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GVOCSA News

On the way to your stomach something happens to your soul.

January 2004



Notes from the Farm

By Elizabeth Henderson

No doubt about it, this 15th year of CSA was our best season ever! We produced and distributed more food to you than ever before, and had some left over to sell to stores.

Your shares were bigger than usual. For example, instead of a pound of beans a week and a pound of onions every other week, we were able to provide 1 1/2 pounds of beans and 2 pounds of onions. We aim for 6 weeks of broccoli, but there was enough for close to 8 weeks, and when we discovered we could not sell cases to Wegman's because we are not in their new computer system, members purchased much of the extra broccoli.

Members also ordered close to \$3000 worth of squirrel bulk. Throughout the fall, we have also made regular deliveries of broccoli, carrots and onions to Abundance where we have developed a good working relationship with Melody, the capable new produce manager. We have donated many bushels of slightly defective, but still edible peppers, onions and potatoes to Food Not Bombs.

Seeing how much food was coming, in August we invited the 9

people on the waiting list to join, so we ended the season with 263 shares, 20 more than last year. For the first time, our gross sales surpassed \$100,000. Small wonder that in the fall we felt like we were harvesting all the time.

Core Team Openings

The following positions are open on the CSA Core Team:

- Distribution Coordinator
- Scheduler (for farm work)
- Newsletter Content editor and mailing/folding person
- Social Coordinator
- Co-Treasurer
- Outreach person to work with Lila Bluestone

If any of these positions interest you, contact Liz or anyone on the Core Team for more information.



We saved more of our own seed this year. With enthusiastic help from Nathan Klassen, we saved many pounds of bok choy and komatsuna, enough to supply all of upstate New York. In rat proof storage, we have stashed away cilantro, dragon tongue beans, butterbeans (edamame), Mayflower peas, several flowers, and 100 pounds of our own potatoes. The researchers on the pepper breeding

Member Action Items!

❑ *Have you paid your \$50 deposit for the 2004 season? After January 1st, GVOCSA membership is on a first come first serve basis. If you want to be guaranteed a spot, act now before general sign-up in March. Mail Judy Emerson your \$50 deposit, or call her if you have any questions.*

*Judy Emerson
130 Monroe Parkway
Rochester, NY 14618
716-461-5378*

❑ *Mark your calendar for the general sign-up meeting Saturday, March 27th from 2-4PM, and Wednesday, April 14th, from 7-9PM*

❑ *Order plants for your garden using the order form. The Farm grows your plants with untreated seed, in our compost-based soil.*

❑ *Why not consider joining the Core Team (see notice inside for details)?*

project, funded by the Organic Farm Research Foundation, collected 10 variants of the open-pollinated sweet pepper we grew for them to plant in a greenhouse this



winter where they will expose the peppers to cucumber mosaic virus. They will select the best survivors and we will grow out some of the seed next season. In a few years, we will have a stable, disease resistant open pollinated early sweet pepper that tastes good too.

While we would love to claim that this success was entirely due to our brilliant farming skills, we are more inclined to give credit to the weather. The truth probably lies somewhere in between. After 5 years, we have a better understanding of the ground at Peacework, and the soils have benefited from 5 years of covercropping and compost. Greg, Ammie and I are working better as a team. Having two bright and highly motivated interns who stayed with us from March through November also made a big difference. And member participation in farm work was exceptionally high in quality. Knock on wood; we also had no accidents or emergencies. Blessed with adequate rains, we come out with a formula for excellent production. Will we be able to replicate this next year? Only time will tell...

The 2003 summer season lasted into early October. The usual mid-

September frost held off till October 3, by which time we were glad to stop picking tomatoes. Although we had some warm and sunny fall days, overall, it was a very

wet season, so wet that we were not able to spade in crop residues on some of the beds or to spread compost or manure. On some beds, we left the residues and spread rye seed on top of them so as not to leave them without a cover crop. The rye sprouted and is growing right through the abandoned carrot tops and lettuce leaves. We also left in the ground half a bed of carrots and the streamside ends of two potato beds because of standing water and gooey soils. We did not want to take a tractor over those beds for fear of compacting the soil and bogging the tractor down over its axle in the mud. While hurricane Isabel missed us in September, two violent windstorms nearly swept us away. On November 13, we had to hold on tight to the tat soi to keep it from turning into flying saucers. Members braved wind gusts up to 79 miles an hour with us on that day! Joanna Kaiser and Martin Siegrist valiantly washed potatoes as the winds whipped against them. But despite the rains and some snow, we completed our usual clean up jobs in a timely fashion. Greg hauled many loads of horse manure from the horse farm up the road. All the irrigation tapes, hoops, row cover, harvest boxes, sinks and work benches are safely stored inside for the winter. Well-aged

compost fills the barrels in the green house for use in potting soil in the spring. The water system is turned off and drained so that it will not freeze.

Children and the farm

The change in children's days for this season seems to have gone well. We eliminated the children's days in May, October and November since few parents ever brought children then, and added a second Thursday and Sunday in both July and August. Lots of children came and participated in Roland Micklem's wonderful nature walks. We plan to continue work on our play area for small children right in front of the

GVOCSA Vision Statement

We envision the creation of a land-based community of people of diverse ages, backgrounds and incomes, farmers and non-farmers, who are committed to love, justice, equality, democracy and cooperation, and honor the intrinsic value of nature and food, and the dignity of labor.

The members of this community will work gently together to learn and teach others to live sustainably, in the broadest sense, for the health of all living creatures and the planet. We will practice an agriculture that supports a whole, healthy, sustainable and loving community.

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wash up area where parents can keep an eye on little ones while doing productive farm work. In the spring, we intend to schedule a special workday to move the sand box and put up a swing set.

Ideas for next year

For the coming year, we have more improvements in mind. We would like to clear away the remaining rubble from the section of the barn that collapsed in 1998, and build out the graveled area behind the packing shed a bit farther. Inside the big barn, we would like to remove the old dairy stanchions, which take up a lot of space that we could use for crop storage. Then we will purchase a forklift attachment for the tractor and more 20-bushel boxes so that we can dump potatoes directly into these storage bins and drive them into the barn or out to the wash area. That will reduce a lot of heavy lifting and save our backs. We would also like to purchase another hoop house in which we will grow tomatoes to extend the season and, hopefully, reduce losses to early blight. To ensure an adequate supply of irrigation water for the barn, we would like to dig another well, like the one in the Fairville Field. Any dowsers out there? With the help of Tom Ruscitti, we will be investigating changing over to solar pumps for the irrigation water. At Abundance, we will have a different space for CSA pick-ups. With Dave Fergusson and his daughter Emiko, who returned from hiking the Appalachian Trail just in time to help, Greg moved the cooler from the right side of the Abundance warehouse to the left side.

Interns staying in Rochester

There is good news for the Rochester area about our interns: both Katie and Chris will be staying around. Katie has taken the job of farm manager for GRUB. She replaces Aura LaBarre, and will be growing vegetables at the

“Vineyard” on Sanders St. between Clifford and Bay, and at two other garden lots. I will continue as organic crop adviser to GRUB and am delighted to continue working with Katie. Chris will be house sitting on Mulberry St. and, I am sure, will find other activities, political, cultural and money earning while he seeks another farm position for next season. Meanwhile, the farm has a couple of excellent candidates for 2004.

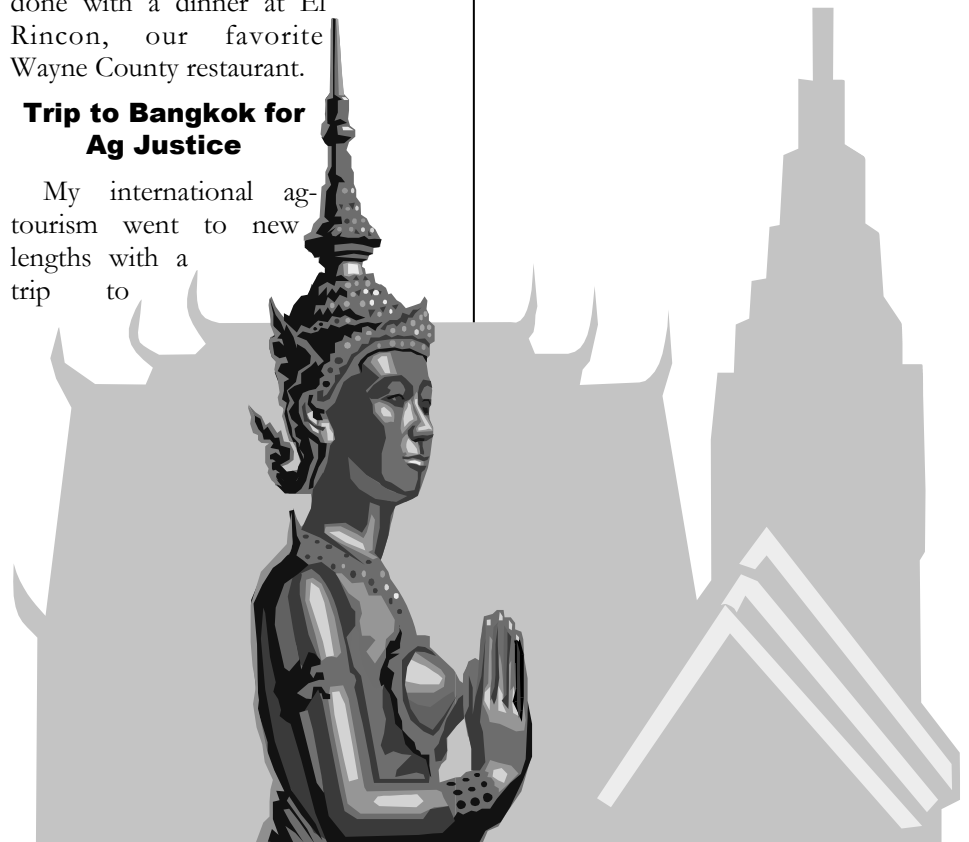
Re-Roofing is done

The Persistent-Homesteader-of-the-Year award goes to Ammie, Greg and Helen for completing the reroofing of their house! An old farmhouse with multiple roof sections added over the years by amateur carpenters, its rotting boards and leaky flashing made the job particularly challenging. They plugged away at the job through August, September, October, and November, struggling to keep tarps on the unprotected sections of roof during the big windstorms. On Sunday, December 16, we celebrated the end of a job well done with a dinner at El Rincon, our favorite Wayne County restaurant.

Trip to Bangkok for Ag Justice

My international ag-tourism went to new lengths with a trip to

Bangkok in early November. As one of the conveners of the Agricultural Justice Project, I helped host a 3-day meeting on social justice in organic and sustainable agriculture for 32 people from 19 countries. Participants shared their experience in working for organic production and fair trade in Africa, Asia, Mexico, Eastern and Western Europe, Australia and the US. We planned next steps towards combining fair trade with organic certification, and strengthening the commitment to social standards in organic agriculture worldwide. To inspire our discussions, we visited a rice growers group organized by our hosts, the Green Net Cooperative, which markets fair-traded, organic products from Thailand. I also managed to squeeze in a little time to see the city of Bangkok with its remarkable Buddhist temples and the Grand Palace of the Kingdom of Siam. I will be writing an article for the NOFA-NY newsletter on my trip which I will also place on the GVOCSA website with some of my photos.



NOP and Organic Chickens Issue

The National Organic Program (NOP) continues to threaten organic integrity by blurring of the lines between accreditor and

that by next season the NOP will accept the NOSB's compost task force definition and we will be free to stop calling our compost "seedy rom" (rotted organic matter).



certifier, and failing to honor recommendations of its citizen advisory committee, the National Organic Standards Board. For example, a certifier in Massachusetts (MICI) refused to certify a chicken farm (the Country Hen) for failure to allow its chickens access to the outdoors. The NOP ordered MICI to grant certification or lose its accreditation. MICI appealed, but an administrative court judge turned down the appeal. Certifiers, the judge said, do not have the right to appeal NOP decisions. MICI will appeal this decision at the next level, a judicial officer. When that fails, we will be asking all of you to write letters to Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman demanding that organic chickens get to live natural lives out scratching in the dirt. The composted horse manure that we used this year did not meet the NOP definition for compost. NOFA-NY LLC, our certifier, blinked at this "infraction", hoping



Our fifteenth year of Community Supported Agriculture ends on a high note. Despite the depressing news from the outside world, this has been a very good year for us at Peacework, and, we hope, for you, our dear friends and members. There is so much for us to be grateful for - your continuing support, the bounty of this land, our warm and nourishing community. We wish you joy, love and, especially, peace in the New Year, and look forward to our 16th season with you next spring!



CSA Farm Work

By Elizabeth Henderson

A few long time members have mentioned to me that they were seriously considering not continuing or dropping out of the CSA because

they were "too old." This is especially upsetting to me since I know them to be not much older than I am. Like other aging farmers, I have figured out that older people may not have the strength of younger people, but we can work a lot smarter and use our limited energy to greater effect. There are also many jobs at the farm that do not require either strength or stamina, jobs that are essential and time consuming for us farmers. We are tremendously appreciative of help with such tasks as cleaning and clipping onions and garlic, or preparing garlic seed for planting. These are sit down jobs that one can do while basking in the sun and having a pleasant conversation.

We at the farm are very happy to try to match each CSA member with an appropriate job. No one over 2 or under 90 is too old or too young to make a contribution!



2003 End of Season Survey

By Elizabeth Henderson

The farm and the CSA express our gratitude to the 52 members who took the time to fill out the end of the season survey. The farmers and the Core pay close attention to your comments, criticisms and suggestions for improvement. We are always fine-tuning our systems. Hopefully, any of you who were unhappy did not just slink off in silence!

Orientation

Of the 12 new members, 9 attended the orientation and found it helpful. Typical comments were: "good explanation of responsibilities," "very thorough." Yet, although all the information is repeated in the Member Guide we handed out, a few people missed important details, such as the invitation to picnic at the farm, and the need to transport vegetables

from the farm to Abundance.

Food and Farmwork

The level of satisfaction with food and farm work appears to continue very high. There were a few comments about the price or quantity of food in the partial share. Splitting a full share is definitely a better bargain. For the record, the partial share size is a compromise between the farmers and member demand for a small size share. The farmers would prefer one size: two sizes more than doubles our paperwork and makes picking and packing more complex. As stated on the contract, the farm promised 4 - 5 items a week for the partial share. We make every effort to ensure that everyone gets some of almost every crop, though not always on the same week. What we can include depends in part on weather and in part on the size and energy of the picking crew on harvest mornings. There were a few Thursdays when only half the number expected showed up, and, as a consequence, we picked less than planned and worked past noon. Fortunately, that did not happen very often.

The one crop that drew negatives was the melon crop -- they were not sweet. Sweetness in melons comes from heat. In a cool, moist season like this one, melon flavor limps. There does not seem to be much we can do about that. We plant the melons in beds to which we have added compost. We use black plastic on the melon beds to heat the soil earlier, and we cover the melons with row cover until they flower to coddle them along.

Sign-up

The sign-up system attracted the highest level of dissatisfaction. Several members repeated last year's pleas to have sign-up on line. In response, last winter, our webmaster, Mike Axelrod, inspired one of his students to design an interactive sign up system on our

website as a class project. She completed the design work, and created a prototype. However, due to technical difficulties, this system did not work when the server for our website changed. (Please don't ask me to explain!) Hopefully, our computer wizards will find a way to make this work for 2004. Any new volunteers?

Scheduling

Some members are also less than happy with scheduling, or rather, rescheduling. Finding someone to change workdays with you can be a problem. It would help if more members signed up for the GVOCSA listserv. You can do this through the website - www.gvocsa.org. Posting your request for a trade is a quick way to get a response. The listserv is monitored so it is not a source of excessive emails or spam. Perhaps for next season, we can generate a list of members who are willing to be called on short notice to do substitutions.

Appreciation!

There were many expressions of gratitude to the farmers and the CSA. Here are some quotes:

"Warm welcomes, hard and happy working farmers, great sense of community."

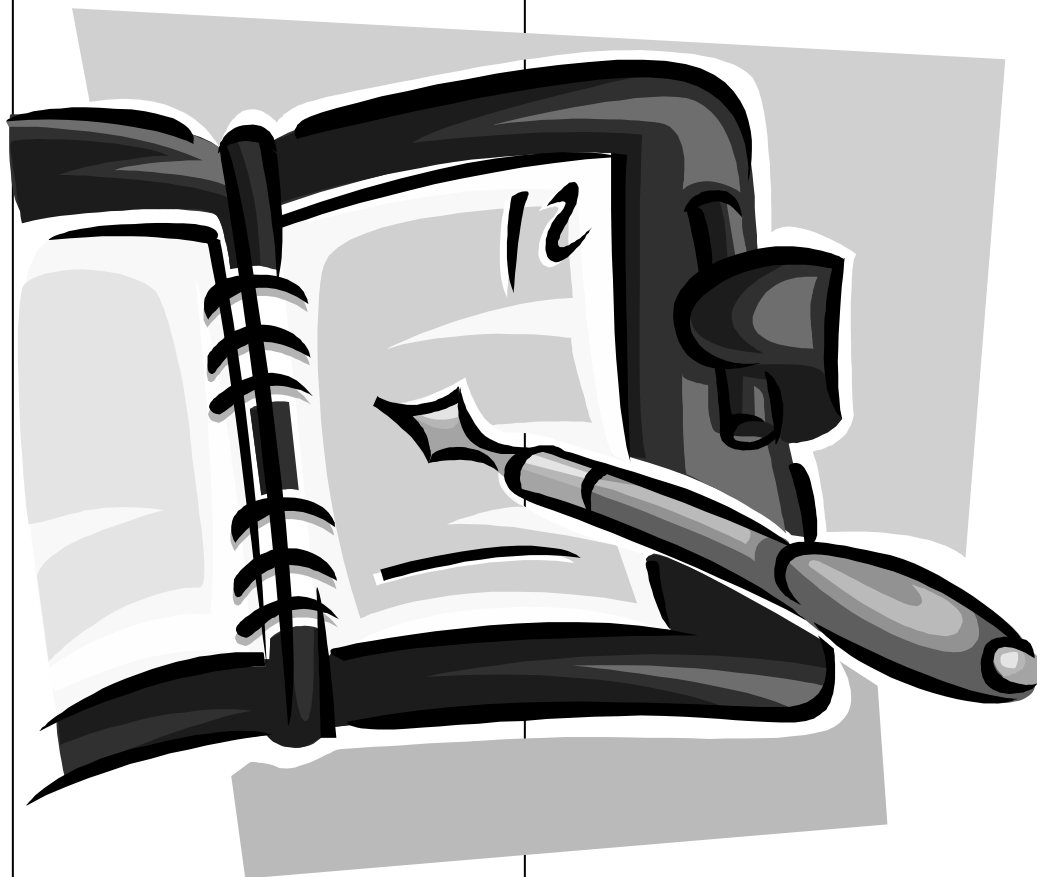
"I am proud to be a member."

"Loved the whole experience and will do it again. Veggies were yummy!"

"Our children love it!"

"I marvel and admire the dedication of the farmers and the core."

"Being in the CSA makes me feel SMART!"



NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK, INC.

22nd ANNUAL ORGANIC FARMING & GARDENING CONFERENCE,
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& PRECONFERENCE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

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Syracuse/Liverpool Holiday Inn

☞ *Three Dynamic Keynote Presentations* ☞

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“Reconnecting Farms & Urban Households in the 21st Century – A Danish Approach” by Danish Organic Farmer Thomas Harttung, running a multi-farm box delivery business in Copenhagen to over 38,000 customers weekly.

“New Scientific Insights on the Consequences of How We Grow Food” by Charles Benbrook, former Executive Director of the National Academy of Sciences' Board on Agriculture.

“Retaking the Genetic Commons – How Gardeners and Farmers Hold the Key to Transforming Agriculture” by Shepherd Ogden, teacher, founder and president of The Cook's Garden seed company until last year, as well as an author of four books.

☞ *Friday, January 30th* ☞

CSA Start-Up & Trouble-Shooting Full Day Workshop

On-Farm & In the Garden Vegetable Breeding and Seed Saving Full Day Workshop

Organic Certification: The Process, Paperwork and Regulations Half Day Workshop

☞ *Saturday & Sunday, Jan. 31 – Feb. 1st* ☞

Starting Saturday morning through Sunday lunch, join us for over 40 workshops on just as many topics.

CSA Convocation and Skills Building (Liz is in this one)

Organic Growing Practices

Dairy Roundtable

Garden (and Farm) Workshops

Research Findings, Implications & Needs

For conference brochure and registration form, visit our website at: www.nofany.org or you can write or call our office at 518-734-5495 to receive your copy by mail.

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P.O. Box 880, Cobleskill, NY 12043

PLANT ORDER FORM

Peacework will grow these plants in our greenhouse using untreated seed and our own compost-based potting soil. We will deliver them to Rochester in the spring approximately 5/20.

PRICES: \$1.50 per single plant (larger plant in 4 in. pot)
 \$2.00 per flat (6 smaller plants to a flat)
 A=annual P=perennial

VARIETY	# OF SINGLE PLANTS	# OF FLATS	AMT. PAID
Herbs:			
Parsley (A)			
Basil (A)			
French Thyme (P)			
Rosemary (P)			
Sage (P)			
Flowers:			
Marigolds (A)			
Petunias (A)			
Nasturtiums (A)			
Snapdragons (A)			
Columbines (P)			
Hollyhocks (P)			
Delphiniums (P)			
Sweet Williams (P)			
Echinacea (P)			
Vegetables:			
Red Cherry Tomato (A)			
Yellow Cherry Tomato (A)			
Regular Red Tomato (A)			
Broccoli (A)			
Sweet Peppers (A)			
Other			

Make checks payable to Peacework Organic Farm. Send to: Peacework Organic Farm, 2218 Welcher Rd., Newark NY 14513

DEADLINE FOR ADVANCE ORDERS: MARCH 1, 2004

Have you paid your \$50 deposit for the 2004 season?

GVOCSA membership is on a first come first serve basis. If you want to be guaranteed a spot, act now before the general sign-up meetings on Saturday, March 27th from 2-4PM, and Wednesday, April 14th, from 7-9PM. For more information, see Member Action Items on the front page inside.



Politics of Food Program, Inc.

GVOCSA

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Rochester, NY 14614

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