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News from the Farm
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Crossing the Threshold—Jack McAndrew

From the Editor

A recent trip to one of the grocery stores popular during my childhood jarred loose early food memories. People speak of food deserts—stores selling food with enough chemical additives to survive years on their shelves but without offering any fresh, nutritious alternatives. Only learning about the lengthy journey food makes from farm to distant tables have I realized that these childhood grocery stores of mine were food deserts too, though not labeled that then.

As an immigrant, my father wanted to position himself in the suburbs where his life might look like everyone else's. So, a Saturday trip for groceries meant that we unpacked bags of canned ravioli, boxes of corn flakes, and trays of frozen dinners. As a child, I thought these foods, also in my friends' kitchens, meant that my dad took good care of his family. Of course, I didn't spend many moments contemplating the real food he grew in our back yard garden. I sweated there in summer heat to harvest and freeze what we grew. It embarrassed me, since none of my other friends had gardens. Also, that food held none of the enchantment of the cornflake boxes with their hidden toy packets inside. Only upon reflection did I realize that if our food had come only from the stores we now label food deserts, our family would have been poorly nourished. I may have felt shame because my grandmother harvested dandelions from our

yard for dinner. But thank goodness she did. They had more nutrition than those cornflakes ever could.

I wonder now when I see these brands being sold, why they are still with us. Why hasn't General Mills vanished into the annals of history? What about Kelloggs? Betty Crocker? Campbell's? Kraft? Jello? Or any of the other companies that manage to hold on by rebranding their products and reformulating their contents? Unfortunately, we have these and many others in the stores of today, making money off our desire for fast food and our yearning for more leisure time.

But swatches of the human community are shaking themselves awake and asking what else is possible. A few of the articles in this issue are related to that. We know that some new communities are being designed with farmland at the center to supply families. In this issue, an urban community went in search of a biodynamic farm to supply their needs. They found it in Pennsylvania. Spiritual Foods CSA (community supported agriculture) brings in food from this and other biodynamic and organic sources to feed its urban members. Their story is told here. Also the JPI staff share more about what's going on at JPI. And friends of Jack McAndrew memorialize the crossing of this gentle giant first featured in AB 92.

As Steiner taught, each era contributes to the elevation of the next if it accomplishes the task set for it to do. In this, the 5th Post Atlantean Epoch, we have the job of activating the Consciousness Soul. May the contributions of those who have crossed and those who remain continue to contribute to that evolution, generating nutrition for body and soul.

Front cover: Greenhouses transition crops through the seasons at the Kimberton CSA. Photo by Frank Kurylo.

Applied Biodynamics

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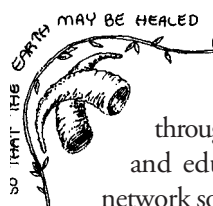
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Mission



The mission of the Josephine Porter Institute for Applied Biodynamics, Inc. is to heal the Earth through Biodynamic preparations, research and education, and to build a dynamic network so our legacy is accessible to all future generations.

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News From the Farm

JPI Staff

JPI spends the dark months of winter in our own sort of deep quiet. We spend far too much time dreaming, hoping, planning, for spring. And then one day becomes perceptibly longer than the one before it. The next is too, and the sun's color is perhaps a tinge warmer. The ice on the Little River begins to shine, melting until finally the silence is broken with a few sharp cracks and the river is revealed as wide awake and moving.

Spring rushes in, blowsy and huffy that we might even doubt her arrival. Chastened, we hurry to work on our plans, our purpose, our dreams, so ephemeral during those earlier days of waiting.

"How many units of BD 500 do we need to pack today? There's a winemaker on the phone that wants to know about this thing 'biodynamics'... Did you see the dandelions opening? Gotta collect 'em first thing in the morning."

All of a sudden we're as wide awake as the Little River, processing the spring rush of orders, gathering flowers and leaves, collecting horns, bladders, and skulls, and hosting our first **IN PERSON** workshop after two pandemic-tinged years. Students here on the farm carefully graft scions to rootstock, gazing at the small bare trees as though they can see their future dripping with apples.

How could we doubt the inevitability of the earth's cycles? The inhale is so deep, the exhale so complete. We could be forgiven for getting lost in the stillness, but once the ice breaks we must shake off that winter fog and look around, lest we be caught unawares by crocus blossoms and greening pastures and scores of songbirds who insist we join the party.

And so we do. In spring we join our community in consultation of the calendar, the almanac, and the cosmos, and we apply preparations to our acreage with reverence. We may have been into 2022 for months, but spring is the true beginning. Farm years start in spring, and so we humbly join the farmers and gardeners we serve in tracking time.

The whole farm season lies ahead, and we will take advantage of it. This year JPI will expand our cultivation of yarrow, valerian, and chamomile. The nettle that grows wild and free in treacherous patches along the north side of the barn will see more frequent pruning as we expand our capacity for BD 504 along with the rest of the preparations. And just beyond those wild plots, we will erect permanent fencing around five acres of pasture, visualizing the herd that will graze there in the future as we work away under the southern Virginia sun.

We look ahead to long days of harvest, of digging, of earthy tasks involving viscera and manure. We know those endless summer days will bring the same sort of miasma we left behind in winter, the sense that the world is still and the seasons unending. Will we pray for cold? Undoubtedly.

But now, in the blessed present, there is nothing but spring. We are hopeful, joyful, and overflowing with potential, just like farmers, like landscapers, like gardeners everywhere, like the earth herself. We look eastward to the ever-earlier rising sun, and we feel the world around us. We pledge ourselves to be good stewards for this farm season and for all those ahead.

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*)

What to Do During the Spring

- Tree Paste - can be applied in late winter before sap flow, but when the temperature is above freezing.
- Valerian (BD 507) - offers protection from late spring frosts.
- Vernal Equinox spray of 500 and 501—application of 500 horn manure at mid or late afternoon.; then the next day apply 501 horn silica "before the dew has dried."
- Calendars - continue to review and study the biodynamic calendar in preparation for the coming year.

Preparations and calendars can be purchased at www.jpibiodynamics.org.

Exploring Spiritual Foods, An Urban CSA

Mary Maruca

When my sister and I were children, our father regularly took us to the Italian market, a raucous, crowded outside jamboree of merchant stalls selling food he loved and that we, as misplaced Italians, still ate at home. Bins of crusty bread. Piles of vegetables. Massive containers of olive oil. Salamis. Cheeses. Fermented foods for antipasti. As children, we could hardly imagine so much plenty in one place. In those days no barcodes identified either the type of bread or the salami we bought to eat with it.

Barcodes have become ubiquitous now, so much so that each apple and lemon I buy are identified that way and individually priced. As a member of a CSA (community supported agriculture) however, I find myself in a different environment. Here, humans, not barcodes, track inventory and offer members vegetables that are fragrant with the earth in which they grew. No wonder I identify so strongly with CSAs, especially CSAs that reach out to urban populations where I find myself unfortunately counted, helping us to have more contact with the land.

In this and many other ways, Spiritual Foods for the New Millennium (SFNM) offers good medicine for soul and body. Based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and operating out of a garage surrounded by massive fig trees (literally), as well as terraces gardened biodynamically, it distributes shares of biodynamic (primarily) and organic foods from

local farmers to CSA members across the urban landscape of metropolitan Washington, D.C. Its customer base is in Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia, where long established drop sites managed by volunteers offer convenient pick-up for fresh fruits, vegetables, breads, and dairy products. And, on occasion, many of these CSA members also get together to give back to the larger community, offering time, perhaps the most precious of all gifts, to fulfill community projects. Most recently, volunteers across the community peeled and cut pumpkins donated from neighborhood porches and a local farm stand, then returned them to the Chevy Chase freezers to provide the homeless with nutritious soup throughout the winter and into early spring.

Although some outlying farms do drop off produce boxes to farm markets and other selected locations in the city, Spiritual Foods founders viewed the process from the consumer perspective. CSAs begin one of two ways: as a farm seeking consumers or as consumers seeking a farm. In this instance, 23 years ago, in 1998, Spiritual Foods took the latter direction and sought out a farm. Previously involved in a local CSA, Victor Landa and his wife, Lakshmi, sought to strengthen the relationships of people to soil, community, and spirit. They found answers in biodynamic agriculture, recognizing the truth of Rudolf Steiner's analysis that a failure of nutrition



Victor Landa (in white) with wife Lakshmi (to his left standing behind a young boy) visit Kimberton farm with CSA members in 2017. This was Victor's last farm visit. Interested CSA members generally are invited to visit the farm once a year. Photo courtesy of SFNM.

leads to an inability of humanity to evolve spiritually. To offer more opportunities for better urban nutrition, they found a farm close enough that its biodynamic food could supply city dwellers.

Initially, the couple began SFNM as an all-volunteer effort, bringing biodynamic food first from the 20-acre Camp Hill farm (Sankanac CSA) in Pennsylvania and then later from the nearby Kimberton site, a 10-acre Demeter certified farm organism that serves its own CSA members as well as those who have SFNM CSA membership. Victor and Lakshmi wanted to offer members good food grown on healthy soil for which they paid farmers an equitable price. They hoped this would provide farmers the sustainable incomes that honored the professionalism and wisdom with which farmers brought food to harvest.

Of course, Kimberton is several hours drive outside of the D.C. area, so in the early days, volunteers drove a van on a rotational basis up to the farm and back. Organizing whose turn it was to make the trip might challenge even the best planner, with or without an Excel spread sheet to rely on, so the community felt grateful to Hanuman, a member since those early days, when he purchased a small truck, sized like a FedEx truck, and began to regularly and reliably make the journey.

Although the CSA has grown and evolved with changing times, Victor Landa's vision of supporting biodynamics, providing good food at fair prices, and building service into the community has remained fundamental. The CSA's 100 to 180 annual members have received the benefit of work from four different farmers, four vehicles, and two trailers. Any and all issues that percolated up during this time seemed to find appropriate solutions.

Packaging shares originated as a volunteer-based, market-style process where individuals showed up at the Chevy



CSA full share with bread and eggs, as well as vegetables. Veggie-only share at bottom of page. Photos courtesy of SFNM.

Chase location to weight out shares or to do the same at other drop sites around the city. Sometimes a share might be a bit short as someone who arrived early accidentally took too much. This resolved itself when the CSA began to package shares in boxes at some locations, then, just before the Covid pandemic began, did the same for all locations. Now CSA boxes arrive at six locations, besides the Chevy Chase site, on a weekly or biweekly cycle, deposited on the porches of the host families, and left for members to collect their share of greens, root vegetables, and other in-season items. Hanuman's truck drops off the fresh food picked in the field the day before but doesn't have to wait for members to sort through and pick up shares.

Another innovation instituted during the last few years is the half-share concept. From the beginning, some members could not use a full share but still wanted to participate. They partnered with a family member, co-worker, neighbor, or friend, or sometimes Spiritual Foods would play match-maker, connecting those who wanted less produce. To make





Farmer John and wife Martha care for their orchard in Florida.

this process easier, the CSA later developed half- or biweekly shares. These arrive every two weeks, giving the smaller household fresh food but not so much of it that they waste any.

Not all farms can grow everything, so to round out the shares, as well as support more farms, the CSA further adapted to include what Lakshmi identifies as supplements. These are additions to the main share that expand what is generally available—fruit for instance. Though berries occasionally may be available from the main farm, as well as melons and cantaloupes, treasures like lemons are not a mid-Atlantic fare. So the CSA has developed relationships with biodynamic and organic farmers who supply staples as well as some unexpected delights harvested throughout the season. At a much anticipated time during the summer season, Florida avocados, lychees, and mangos become available for special order, as well as a desirable addition to the share boxes.

Members consider it a delicious surprise when, in the middle of a hot, dry summer a fantastically sweet mango shows up in a share box, giving sheer joy to the taste buds. During one retreat in the vicinity of the Florida farm that supplies these beauties, Lakshmi and Hanuman report that

they witnessed the 88-year-old farmer who harvests the fruit climbing his ladder to check on the avocados while wearing a protective motorcycle helmet. Apparently, an avocado can just decide it's time to let go, and let go it does, but because some varieties are so large—weighing more than a pound—being hit on the head by an avocado does not guarantee quick recovery, especially if you're poised on a ladder half way between the earth and sky. Members are glad their fruit farmer takes extra precautions!

This year two other special supplements awaited members from the same farmer—the delicious Japanese persimmons that arrive in Fall and, as the last fruit gift of the season, thin skinned, juicy lemons with a Meyer lemon flavor. Lakshmi explains that the farmer treats his trees as lovingly as he might his children, daily hand weeding under them on his knees—no small task at 88—and tracking the right moment when fruit is ready for picking so that the highest level of nutrition is available in the boxes he mails out. Often as fruit shoppers realize, grocery store berries, apples, avocados, and other fruit arrive green, picked before it is ripe and nutrition fully available. Even organic fruits arrive this way. I remember my Italian grandmother literally 'snorting' at some fruit she refused to purchase, saying that in Italy, people wouldn't feed such produce to the pigs because they valued their pigs too much.

To continue to offer highly nutritious foods to their members and also to increase the number of biodynamic farmers the CSA can support, SFNM encourages farmers to contact them if they have food to share. Farmers don't need to supply the CSA every week. Rather, they only need to offer something that might build nutrition for the community at some point during the season. For a while, the CSA brought in potatoes from Tennessee. SFNM still offers dates wild collected in Arizona, which are then stored without drying and thus aren't available year around. Rather they are intended to be savored, remembering that dates were the first form of sweetness for early humans. Indeed, as Hanuman phrased it, they sometimes are consumed with the respect given a sacrament, which, if we ate as consciously as Steiner likely did, we might approach all our food this way.

In addition to the fruit, Spiritual Foods layers in other special items. Dairy and bread are much appreciated since the eggs come from free range Kimberton chickens, and the whole-grain bread is fermented two days before baking, increasing access to greater nutritional value. But the CSA adds grains as well, millet for example and lentils, which some CSA members are familiar with and others aren't. Lakshmi says this additional level requires a lot of planning, not only to acquire the food but also to organize volunteer members to partition it for the shares so that every few weeks a little something extra is provided.

“The dry goods were Victor’s idea,” she explains. “We do this to round out the shares for a wholesome, balanced diet and to strengthen the community element. People like to contribute and this gives members the chance to volunteer in their homes. Basically, they weigh and separate out the grains into one-pound packages. They get to contribute to the CSA, as well as receive from fellow members.”

Through such hands-on work at all levels of farm and community, links are woven forward and backward, in and out, meshing land and people, farmers and consumers, and drawing in the intangible such as the good air and water that also contribute to the quality of the food. Most members of this urban CSA don’t go out to visit the farm but their participation gives them a direct connection.

“Victor liked biodynamics,” Lakshmi adds, “because its intention is for farmers to heal soil and work with the forces of nature. Such energy goes into the food, which is something you don’t get when products are mass produced and make the long journey from across the country or over the border. The energy just isn’t there. The freshness just doesn’t come through.”

She notes that the SFNM web site also mentions regenerative agriculture, something the CSA also supports, a

term that she said came into more frequent use following the Paris Accord in 2015 where small farmers from around the world gathered for their own conference to talk about reversing global warming. “Rudolf Steiner did it first,” she said. “He gave us biodynamic agriculture, which was the regenerative agriculture of his day.”

As consumers become increasingly aware that the problem with food is at least its absence of nutritional content—even if human minds and hearts haven’t progressed far enough to recognize the links between spiritual strength and nutrition—doctors have started to observe that a healthy human microbiome promotes immunity. Some doctors even acknowledge, according to Hanuman, that nutritious food is the best way to build such a biome because the food is the result of healthy soil. “When you harvest cabbage for sauerkraut, the cabbage already contains bacillus from the soil and so the cabbage will ferment itself. You only have to add salt,” he says. “Plus a bunch of Swiss chard has more Vitamin C than oranges. Greens offer the doorway to health that a lot of people are looking for right now.”

One of the most recent innovations for the CSA has been creating a year-round source of food, which includes



Kimberton greenhouses allow room to grow more food during changing seasons. Photo courtesy of Spiritual Foods.

those all-important winter greens. Although it took a few years to convince the farmers that winter shares were a good idea, SFNW finally overcame this hurdle too.

“Winter is their quiet time,” says Lakshmi, “a time of rest, introspection, and planning for the spring season. At the time when Victor first floated the idea, the farmers also didn’t feel they could guarantee produce during the cold months.”

Eventually the farmer at Camp Hill built a large greenhouse in which to grow winter foods and the CSA managed to scrape through. The Kimberton site then began to put in hoop houses and row covers, but when the weather really got rough, the farmers had to cut away the ice and crawl in on their bellies to pick the vegetables. No one liked doing that. Over the last few years, however, Kimberton has increased its greenhouses, completing eleven by 2022. Now since all the greenhouses are warm and tall enough to let the farmers stand up to harvest, the benefits of a winter CSA are clearly visible.

For Lakshmi and Hanuman, it is gratifying to be able to visualize what 20 years of persistence and faith in community have accomplished.

“We have watched families grow up with this CSA. We have seen children raised on this food now in college, and we see them giving back. This past year, on December 26,

we had our winter clothing program for the homeless. Four families showed up with their kids, all of them CSA members. Some of their children now in college came around to help us distribute bags of clothing to the homeless too. So the future is built step by step. When I am on the phone with members, some of them have said to me, ‘This food has changed my life.’ How life affirming! Steiner saw the potential for this. And so did Victor. When we say we waste nothing, we don’t—neither food, nor packaging, nor the good will and connection of our members with the land. It all shows us that we are weaving relationships among people, food, and soil, and what that weaving will be is still evolving beautifully.”

“The Spiritual Food CSA offers an extraordinary opportunity for like-minded people to come together in community to manifest, by acting directly and consciously, the model of a new world on which a new positive collective consciousness will be built.”

—Victor (Vyasa) Landa

For more information on SFNM, visit schooloflife.org and spiritualfoodcsa.org.

Introducing Frank Kurylo, Kimberton Farmer

From a bird’s eye view, Kimberton’s ten Demeter-certified acres look different, depending on the time of day and season of the year. Sometimes before everything gets growing, the rows may appear like whitecaps on the ocean, since tender green shoots are covered under protective hoops and row covers. On other days, as solstice approaches, the farm is roaring with unstoppable growth—numerous varieties of tomatoes warmed by sunlight and ready to be picked for CSA shares; sweet peppers acquiring color; summer squash showing their roundish yellow sides. Then comes fall, when the riot of color surrenders to layers of aged brown manure on the fields, the raw materials coming from the Seven-Stars dairy herd that also defines the landscape. Frank says visitors know something different goes on here because wherever they turn, they see cows.

For now, however, it is the cold end days of winter, when the farm organism—or maybe only the farmers—seem to tremble with excitement about what’s ahead. Any day now as the weather turns toward mid February, they will start sowing seeds. And then the quiet time will be behind them—the time of planning and ordering seeds—and the wave of the year will begin to surge.

“February is like a cannon,” says Frank. “It gets more and more intense with each day. You ride the wave of this time and do your best to maintain a steady response to whatever is going on.”

For Frank, this involves giving himself some personal time first thing in the morning. Mostly, he is up by 4:30 or 5, and claims the first hour of the day for coffee, yoga and/or meditation, and perhaps a little communing with his dog, that is, if new baby Jack doesn’t want to join the party. After that, Frank is ready to check on computer messages and prepare himself to go to the farm. Though this pattern may vary according to the season, he still feels that a well-paced morning routine helps him deal equitably with whatever critical events show up the rest of the day.

This afternoon, the farmers have just finished putting baseboards on their eleventh greenhouse. This season they are growing in ten of them. Their winter array of greens includes spinach, arugula, salad mixes, swiss chard, and a refreshing salad green called claytonia. Some items have already been pulled from the fields to be held in storage to fill out CSA shares—butternut squash, kohlrabi, cabbage, and various radishes.



A drone's bird's-eye-view of the Kimberton CSA as crops start to sprout. Photo courtesy of Frank Kurylo.

Frank reports that the farm also just broke 400 members last year between its own membership and those of Spiritual Foods CSA (SFNM). When you look at these kinds of numbers, that's a lot of food plants to keep up with. Although winter growing remains tricky with its sometimes single digit days, Frank has the extra greenhouses and storage food as backup in case something goes south with the weather. This helps CSA members remain confident they will enjoy a good supply of winter foods.

Back in 2012 when he first came to Kimberton, Frank thought more about environmental law than the appropriate times to spray 500 and 501. During that period, he considered that he might specialize in law, but he could also see that a lot of the environmental law fights ended up being lost, just as did the campaigns run by the environmental candidates he had helped fundraise for. There was something concrete about working the soil that appealed to him, especially since he had always been a highly active outdoorsman. Once he started at Kimberton, he realized it was possible to grow the highest quality of food for neighbors and that the community might even be expanded to cover a larger region if the right people became involved.



Farmer Frank

“I’m very passionate about this,” he explains.

That’s not to say he isn’t also passionate about the Pennsylvania chapter of the young farmers coalition he started in 2013, then later had to step away from due to his work for the farm and his own growing responsibilities. Nevertheless, the chapter went to D.C. with the national coalition just before the vote on the Farm Bill and did manage to draw some funds for worthy projects. “But the farm ends up taking a lot of effort,” Frank acknowledges, “and I need to focus here. I have to hone in on what I really do well.”

And what he does especially well is riding the wave of the farm as it builds toward spring and then summer. Frank calls these the shoulder seasons and transitions. He says there are “days when whatever it was that happened in the past 24 hours is the icing that lets you take a deep satisfying breath in and feel this landscape is worthy of having a moment lavished on it. I make sure I spend after-hours time here on these occasions just soaking it in.”



Beet seedlings going into the ground. Photo courtesy of Frank Kurylo



Tomato season comes early when these lucious fruits of summer are planted in a greenhouse. Photo courtesy of Frank Kurylo.

Crossing the Threshold—Jack McAndrew

Many lions of the 20th century crossed over during the last months of 2021—Desmond Tutu, E.O. Wilson, and others too numerous to name chose those closing days of the year to offer assistance back to us from the other side. Among them were those whom the biodynamic agriculture community considered its own, wise men who applied spiritual science to farming. One of those was Jack McAndrew, the resourceful, dedicated, kind-hearted, true-speaking master of California compost preparation. Born July 10, 1935, he quietly passed from this life on December 22, 2021, at 7:15 a.m. in his home overlooking the Pacific. A long-time student of Rudolf Steiner after his search for a spiritual path brought him to the *Agriculture Course*, Jack was mentored by many and mentored many others from the 1970s to his death during the Christmas advent season. It is interesting that this tender-hearted, introspective man, born to the constellation of Cancer, chose the doorway to the Holy Nights to depart.

In 2017, *Applied Biodynamics* 92 featured a full-length account of Jack's adventurous life, as well as his protocol for making compost. In this, as well as AB issues 91 and 93, readers learned about his thoughts on biodynamic compost, as well as results achieved by farmers he directly mentored. Some of those individuals shared heart-felt gratitude on Facebook as their way of sending Jack on (some of these entries follow). Hazel Archer Ginsberg read a statement from Steiner that I heard simultaneously with learning of Jack's home-going. It was spoken by Steiner on New Year's Eve just before the first Gethenium burned, a lecture later published in English as *Man and the World of the Stars*: "Every year finds new graves. That is true. But equally true is that every year finds new cradles. As this year touches the past, so does it also touch the future." The love given and received by and through Jack McAndrew throughout his life proves the truth of this. Jack touched both past and future and leaves a noble legacy behind.

From Demeter-certified One Gun Ranch, where owner Alice Bamford embraced Jack's wisdom and biodynamic agriculture skills, and where Jack made hundreds of tons of compost annually: Farmer Jack has gone in peace surrounded by love, knowing that he made a difference in this wonderful world. Teaching so many to tend the earth, nourish the soil, make the most magical biodynamic compost, sow seeds with finest intention and grow the most delicious nutritious vegetables on earth. Magical man, wise Irish soul, twinkling eyes, romantic heart, deeply loved, mentor to many, maestro to us at One Gun Ranch. King of Compost. Your legend and work live on. We will forever feel your kind watchful eye



Jack McAndrew shortly before his death.
Photo courtesy of Alice Bamford, One Gun Ranch.

and honor you whenever we have our hands in the soil as you did it until the end. Thank you for all you did and for all you touched. Rest in Paradise, Darling Jack

From Mike Reisbord, Ranch Reiso, whom Jack mentored:

Jack sowed seeds in soil, hearts, and minds. He taught how to make the most nutritious compost to anyone who wanted to learn. He called himself a humble servant of the land. An agricultural therapist [who] crossed over to the other side...in the peace of a rainy early morning. Overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Between the winter solstice and Christmas. With a clear mind, and a large circle of adoring friends and students. I am honored to be included in that circle of love. The next morning I woke to a vivid rainbow outside my bedroom window. In helping to move and distribute Jack's modest belongings, I see what he valued—books of deep concepts on agriculture, [the] human spirit, and health. Pictures of farms, friends, and flowers. And he had seeds too. Farmer Jack planted lots of seeds during his 87 years of a life well lived. He planted seeds in hearts and minds and in some of the best compost made anywhere on earth. Thank you Farmer Jack.

(Check out <https://tinyurl.com/2bmj278v> to view four videos posted by Mike of Jack making his famous compost.)

From Stefan Hagopian, long-time friend and mentee:

For 20 years, Jack, spent a lot of time at our farm, initially teaching us how to make compost, planting grape vines, and

Jack McAndrew, A True Gem

Stefan Hagopian

Jack McAndrew was a true gem as a human being during the 30 years I knew him. He was a multi-faceted man who at some times could be even a study in contrasts—some even would say conflicted.

Before I knew him, he had a very diverse career leading up to his discovery of biodynamic farming and Steiner's teachings. He had traveled the world, joining the Navy (underage) just in time for the Korean War, and then later traveling as a professional photographer on international cruise ships. He also worked many years at race tracks where he learned about gambling, which he carried with him fondly into his future, randomly betting on almost anything for small dollars and playing the stock market for larger dollars.

By contrast he was very exacting in his approach to Steiner's teachings and compost-making specifically. He did plenty of experimenting and was very practical about working with the limited conditions and supplies available in any situation. However, he was loathe to cut corners or compromise in the arena of biodynamic agriculture.

As he was slowing down in his mid-80s, I visited him most often at his home. In this setting I would always have a question or two about something happening on the farm or some principle of biodynamic agriculture unclear to me. His answer to my questions, even if he knew with some certainty, was always the same. He would hand me the planting calendars and/or Steiner's Agriculture lectures. He would direct me to the index first, so that I could find all relevant details pertaining to my question. As much as he knew after all his decades of dedicated study from many great teachers, Jack was both humble and realistic about the volume of knowledge available, and the necessity of working with nature effectively.

Some of his humility manifested in his abundant sense of humor even in the midst of the most serious circumstances. During one of his two heart attacks, both of which required quadruple bypass heart surgery, he was in the St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica. I was visiting at a time when it was unclear whether he would make it out alive. In the ICU, his asthma was acting up; he was very weak; and the prognosis was not good after the surgery. He had machines beeping and tubes inserted all over his body when he opened one eye just barely enough to see that it was me at the foot of the bed. He forced out some words, barely audible, between wheezing gasps for air to supplement the oxygen tubes in his nose. He said: "Do you... (wheeze)... know how... (wheeze)... much this caper is gonna cost?"

You had to really get to know Jack deeply to see that he rarely became very attached to the material outcome of a gamble, win or lose, no matter if a small loss or a massive life-changing loss. He always appreciated and maintained his awareness of the transient nature of material life and money in general. Though he regularly mentioned that he was underpaid for his expertise in compost-making and biodynamic farming in general, he found a way to inform me he was charging the same price at any of the grand properties where he consulted that he always charged. He gave the client 2 choices: Either (1) \$10,000.00 (because that is what the consult was really worth) or (2) free.

When I asked him recently if anyone had ever chosen the \$10,000 option, his answer was flatly "not yet."

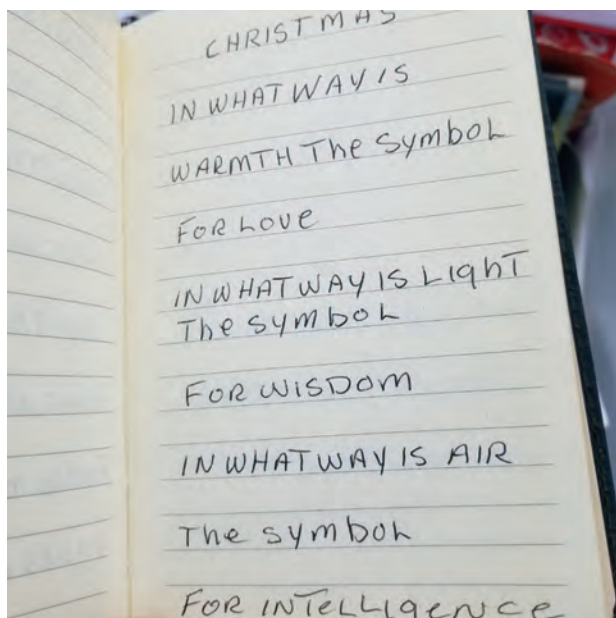
So I disagree with the idea that he was conflicted, because behind every apparent conflict was a carefully chosen principle. Jack was a very spiritual man, and His inspiration helped him to keep those principles above all else.

later helping make wine, as well as offering advice whenever he could. With Jack's guidance, we only farmed that land organically and biodynamically, so years later, when we started making wine, all the produce was really showing the effects of biodynamics, you know, achieving an intact self-fertile and self-regulating ecosystem. . . . When you read old literature, you realize that early farmers and physicians understood the issues of natural health and vitality more easily than we do now, almost as if by instinct. Today, this way of thinking and feeling seems elusive. . . . Jack recalled a quote from Steiner who was asked, "Why do people seem so unmotivated in this regard, or disinterested in spirituality compared to the elders, or people of the past?" Steiner's answer to that question was "It is the food!"

(Read more about Jack and Stefan in AB 92 from which this excerpt is taken and also in the longer memory Stefan has shared.)

From Steven Wynbrant, also mentored by Jack, whose own product reads "Wynbrandt Farms Biodynamic Compost is a recipe and tradition handed down through a lineage of the world's most dedicated Biodynamic Compost masters that dates back directly to Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Biodynamic agriculture."

Jack and I share such a profound love of the high art of compost making—the idea, the alchemy, the magic, the action, the results, and how it heals and elevates the vitality of the liv-



Thoughts from Jack, found in his home at his death

ing skin of the earth, and thus, of humanity. We are endlessly fascinated, enchanted, and amazed. Making compost infuses our lives with the sacred, the timeless, The Divine, a purpose greater than ourselves, and relevance in the continuum of humanity as humble guests inhabiting the earth. Our body dies but our spirit is eternal. In the decomposition of our flesh and bones—in our death—there is life. Our composting bodies nourish the living skin of the earth—who we are, where we are from, what we are made of, and where we return to.

Humus (and *humus compost—what Jack taught me to make) is the smallest, most broken down particles that organic matter becomes—fully decomposed. Jack talked about it as a state of aliveness. Humus. Human. Humility. When we return to the soil, we return to ourselves—we return to who we truly are. And when we return to who we truly are, we are humble.

Jack, you are in each and every compost pile I will ever make. You are in the “sea of greens” that I plant in my garden, in the gardens I plant with children, and in all gardens I plant everywhere. You are in the garden beds that I eat from that sustain me. You are with me on my journey, and your influence is passed on to all who I teach and all who I impact.

Yehi zichra baruch -Your memory is for a blessing.

(Read more at <https://www.wynbrandtfarms.com/blog/jackmcandrew>.)

Willi Sucher’s work interested Jack profoundly, particularly Sucher’s lifelong inquiry into Steiner’s observation that the configurations of the heavens at the time of a person’s passing could be studied to understand that person’s future

existence. Sucher observed: “This picture struck home like lightning. Here arose a perspective which no longer depicted the human being as a helpless object of the rhythms and movements of the stars. It was the soul of man which meant something to the stars; they were even waiting for that which he had to bring them as the fruits of his earth-experiences.” Certainly, those who loved the mischievous elfin twinkle in Jack McAndrew’s eyes and his whole-hearted smile look ahead with gratitude and joy to what he will be offering us now from the other side and to the gifts he also brings to the stars. Blessings to you, Jack McAndrew. May all our love sustain you as you journey.

“The most important part of the process is reverence for the smallest entity”— Jack McAndrew

The human being is only able to overcome the fear of death and to face death courageously if he knows that an immortal everlasting core is in his inside for which death is only a change of the way of life. As soon as the human being finds the immortal core in himself with the help of occult science, he educates himself more and more for overcoming all such feelings, last also the fear of death.

—Rudolf Steiner

<https://wn.rsarchive.org/.../eLib2015/19071212p01.html>



Jack grew salad greens in pots filled with compost on his porch.

What's Happening With the Fellowship Conference?

It is with a heavy heart—and no small sense of relief—that the Fellowship Planning Committee recently announced its decision to postpone the 2022 Fellowship conference until February 2023. We agreed to keep our focus on holding it in Ithaca, NY, and at the same general time of the year (actual date to be determined) with the same theme (Chamomile and Dandelion), and a base assumption that everyone can still participate.

This decision did not come easy as a lot of planning already had been done. This decision was not ideologically, politically, or even scientifically based. Rather, it was a practical, pragmatic decision in the face of uncertain risks at many levels, including financial risks.

We hope everyone understands and hangs in there as we push this off yet another year. So, mark your calendars for late Feb 2023. For more information please contact Mike Biltonen at mikebiltonen@jpibiodynamics.org.

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

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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JPI welcomes your contributions of dandelions, chamomile, and yarrow for our preparations. Now is the season to collect dandelions! Your efforts ensure an adequate supply of BD 506. Thank you to all those who have contributed in the past. Dandelion blossoms are best picked in the morning on the first day that they open when they have a tight center of unopened petals. See <https://tinyurl.com/2s3jdmmr> for more information on picking and drying.



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“[The peasant] meditates in the long winter nights! He does indeed acquire a kind of method—a method of spiritual perception. Only he cannot express it. It suddenly emerges in him. We go through the fields, and all of a sudden the knowledge is there in us. We know it absolutely. Afterwards we put it to the test and find it confirmed. I, in my youth, at least, when I lived among the peasant folk, could witness this again and again.”

Rudolf Steiner, *Agriculture Course*, (Adams trans.), pg. 51–52

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