

Buffalo Bullsheet

Summer 2010
Buffalo Mountain Co-op
and Café

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Co-op Hours

Monday - Friday; 9am to 7pm



Saturday; 9am to 6pm and

Sunday; 10 to 4 (9 to 5 after July 4th)

Tales From the Barnyard; or, Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May, by Olive

How can the summer solstice have come and gone and we're still waiting for real summer to begin? It's a scary thought that the days have started getting shorter, and the first half of the year is over. What gives? It makes me wonder about ways to slow the whole thing down. I've tried meditation, but it never stuck. The only time I let myself do things like lie on the grass and watch the clouds drift by is when I've gardened like my life depended on it and left myself for dead.

Like many Vermonters, I judge success or failure by how much I get done. The summer I put up 15 pints of pesto I felt like a better person than I was when I put up 10. Growing up on a small New England farm instilled in me that there was always more to do than could ever get done. We tried anyway. We hurried and scurried and gobbled up time like there was no end to it. Turns out there is, at least as we know it.

To quote one of the last things a friend who recently passed said, "Life is good." The sages tell us that life gets better the more we pay attention, but how to do that? As Lady Fortuna would have it, a sage disguised as a gardener in mud clothes gave me the clue. She was talking about her bug patrol methods, especially dealing with slugs. First she catches them by hand, then releases them in her driveway. She became fascinated with



them, watching them retract their eyeballs on their stalks until they start moving again. Up come the eyes, and down the driveway they go, their antennae at the ready, picking up signals with perfect reception. Their vacations are planned; they'll stop at the first Slug Spa they come to, eat healthy, refresh themselves in the dew, and loll around with other slugs perpetuating their species with no regard for gender. (Think how much time that must save right there!)

So that's the secret I was looking for. Next time I want to slow down and quit worrying about what I did or didn't get done, I'll just capture a few slugs, and then free them far from the garden. I'll even stop to smell the roses as I watch them go, on slug time.

Happy long and lazy summer to all.

Women in Agriculture- Roles Affirmed

Women farmers have found themselves the focus of much well-deserved attention over the last few months. A new book by Temra Costa, ***Farmer Jane: Changing the way our country eats and farms*** celebrates the agricultural renaissance taking place and maintains a feminine approach to our food system is what is really driving much of the change. In a recent interview, she contends that “women now have a few decades in the workforce under our belts and just the presence of women in the conversation changes the form of the process. There is a shift from only profit driven motives to the triple bottom line--people, planet, profit. The truth is, the entire green economy is a feminine based approach to business.”

“Men that are already into sustainability embrace the information, and those that aren't, feel threatened by it. However, more and more, men are starting to utilize these feminine characteristics of relationship-based thinking, community, and caring for the health and well-being of others at home and in the workforce.”

She goes on to state that; “The demand for local food is creating more a comfortable niche for women. These women are really good at marketing and multitasking and selling their products and are oftentimes transitioning from corporate America to start sustainable farms.

The women-in-farming trend has been on the radar of the organic community and there will often be workshops aimed at female farmers, but it hasn't received any prominence in the agenda. And to me, that's strange. One out of every ten farmers in America is a woman, and we make up 60% of the staff of non-profit sustainable agricultural organizations in this country.

Perhaps we're seeing women in agriculture more now because the support system for these alternative forms of farming is starting to meet up with demand. We need to continue to push the bar within the sustainable food system to reflect a more accurate representation of what is going on in the field.”



This awareness has come to bear in international farm policies as well. Here is an excerpt from an article entitled; **U.N. Biodiversity Plan Demands Voice for Women**, published on May 28, 2010 by Stephen Leahy of the *Inter Press Service*

“Women provide up to 90 percent of the rural poor's food and produce up to 80 percent of food in most developing countries, and yet they are almost completely ignored when policy decisions are made about agriculture and biodiversity.

That's about to change thanks to a United Nations agreement on biodiversity that will ask countries to ensure women are involved in decisions regarding biodiversity - including agriculture.

“This is a game changer and will be a milestone for other U.N. conventions such as climate change (U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change),” said Lorena Aguilar Revelo, senior gender advisor at the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Moravia, Costa Rica. The U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Strategic Plan under final discussion here in Nairobi that sets the objectives and goals of a new international agreement on how to curb the loss of biodiversity will explicitly state that women must participate and funding will be tied to their involvement, Revelo told IPS.

“Women are the protectors of agricultural biodiversity. In Peru, they grow more than 60 varieties of manioc, in Rwanda more than 600 varieties of beans,” said Revelo. “Leaving aside 50 percent of the population when we are in a biodiversity crisis has not been very smart.”

Women in developing countries have an intimate knowledge of the social and natural systems, including collecting 80 percent of the wild edibles. They save up to 90 percent of the seeds that are used in smallholder agriculture, according to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Despite these realities women are not seen as the main players in conservation, and are not invited to meetings on biodiversity, said Revelo.

"Even in discussions about access and benefit sharing of natural resources women's roles have not been recognized except at the CBD," she said. Studies have found that if women receive money for conservation, 90 percent will go to the family, while men only use 15 percent on average, she added.

Cultural change is key if there is any hope for stemming the biodiversity decline and improving livelihoods, Revelo said. "We need to modify unsustainable patterns. That sometimes means changes in cultures, customs and ways of living."

See the full interview with Temra Costa at http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/20100427_farmer-jane

The complete IPS article can be found at <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2010/05/28-0>

The Bullsheet welcomes any perspectives on gender issues in agriculture in our local community for future issues. Send them along with any other article ideas to Buffalo1@vtlink.net Thanks.

Register Reminders

With the summer, sales start to go up and the co-op can be a happening place. Here are some reminders to help move things along at the register. If you are a member, please tell the cashier your name or member number when you arrive at the register. Your current member status will then automatically appear on the register screen and your discount will be figured into your purchases. In order to save time and confusion, please have the PLU #, of bulk items written on your purchases if at all possible before bringing them up for check-out. These should be listed on the top of bulk bins or jars. Either write them directly on the bag, or there are little labels, and pens located in the bulk area for your use. Ask, if you are

unable to locate them. It is also important to pre-weigh your glass jars or plastic containers so that their weight (called the tare weight) can be deducted from the price of your bulk item purchases. You can weigh them on either of the scales at the front registers, or on the scale in the backroom. The cashier will be happy to help you bag or box your groceries, but to save time, you can help a great deal by bagging your own purchases. Keep track of the bags you bring in from home for use, so you can let the cashier know how much bag rebate we owe you (figured at 5 cents a bag). If at all possible, please pay for your purchases with a check or cash. Credit and debit cards cost the co-op an additional 3.5 % on purchases which amount to a huge out-lay for us over the course of a year. If you forget your checkbook, or for another unexpected reason, cannot pay for your purchases, members can temporarily charge items up to a limit of \$50. We are very happy to print out a sales receipt for you if requested, but will save the paper if not.

As always, thanks for your patience



News from the Café

We have broken through the office wall and most people have now gotten a glimpse at our expanded space. We are currently finalizing drawings and plans for our new permanent layout. We are focusing on an easier flow through the café area for those who want to grab a quick cup of coffee or a pre-made lunch or snack, while providing a welcoming spot for those who would like lunch made for them or who want to use our wi-fi services. A new deli case will enable us to offer more 'grab and go' choices. While we will not carry deli meats at first, we plan to gradually incorporate these offerings through the slower winter.

The café is a hopping spot during the summer; come check us out! We offer daily specials and a variety of sandwiches, burritos and other meals. Everything can be made to go, so the next time you're off for a picnic, pick up something delicious upstairs. If you have a larger event, we also offer catering for up to 40 people. There are many options to choose from, or develop your own menu with Deb.

Hope to see you at the café! Deb, Rachel and the entire café staff



To my friends and family, real and substitute, To the membership of the coop - J. Angus Munro

My time of almost seventeen years with Buffalo Mountain has been amazing with the ups and downs that any family experiences and a family it truly is. I have had my challenges and moments of deep darkness and moments when the wonder of what we are doing here in a historic sense has lifted me to new heights. In fact everything in the course of my time here has lifted me to new heights even the times of most trouble.

As some of you know I have decided to reinvest myself in myself and my creative life by going back to school for my MFA to ultimately go back to school as a teacher. I will return eventually and hopefully will become involved as a member as this is my co-op, but for now it is time for change.

The essence of what I am getting to is that I am leaving. I have been here for as long as anyone deserves to be here. Being here has been a privilege that I am only really just beginning to understand. It is a job and as such it has had its responsibilities and drudgery, its tasks and benefits and it has had its debilities, those things which could be different if only... But the if and the buts are not what the co-op is, instead the co-op is an amorphic being with a purpose. The co-op is a community nexus and a center of historic effect. It is a store and a community, it is a place and a center of activity but most of all it is the accumulated purpose of its founders and members, a reflection of its mission and its core. It supports its members and its staff in myriad and beautiful ways. To be a staff collective member here is to be really lucky, to have the support of a very "real" family and to feel the whole community move and flow every time you work. Those of us who have been here have been blessed. And I have been blessed for a very long time.

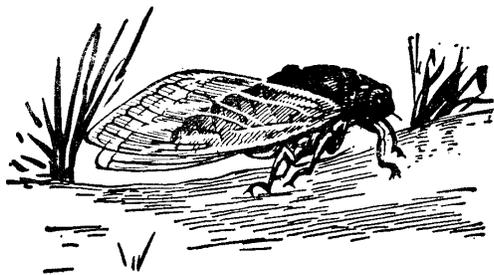
The coop job is intensely complicated. The work we do here is consequently hard. We, who see every conflict and its resolution. We have to deal with the day-to-day needs of everyone who feels entitled to their co-op and who truly believes that their entitlement is just. We have to work really hard to be able to live the message we try to show while getting the "work" done. That is wonderful when it grooves and awful when it jars. Everyone has their abilities that allow them to be co-op staff or they leave, some quickly (the shortest I remember was a week). I have been here for almost seventeen years. Annie, Kathy, and Robin have each been here for more some with breaks some without. The things I have seen and done in the role of a staff person have eclipsed the day-to-day managerial tasks with being a camp counselor, psychologist, philosopher, saint and demon. My role has been father, priest, rabble rouser and peacemaker all bundled into one. Anyone who seriously works here has to walk those things at least to some degree. We also have to decide what boundaries are right for the co-op. where to draw the line with behavior that allows an individual his or her right to be as they are, with when to say you are crossing into another's space with your actions inappropriately (with or without the help of police) and when to set the ground work for future crisis intervention.

The work here is so worthwhile. The dream of creating something that can act as a model for a more compassionate world is working. Look at the food chain of Hardwick and you will see that those who are founding it are the youth of the co-op or others attracted to this area by the community generated by the co-op. We created this model because we have been visionary. Because we believed that there could be something different than the Wal-Mart mentality that big is better.

We have created the alternative as “the change that we hope to be” and living this is part of the staff’s responsibility. It is part of the board’s responsibility to continue building this and part of my reason for having stayed on for so long. I have invested hundreds of hours that I could never have billed as work learning about democracy and participatory democracy and reflected these ideas into our process and into our mission and goals. This has been one of my ongoing contributions to the co-op and it has been a life long interest and value to me personally. I am now sure that the values of democracy in the workplace here is secure. I am also sure that the co-op mission and membership are strongly invested in this alternative model. I too am sure that for it to survive long-term is not an economic positioning but rather a mindset of transformation and community investment. The community must continuously reinvest itself and own the goals and mission and continue to develop this model.

I have been integral many times in the continuous growth of the democratic aspects of the co-op, the compassionate response to the sometimes challenging behavior of individuals who are part of our community, and to the development of process by which to engage such difficulties. I have grown unbelievably from this task and have had a pivotal role in how we take it on as staff. This role now has been spread around with more shared responsibility and that is how it should be and makes me sure of its sustainability. Members of the staff still desire a peaceful workspace, but there is an understanding amongst us that our community members deserve compassionate engagement whenever possible.

In leaving I do have some concerns that might be worth debating and addressing. The first is just the above issue. How do we, with the continuous transition of the collective and board membership, guard our community and membership against the separation of the goals and the comfort of our individual collective and board members, and the goals of the membership and the compassionate development of the community? Or better how do we integrate those goals? And secondly, how do we adequately develop and limit the roles of the collective and board to have a working system for the store and community aspects while guarding each other from ongoing power and control issues which have thankfully, been very limited in recent years, but that have almost brought the co-op to the brink of collapse in the past. How do we define the roles of these respective bodies to establish boundaries that will allow the seamless integration of our goals and our individuality? How do we cultivate and educate our staff and board to understand the importance of our mission and how do we avoid the integration of conflicts of interest while working from such a small pool of those interested in being invested without “personal agenda”?



I offer limited answers to those questions but feel the conversation surrounding those issues needs to be a part of the democracy of the co-op. My suggestion is not in the details (and those are the true work of this model of democracy) but in the need.

The logistics of my departure are still in limbo though I have committed to mid July 2010 being the latest I will continue as I have been. I have very few regrets in having been here for so very long, and surprisingly few regrets in leaving. It is time and my personal development is my motivation. I have thoughts for each of you, things that I have observed over time but more than anything I have love and admiration for all of you and your individual pathways that have led you here, and that continue to lead you within the womb of the co-op. This is my rebirth and like a Cicada my seventeen years are up.

Thinking Outside the Grid – Steven Gorelick

Thirty years ago, a friend of mine published a book called *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save The Earth*. It described the huge environmental benefits that would result if everyone made some simple adjustments to their way of life. Six hundred thousand gallons of gas could be saved every day, for example, if every commuter car carried just one more passenger; over 500,000 trees could be saved weekly if we all recycled our Sunday newspaper; and so forth. The book was immensely popular at the time, at least partly because it was comforting to know we could “save the Earth” so easily.

Unfortunately, the projected benefits of these simple steps were actually insignificant compared to the scale of the problems they addressed. Saving 600,000 gallons of gasoline sounds impressive, but it’s only about 1/1,000 of daily fuel consumption in this country. Half a million trees every week sounds like a lot too, but the sad fact is that about 1.5 acres of forest are being lost every *second*, despite all the Sunday papers that are now routinely recycled.

50 Simple Things is no longer in vogue (you can buy a copy online for 1 cent), but its core assumption – that our most urgent crises can be solved by tinkering around the edges of modern life – is as popular as ever. An insert in Al Gore’s *Inconvenient Truth* DVD, for example, suggests fighting climate change by recycling more, inflating your tires to the proper pressure, using less hot water, and several other equally “simple things”.

If there’s been much of a change in mainstream attitudes to our environmental crises, it’s that today’s “solutions” rely much more heavily on technology – hybrid cars and compact fluorescent light bulbs, clean coal and genetically-engineered biofuels. What this means is that while individuals are still directed towards those same small, simple steps, it’s Big Business that will take the big leaps. As an ad for the German corporation Siemens puts it, “industry is leading the way to the green revolution.”

Listeners to VPR have probably heard a similar sentiment from underwriter IBM, which claims to be “building a smarter planet” (a slogan that suggests a naturally dimwitted Earth prone to embarrassing gaffes like environmental breakdown). To this end the company plans to “infuse intelligence into the systems and processes that make the world work: cars, appliances, roadways, power grids, clothes, even natural systems such as agriculture and waterways”. Like *50 Simple Things*, IBM’s premise is that fundamental change is unnecessary: modern industrial life can continue its upward and outward expansion – cars, roadways, appliances and all – so long as everything is done more efficiently through new technology.

With industry leading the way, the future will probably look a lot like the present – barring ecological or economic collapse, of course. Endless growth will remain the holy grail for governments around the world; resource depletion will continue unabated; the gap between rich and poor will continue to grow, and the wealth and power of transnational corporations will keep on expanding.



If what mainstream environmentalists like Al Gore and “socially responsible” corporations like IBM and Siemens propose is essentially more of the same, what would fundamental change look like? For starters, we might want to take a page from the local food movement. Most of us recognize the social, economic and environmental benefits of local food, but we don’t often extend that logic to other basic needs.

Think for a moment about the implications of “local energy”. With our continent-wide electric grid, we can’t really know the environmental costs of flipping on a light switch, using a hair dryer, or making toast in the morning, just as we can’t know what went into that industrially-grown tomato from Florida or apple from Chile. Did the power come from Vermont Yankee, a hydro project in Canada, a huge windfarm on a distant ridge, or a coal-fired plant out West? Even if we consider the costs of these sources of power, few hit home directly or immediately.

If our electric needs were sourced locally or regionally, on the other hand, we’d have to balance our desire for power with costs that we bear ourselves. One can imagine a lively, maybe even heated, debate in Hardwick about whether we should put a string of giant windmills on top of Buffalo Mountain (or a series of less productive windmills somewhere else); whether we should use the dam on Hardwick Lake for power generation (or remove it to restore the river); and whether a permit for a McMansion with a Jacuzzi in every bathroom should be granted. Trade-offs might be difficult to balance, but at least the costs and benefits would accrue to the same community. (One of the reasons so many Vermonters are reluctant to embrace windpower in the state is that while most of the power and profits from large-scale windfarms flow out of the state, all of the environmental and aesthetic costs are borne by local residents.)

Ultimately, a greater reliance on local power would eliminate one of the most destructive side-effects of the grid: the implicit notion that energy is limitless. The expectation is that our homes and workplaces should have as much power as we’re willing to pay for, 24/7, year in and year out. My family no longer has that expectation, because for the last 12 years we’ve lived off the grid. (I don’t suggest that this makes us environmental heroes: I’m well aware that the photovoltaic system we rely on also has environmental costs, some quite heavy.) The point is only that our attitude towards energy now includes a healthy sense of limits. If the sun hasn’t been out for a few days we probably can’t run the vacuum cleaner, and we’ll have to use a broom instead. If the sun hasn’t been out for a week, we’ll have to turn off the pump on our deep well, and use the gravity-fed spring instead – which means there won’t be enough pressure for showers. In the best of times we don’t use electricity to toast bread (anything that turns electricity into heat uses a lot of power); instead we only make toast in the winter, when it can be made on the top of our cookstove.

These and many other adjustments don’t feel like sacrifices: they’re simple and logical responses to the fact that our source of power is limited and variable. The fuels that power the grid are limited too, as resource depletion and global warming should make clear, but there’s no direct link between that fact and the day-to-day experience of grid-connected life.

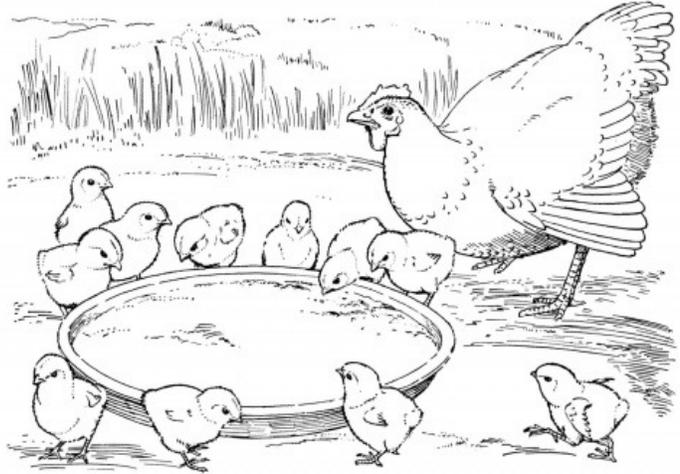
Building up decentralized renewable energy systems for local and regional self-reliance might seem too difficult or expensive, but consider the huge subsidies presently given to nuclear power and fossil fuels. Eliminating those subsidies and providing even a fraction of the same amount for smaller-scale, more localized renewables would go a long way to getting us there. The alternative is to assume that the best we can do is inflate our tires properly and screw in a new light bulb, while encouraging companies like IBM and Siemens to prolong the fantasy of limitless power and endless growth.

New Local Chicken!

Free Range Pastured Poultry and Eggs

Jennifer Royer of Sunshine Acres Farm LLC, on Hopkins Hill Road in Hardwick.

If you've wondered what all the clucking is about up on Hopkins Hill, it may be our chickens! My husband, two daughters and I raise free range pastured meat chickens, turkeys and eggs on our farm Sunshine Acres and this takes everyone's help. Being raised on a family dairy farm, my husband Fernand leads the way with his 35 plus years of farming experience. Jessica and Cassandra help out with the egg layers by coordinating the egg washing, carton labeling and sometimes "chicken round-ups", and I fill in where needed.



This adventure began when Fernand and I were looking for ways to ensure our family had access to high quality food, and to share our love and respect for Mother Nature and the diverse abundance of life She supports with our children. The first desire led to the purchase of a pregnant Hereford cow, meat chickens and turkeys and a few heritage laying hens to compliment our vegetable garden and berry bushes. The benefits of growing your own food utilizing both sustainable and natural practices have been widely reported. This we knew and supported. The second desire led to the family purchasing a pregnant Dorset ewe to compliment the 3 horses and 2 dogs we already owned. The problem began, or should I say this story began, when the laying hens produced more eggs than the family, extended family, friends and co-workers could or wanted to eat. Enter the Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op! With the Co-ops unwavering commitment to support small scale farming and their community as a whole, they opened their doors to us and agreed to take the extra eggs. This commitment has recently expanded to include our free range pastured poultry.

May 29, 2010 marked our first delivery of our free range pastured chicken to the Co-op. This fall we will also offer Narragansett, Bourbon Red and white turkeys for sale on a pre-order basis. All of our poultry are raised on pasture after graduating from a brooding pen. Each pasture contains a mobile "chicken tractor" which provides protection from the elements as well as from predators, and plenty of fresh water and supplemental feed. Garlic, apple cider vinegar and daily moves to fresh pasture are a few of the ways we keep our flock healthy and happy.

We would like to thank the Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op and the Hardwick community for your continued enthusiastic support of our journey in raising high quality poultry.

A note from Beth Cate, our meat department buyer: My desire is to carry as much local meat products as possible. I'm hoping that my fellow meat eaters will help support me in this. While Misty Knoll chicken is less expensive, the birds do not receive the amount of care that the Sunshine Acres birds do. There are a number of ways Misty Knoll keeps their prices lower. They raise A LOT of chickens and turkeys (they sell poultry to stores and restaurants all over New England). They also have their own slaughterhouse and butchering shop on site, whereas folks like the Royers have to pay for the expense of "processing" their products.

My intention is to no longer carry Misty Knoll whole chickens, and to only carry whole and half chickens from the Royers. If you prefer to consume Misty Knoll whole birds, please feel free to special order one! Specific cuts from Misty Knoll will still be available. **Many Thanks!**