabe, JPI's preparation maker, braved the wintery weather to begin their long drive back from Wisconsin to Woolwine. I remember making a joke about Larry's driving skills right before the photo was taken and got a bit of a smile from Hugh that I hold onto.



Honoring Hugh Courtney—July 8, 1932–June 15, 2020

Amy Hamilton

You sly, shipwrecked sailor
Jettisoned from your formal life
into the far flung hills of Virginia;
in the mornings, I see
the rampart of your barn
Jutting into the criss-crossed chem trail sky
With your long fingers pointing it out
As you ambled from site to site
Knowing
where each pit held
the sacraments
gestating
ripening
waiting
For you to unearth them
With the help of us blue-gloved exiles
whom you gathered
to your bosom
Cold and steely on the outside
But warm as the hearth of the gods within.
On freezing November drizzling days
we'd set out for them
your inner map guiding us....
Holes
all over the farm



Holes
Crossing wide creeks
sometimes falling in
Laughing, trudging up hillsides
with five-gallon buckets
and yellow rubber dish gloves
gathering the manure
Settling back down
into the dampness of the basement
to fill, again and again and again
the horns of plenty
to bury them in
Holes
to gestate
to ripen
to wait
For you in your perpetual glorious determination
to uncover them.
How hard! How hard!
This life you lived.
How heavy! How tiresome!
The load you carried.
How did you keep
the light shining in your heart
amidst these craggy shores
on which Life tossed you
for dead?
All around you, hearts turned to stone
and yet
you kept caring
and hoping.
What divine conversations
you must have had
with the elders
as you strode
among the fallen leaves
and snow
and yarrow
and dung
muttering mysteries.
My beloved elder
I will never know.
A mystery you were
and a mystery you remain.
I only know that I love you,
and for each morsel you
graciously fed me
I give thanks.

Honoring Hugh Courtney

Abigail Porter

Our founder, Hugh Courtney, crossed the threshold on the morning of Monday, June 15, only weeks shy of his eighty-eighth birthday. He joined the company of other biodynamic notables who passed in recent years, among them Alex Podolinsky, responsible for the growth of biodynamics in Australia and Peter Proctor of New Zealand, known for his work in India. Most recently, on August 25 of this year, Hugh Lovel of Quantum Agriculture, known for his application of radionics and broadcast towers to biodynamics, has joined them. One can imagine this indefatigable team helping us from the other side in this time of dire need, and opportunity for biodynamics.

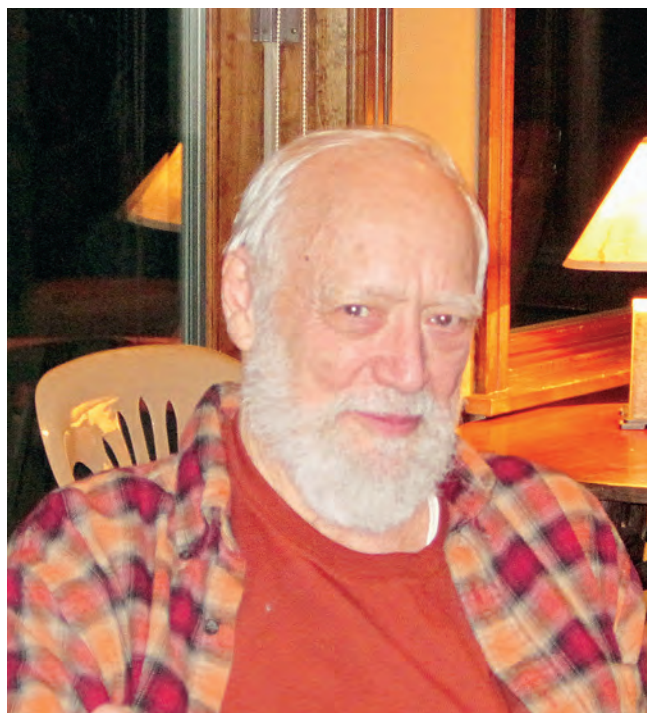
Hugh Courtney died quietly at home after spending the previous day in the garden with his wife, Elisabeth. Three days before Hugh passed, Larry Mabe at JPI had a dream that Hugh collapsed in front of him and could not be revived. Larry was shaken, but tried to brush the dream off since Hugh had appeared in his dreams several times before. On Monday, however, he found out his dream was true.

Those of us who knew Hugh well fully expected him to live past 100 like his father had done. In retrospect though, it seems like he had been preparing to leave for a while. Hugh Courtney was complex and controversial, a man of contradictions—endearing when he was kind, open, generous, encouraging and inspiring, though sometimes just as easily rigid, judgmental, withholding, uncompromising, and a stern taskmaster. During the past seven years, Hugh had reconciled with many of those with whom he had previously disagreed.

Hugh and JPI had gone separate ways in 2013 when Hugh decided to keep his farm in his family and it became clear that JPI had to find its own farm. JPI started prep making in an old barn on a leased farm that we later purchased, and Hugh retired from JPI. Nevertheless, for the past two years, JPI and Hugh often helped each other out. Hugh presented at one of JPI's fall workshops and supplied JPI with 500 when we ran out, and JPI and Larry helped Hugh with various projects.

In January of this year, Hugh also asked Larry to drive him to the Fellowship of Preparation Makers Conference. There, it seemed to some that Hugh gave his last goodbye. Since that trip, Larry has expressed gratitude for the many hours in the truck to and from Wisconsin with Hugh that led to long conversations and healing for both. Hugh let Larry know that he was glad Larry was still making preps for JPI.

I am forever grateful that Hugh took on the challenge and the responsibility of continuing Josephine Porter's work with the preparations in 1984. He had apprenticed with her for seven years, coming to her farm periodically from the



fall of 1976 until the fall of 1983, with many phone consultations in between. When I asked my mother the week before she passed, May 4 of 1984, if Hugh would continue the preparation work, she said, yes, she thought he would.

Not only did he continue providing preps nationally and internationally, he reached thousands of farmers, gardeners, and educators through his book and many workshops and presentations on and off the farm, greatly expanding the making and use of preps here and abroad. He was a voracious reader of Steiner's lectures and frequently reread and studied the agriculture lectures, as well as books such as Karl Konig's *Earth and Man*, dozens of times for a deeper understanding of the forces behind the physical world. He brought that understanding to his workshops and lectures.

Despite the setbacks, challenges, and controversy faced by JPI and in Hugh's own personal life, he continued on his mission with his strong will and optimism. One can hardly imagine what biodynamics would look like in the United States now if Hugh had not been there at the right time with a calling and passion for the work of healing the Earth, inspiring his students to carry the work forward. (For more history of Hugh's life and our honoring him on his eightieth birthday see *Applied Biodynamics*, Autumn 2012, issue no. 78).

Accomplishments and Contributions

As I was making up this list, I was amazed at how productive Hugh was, especially considering that he came to biodynamics

later in life after careers in the Navy and with the Maryland library system. It was obviously his destiny to contribute to the growth and understanding of biodynamics on this continent.

Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics (JPI) was founded in 1985 as a non-profit to honor his mentor, Josephine Porter, and her contribution to biodynamics, as well as to provide a home for the preparation work, education, and research. JPI provided Hugh with the vehicle for his many educational and research accomplishments as well as for his legacy. On page 192 of *What is Biodynamics*, he writes,

...the institute [serves] the greater biodynamic community in the United States and abroad with quality biodynamic preparations, as well as serving as a primary educational base where those who are interested can gain practical experience in learning to make their own biodynamic preparations.

Preparation Making Workshops—Although other centers taught about biodynamics, JPI was the only place at that time that offered deep, focused intensives on both the practical making and use of the preps, as well as the spiritual or unseen forces behind their processes. The annual fall workshop frequently included the sacred sacrifice of

the cow to harvest sheaths for the chamomile, dandelion and oak bark preparations as well as provide materials for the Hugo Erbe preps. It was an opportunity for students to see the beauty of the internal organs and the complexity of the cow's four stomachs that make the cow and her manure so exceptional. For more than thirty years, hundreds, if not thousands, of students were inspired by Hugh and implemented his teachings on their own land.

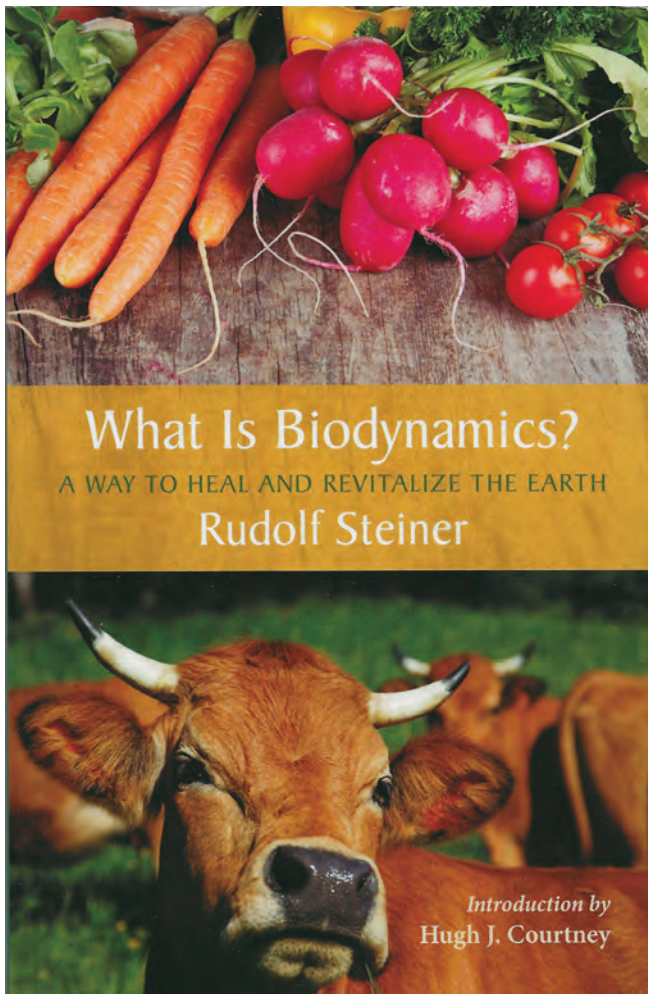
Applied Biodynamics (AB) began publication in 1992 as a way to provide additional educational material, spiritual insights, interviews, festival celebrations, book reviews, and research anecdotes on the preparations in between JPI workshops and also to help inform those who could not attend.

What is Biodynamics: A Way to Heal and Revitalize the Earth—Hugh's book, published in 2005, is a compilation of selected lectures from three different lecture cycles given by Rudolf Steiner, including three lectures from the Agriculture Course on the preparations. Hugh's 44-page introduction includes illustrations by Matthew (Matias) Baker, an employee at JPI. For many, this book was their first introduction to biodynamics and inspired them to further study.

Associative Contracts—Hugh initiated a CSA-type arrangement for the preparations. As with Steiner's concept of associative economics, our Associative Contracts emphasize the



Students stuffing cow horns under Hugh's supervision at 2012 Fall Workshop



development of a conscious coordination between producer and consumer through which we meet each other's needs. In this modality, biodynamic practitioners contract to support the yearly work of JPI at the beginning of the season, while being rewarded for their investment with a reduced cost of purchase. This partnership helps us to plan our preparation making and distribution schedule in advance while assuring that your biodynamic prep needs are met adequately and without delay.

By designating your delivery dates in advance, you will receive biodynamic preparations close to the time you plan to use them, assuring proper storage at JPI in the interim. Contracts may be customized, with the cost adjusted accordingly.

Sequential Spray Protocol—During 1988, the third year of severe drought, Hugh remembered Steiner saying that the preparations help the Earth and plants attract what they need. He began experimenting with using all the preps. He found that by using all of them in sequence over a two-day period on water/leaf days, extreme dryness could be balanced

by attracting rain. With the current weather extremes, this protocol has gained widespread use here and internationally. For a more detailed description see *Applied Biodynamics* (AB) issue nos. 6, 24, 25, and 89, and “Sequential Spray of Biodynamic Preparations for Weather Extremes” on the JPI website under “Learn” and “Biodynamic Preparations.”

Tree Harmonizer—By realigning the etheric (life) body of a tree to its optimal orientation to the Earth, the health of the tree will improve. In addition, by placing biodynamic preparations around the tree, the tree becomes a broadcaster of sorts; the effects of the preparations will radiate out, harmonizing the area around the tree. “*Tree(s), so treated, will have a healthier future life and, most especially, improve the life and health of the soil, animals, and yes humans, in an amazingly wide radius.*” For detailed directions, visit the JPI website under “Learn” and then “Articles.”

The Milk and Honey Spray—Folklore and his Bible readings provided Hugh with the inspiration for this spray to use when plants are suddenly attacked by detrimental insects or otherwise stressed. After using the spray, he noticed a dramatic increase of beneficial insects and a decline in the harmful ones. More on this spray in *Applied Biodynamics* numbers 6, 39, and 40, and directions on JPI website.



Hugh with dried yarrow blossom to compare to unearthed, transformed 502 during workshop



Filling pit with barrel compost

Silica preparations 501(horn silica) and 508 (*Equisetum*/horsetail)—Noticing that very few silica preps were being ordered in relation to other preps, Hugh realized that they were being neglected and the full benefit of biodynamics was not being realized. More than on any other continent, Hugh felt their cosmic influence was most needed in many regions of the Americas to balance the strong earthly limestone influence of the soil. He also encouraged more frequent use of both the fresh and fermented plant silica horsetail (508) teas.

501 5X (horn silica)—Hugh developed a pre-potentized silica spray that only requires 20 minutes of stir time instead of a full hour. He hoped to encourage increased use of silica with the shorter stirring time.

500(X)—Hugh added pre-potentized horn manure, also requiring only 20 minutes of stir time to the preparation tool chest for farmers with limited time.

Pfeiffer Biodynamic Products—When Margrit Selke, maker of the Pfeiffer products (developed by E. Pfeiffer) approached retirement at age 97, and General Composting Corp and the non-profit Pfeiffer Foundation planned to cease operations, Hugh successfully negotiated the transfer of the machinery and the proprietary formulas for the Pfeiffer Compost Starter and Pfeiffer Field Spray from the Pfeiffer Foundation to JPI, both of them being non-profits. JPI continues to honor its commitment to the Pfeiffer Foundation to make the Pfeiffer products available. The products are an easy way for beginners to start with the preps since they contain all of the compost preparations and 500, although they were initially created by Pfeiffer for municipal composting operations, poultry houses, and large-scale field applications.

In addition to the preparations that Hugh created, he brought widespread awareness of preparations developed by other practitioners, which he made and added to the JPI catalog.

Maria Thun Barrel Compost/cowpat prep—Maria Thun, in collaboration with Dr. Pfeiffer, developed this prep to help alleviate and reduce the uptake in plants of radioactive elements resulting from the above-ground testing of atomic bombs in the 1940s and 1950s. Making barrel compost became

part of the seasonal workshops. It is made with manure and includes all of the compost preps in addition to eggshells and basalt. JPI offers a Barrel Compost Biodynamic Compound Preparation Kit to make your own.

Peter Escher/Pfeiffer Tree Paste—Through Hugh's efforts, interest and use of the tree paste was revived to strengthen fruit bearing trees. Recipes are on JPI website and in back issues of *Applied Biodynamics*, as well as in *The Biodynamic Orchard Book* by E. Pfeiffer and M. Maltas.

Podolinsky Prepared 500—Alex Podolinsky treated 500 with all the compost preparations to spray over thousands of acres where there wasn't enough compost to meet the need. Although Josephine Porter custom made "Prepared 500" for large cattle farms, Hugh brought it to national attention. It has been used to prevent spring bloat in cattle when they go out on their first pasture of the season. It is also a good way for anyone to get 500 and all the compost preps sprayed out at the same time.

Hugo Erbe Preparations—Through Hugh's influence, the Three Kings #8 preparation is now widely used on Epiphany. He put together a kit of the ingredients to encourage its use. He also made available the companion Harmonizing preparation #9 frequently used at Michaelmas as another offering of gratitude to the Elemental world. Another Erbe prep he made available is the Bovine Rumen #5 prep recommended by some vineyard consultants. The book, *Hugo Erbe's New Biodynamic Preparations*, offers more information and background on the Erbe preps.



Hugh burning pests to make ashed peppers



Hugh with pepper "library" (courtesy of Rand Carter)

Hugh always kept experimenting with one prep or another, including the length of their burial times. Here are a few of his anecdotal research projects.

Ascension Day—By experimenting with various times to unearth preparations, Hugh found he obtained the best results if the preparations buried in the fall were left in the earth until after Ascension Day. He left the oak bark and nettle prep in the earth for a full year and frequently left the 500 horns in the earth for a year as well.

Four-year Summer Burial of 501—Sensing the significance of a four-year cycle, Hugh would bury 501 for four consecutive summers, which he thought resulted in a more potent preparation. He would unearth the 501 in the fall, store it in the horns in a sunny location in the building or greenhouse, and then rebury it the following spring. He insisted that 501 could not be left in the ground during the winter after he experimented and had a sensitive crystallization test made of before and then after winter unearthing. The pattern had lost its structure and became chaotic, as I recall him saying.

Seed Soaks—Experiments using individual biodynamic preparations, depending on the type of plants and what part of the plant would be harvested, required different preps for optimal results. Hugh also found that soaking seeds in 500 before planting helped plants be more resilient in the face of drought. For charts and more information, see *Applied Biodynamics* numbers 7 and 40, and "Seed Soaks with the Biodynamic Preparations" on the BDA website (<https://www.biodynamics.com/hugh-courtney>).

Foliar Application of Individual Preps—Hugh also experimented with foliar sprays of individual preps. In one experiment he used 506 dandelion (ruled by abundant Jupiter) prep on beans, which resulted in increased production.

Pest "Peppers"—More than anyone else, Hugh is known for his work with ashing animal skins, insects, and weeds to create remedies to alleviate excessive pest problems, following Rudolf Steiner's and Maria Thun's recommendations. Through the

years, he built up an extensive "library" of pest ashes. Burning pests to ashes was frequently part of the workshop series. One of his successful experiments that he reported on at the BDA conference in Kentucky several years ago was the use of potentized woolly adelgid ash and Pfeiffer Field and Garden Spray applied to afflicted hemlocks.

The Fellowship of Preparation Makers—Indirectly, Hugh is responsible for the formation of the Fellowship. In 1999, not having found anyone to take over his position, Hugh expressed his desire to retire from JPI. He wanted to spend more time writing, experimenting with the preparations, and developing his work with the pest "peppers". Due to Hugh's concern for how JPI would be carrying the preparation work into the future, a committee from the larger biodynamic community met in Copake, NY early in 2001 to address how the need for preparations could be met in America.

The focus of the committee, among other things, was to find ways to foster the growth of regional preparation making groups and to support central preparation making facilities to be located in the east, west and central parts of the country as well as Canada. The Future of the Preparations Meetings grew out of this committee...

The meetings were held annually in different locations around the country and eventually evolved unto The Fellowship of Preparation Makers. The Fellowship continues to meet annually with an in-depth study of one of the preparations and visual quality assessment of samples from across the country.



At the Fellowship, Hugh prepares peritoneum/mesentery to make 506 (dandelion)

Hugh Courtney

Virtually from the beginning of biodynamic agriculture, the horn silica preparation, 501, has been associated with the forces of sunlight or the light ether forces. It has even been seen as a substitute for too little sunlight. Conversely, when strong sun conditions exist, it has been suggested that one can forego the use of 501.

During a visit by Alex Podolinsky in the 1980s to the American West and Midwest farm lands, several farmers were strongly influenced by his assessment that they already were dealing with too strong sun forces.

In addition, 501 is called for during the crop season when the grower is so busy that it is much easier to justify skipping the task of spraying 501 if one has an authority to fall back on, such as Alex Podolinsky or others. Rudolf Steiner, in Anthroposophical Spiritual Science and Medical Therapy, says the light ether derived its name from the fact that most human beings have the ability to see. He further states: "If the majority of humanity were blind, this ether (light) would naturally be given a different name, because other aspects of it would manifest more strongly to the blind."

I would like to suggest that we first of all consider the possibility that 501 in this western hemisphere may be working more strongly with those "other aspects" of the light ether and, secondly, that we be much more dedicated to understanding how 501 should "work" under our North American geographic conditions.

Hugh Courtney's Legacy: The Elders

Although JPI continues as Hugh intended for it to, by far his greatest legacy is his many students. Although many were new to biodynamics, even experienced practitioners came to his workshops and lectures to experience his perspective, many of them colleagues in the Fellowship of Preparation Makers.

Among the elders who share their thoughts are Dewane Morgan, Jeff Poppen, and L. A. Rothrairie. The older generation of practitioners also includes Uli Hack, Ben Campbell who took biodynamics to Japan, and Gena Nonini of Marian Farms, grower of biodynamic almonds, raisins and grapes for spirits, who served on the JPI board along with Bill McCranie, owner of a Demeter certified beef and blueberry farm in Texas. Pat Frazier was instrumental in creating the first regional biodynamic group in Colorado. In addition to serving on the

Bio-Dynamic Preparations Related to Geographic, Mineral, and other forces in the Earth

Earthly	Mediating or BALANCING	Cosmic
Western Hemisphere	Eastern Hemisphere	
North, Central, South America	Europe, Africa	Asia, Australia
Limestone	CLAY/HUMUS	SILICA
BD # 500	BD # 502 to 507	BD # 508, BD # 501

From *What is Biodynamics*, p.21

"When geographic forces are identified from Steiner's indications in Geographic Medicine, we can readily correlate the silica/cosmic preparations to the Eastern Hemisphere (Asia and Australia), the limestone/earthly preparation to the Western Hemisphere (North and South America), and the clay/mediating compost preparations to Europe..." (figure above)

[For instance, because of the predominantly silica/cosmic nature of Australia, horn manure (500) is what is primarily needed in addition to the compost preps (502-507) to bring balance. Likewise, in North America, where the limestone polarity is strongest, the silica/cosmic forces need to be brought in with the horn silica (501) and Equisetum (508) polarity.]

JPI board, Pat has taught workshops in biodynamics and PermaDynamics at JPI.

Uli Hack and his family have a 900-acre Demeter certified grain and cattle farm in Ontario, Canada. Their farm hosts preparation making for the Ontario biodynamic group. The farm and the community hosted two Fellowship of Preparation Makers conferences during in the past ten years.

It touches deep to hear of Hugh's passing. For so many years he was the solid rock for the biodynamic movement. He had so much knowledge and so much wisdom and shared it so freely. He worked tirelessly and helped start so many projects. And he did it all with such a warm and caring heart. To me he was the center of biodynamics in North America.

May the angels guide you on your new path, Hugh.



Dewane Morgan owns Midheaven Farm in Park Rapids, Minnesota, on sandy loam soils left by the glaciers. He sees as his mission to leave the land better than when he began caring for it. His is a multi-functional cattle and

grain farm, with a CSA, and educational opportunities during the summer months.

The last time I saw Hugh Courtney was at the 2020 Fellowship of Preparation Makers conference held this past winter in East Troy, Wisconsin. His physical body appeared weaker than the previous time I saw him, but his thinking and what he had to say was as clear and sharp as ever. We were talking as we stood off to the side of the room before the conference started. Suddenly Hugh looked over the crowd and asked, “Do you think we are the only two veterans here today?”

On our first Thursday of the month Subgroup 2 conference calls, as well as other Fellowship of Preparation Makers committee calls, Hugh would always announce, “Courtney here,” as if reporting for morning roll call.

When Hugh was in college, he was in the ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corps) program. After graduation, he was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Navy and served aboard naval ships from the mid-1950s to 1963. In all branches of the U.S. military, enlisted personnel are required to salute and refer to officers as “Sir,” or “Ma’am.” I was an infantryman in the U.S. Marine Corps and served in Vietnam. I used to tell Hugh with some degree of seriousness that I should be calling him “Sir” out of respect for the rank he held in the Navy.

Hugh’s strong commitment to how biodynamic preparations were made and distributed was influenced by his time in the military. In the service, there is what’s called “chain of command.” Orders to carry out a mission are given by officers, and enlisted people are expected to complete the mission with their respective training and skills. Hugh incarnated into this life to carry on the work of Josephine Porter, providing preparations to anyone who asked.

I used to purchase biodynamic preps from Josephine Porter.

Jeff Poppen, the “Barefoot Farmer,” has been hosting the Southeast Regional Biodynamic Conference on his farm, Long Hungry Creek Farm, since the conference moved to Tennessee over twenty years ago from Hugh Lovel’s farm in Georgia. Poppen’s farm is one of the oldest and largest biodynamic farms in Tennessee. In addition to making preparations and growing vegetables for his CSA, Jeff consults and is a speaker at conferences.

When she crossed over, I continued purchasing preparations from Hugh. Hugh told me his mission was to teach and have as many people as possible making biodynamic preparations in the United States. I remember getting my first order of cow horns from Hugh. I placed the order and paid Hugh. Later in the summer, a semi-truck dropped off a barrel of cow horns from a packing plant.

I started making some preparations but continued to order preps from JPI each year for decades. I always questioned (and still do question) the quality of the preparations I make by myself. I could always count on Hugh at JPI to have a complete inventory. I always ordered prepared 500 from Hugh in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Once he told me I was the only one he knew of who was using prepared 500 in the U.S. at that time. He always wanted feedback from individuals on results they noticed from using the preparations and also about how they used them.

When I look back over the past forty-six years of making and using the BD preps, I feel Hugh accomplished his commitment through life’s ups and downs, carrying out his life mission to help ensure BD preparations are always available to anyone who wishes to use them. A second part of that mission was teaching as many people as possible how to make the preps individually, in local groups, and in regional gatherings. He did this too.

Anyone who worked on a project with Hugh knew before long the road would be rocky. I attribute this to the fact that Hugh was used to giving orders in the Navy, and he carried that over to his vision and mission concerning JPI. I had a major strategic difference of opinion with him as to how biodynamic agriculture should be introduced to people in the United States. Like many others nowadays, Hugh was committed to introducing people to biodynamic agriculture through making the preparations. I, on the other hand, strongly felt that a person should have the will to use quality preparations for a couple of years until he or she actually saw the physical results of the spray preparations in conjunction with the compost preparations. Then, that person would have the experience to talk about biodynamic agriculture and the making of the preparations.

I salute you, Courtney, out of respect for your commitment to biodynamic agriculture. I look forward to working with you in fellowship in a future incarnation.

Hugh and I met at our first Southeast Regional Biodynamic Conference at Hugh Lovel’s farm in Georgia in 1987, and he mentored us in the art of preparation making annually for many years. Each year Hugh Courtney would focus on one of the nine preparations, and we learned hands-on how to make them. Afterward, Harvey Lisle called us the rebels because of our undogmatic willingness to do things differently

and, plus, we lived in the southeast. My preparations were far from acceptable, but Hugh's patient encouragement and wry humor prodded me along. We had many a good laugh over my botched attempts.

Our last conversation was funny, as usual. I proudly shared that we had covered the gardens that morning with equisetum and horn silica. He asked why I did it with an eclipse coming that afternoon. I argued that the eclipse was yesterday, as I had stayed out of the garden all day. Of course I was wrong, a day ahead of myself, and he once again invoked the biodynamic angels to come to my rescue.

He offered to write an introduction to my new booklet, *A Simplified Version of Agriculture*, by Rudolf Steiner. He passed away a few days later, so I don't know if he read it.

Hugh's enormous contribution to Steiner's agricultural impulses solidified this work not only in the southeast, but across the United States and worldwide. Hugh's keen observation, direct perception, and unique perseverance matured into a deep understanding of forces invisible to most of us. Hugh will be with us every time we make the preparations.



Jeff Poppen, Hugh Courtney, and Hugh Lovel at 2015 workshop in Abington, VA, where they presented (photo courtesy of Rand Carter)

L. A. Rotheraine

Editor's Note: *the following article appeared in Issue 4 of Applied Biodynamics and is the remembrance of Hugh Courtney that the author wanted to offer. The article has been lightly edited from the original.*

Selke, Courtney, and Evergreen Elm

In 1991 Evergreen Elm, Inc, a non-profit residential care agency for the handicapped, received state and federal

funds for a biodynamic garden, entitled Evergreen Elm's Horticulture Therapy Program. It had remarkable success. The volume and quality of the 1991 vegetables stunned critics of this "strange agricultural system," winning 11 ribbons out of 14 entries in major vegetable categories. It started to change the town's perceptions of both biodynamics and the handicapped.

The garden quickly became a showpiece for the people of Bradford, PA. Due to economic bad times and other priorities,

however, the program was scheduled for elimination. But the publicity received in 1991 and the obviously beneficial therapeutic effects to both participants and the community encouraged a further commitment by the non-profit's board of directors. They saved the project.

We started in 1992 knowing we needed another fantastic year. But due to a series of circumstances, we only had a small amount of biodynamic compost. We did have 10 tons of raw cow manure mixed with hay and an equal amount of leaves. Our garden is on a lower slope of a crystalline mountain, about 20 feet from the valley floor, on a 10–15 degree incline. The floor of the garden is at least 5 feet of solid clay. Our raised beds have been in place since 1990. We didn't bother digging into the clay, but constructed beds 4 to 5 feet wide and 3 to 4 feet high out of leaves, tree branches, composted horse manure, and a low-grade topsoil. The beds were placed right on top of the clay. We used a biodynamic intensive method of intercropping with 3 to 5 crops in each raised bed. We planted onions at the base of each bed and up the slope 12 inches, then peas an additional 6 inches up to help hold the base soil in place. We used the small quantity of biodynamic compost left over from 1991 for the 1992 vegetables planted from seed.

Later when the seedlings started to come through, we sprayed them and our pre-started plants with Thun Barrel Compost. Then, on the day after our last frost, June 23, we again sprayed in the evening with the barrel compost. Except for the tomatoes, all the pre-started plants were planted in a mix of raw cow manure, straw, and leaves.

Everything grew green and large, but the cold, rainy summer had reduced fruiting. The garden needed more drastic action to give the project a chance of surviving the fiscal axe. I feared using 501 because of the already intense crystal influence from our silicon mountains, which stimulates excessive heat and air activity.

So I telephoned JPI and Hugh Courtney. He told me that 501 would work with minimal damage, if any at all. We were to spray the prep 2 to 4 times on each plant in the early morning hours on fruit days. As I was spraying I realized that 501 was the answer for a person desiring an instant tan and that it could probably be used as an herbicide (I and my spraying partner had red arms and faces, though no heat and pain, and we both tanned). I wondered if Hugh was right, and if the prep could create enough warmth and stimulate sufficient light to keep the garden in the public spotlight so that our work would be allowed to continue.

A few weeks later I watched our gardeners choosing and picking the vegetables they would use in the county fair competition, and I thought of the incredible good they could do for biodynamics and the community if they could duplicate their performance of 1991. I also thought of how the cynical newspaper and TV reporters had become interested in the garden when only a few years earlier they had laughed at our biodynamic gardening techniques, the *Stella Natura Calendar*, and the invisible cosmic and earthly forces the biodynamic technique enhanced. Hugh Courtney also came to mind. Who was this person who made the barrel compost and the 501, which seemed to bring every fire and air spirit in the Allegheny Mountains into our gardens?

The day of judgment came and when the results were reported to me by phone I asked to have them repeated three times. The voice calling from the county fair stated we had won 18 ribbons for 21 vegetable entries. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* also ran a picture of the most photogenic tomato plant and offered readers the opportunity to learn the garden's biodynamic secrets.

Thank you, Hugh Courtney, for this and for so many other questions you answered. Blessings on your journey.

Hugh Courtney's Legacy: From Students to Educators

Hugh had the greatest influence on the young people who came to JPI in their 20s and lived or worked at JPI for years during the late 1990s through 2012. They had not yet found their path in the world, and he took them under his wing. Now many are teachers, themselves, passing the knowledge on. They include Matias Baker, Lloyd Nelson, Laura Ricardi, Osiris Abrego Plata, Joey Brinkley, Natalie Brinkley, Patricia Smith, Florence Rewinski, Larry Mabe and Lenna Keefer, who cooked for and assisted with many of the workshops.

Matias Baker found Steiner's work when a friend lent him How to Know Higher Worlds, The Agriculture Course, and

The Secret Life of Soils while he lived in a fishing village in Belize. He "knew it was the path he was searching for" when he read them. He left for North America to learn more. His journey brought him to several long established biodynamic farms and to the Fellowship Community where he mentored under Dr. Paul Scharf. It was here that he developed a deep connection to Ehrefried Pfeiffer's work. Matias built a foundation in biodynamics and anthroposophy before landing at JPI for seven years until 2006. Because of his interest in alchemy, Hugh directed him to Dennis Kloeck where he and Kloeck are now researching new biodynamic preps. The preparation work has helped Matias understand alchemy in the social and cultural sphere and how

to bring people together to build new initiatives for community. He also consults on the art and science of Biodynamics and the teachings behind quality BD preparation making and holistic landscape ecology. His clients include California Vineyards and diversified land projects in Mexico, Costa Rica and Barbados.



Lloyd Nelson lived and worked at JPI from 1996 to 2006. He did a college-level internship with Hugh in 1997, receiving credit hours to complete his horticulture degree. From 1998 to 2006 he traveled and taught, representing JPI. Having learned much from Hugh, he now makes biodynamic preparations,

sold through Biodynamic Source, and has founded a custom biodynamic spray service, BioSprays, with Brook LeVan of Sustainable Settings, a 244-acre Demeter certified ranch, market garden, and more in Carbondale, CO.

In 1996, I was told I needed to meet a man in rural Virginia. So, at age 19, I set out with my two brothers to meet this amazing person—Hugh Courtney, the Grey, or so we called him affectionately. Meeting Hugh started my biodynamic adventure.

I apprenticed under Hugh the following year, living and working under his mentorship, returning more often than I can even recall to help him in his annual efforts to make biodynamic preparations and to ignite the desire of all those who came to learn from him to be of benefit to the Earth. There is rarely a moment now that I do not remember some wisdom from Hugh and find myself feeling gratitude for all he shared.

Each year when we gathered with Hugh, we'd learn about his experiments with the preparations and other biodynamic processes. I was fortunate to travel and teach alongside him for many years. These direct, hands-on experiences convinced me of my calling, and have guided me ever since to make and share the biodynamic preparations, as well as the benefits of building relationships with all aspects of life. Above all, Hugh Courtney helped me both to recognize and to act on my calling to be a preparation maker, and to devote my life to sharing the incredible benefits of biodynamics.

Hugh emphasized that being a good prep maker requires a year-round consciousness—keen observation of the smallest details and larger systemic shifts occurring on the land. It also requires a long view, a multi-year and, at times, a geologic and cosmic perspective. Making biodynamic

Hugh stressed the importance of intentionality. While at JPI, I learned to create a sacred space to invite the spiritual benefactors into the preparation work...an altar. Farmers will be the priests of the new communities.

dynamic preparations, as Hugh taught, necessitates an articulated daily, seasonal, and annual dedication, with a touch of the devout—for example, harvesting flowers for the preparations according to appropriate planetary rhythms; locating the optimum locations in the earth for preparation pits; integrity in sourcing and collecting the various sheaths; keeping the preparations, their pits, and where they are stored in our consciousness, then visiting the pits throughout the year.

Hugh took to heart, and passed onto us, Rudolf Steiner's request that *"The most important thing is to make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire Earth, so the Earth may be healed. And the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. That should be our first objective. Experiments can come later."* (R.S. p. 260, Appendix C of *The Spiritual Foundation for the Renewal of Agriculture*, from *New Directions in Agriculture* by Ehrenfried E. Pfeiffer).

Hugh's instruction and his own practice went far beyond the mere how-to of prep making, weaving a holistic fabric of method and practice that worked with the planetary rhythms to enhance the efficacy of the preparations. He often reminded us that he was one of the biggest proponents of specifically timing planetary oppositions to favor the highest, best tuned gestures for creating preparations with the greatest efficacy.

Hugh's deep connection to the elementals and nature spirits led him to consider the preparations as sacred food, gifts that feed the elementals. He, in gratitude, would often refer to them as "the biodynamic angels." He felt he and other biodynamic prepmakers were connected to what Rudolf Steiner referred to as the super sensible school of Archangel Michael. Many of the pupils of this school are incarnated in this lifetime and inclined to do this work, he often said.

Hugh, we miss you. But I know you are still with us, and at work above and below, guiding us as we make and use these powerful gifts for Earth and all humanity. We also celebrate you as you move on to continue your work in the imaginal realm. You are our ancestor now. Hugh Courtney, the Grey, has become Hugh Courtney, the White. Before, we stood in the protection of your shadow. Now it is our turn to carry the torch for the next generation.



Laura Riccardi-Lyvers is a gardener, preparation maker, and grazier who runs the biodynamic program at Foxhollow Farm, a grass-fed beef operation in Crestwood, KY. For 15 years she has worked in various capacities with the farm's pastures and different styles of grazing, and

for several years she applied the biodynamic preparations to the 735 field acres to meet the Demeter certification standards. Laura makes the BD preparations for the Foxhollow Farm, as well as for other select farms and gardens, through her small business, Bio-Ag Resources. She currently lives with her husband, Philip, on his family's large-scale hog and grain farm in Central, KY, where she gardens herbs, flowers, and food, and tends a small dairy herd. She lived and worked at JPI for four years starting in 2001.

I am grateful to be able to say a few things about a very special man, Hugh J. Courtney – my mentor, if I ever had one.

My time and experience with Hugh definitely shaped my life. I feel incredibly fortunate to have lived in Hugh's orb at the Woolwine JPI farm for about four years, beginning with a life-changing Fall Prep Making workshop in 2001. If you know Hugh, you can imagine what four years of living and working with him in the remote backwoods of southwest Virginia might have been like. And as I reflect on it, the truth is, that time was beyond words.

But here are a few that may come close to the love and respect I feel in my heart.

There are two most amazing things about Hugh, at least from my experience with him. One is that he

took in people like me—seekers, striving to understand the Spirit—and let us live in his midst, doing what we could to contribute. Or the many folks that attended all those Spring and Fall workshops over the years, spending five days or more at a time, camping out, hanging around sometimes well after the workshop ended. When I think back on Hugh's personality and nature, it is a little shocking that he chose to open up his homeplace to so many people. I believe he did this “out of the love for the deed,” because Hugh, as much as anyone I know, lived his life for the deed of biodynamic agriculture.

The other thing about Hugh that was woven throughout his being was his devotion to the spirit. This man, in his early 70s when I met him, and a librarian and military man (Navy) before JPI, was as matter-of-fact about the spiritual world as he was about the physical world. Every endeavor and any conversation about biodynamics or agriculture was thought of and spoken from an understanding—or a striving to understand—that “which stands behind” the physical world.

To get to have a teacher and companion with such a huge heart and spiritual conviction was a great blessing in my life and in many others' lives. I began missing Hugh the moment I heard he had crossed the threshold. And then this thought came through a moment later: how incredible that Hugh is now in the spiritual world, having taught so many of us of the spiritual world—so many of us who understand at least a little bit what this means for him and now for us, as he works and cares for us from the heavens. How incredible that so many people on Earth are sending our love and thanks to this great man, as he begins his new journey in the spirit.

Osiris Abrego Plata attended her first workshop at JPI in 2003, and apprenticed there from 2004 to 2006. She is a Social and Labor auditor, focusing on Social Responsibility Certification Programs, and has served on the BDA Board of Directors since 2018.

The biodynamic community has been a source of deep inspiration ever since I set foot on this path, visiting JPI for the Fall preparation making activities in 2003. I still feel as deeply moved today as I felt then, observing community in practice, celebrating an agricultural festival, and feeling Hugh's dedication to sharing his knowledge and caringly guiding participants through learning such delicate matters.

The community aspect of the work orchestrated by Hugh provided an orientation on the breadth and depth of the biodynamic community. Hugh's generosity of spirit

exposed me to a network of dedicated and enthusiastic farmers, students and creatives. Understanding these networks and individuals, as well as the stories of their farms has stayed with me as one of the most valuable insights gained from working at JPI.

On a personal level, Hugh's guidance on the study and personal connection to biodynamic preparation making afforded me the capacity to recognize stories that had been shared with me in traditional farming through my lineage, and to explore a voice within me that would lead me to my work in verification systems of social responsibility in farming. I feel extremely grateful to have known Hugh personally, and rest in knowing his legacy is honored by the continued work of so many of his students.

Joseph Brinkley is a biodynamic consultant and preparation maker in Napa Valley, CA, and is currently Director of Vineyard Operations for Bonterra organic and biodynamic wine.

I first visited JPI in the fall of 2002. It was just after one of Hugh's legendary, intensive preparation making workshops, and I helped the two remaining attendees finish digging up 500 horns. My way to JPI and biodynamics, like most, was a bit circuitous. I had the pleasure and honor of knowing Hugh's long time, good friend Beau Johnson. Beau and I met at my place in Christiansburg, VA, and he would always visit and often stay the night as he was traveling doing what many of us who knew and loved him affectionately called "The Beau Show." Beau introduced me to Hugh, and since I was living in Christiansburg and pursuing a Horticulture degree at Virginia Tech, I would regularly go down to Woolwine to learn as much as I could from Hugh.

The days I would arrive, Hugh would often have me perform some task either farm related or prep related. Then he would hold a study group, speaking either to his extensive knowledge of Steiner's writings and lectures or about his other favorite hobby—the influence of the Celestial bodies on humans and Earth. These regular trips continued until I graduated, at which point I went to stay on the farm for a month or so, and we hosted the first biodynamic winegrowers from the West Coast. Unbeknownst to me at the time, this was the beginning of a career path that I am still on, as the current Director of Vineyard Operations for Bonterra, a wine company farming 900 acres of organic and biodynamic wine grapes in Northern California.

Patricia Smith was the editor and contributing writer for Applied Biodynamics from 2000 to 2010. She lives in southwest Virginia and came to JPI as a volunteer in the summer of 1997. Later that year, she was hired as a preparations making assistant.

Hugh would have been 88 in less than a month's time. I thought, like many others, that he would live past 100, like his father, Jim. His focus on healing the earth since he began the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics in 1985 brought many people to the biodynamic community. He was living proof that once you set your mind to do something, in spite of hurdles and setbacks, everything moves in that direction to help attain the goals.

Incredibly patient with questions from callers, Hugh gave his answers in a simple, straightforward manner without fanfare or a hard sell. As he always said, "biodynamics does not come to the people, people come to biodynamics." For those people coming to biodynamics, Hugh was there

I learned many things from Hugh during those visits, and subsequently in the many months I later lived and worked on the Courtney farm in Woolwine between 2006 and 2007. The two most impactful pieces came at this time, and are those that I continue to appreciate to this day. The first is the honoring and the recognition of the Spirit that stands behind and works with all of matter. This recognition and honoring of the Spirit has been largely lost in the western approach to agriculture, though we are seeing a renewal of it in many areas today. This shift in our paradigm is essential if we are going to repair the damage we have done to our planet and help renew it. The second life changing impact I learned from Hugh is how to be aware of what our senses perceive throughout the processes of preparation making and using, during farming, and in daily life.

Hugh showed me a way to combine spirit, healing, and agriculture, a way that I had been seeking, and for this I am eternally grateful. He also provided a tough love that taught me to face and overcome the many challenges that I would later face in life. He did this through his stern outwardness and deep inward love for those he cared for. Hugh Courtney leaves many blessings to this world, too many to list in a brief article such as this. He leaves a lineage of thoughtful, trained preparation makers all over the world—many strong and life-long friendships were forged in Woolwine; new ways to imagine and use the biodynamic preparations; and an impressive increase in the acres receiving these important medicines in the nearly four decades that he devoted his life to this work.

Thank you and bless you, Hugh Courtney.

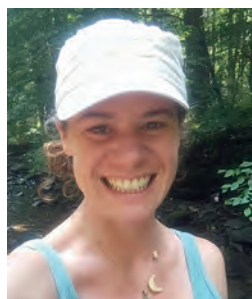
for them. If he had not carried on after Josephine Porter died, it is a wonder where biodynamics would be today. Many of us would never have realized or discovered the biodynamic preparations without Hugh's diligence and dedication.

His commitment to the work at JPI was remarkable. He did not know the meaning of burnout. I believe it was his sense of pacing himself and never being in a mad rush. Besides the normal office hours, he worked nights and weekends to complete the myriad of tasks at hand.

Just one of the many facets of JPI's mission of education was the newsletter. Hugh was a gifted writer and editor, and we were fortunate to have his literary contributions for *Applied Biodynamics*. The "how to" articles were very important to him, not only to document making the biodynamic preparations, but also to help those who could not attend prep-making seminars learn without leaving their farm or garden. Hugh emphasized to the readers

the important use and application of all nine biodynamic preparations.

I hope we can live up to all that you have taught us,



Natalie Brinkley lived at JPI in 2006 and 2007. While there, she taught biodynamic methods to local food and wine growers and to students involved with the Future Farmers of America. She also provided produce from the farm to local restaurants. She went on to educate co-workers and visitors at Grgich Hills Estate, a winery growing biodynamic grapes in Napa Valley, California. Years later, Natalie received two Waldorf teacher training certificates (one in Curative Education) and has continued to incorporate biodynamic ways of celebrating life, working with a spectrum of Waldorfschools. Natalie continued to work with Hugh in the Education Group and the Conference Planning Committee of the Fellowship of the Preparation Makers for many years. She also was involved with making biodynamic preparations and hosting educational workshops in various counties surrounding Napa Valley. She and her then husband

Hugh, and carry on your mission to apply biodynamic preparations as a healing practice to benefit the earth.

once joked with Hugh about having “biodynamic babies”—both of their boys were born while living on biodynamic vineyards. Many seeds for the future were broadcast during her time with Hugh at JPI.

Synergy and Syzygy: A Livication to Hugh Courtney
Virginia clay and plans for apples.

The color of Son awakening stirred into a vortex.

And a two-story trailer.

Conversations with elementals.

Courage ushered in on the mane of a white Appaloosa.

And a cattle Guard.

Cotyledons growing in trios.

The euphonious symphony of filling horns.

And a “Very good.”

Your bright blue coveralls.

Healing carried on, and when we needed it the most.

And if you can bring yourself...

A drop of light.

Larry Mabe, JPI’s own preparation maker, has been making preps for JPI for almost twenty years. He first learned about biodynamics and the importance of the preparations when he came to JPI in February 2001. He made the preps under Hugh’s guidance until May 2013 when he moved with JPI to our own farm in Floyd, VA. Larry continues to make preps following Hugh’s high standards. In preparing the intestines for stuffing Larry demonstrates impressive skill. He is known as the “sausage master.” If you have ever seen him trim excess fat from intestines with the precision of a surgeon, you will know why he lives up to that name. Larry says it is “all in the technique” and advises us to “practice with clear intention.” What follows is a brief interview in which he recalls some of his experiences with Hugh and then taking what he learned a step or two further, as Hugh would have wanted him to do.

When the non-profit Pfeiffer Foundation transferred the proprietary formula and rights of the biodynamic Pfeiffer Compost Starter and Pfeiffer Field Spray to JPI, Larry became the Pfeiffer technician, in addition to his other farm tasks ranging from field work to mechanic, and from office work packing orders to prep making and spring and fall workshop assistance.

Larry remembers 2001-2008 as the “golden years” at JPI



when the largest number of people either lived, worked, or interned at JPI. The workshops were always full: 30 to 40 students came from the United States and other countries, including Japan, South America, Mexico, Canada, and Europe. Many were new to preparation making, but even experienced practitioners came to learn from Hugh. Hugh and JPI employees gave many workshops off site, and set up prep and book tables at conference and other events. Hugh also gave presentations at ecological conferences up and down the east coast.

Larry describes being taken aback when one of Hugh's early experiments with the sequential spray really did bring rain during a severe drought. After they sprayed the last prep in the sequence, rain fell, but only on the farm and surrounding Woolwine area. They were surprised to hear an announcer on the radio say "someone in Woolwine must have done a rain-dance."

Taking Hugh's work with the preparations a step further, Larry now makes all of the Podolinsky "Prepared 500" with pre-potentized 500 (cow manure that has been stirred for an hour before putting it into cow horns for winter burial). He feels it makes a better, more consistent product. Although the pre-potentized preps only require 20 minutes of stirring, Larry prefers to stir all of the preparations for a full meditative hour.

The "care and attention to detail" Larry learned from Hugh continues to characterize his work with the preparations. Larry stresses that your "state of mind and intention" is important when working with the preps. While he is making or stirring the preps he gets "in the zone" and imagines the benefits of the specific preparation on the Earth: healthy roots, leaves growing, blossoming and fruiting. It becomes a form of meditation for him.

Florence Rewinski worked at JPI from 2005–2009. She worked in the gardens and office, cooked for many of the workshops, and assisted with prep making as well as the workshops. After she left, she returned to teach dandelion and chamomile prep making at the fall workshops through 2011, while also setting up the JPI bookstore tables at the SE Biodynamic Conference at Jeff Poppen's farm for several years after that.

The first time I met Hugh, he told me I needed to get off Long Island, which I eventually did for good, ending up in the Black Mountains of North Carolina. He welcomed me into his family and was like a father to me. My time at JPI developed part of my deeper connection to Mother Earth through the preparation work. I will always hold Hugh in my heart with gratitude for his work with the preps. He changed my life direction.



2013–2020 Earth Legacy Agriculture Workshops

Hugh of course never retired and continued workshops on his farm in Woolwine. Among many others, the most recent crop of "Hugh's Children" include Rand Carter, Troy Teets, Amy Hamilton, Holly Whitesides, Amy Ray, Ines Kinchen, and Stewart Lundy.

Holly Whitesides and her husband Andy own and operate Against the Grain, a 35-acre diversified biodynamic and organic certified farm in western North Carolina. They grow produce and humanely raised meats for their 95-member CSA, sell at a weekly farmers market, contribute to a food hub, and supply several local restaurants.

My husband, Andy Bryant, visited Hugh Courtney's farm in 2013 for a horn stuffing/500 workshop and returned from the visit with inspiration, perspective, and a deep sense of knowing that biodynamics was the path for our farming practice. We had been introduced to biodynamics previously, but Andy's time with Hugh really crystalized our resolve to study and engage with biodynamics in a deeper way. Through the years, both Andy and I traveled to study with Hugh at Earth Legacy. We explored not only the preparations but also pest and weed peppers, and gained a foundational understanding of the practice of biodynamics.

Earth Legacy was also the primary source of many of our compost preparations. Of course, we see our compost as the foundation, and really the heart, of our farming practices, and before we began making our own, we wanted to make sure we were sourcing off-farm preparations from a reliable and authentic source. We trusted Hugh's knowledge and depth of study and felt a resonance with a man who dedicated his life to biodynamics and the preparations. As our practice continued to grow, we relied on Hugh for advice and consultation as we started making more of the preparations

Stewart Lundy is co-owner with Natalie McGill of Perennial Roots Farm, where they grow heirloom produce, fruit, eggs, and meats, and make value-added products for their CSA. They make biodynamic preparations on their 50-acre farm and orchard, and incorporate permaculture agriculture with biodynamic practices. Stewart gives workshops, consults, and researches esoterica. Having an affinity for German literature that he has been translating led him to also translate Steiner's Agriculture Course recently of which Hugh Courtney had planned to write the forward.

I always returned to Hugh Courtney perhaps not so much to learn about biodynamics as to practice it. I'm a full time farmer. It's not easy to get away, but every year I made the sojourn to Hugh Courtney's place to participate in making preparations. At home we make various herbal remedies and I dabble in alchemy. Hugh's wife, Liz, once asked me bluntly, "Is there really anything you have to learn here anymore?" I could only reply, "I wouldn't still be coming if there wasn't." It's 2020 now, and I won't be returning to any other practicum headed up by Hugh, at least in this life.

Though clearly saturated in theoretical Anthroposophy, Hugh was also intensely focused on doing the work and not just talking about it. If I gathered nothing else from Hugh it was this: theoretical generalizations should always be secondary to practical experience. When I'd pose a hypothetical to Hugh, he would invariably say, "I don't know. Let me know what you find out!" While frustrating to any neophyte, his constant deflection always turned my considerations back to what actually works. Big ideas and floral language mean nothing if they can't be implemented. While an academic can live in a bubble of words without seeing the consequences of his or her errors, a farmer has to eat the fruit of his ideas. On a farm, the feedback loop between an idea and its consequences is so intimate that the imagination of the farmer quickly becomes trained to be precise and even cautious. The most significant change that making biodynamic preparations with Hugh Courtney brought was

on our own farm. He was always willing to answer questions and share his experience.

He is missed deeply, not only as a practitioner but also as a teacher. His passing is a call to all of us who have been inspired by him to share our knowledge, no matter how small we think it might be, with other farmers and gardeners. His gifts to the biodynamic community are many and, for those of us who have been blessed with these gifts, we can show our appreciation by sharing them with anyone who is interested.

not the improvement to the soil on the farm (though it did that), but rather the transformation of my own imagination. When you stuff chamomile into intestines or manure into horns, the strange newness is able to bypass the critical mind and freely enter the heart where it becomes a kind of muscle memory. By an act of will—doing the work—the imagination itself is directly affected.

By making the biodynamic preparations, new combinations never previously conceived come to the farmer's mind in surprisingly unrelated situations. Even if I never applied the biodynamic preparations to the farm ever again, their effects still persist in me. While most people look for external evidence, the chief benefit of the biodynamic preparations above all others is the inner development of the farmer who crafts them. This is not attainable by abstract thinking about biodynamics, nor even regular applications of the preparations in the garden. The fullest transformation of the agricultural imagination is only attained by making the preparations yourself. You don't even have to understand what you're making in order for them to transform you. This is Hugh's gift to me.



To honor Hugh Courtney and share his knowledge and writings, JPI is compiling a complete set of 86 back issues of *Applied Biodynamics*, which will be made available for sale later in 2021. If you are interested in ordering this set, please email mikebiltonen@jpibio-dynamics.org. You will be notified as soon as the sets become available.

Mike Biltonen and Hazel Archer-Ginsberg met Hugh for the first time at the Fellowship of Preparation Makers gathering at the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute in Wisconsin on

January 30–February 2, 2020. The theme of this year's conference was Silica, BD 501 and 508: Tools to Bring the Cosmic Light Into the Earth.



Mike Biltonen is a biodynamic farmer and orchard consultant in Trumansburg, NY. He is JPI's newest board member and a writer for Applied Biodynamics.

What is Biodynamics? was the first book I ever read on the topic. Of course, I didn't have a clue who

Hugh Courtney was at the time. Through the years, as I read more deeply and widely on the subject, I kept bumping into this Hugh guy. Eventually, I got to know more about him and his contributions to farming and biodynamics—and I came to deeply appreciate how much he had done for biodynamic farming. I can't even fathom where we'd be without his efforts,

perhaps still in the Dark Ages. Those who have worked and studied with him are now the torchbearers, lighting the way.

This past January I finally had the opportunity to meet Hugh in Wisconsin where we spent some time together discussing his past, preps, peppers, and the general state of the universe. I'll never forget those few wintry days. Every once in a while you run across folks that are so iconic and so important to what they do that you never forget them. Hugh lived up to everything I'd heard about him.

I was supposed to go to Woolwine this past April to spend some time with him and follow up on our conversations. Alas, coronavirus kept it from happening, and now it will never happen. Though Hugh may have crossed the threshold, he will always have a place in everything I do going forward, and also in why I do it.



Hazel Archer-Ginsberg is founder of Reverse Ritual, Understanding Anthroposophy through the Rhythms of the Year. Essayist, lecturer, poet, trans-denominational minister, and Anthroposopher, she is the Festivals Coordinator of the Chicago Rudolf Steiner Branch, The Traveling Speakers Program, and the Central Regional Council of the Anthroposophical Society.

Hugh Courtney was in the room where the quality comparison samples of horn silica (501) from across the county were laid out. We were to go in during the breaks at the Fellowship of Preparation Makers Gathering at Michael Fields in February 2020. The theme was “BD 501 and 508: Tools to Bring the Cosmic Light Into the Earth,” and I was asked to bring a Candlemas Festival to ignite the weekend.

As a city girl I had only worked with the preps at the Zinniker Farm through the years, so I was excited to learn more about them, especially since I am part of the Elderberries Biodynamic Outpost and 3-fold Cultural Hub in Chicago.

When I came in, Hugh didn't even look up. We both walked around the table, taking note of our impressions of the various prep samples. After a while Hugh made a kind of grunt, and I came over to where he was. I made a comment about how that one in particular had the quality of being

touched by the Salamanders. He looked up at me for the first time, grunted again, staring into my eyes for a bit before he said, “Oh, so you see it too.” He asked me what I thought about another sample. I sat with it for a spell and then replied, “Well this one is very different; it almost seems like the opposite, very watery.”

This got me a smile. The ice was broken. We sat down together, and Hugh shared with enthusiasm some of his many experiences working with the elemental beings.

I will never forget this one encounter with Hugh Courtney. This brief hour of true connection has given me the key to continue our communication as the fruit of his labor expands on into the spiritual world, and rains down on all of us who are willing to continue his life's work of spiritualizing the Earth.



501 (horn silica) ready to be buried for the summer

Amy Hamilton runs Appalachian Seeds Farm & Nursery in Leicester, N.C., where she grows organically certified and biodynamically grown vegetables, perennials, and medicinal seeds and plants.

Hugh Courtney's book *What is Biodynamics* opened up the door to biodynamics for me not only through imparting understanding of Steiner's Agriculture course but by making the preparations available to me while studying with Hugh to learn to make them. Hugh is a cherished mentor and elder who assumed great responsibility for the work of biodynamics. It will take many of us picking up pieces of the work he held to continue offering what he did.

Prayer for Hugh by Amy Hamilton

Blessed be your hands
Which lovingly prepared
These offerings we now give
So that the Earth may be healed.
Across the void we open our
Hearts, our ears, our eyes to you;
That our love may be carried to you,
That you may feel it, and hear it, and see it.
The love that connected us
On the physical plane
Persists and remains through the physical parting
That is Death.
Your offerings and sacrifices
Were not made in vain.
We honor you.
We ask that you continue
To work with us, through us,
In our mutual tasks
Here on Earth.

JPI's Newest Board Member: Mike Biltonen Clay Wesson

I feel honored to welcome Mike Biltonen to JPI's Board of Directors. He joined us in early 2020, bringing his more than 35 years of practical farming experience, specifically around sustainable orcharding and transitioning land from conventional management practices toward a healthier biodynamic future. He strengthened his knowledge of the Eastern United States first with an undergraduate degree in horticulture from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. He continued his education in upstate New York, completing his master's degree in fruit and vegetable science from Cornell University. He currently lives with his wife in the Finger Lakes regions of New York where they operate their business, Know Your Roots.

Although Mike brings years of education and experience to JPI, we especially appreciate that he is a passionate lifetime student of holistic farming. His work and interests strongly support the mission of the Josephine Porter Institute. Also if Mike's name sounds familiar, he has also served as a writer and editor for *Applied Biodynamics* since 2016. Welcome Mike!

Reminders

- For timely delivery, order Three Kings preps by December 12.
- Associative Contracts are due by or before March 31, 2021, to qualify for a discount. A free PDF of *Applied Biodynamics* is now included when you sign up for an Associative Contract (<https://jpibiodynamics.org/collections/applied-biodynamics>) For more information and to access the contract, go to: www.jpibiodynamics.org/associative-contracts/.
- JPI will be closed for Thanksgiving and the following Friday (November 26–27). Christmas Eve, we close at 1:00 P.M., then are closed on Christmas day through January 4.
- *Stella Natura* 2021 and the *Maria Thun North American Planting Calendar* 2021 are now available. Please see the JPI website for complete information and to place your order.
- Annual subscription for *Applied Biodynamics* is \$30.00 (Print) or \$20.00 (PDF).
- JPI farm and bookstore remain closed to the public until at least spring 2021 due to coronavirus concerns. Also cancelled are all farm workshops until the farm reopens. If you would like to place an order, please visit us at www.jpibiodynamics.org or call (540)745-7030. If you would like to be notified when we are planning to reopen or about other JPI news, please email to mikebiltonen@jpibiodynamics.org.



Online Biodynamic Conference **SEEDING *the* SPIRIT of STEWARDSHIP**

Climate, Agriculture, & Community

November 12-15, 2020

We are pleased to announce that the Biodynamic Association will be hosting an online gathering from November 12–15, 2020, which will incorporate some of the elements of the in-person North American Biodynamic Conferences so many have come to love, and some new elements that are only possible when we are each still at home, wherever we live, when we gather. While the full, place-based experience of our past and future conferences cannot be replicated virtually, we are excited about the opportunities possible in gathering in a different way this year.

This November, look forward to inspiring keynote speakers, interactive small-group conversations, three-day themed workshops, virtual exhibits, and updates and opportunities to engage with the unification of the Biodynamic Association and Demeter USA toward the formation of the new Biodynamic Demeter Association. You can look forward to engaging with the land where you live and connecting with fellow biodynamic community members in your local region before, during, and after our online gathering.

Explore a topic more deeply during your choice of a three-day themed workshop. We have set aside two time slots in the schedule so that you can choose which best fits your needs. As of press time, choices included:

- “Biodynamics, Climate Change, and Conscious Inner Development” with Sarah Hearn, Seth Jordan, Seamus Maynard, Anthony Mecca, and Meaghan Witri
- “Cultural Shift 2050” with Joseluis Ortiz, Dr. Gabriela Pereyra, Tom Spaulding, and Sarah Weber
- “Introducción a los Preparados y Prácticas de Biodinámica” con Daniela Escudero y Dulce Morales
- “Seed, Soul, Soil: Courage in the Time of The Anthropocene” with Claudia J. Ford
- “Social Permaculture and Healing Justice for Biodynamic Practitioners” with Adam Brock, Asia Dorsey, and Stephanie Syson
- “The Spiritual Foundation of Biodynamics” with Alex Tuchman

- “Free the People, Free the Land: Envisioning Collectively Healed Futures” with Stephanie Morningstar and Caca Yvaire

Visit biodynamics.com/conference/2020 to find updated information about keynote speakers, workshops, sponsors, registration, and scholarships.

This year, our gathering will initiate the theme of *Seeding the Spirit of Stewardship: Climate, Agriculture, and Community*, which we will continue to carry together until we gather in person again in November 2021 in Westminster, Colorado. Earlier this year, our conference advisory committee had discussed the idea of a two-year theme, and the current circumstances of an online conference leading up to an in-person conference seem ripe for the longer and deeper exploration of the theme. We look forward to gathering with you this fall across distance!

Biodynamic Preparations Legend

BD 500—Horn Manure

BD 501—Horn Silica

COMPOST PREPARATIONS

BD 502—Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)

BD 503—German Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

BD 504—Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*)

BD 505—Oak Bark (*Quercus alba*)

BD 506—Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

BD 507—Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*)

BD 508—Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Ongoing Activities

Biodynamic Association Courses and Webinar Series

For a small fee, the Biodynamic Association offers ongoing webinars on pertinent topics. <https://www.biodynamics.com/webinars>

Chesapeake Biodynamic Network (CBDN), College Park, MD

Meetings, networking, Agriculture Course study and biodynamic workshops held monthly in College Park, MD. Contact Michael Judge for the schedule at mjudge2000@gmail.com.

The Pfeiffer Center, Chestnut Ridge, New York

Workshops and trainings. www.pfeiffercenter.org

Spikenard Farm Honeybee Sanctuary, Floyd, VA

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

White Rose Farm, Taneytown, Maryland

Educational food and farm events, festivals, celebrations and biodynamic farm days. www.whiterosefarm.com.

Online Resources:

Rudolf Steiner Archive

Lectures and books; donation requested. www.rsarchive.org/

Rudolf Steiner Audio

Audio version of lectures and books. Donation requested. www.rudolfsteineraudio.com

Bio-Dynamics Journal (1941–2007): Soil & Health Library

Articles by E.E. Pfeiffer, Sir Albert Howard, Albrecht papers and others. One time donation of 10 Euros. www.soilandhealth.org

<https://earthhavenlearning.ca/seed-regeneration.php>.

Download twenty years of research on seed regeneration by Georg Schmidt for free.



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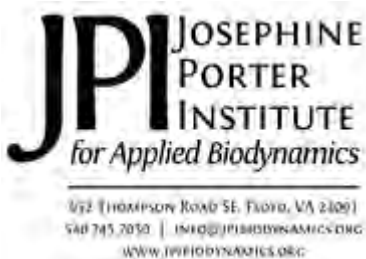
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*Seek the truly practical material life
But seek it so that it does not numb you to the spirit.
Seek the spirit but seek it, not in passion for the super-sensible,
But seek it because you wish to apply it selflessly in the practical world.*

*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.*

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