

ECO-JOURNAL

Volume 9, Number 2

March/April 1999

Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future ...

WHERE IS YOUR NEXT MEAL COMING FROM?

Summary of the keynote address by Lynn Miller

"Is mainstream industrialized agriculture sick? Does organic agriculture offer a cure? Are these political battle lines confusing a constructive view of the future? Yes, yes, and yes - perhaps for surprising reasons"

Understanding the problem. Understanding the challenge. Understanding the opportunity. Understanding our own motivations. The probability of success is contained within the 'why' of what we do. What we do IS important. We farm. How we do it IS important. We employ organic methods and appropriate technologies. However, WHY we do what we do is MOST important. Contained within that WHY is an explosion of spiritual, economic and physical reasons which, when woven together, create community and afford us solutions to most of our great contemporary social ills. Connections, the connections from our WHY, mean community.

Stop worrying about 'organics' and the 'enemy'. Organics will more quickly rise to the forefront as the best logical and spiritual solution if we work on the construction and reverence of biological, multi-dimensional communities.

The time is past for political activism on agriculture issues. Political activism, on the alternative agriculture front, leads us to a crippling alienation from many people we need to serve. It is time for a cultural activism which will attract those people.

Insidious biotechnologies, poisoned public food, a battered biosphere, a defacto criminalization of self-sufficiency, the ridicule of local self-reliance, the murder of genes, and a dying top soil are critically serious disease symptoms which we currently attempt to treat with political activism. We should, rather, be working to re-

build our 'cultural immune systems' and thereby remove any opportunity for these symptoms to exist. To attack these problems with a political activism we risk creating new problems and refueling the corporate directives. To attack directly is to miss the real point, the real cause. To attack directly is to miss an incredible, time-sensitive opportunity.

With cultural activism our 'rathers' guide us and the market for poison, destruction and consumptive membership evaporate. The opportunity I speak of?



Capacity crowd listens intently to Pat Mooney of RAFI

The world is hungry for food of good health, the produce of a land of good heart. People, across the proverbial board, are worried about utility and food infrastructures. Winnipeg and Manitoba are hungry for these things. The hunger is NOW, TODAY, here. It is an economic reality. Its an emotional necessity. This hunger has created a void in the modern spirit. The world is increasingly frightened by science in the service of corporate industry. People have grown suspicious of store-bought foods.

Have we arrived? Yes. Where have we arrived? We're here now and we should, as concerned farm-

ers and community leaders, know what to do. But there is confusion. Time, in my opinion, is past for the political action of the recent past. Time is past to verify our individual and collective dreams. Our dream won out.

[There exists] a frightened hungry people in desperate need of clean, healthy food, scientific accountability and self-sufficiency skills. This is our opportunity. We can provide these things. And when we do, the change for the good will be rapid.

We're here right now but it is important to be honest about our various motives. Two opposites predominate: Great profit versus health - or piles of money versus hope - or fantastic wealth versus magic - or fabulous affluence versus salvation.

Salvation, magic, hope and health spell fertility and good farming and community and self-sufficiency and local self-reliance. Great profit often spells sterility. The world is hungry for food of good health and that hunger translates immediately to huge market potential. What may happen soon will shatter all previous notions of food value. Billions of dollars are at stake. The blood-sucking dragons of the corporate ethic know this and are with us each breath of

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OUR FOOD...OUR HEALTH...OUR FUTURE

February's Organic Agriculture Confer-
ence, held at the University of Winnipeg,
was a smashing success, according to just
about everyone who attended. Some 300
people showed up to participate in a day
and evening of workshops, presentations,
networking and learning. The trade-show
was one of the liveliest events of its kind,
with a continuous buzz of activity and dis-
cussion, food sampling and
seed-exchanging right up
to the final minutes of the
conference. The event
was positive and solu-
tions-oriented, though Pat
Mooney of the Rural Ad-
vancement Fund Interna-
tional gave us a sobering
(some said terrifying) re-
minder of why organic agri-
culture is so important, when
he discussed the concentra-
tion of power in the hands of
multi-national biotech giants
like Monsanto.

A follow up meeting was held on March
17 to explore actions and strategies to fur-
ther organic agriculture in Manitoba. Sug-
gestions included developing a skills bank
for learning and mentoring, encouraging in-
stitutions to use organic foods, taking ac-
tion on genetically modified foods, support-
ing the development of urban organic agri-
culture, and much more. A "caucus" on or-
ganic agriculture, based out of the Eco-Net-
work may be one way to foster support for
these varied and exciting projects and ideas.

Included in this Eco-Journal are two of
the presentations from the conference.
Lynn Miller spoke on Friday night at a joint

event with Cafe de Todos. His words are
provocative. Perhaps not everyone will
agree with his approach, but to judge by
the reaction of participants, Lynn was a
great inspiration. And, as an aside, he com-
mented that in his travels all over the conti-
nent to attend Organic Agriculture confer-
ences, he has never experienced better food.

This is important because al-
most all the food for the con-
ference was donated from
the root cellars, freezers
and cupboards of local
growers. Which goes to
show that our own
bioregion can provide
that which we need, and
deliciously too! (Espe-
cially when chef
extraordinaire, Kelly
Dube, and her crew of
dedicated volunteers
is working on cooking
it). Which brings us to

the other presentation highlighted here.

Dave Neufeld speaks in a compelling way
about the importance of bioregional think-
ing and action - for the environment, for
our own health, and for social justice.

It wasn't easy to pick these two presen-
tations out of the many fine ones from the
conference. If you'd like to read more, a
"Proceedings" document was produced,
containing a summary of all presentations.
Some extra copies are available at a cost of
\$3 for postage and handling. Just call the
office if you're interested in obtaining one.
Also, we still have some copies of our Con-
sumers Guide to Certified Organic Foods in
Manitoba, just \$3 per copy.

ECO

1998-1999

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Our Food ... Our Health ... Our Future ... **THE BIOREGIONAL APPROACH**

Summary of a presentation by David M. Neufeld

Every day we choose to break the law by buying milk from our neighbours. By law, all milk bought and sold must be pasteurized. Our health, we are told, is being protected from diseases carried in cow's milk. But there is also evidence that the pasteurization process renders the milk too difficult to absorb, which causes allergies. So instead of buying questionable milk from a carton, we choose to support a local, organic farm - regardless of the law. The law, it seems, has more to do with protecting tax revenues and promoting gross domestic product figures based on the transportation of 'product' than it does about health.

Making Choices

Secondly, we choose to use a modest amount of cow's milk in our diet, rather than buy soy milk. We have been counselled by health advisors to stop using dairy products - to use soy products instead. We have also been counselled to use brown rice instead of wheat and arrowroot powder instead of eggs. The reasons for these recommendations are understandable enough. But we wonder why it is best for us to base our diet on foods that are foreign to our soils. Cultures have survived in climates and growing conditions much harsher than our own. Surely we can grow our staple foods and live abundant lives here on the prairies.

The cause of our wheat and gluten intolerance is not, in my experience, the wheat in our diets but rather that we eat it in too refined a form and that we do not eat enough other (prairie grown) whole grains. Likewise with milk. It is not that we use milk but that we misuse it that is the cause of ill health.

We are not purists by any means. You will find peanut butter, rice and orange juice in our kitchen almost every day of the year. What we do try to do is base our diet on locally grown (and as much as possible) organic food, and then add to it with imported foods. We are fortunate in that we have space to grow and raise a lot of our own food and that we have neighbours who grow and raise food organically.



*Bioregional Chefextraordinaire,
Kelly Dubé*

Some of the other 'BIOREGIONALISM' efforts we are involved in are: building with locally milled (poplar) lumber and straw bales; growing seedlings (most medicinal herbs) for farmers, herbalists and home gardeners; home schooling and training young people in prairie life skills; offering eco-retreats and tours to schools, families, singles and seniors; encouraging small to medium scale organic agriculture to new and seasoned farmers - emphasizing growing for local markets; powering our home with solar, wind and hydro mix; encouraging more urban dwellers to move to rural settings and, working collectively with the local economic development board to improve entrepreneurial and employment options.

These are all choices we have made. They have not happened overnight. And they are all evolving. This is the essence of freedom and anarchy (in the classical sense of the word): realizing that everyday we each have the power to choose to enrich our own and our community's life, in some modest or dramatic way, with the resources at our finger tips.

Cursing the dark / lighting a candle

Bring to mind, for a moment, the last plate of food you ate. Imagine the setting where each of the ingredients was grown. Imagine the transportation and storage facilities along the way to your table. The distances are great: on average 1,200 km per item. That we have an economic and food system based on transporting goods great distances should not be a surprise to us.

As long as there have been cities and armies, the powerful have found ways to extract what they need from the more vulnerable areas. The North American continent was settled and plundered in order to feed the appetites of the rich in Europe. The rich in Canada depend, for the most part, on export marketing to maintain their wealth. This aspect of our society has become so ingrained that we who labour to feed the exporters and power centres hardly ever question its value to ourselves and to our communities. Nor do we,

See Bioregional Approach page 9 ►

THE (RELATIVELY) GOOD NEWS ...

SUPER TOXIC PESTICIDE BANNED!

In a decision hailed by the World Wildlife Fund, which has long lobbied for it, the federal government (Health Canada) has finally banned the use of the granular form of the insecticide Carbofuran (known by its trade name - Furadan). This chemical is widely used in Manitoba, especially on canola, and is known to be one of the most toxic pesticides to birds. In fact, the Ottawa Citizen reports that carbofuran has poisoned many millions of birds from 90 species during the last 20 years. The downside is that farmers will be permitted to use up remaining stocks of granular carbofuran, which means more death this summer.

One form of liquid carbofuran was banned in 1995, but another

form, ironically at higher concentrations, is still sold and used in Canada, on corn, potatoes, berries and other crops. It too, is lethal to birds and other forms of wildlife.

MPs SAY NO TO 2ND ROMANIAN CANDU

Nuclear Awareness Project reports that a majority of Canadian MPs (160 in all, including several Liberal members) endorsed a position against federal government financial support for a second CANDU reactor at Cernavoda in Romania. The position supports over 50 Canadian environmental organizations and 80 groups around the world who have signed an appeal from the Romanian environmental group Mama Terra opposing the reactor.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

April 14th - Water Watch Public Forum, 7:30 pm at the Ramada Marlborough Inn, 331 Smith Street. Evening features Nellie McLung Theatre Group, Maude Barlow, National Chairperson Council of Canadians and Judy Darcy, National President Canadian Union of Public Employees. Phone Choices for more information 944-9408.

April 18 - Earth Week Vegan Potluck Dinner, 5:30 pm (doors open 5:00 pm) at Robert Steen Community Centre, 980 Palmerston Avenue. Join the Winnipeg Vegetarian Association as they celebrate Earth Week!. Bring a vegan dish (no animal products - no meat, dairy, eggs), dishes and utensils. Also bring a recipe card to share with others. A variety of local vegetarian-friendly organizations will have displays. We may also have entertainment or a film after dinner. To register or for more information, call the WVA at 889-5789.

April 21, 7:30 pm; April 22, 7:30 pm; and April 24, 2 pm - The film, 'Who's Counting?' According to Gloria Steinem, "Marilyn Waring will forever change your perception of justice, economics and the worth of your work. Watch this film!" at Cinematheque, 100 Arthur Street. \$5 general/\$4 student/\$3.50 members.

April 22 - Spark an Interest in Habitat, 6:30 pm at the IMAX. Join Manitoba wolf expert Gloria Goulet for this truly informative presentation and wine and cheese reception. Learn about the dangers that wolves face due to their limited habitat. The presentation will be followed by Wolves and Wildfire, two exciting new Imax Films. Tickets \$20, call 956-IMAX to attend this fundraising event for Earth Day.

April 23 - The film 'MindWalk' showing ONE NIGHT ONLY, 7:30 at Muriel Richardson Auditorium (WAG). The dynamics underlying the major problems of our time are all the same. What we need is a new vision of the world. Ticket \$3 in advance at McNally Robinson Booksellers and Sears Health Food Store Polo Park, \$5 at the door.

April 25 - EARTH DAY AT THE FORKS - Biodiversity Breakfast, 6 am to 10 am. CBC Radio will be broadcasting live from 6 to 9 with Master of Ceremonies Ron Robinson.

- Sunrise Ceremony, 6 am. Join aboriginal Elder Mae Louise Campbell and the 'Daughters of the Dream Drum' for a sunrise ceremony in the Oodena at the Forks.

- Earth Day Entertainers at the Forks, 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

- Children's Eco-Village, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

- Active Alternatives, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

- Biodiversity Fair, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. Displays and demonstrations.

April 30 - Joseph Zuken Memorial Lecture, 7:30 at Eckhardt Grammete Hall, University of Winnipeg. Lecture features George Harris, plaintiff in the Tax Loophole case, Neil Brookes who teaches law at Osgoode Law School and Arni Peltz, Public Interest Law Centre, Legal Aid Manitoba.

April 30 - Project Peacemakers Annual Eco-Friendly Dinner. Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, 150 Bayridge. Guest speaker is Toby Maloney of the Green Commuting Project, "Making A Move: Changing how we get from here to there". Tickets are \$10, or \$5 for children. Call 775-7178 for more info.

May 12 - Canada Health Day, sponsored by the Canadian Public Health Association and the Canadian Healthcare Association. Organize some health-focussed activities at your school or workplace!

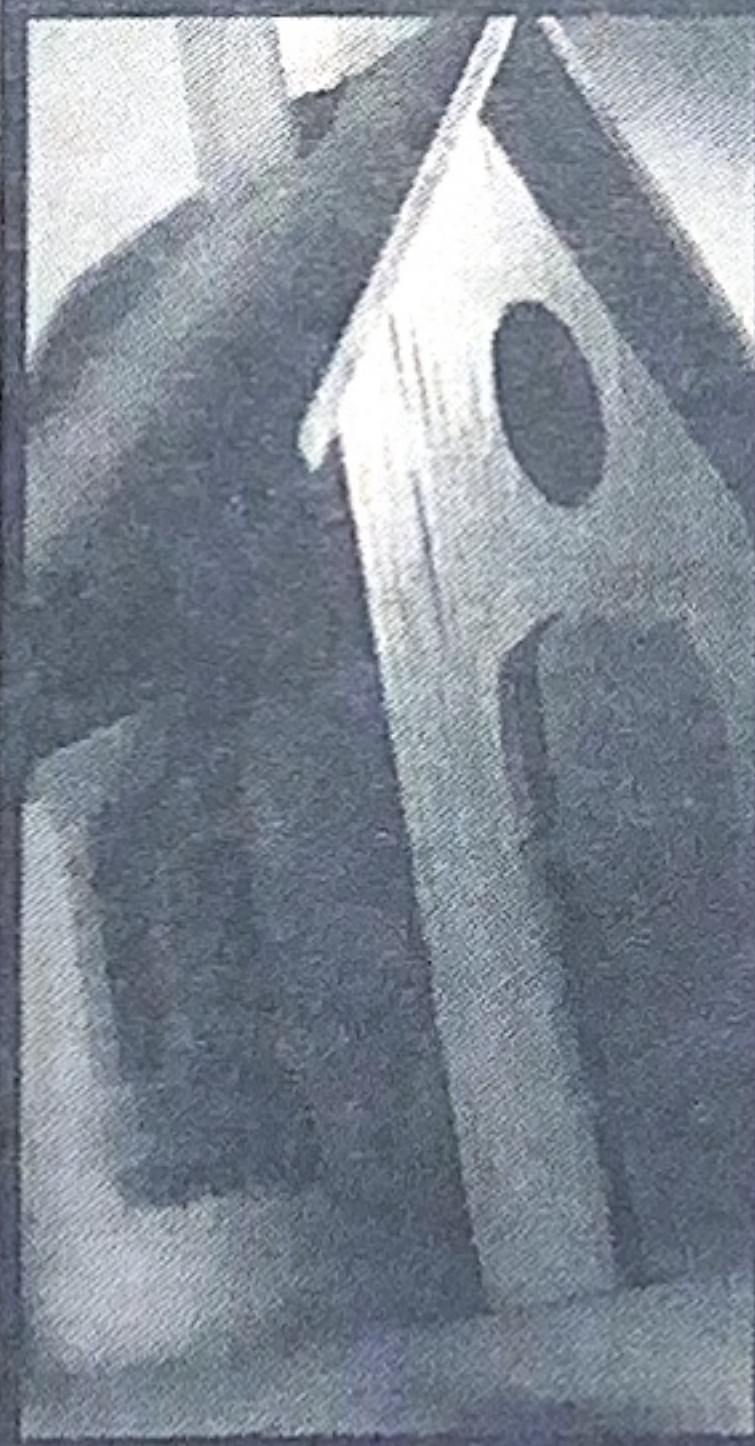
May 28 and 29 - Wolf Weekend with wildlife biologist Gloria Goulet, Riding Mountain National Park. \$130 per person, pre-registration necessary by calling Sarah Goldstein at 204- 755-3438.

July and August - 'Canoe Mantario', Wilderness Awareness programs through Manitoba Naturalists Society. For details call 943-9029.

Comment at the Organic Agriculture Conference:

"a solution to the destruction of rural communities, and answer to industrial farming".

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IF APPROVED, WTO RULES MEAN CANADA CANNOT BAN IT!!

By Peter Montague

Excerpted with permission from *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly* #639

On January 14, after an 8-year scientific review, Canada rejected Monsanto's request for approval of its genetically altered milk hormone, rBGH, a drug that makes dairy cows produce 10% more milk than normal.[1] This was a setback for Monsanto because rBGH was the company's first genetically-engineered product and Monsanto had hoped international acceptance of rBGH would smooth the way for its other genetically-engineered farm crops like cotton, tomatoes, potatoes, rice, corn, and soybeans.

Embarrassing political fiasco

The approval process for rBGH in Canada became an embarrassing political fiasco when Canadian health officials claimed Monsanto had tried to bribe them, which the company denied, and government scientists testified that they were being pressured by higher-ups to approve rBGH against their better judgment.

Ultimately, Canada gave a thumbs down to rBGH because, as the product label acknowledges, it can cause udder infections, painful, debilitating foot disorders, and reduced life span in cows.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of rBGH in U.S. dairy cows in November, 1993, without taking a position on the issue of cruelty to animals. Monsanto will not reveal how widely the drug has been adopted by U.S. dairy farmers.

Monsanto says it will appeal the rBGH decision within the Canadian government. But more importantly, Monsanto will ask the World Health Organization's Codex Alimentarius to declare rBGH

safe when Codex meets in Rome this coming summer. If Codex issues the statement that Monsanto wants, under the World Trade Organization's rules, Canada will lose its right to ban the use of rBGH within its borders, and Monsanto will be one step closer to its goal.[1] At bottom, this is what "free trade" is about - freeing transnational corporations from control by nation states.

Codex Alimentarius is widely perceived to be dominated not by public-spirited health specialists but by scientists aligned with the interests of transnational corporations.

Despite the recent setback for rBGH in Canada, Monsanto is pressing ahead with its plan to dominate world agriculture by selling genetically modified seeds - a plan it is pursuing with powerful aid from the highest levels of the U.S. government.

Both inside and outside the U.S., Monsanto is selling two basic varieties of genetically-modified seeds: "Roundup Ready" seeds that have been genetically modified to withstand a heavy soaking with Monsanto's best-selling herbicide, Roundup (glyphosate), and a group of seeds implanted with a Bt gene, [*Bacillus thuringiensis*, a naturally occurring soil bacterium used for many years as a biological pesticide] which produces a pesticidal toxin in every cell of the resulting plant.

Caterpillars that eat any part of such a plant will die, at least until the caterpillar population develops "resistance" to the Bt toxin.

Genetically altered crops

Within the U.S., genetically altered crops are rapidly coming into widespread use. In 1995, no genetically-modified crops were grown for commercial sale. Three years later, in 1998, 73 million acres of genetically-modified crops were grown worldwide, more than 50 million acres of them in the U.S. [Plantings of genetically modified crops in Canada are also undergoing a dramatic increase]. To allow this rapid change to occur with a minimum of resistance from consumers, the FDA has declared that genetically modified foods do not need to be labeled, [equally true in this country] thus depriving consumers of the opportunity to make an informed choice in the grocery store. You cannot refuse to buy what you cannot identify. It is presently estimated that some 30,000 items in U.S. grocery stores already contain genetically modified organisms.[2]

Monsanto has announced that by the year 2000 (next year), 100% of U.S. soybeans (60 million acres) will be genetically modified. Actually, there will continue to be a small acreage devoted to organically-grown, traditional soybeans. However, if Monsanto has its way, even these organically-grown non-genetically-modified soybeans will become difficult to identify. Last year when the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed national standards to define what "organically grown" means, Monsanto and USDA proposed to allow genetically-modified crops to be labelled "organic." After USDA received 300,000 letters of opposition from an angry public, USDA and Monsanto both withdrew the proposal. But three years from now, Monsanto will be back, urging the government to allow the "organic" label on genetically modified crops. If USDA goes along with Monsanto's plan, then the "organic" label will become meaningless and consumers will have to trust their grocers to supply soybeans that have not been genetically modified. Few grocers will have any way to know.

See Monsanto page 11 ►

FOR THE RECORD

Many were horrified to hear the news that Monsanto, the giant multi-national biotechnology company, is creating a research facility on the University of Manitoba campus. (Actually a renovation of an existing building). Euphemistically named a "Crop Development Centre" this will be Monsanto's first Canadian location for carrying out its genetic engineering work. The new partnership has been enthusiastically endorsed by Premier Filmon, to the extent that Manitoba taxpayers will actually be contributing \$1 million (or one tenth of the total cost) for the building. Here's what one of our members had to say about the issue, in a letter to the President of the University of Manitoba:

Dear Madam, I am saddened to learn that the University of Manitoba has been reduced to finding sponsorship in such an organization as Monsanto; and the delight with which the Premier greets the announcement is in keeping with the level of concern his government shows for the environment.

There may be a place in agriculture for pesticides, herbicides, and genetic modification, but not for the profit of corporations and not to the detriment of the life and livelihood of all the creatures exposed to them.

I can imagine that the University presents this arrangement as leaving its scientific integrity intact. That has not been the experience elsewhere, viz. Health (!) Canada, Dr. Pusztai.

Who sups with the devil needs a long spoon.

Yours truly, Arthur E. Millward

MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK ACTIVE MEMBER GROUPS 1998-99

BREAST CANCER ACTION MANITOBA

Advocacy and support for breast cancer survivors.
P. O. Box 1949, WPG. R3C 3R2
CONTACT: Maggie Brunner (h)1-204-224-8578 (w)1-204-946-4512

CAMPAIGN FOR PESTICIDE REDUCTION! WINNIPEG

Local campaign for a bylaw banning the cosmetic use of pesticides.
C/O #2 - 70 Albert, WPG. R3B 1E7
CONTACT: Ian Greaves 1-204-889-6021 fx: 1-204-947-6514

CANADIAN PARKS AND WILDERNESS SOCIETY (CPAWS)

Involved in advocacy, protection and public education for parks and wilderness in Manitoba.
P.O. Box 344, WPG. R3C 2H6
CONTACT: Scott Kidd (Pres.) 1-204-944-0050 fx: 1-204-947-5250
EMAIL: skidd@mb.sympatico.ca

CHEMICAL SENSITIVITIES INFORMATION EXCHANGE NETWORK - MB

Public education for alternatives to harmful chemicals in everyday use.
43 Rutgers Bay, WPG. R3T 3C9
CONTACT: Margaret Friesen 1-204-261-8591
EMAIL: friesen@mbnet.mb.ca

CHOICES

A coalition for social justice involved in poverty and equity issues.
#409-275 Broadway, WPG. R3C 4M6
CONTACT: Shirley Lord 1-204-944-9408 fx: 1-204-957-1508
EMAIL: slord@mb.sympatico.ca

CITIZENS FOR BETTER PUBLIC TRANSIT IN WINNIPEG

Dedicated to enhancing, promoting, and safeguarding the city's public transportation system.
c/o 140 Wildwood Park, WPG. R3T 0E1
CONTACT: Gord McGonigal 1-204-284-7727
EMAIL: mcgonig@mbnet.mb.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/~mcgonig/cbptw>

CLEAR LAKE GOLF FOUNDATION

Organic and environmentally friendly management for the Clear Lake golf course.
Box 328, ONANOLE, MB R0J 1N0
CONTACT: Greg Holden 1-204-848-2165 fx: 1-204-848-2165

COMMITTEE FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY (CHRIST- LUTHERAN CHURCH)

Committed to establishing and nurturing refugees placed in our community.
815 Inkster Blvd., WPG. R2X 1N3
CONTACT: Howard Engel 1-204-253-2681 fx: 1-204-257-4805

COALITION TO SAVE THE ELMS

Public education and advocacy for policies and practices to sustain the urban forest.
2799 Roblin Blvd., WPG. R3R 0B8
CONTACT: Judy Werier 1-204-832-7188 fx: 1-204-832-7134
EMAIL: jwerier@mb.sympatico.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.savetheelms.mb.ca>

CORPORATE-HOG AWARENESS COALITION

Education and activism to prevent the spread of corporate hog operations in Manitoba.
c/o #2 - 70 Albert Street, WPG. R3B 1E7
CONTACT: Phyllis Abbe 1-204-269-3546 fx: 1-204-947-6511

EARTH FIRST!

Concerned citizens protecting Manitoba's wilderness.
15 - 222 Osborne Street South, WPG. R3L 1Z3
CONTACT: Dave Nickarz 1-204-992-2319 fx: 1-204-992-2319
EMAIL: dnickarz@autobahn.mb.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.autobahn.mb.ca/~dnickarz/index.html>

FORT WHYTE CENTRE

Centre for education on environmental issues.
Box 124 - McCreary Road WS. E., WPG. R3Y 1G5
CONTACT: Martha Peever 1-204-989-8355 fx: 1-204-895-4700
EMAIL: wren@fortwhyte.mb.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.mbnet.mb.ca/fortwhyte>

HARVEST COLLECTIVE/HARVEST ON CORYDON

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877 Westminster, WPG. R3G 1B3
664 Corydon, WPG. R3M 0X7
CONTACT: 1-204-475-1459 fx: 1-204-475-1462

MANITOBA FEDERATION OF LABOUR

Environment Committee of Manitoba labour groups.
#101 - 275 Broadway, WPG. R3C 4M6
CONTACT: Peter Walker 1-204-947-1400 fx: 1-204-943-4276
EMAIL: pwalker@mb.sympatico.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.mfl.mb.ca>

MANITOBA'S FUTURE FOREST ALLIANCE

A coalition of fourteen grassroots groups committed to protecting what's left of our boreal forest.
#2 - 70 Albert Street, WPG. R3B 1E7
CONTACT: Don Sullivan 1-204-947-3081 fx: 1-204-947-6514
EMAIL: sullivan@mbnet.mb.ca

MANITOBA NATURALISTS SOCIETY

Fostering awareness, appreciation and protection of the natural environment.
#401 - 63 Albert Street, WPG. R3B 1G4
CONTACT: Herta Gudauskas 1-204-943-9029 fx: 1-204-943-9029
EMAIL: mns@escape.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.wilds.mb.ca/mns>

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Addresses social justice concerns in Manitoba and overseas.
134 Plaza Drive, WPG. R3T 5K9
CONTACT: Peter Peters 1-204-261-6381 fx: 1-204-269-9875
EMAIL: mcc@mennonitecc.ca
WEBSITE: <http://www.mennonitecc.ca/mcc/>

ORGANIC PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA

Support for organic farmers and the organic certification process in Manitoba.
Box 929, VIRDEN, Mb. R0M 2C0
CONTACT: Lara Scott 1-204-748-1315 fx: 1-204-748-6881
E-MAIL: opam@techplus.com
WEBSITE: <http://www.organicpa.mb.ca>

PROJECT PEACEMAKERS

Working for peace on and with the Earth through disarmament and education.
745 Westminster Avenue, WPG. R3G 1A5
CONTACT: Karen Schlichting 1-204-775-8178
E-MAIL: projectp@escape.ca

ROCKWOOD ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMUNITY TASK FORCE (R.E.A.C.T.)

Environmental education and support of municipal solid waste reduction programs.

MAIL: P.O. BOX 1071

DEL: #355 - THIRD ST. WEST, STONEWALL, MB. R0C 2Z0

CONTACT: Al Rear (Chairperson) 1-204-467-2271

EMAIL: emerald@mb.sympatico.ca

RESOURCE CONSERVATION MANITOBA

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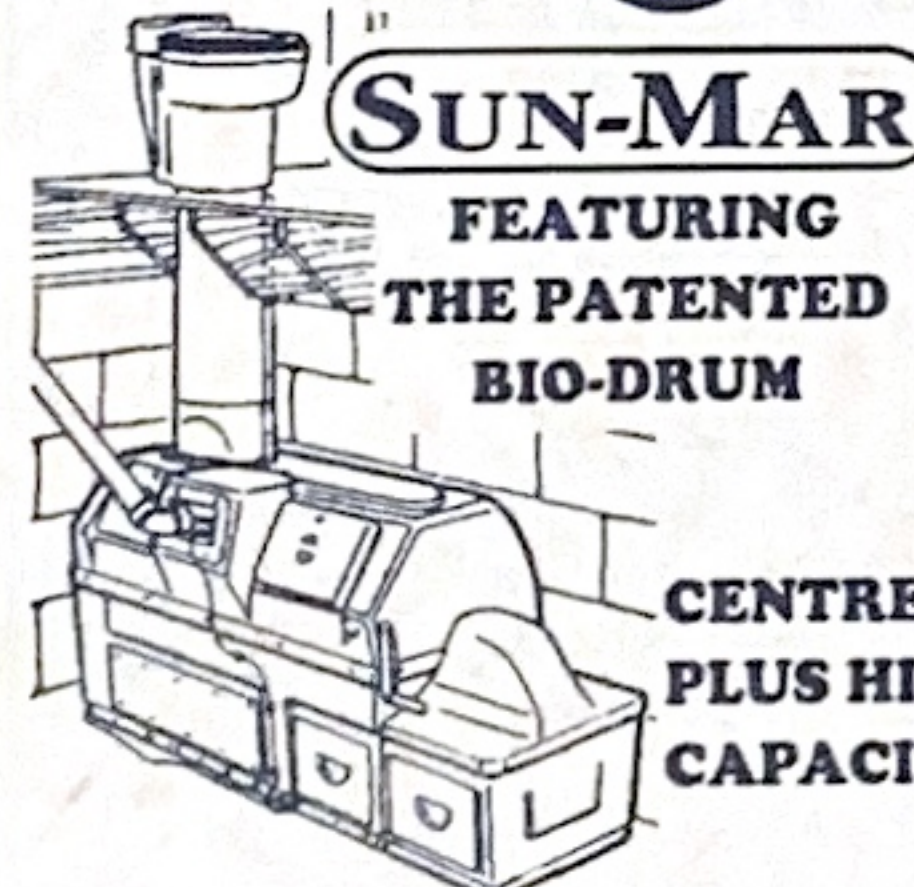
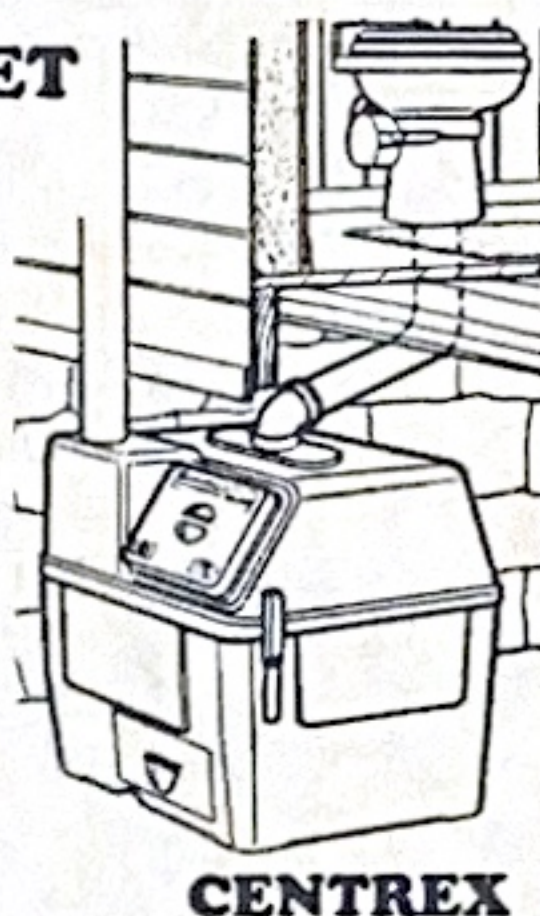
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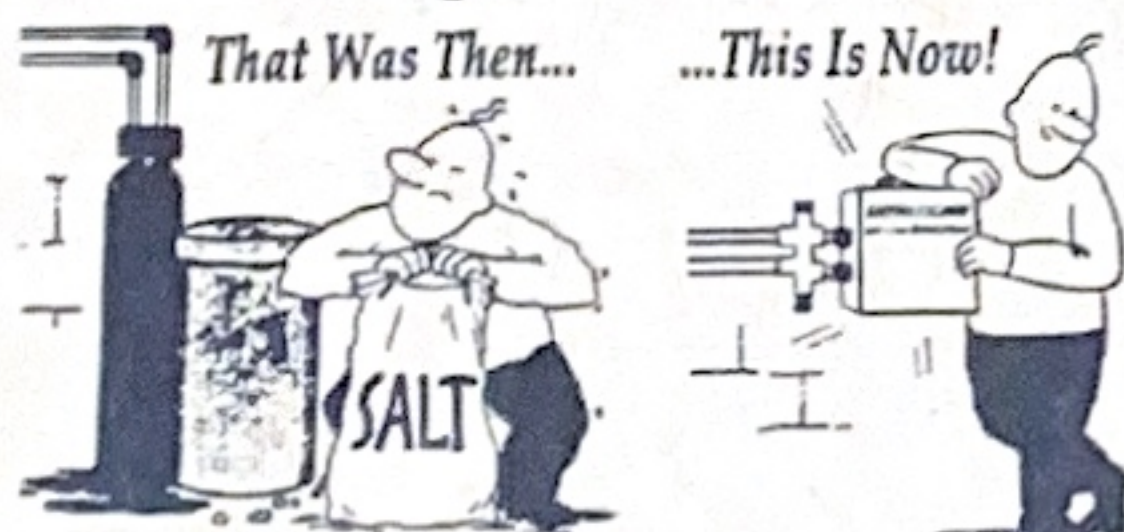
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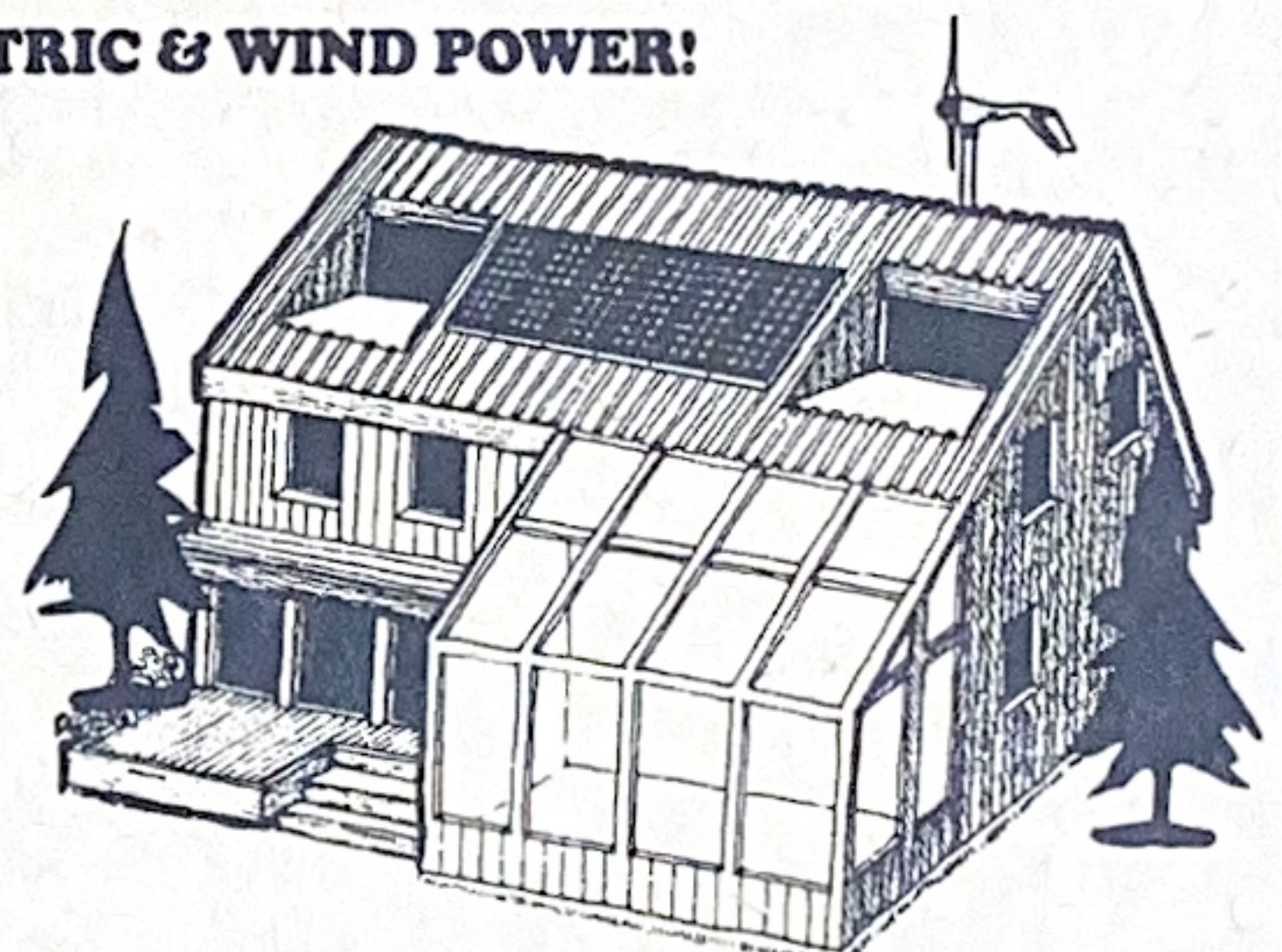
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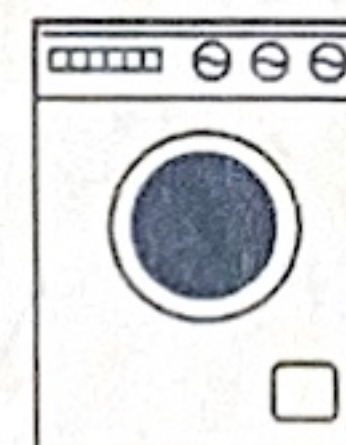
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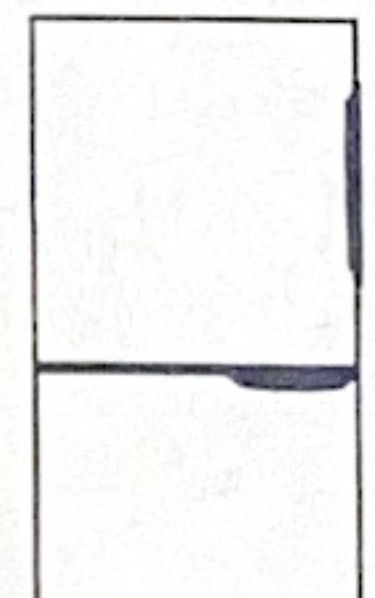
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WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER,

and Last Fall, and Most of The Winter

By David Nickarz

I recently returned from the west coast of the United States after volunteering for 6 months on the Sea Shepherd III, one of two marine vessels from the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

We spent October and November of 1998 protecting Gray Whales off the coast of Washington State. The Makah are claiming a treaty signed with the U.S. government gives them a right to hunt Gray whales. The U.S. government agrees, although the International Whaling Commission, the body responsible for overseeing whaling around the world, did not sanction this hunt. The Gray Whale is also listed as endangered under an international convention (CITES), but has been de-listed in the United States.

Dangerous precedent

A successful kill by the Makah would set a dangerous precedent of 'traditional necessity' as justification for whaling world wide. The Japanese, Norwegians and Icelanders will claim the same justification and undermine the 1986 moratorium on commercial whaling.

The Makah whalers claim to be hunting for tradition. Makah Whaling Commission president Keith Johnson stated that the killing of the whale would bring the tribe together. According to Johnson, killing a whale would end suicides, alcoholism, drug addiction, and domestic violence on the reservation. He never bothered to prove exactly how these miraculous transformations would take place.

Makah elders opposing the hunt stated, "There is no spiritual training going on. ...our people haven't used or had whale meat/blubber since the early 1900s. For this reason we believe the hunt is only for the money."

The Sea Shepherd uncovered documents through the Freedom of Information Act that did show the hunt was a commercial venture. A 1995 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) memo stated "The Makah intend to harvest Gray Whales, Harbor Seals, California Sea Lions, Minke Whales, small cetaceans such as Harbour Porpoise and Dall's Porpoise, and, potentially in the future, Sea Otters. The Makah are planning to operate a processing plant so as to sell to markets outside the US. The Makahs have started discussions with Japan and Norway about selling the whale products to both countries." This put to rest any notion of a spiritual hunt by the Makah whalers.

The 1998 Gray Whale Campaign

October 1, 1998 - The Sea Shepherd III and the Sirenian anchored in Neah Bay, Washington to protect the Gray Whales from the Makah whalers. Along with the 2 Sea Shepherd ships there were a half dozen other animal protection groups on the water. There were even Whale Watching company zodiacs from Victoria helping with the patrols.

Even before we arrived we had to deal with hostile media who tried to paint us as racist for opposing the Makah's 'right' to hunt whales. This couldn't be further from the truth.

Paul Watson, founder and president of the Sea Shepherd Conser-

vation Society, has a long history of supporting indigenous rights. He served as a medic for the American Indian Movement (AIM) at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973. More recently, in 1991 Paul boarded and seized the replica Santa Maria in Puerto Rico, pre-empting the 500th anniversary celebration of the Columbus voyage. He secured a formal apology from the Spanish government for the conquest and exploitation of native Americans.

But, it was as if the media had already written the story. We were

the bad guys and the Makah Whalers were the good guys. Lost in the debate were the Makah elders who opposed the hunt and the evidence that Japanese and Norwegian whaling interests were involved.

Through October there were a few false alarms when we were told the hunt had begun and a whale had been killed. Upon investigation it was just the Makah whalers testing our reaction time. We certainly maintained a formidable presence on the water but the whalers had the element of surprise.

November 1, 1998 - during a peaceful protest in the Neah Bay marina a Sea Shepherd zodiac was stolen from the water by Makah residents. Two of the four Sea Shepherd people arrested were assaulted by the Makah Tribal Police Officer Eric Svensen. Shortly

after our people were arrested, their charges were dropped. Eric Svensen is now facing charges for two counts of assault. We eventually recovered our zodiac after months of delay, and the repairs will be paid for by the Makah.

Keeping an eye out

Most of the time was spent patrolling the waters of the Olympic Peninsula in small boats and zodiacs. The ship I was serving on was at anchor close to the town of Neah Bay. The crew took turns doing night watches on the bridge, keeping an eye out for whalers and anyone who might damage the ship.

We heard rumors the 50-caliber rifle the whalers plan to use to kill a Gray Whale would be used to shoot at our ships. A 50-caliber shot would easily penetrate the Sea Shepherd III's inch thick steel hull, the main engine and out the other side—and still have the energy to travel another mile. Fortunately this did not happen.

The Makah did not go whaling in 1998. In general the whalers had no idea what is involved with killing a 40 ton whale. Several whaling team members quit, one citing spiritual unpreparedness as a reason. At the end of November Mother Nature took over the campaign. Whaling would not take place during the winter months due to harsh weather conditions.

Even with all these problems the Makah whalers intend to continue the hunt in the spring of 1999 and the Sea Shepherds will be there to put a stop to it.

Dave is now catching up on forest issues and looking for work. Earth First! will be in the forest again this year and is looking for help. Marineland Niagara Falls intends to capture 6 Beluga Whales for its aquarium this year, likely from Churchill, Manitoba. To help, call Dave at 992-2319.

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BIOREGIONAL APPROACH

continued from page 3 ...

often enough, imagine and plan for alternative economics that depend on local needs. Lighting a candle can be a radical act.

Back to that plate of food: what is the difference in nutritional quality between: a) an apple that was picked before it was ripe in New Zealand, stored in a preservative gas, shipped to a distributor in Vancouver, then sent to my local Co-op store where I pick it up and put into our child's lunch bag and, b) an apple I get from my neighbour's tree?

Our apple trees are still young. I have caught myself buying apples from a great distance away during local apple season.

We can grow fine apples in Manitoba. Perhaps we need to make up and sign pledge sheets committing ourselves to buying locally-grown apples from a future local commercial orchard. Maybe than a grower or two or ten would rise up to take on the challenge. A few years ago there were virtually no local commercial garlic growers. Now there are a dozen or more. There is so much more that we can grow for ourselves and for our neighbours in the city.

Some of us may find it useful to make a list of everything we regularly stock in our kitchens.

Check off what you get from local sources and then begin, one item at a time, to look for local sources (and preferably organic and small farm sources) to replace the food bought from a distance. If I am committed to using some imported foods, like peanut butter for example, I need to find out where I can get an organic, fresh supply. I also need to find a trading company that pays a fair price to a distant farmer. Once we need to pay a fair price for our imported

foods, we will look more diligently for local alternatives like cheeses and bean spreads. This also frees the distant farmers to grow for their own local markets. We can change our habits and/or we can form empowering links.

Information is power. The best sources for information on local organic farmers in Manitoba are Manitoba Eco-Network in Winnipeg (they have a fine booklet) and the Organic Producers Association in Virden.

Co-operation is power. We can form local buyers' clubs and join Community Shared Agriculture ventures. Many local organic farms will accept labour in exchange for training and room/board. We who want to know where and how our food is grown are not a fuzzy-headed fringe group. We are quickly becoming the majority. Together we can influence the business and political authorities. Some European countries are far ahead of us in their efforts to encourage organic farming and in protecting their farmers. So speak to anybody who will listen.

Some of the changes we make will cost us more and some will save us money. We may need to adjust our expectations about how much of our budget we are willing to pay for healthy, fresh, secure food. If local farmers cannot make a living by growing food for us, we have to be willing to pay more for our food. Likewise our expectations may need to change about the cost of our power, transportation and housing.

Changing the dance

Food is a highly emotional subject. The farmers and cooks most dear to us want to believe that they are preparing food that is nutritious and safe. When we ask questions about how they grow and prepare food, our words are often interpreted as criticism. It is important to communicate gently and with positive options in mind so that, if there are hard feelings that arise due to our choices, the discussions with loved ones are centred on our concerns and not on the way we communicate those concerns.

Magdalene Andres and David Neufeld and their four children live on a wooded 160 acres in the Turtle Mountains on the edge of the prairie. They both worked for the Mennonite Central Committee in South Africa, Lesotho and Saskatoon for ten years before settling in the Turtle Mountains near where David grew up. They can be reached at: (204) 534-2303 or fax (204) 535-7202 or Box 478 Boissevain, MB R0K 0E0 or email: roomtogrow@techplus.com

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HOPE FOR THE PLANET

continued from page 1 ...

the way. There is fantastic hope for the planet and mankind contained within the needs of our populace, MAYBE.

But we must choose our way. If we choose profit we will stumble into sterility; factory farms, and fascist servitude. If we choose hope and health and magic we will sail into those same three things with the added bonus of an abiding salvation.

We have arrived. It's time to get the stuff to the tables. It's time to eat. It's time to give thanks. It's time to invite the neighbourhood kids into the garden. It's time to get culturally active. We've arrived. The water is beginning to clear. But we can lose this moment if we insist on continuing to squirt out the dark inks of political arrogance.

[People in] Winnipeg, Manitoba and North Dakota, hundreds of thousands of your neighbours feel, as do millions across North America, a curious crippling alienation. They see, too often, a kooky, sanctimonious, self-righteous, political fringe movement pushing 'organic food'. We've done this to ourselves. We politically active organic farmers and environmentalists have regularly shut more doors that we've opened.

It is ironic, the degree to which alternative farming politics come to employ the tactics of big government and big business. With rules and regulations and testing and tolerance levels and 'transitional zones' and legal definitions. We can never beat corporate ethics at their own game. Never. We should be embracing, culturally, the rapture of passionate independent dedication rather than the itchy tight underwear of compliance. We should know on a first name basis some of the farmers who raise our food. We should shake the hand of dedicated farmers who farm because they care.

Dedication leads to community. Compliance leads to corporate membership and fascist servitude. Healthy local communities will give us what we all want and need.

Mapping out cultural activism

Are we still open to reminder and reconstitution?

Central to any mapping of a cultural activism must be a solid understanding of the important differences between method and scale. We must not mistake 'better methods' (read 'Organics') as the solution. Organic agriculture, as a preferred method of choice for all of food production, can and should be a 'result' - a wonderful result. The premiere question is one of scale.

We want healthy food, healthy soils and healthy communities. We get these things by addressing the issue of scale. A land may produce food which measures 'clean' or organic and yet that land may be in poor health. Our goal should be a healthy fertile vibrant living soil. We do not have this with factory farming. We don't have this with monocultures. Our farms need to approximate gardens in their patchwork quilt diversity. Our farms need to be little churches. Common, crude, glorious little shrines to fertility and biodiversity.

In our political activism we ironically license and condone corporate organic factory farms. We play a dangerous game with legal definitions and forfeit the opportunity of the moment. The agrarian lessons of Thomas Jefferson, E.F. Schumacher, Scott Nearing, Mark Twain, Will Rogers, Woody Guthrie, Wendell Berry and others

can and, perhaps, should be distilled to a simplistic charge: 'we need a limitless supply of small independent diverse farmers. Therein lies our solution.'

Culture is community, Community is culture

We need to develop direct markets in inclusive ways as full community, as festival, as necessity, as theatre, and as a new definition of engaging convenience. We must bring everybody in and allow them to remain who they are and why they are. We must stop constricting our community. And the marketplace should be the beginning. We must allow the politically-disenfranchised, common working class folk to stake a claim to their corner of our marketplace. They must want to belong.

The enemy of community at any and every level of biological life is that which denies weave - denies connection. Political activism is reactionary (sometimes necessary). Cultural activism is constructive and preventive. It builds community which is immediacy, intimacy, touch. True community is culture.

Corporate ethic and centralization (with the industrial scales they require) are the murderers of flavour, health, diversity, song, self worth, and tradition. They deny weave. They deny connection. They deny community. Orthodox vertically-integrated, industrialized, chemically-intensive agribusiness is an unqualified and unholy disaster. It produces unhealthy, tasteless food. It depletes AND poisons the soil. It destroys immune systems. It destroys rural communities. It runs small family farmers off their land. It rapes the agricultural scientific research and development communities. It locks up and often murders for all time, invaluable genetic materials. It mutates and unleashes untested life forms. On and on and on. And this hideous IT - this monstrous agriculture - who or what guides and drives 'it'? One thing and one common thing alone - the corporate ethic.

But the good news is that it is poised on the cliff-edge of its own demise. The corporate ethic, in its insatiable drive for maximum profits and total market control, has the beast eating itself. Today's mega-mergers and buyouts with the resultant downsizing and looting can only result in fewer and fewer big businesses doing less and less and depending on accounting voodoo for self-justification. And the huge agribusiness conglomerates are losing enormous amounts of money with self-defeating forays into genetic engineering and macro-specialization. Cargill's wheat and Monsanto's canola do not feed people. Local celery and lettuce and fruits and rice and carrots and poultry and grapes and lamb feed people. The big business of agriculture stupidly, smugly insists on painting itself in the invisible paint of irrelevance.

The scale of individual and collective enterprise is paramount. Seed saving should be seen as a model of cultural activism, as preventive, as constructive. We need to understand how political activism and the defining and limiting semantics of conflict/solution (i.e. sustainable, organic, environmental, etc.) serve to alienate and, thereby, constrict community. There are critical specifics such as how political activism and corporate ethics serve to guarantee that sizable numbers of legitimate organic farmers will con-

See Cultural Activism on next page ►



MONSANTO AND BGH

continued from page 5 ...

According to a series of reports by Bill Lambrecht in the ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, Monsanto's overarching plan is to gain approval for genetically modified crops in Europe, then use the European imprimatur to sell its technology to Europe's former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

It won't be easy. In Ireland, Great Britain, France and India, farmer-led uprisings have burned and destroyed Monsanto's test plots. In India, Monsanto is growing genetically modified plants in green houses constructed of bullet-proof plastic. Monsanto insists its goal is "doing well by doing good" but farmers outside the U.S. are deeply suspicious. Of particular concern is Monsanto's latest genetic technique called the Technology Protection System, commonly known as "terminator technology." Developed with taxpayer money by the U.S. Department of Agriculture but patented by a Mississippi-based seed company that Monsanto has recently purchased, terminator technology is a genetic technique that renders the seeds of crops sterile after one or two years. This assures that Monsanto's seeds cannot be illegally saved and replanted year after year.

With terminator technology, anyone who becomes dependent upon Monsanto's genetically-modified seed will have to come back to Monsanto year after year to purchase new seed. By this means, Monsanto will gain a substantial measure of control over the food supply of any nation that widely adopts the company's genetic technologies. It is not a conspiracy, merely a shrewd business venture, but it is clear that Monsanto's goal is effective control of many of the staple crops that presently feed the world.

References:

[1] Kelly Morris, "Bovine somatotropin-who's crying over spilt milk?" LANCET Vol. 353 (January 23, 1999), pg. 306. For more detail on this story, see Brewster and Cathleen Kneen, "rbGH-for the last time?" RAM'S HORN No. 166 (February 1999), pg. 1.

[2] These big-name products include genetically modified ingredients Coca-Cola (corn syrup and/or Aspartame), Fritos (corn), Green Giant Harvest Burgers (soy), McDonald's french fries (potatoes), Nestle's chocolate (soy), Karo corn syrup (corn), NutraSweet (Aspartame), Kraft salad dressings (canola oil), Fleischmann's margarine (soy), Similac infant formula (soy), Land o' Lakes butter (rbGH), Cabot Creamery Butter (rbGH).

If you want to avoid genetically modified products entirely, stay

away from NON-ORGANIC tomatoes, potatoes, corn, soy, canola and yellow squash. Avoid corn syrup and fructose-which are in almost all beverages and sodas (even health food brands) and in almost all sweet products, yogurt and aspirin. Avoid non-organic corn oil, cornstarch, corn meal, baking soda, baking powder, glyucose syrup. Avoid soy; soy flour in baked goods, pizza, cookies, cakes, pasta; fillers in meat products (for example Big Macs), vegetarian meat substitutes (for example tofu, tofu burgers, tofu hot dogs), soy milk, infant formula, babyfoods; diet and protein shakes, protein bars; chocolate and candy bars; margarine; ice cream; pet food; soy oil in salad dressings and snack chips; soy sauce; lecithin and soy lecithin. In all, well over 30,000 products.

Aspartame-the artificial sweetener Equal or NutraSweet-contains a genetically engineered enzyme, as do most non-organic cheeses. Amylase (used in making bread, flour, whole wheat flour, cereals, starch), Catalase (used in making soft drinks, egg whites, liquid whey) and Lactase are all genetically altered.

Most livestock and commercial seafood are being fed genetically modified feed. Commercial pork has been genetically altered with DNA from human beings.

Data from Phillip Frazer and Annie Berthold-Bond, editors, NEWS ONEARTH, December, 1998, pg. 4.

[3] Bill Lambrecht, "World Recoils at Monsanto's Brave New Crops," ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH December 27, 1998, pg. A1.

More information is available from the Manitoba Eco-Network Resource Centre, or consult the following:

Canada's Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) at www.rafi.org; phone (204) 453-5259; fax (204) 925-8034; e-mail rafi@rafi.org.

*MONSANTO MONITOR, which is now being published in the Netherlands. Available via mail or E-mail. E-mail biotech@aseed.antenna.nl. Or write P.O. Box 92066, 1090 AB, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Website: www.antenna.nl/aseed.

In the US: Physicians and Scientists Against Genetically Engineered Food at www.psagef.org/sitemap.htm.

The Campaign for Food Safety at www.purefood.org; telephone: (218)226-4164; e-mail: alliance@mr.net.

Food & Water, 389 Vermont Route 215, Walden, VT 05873; phone (802)563-3300; fax (802) 563-3310. Their FOOD & WATER JOURNAL is must reading.

ECO

CULTURAL ACTIVISM

continued from previous page ...

tinue to refuse to participate in certification.

If a bunch of us get together to solve a serious problem and one person is driven from that meeting we have forfeited an opportunity to hold on to the solution. The solution was our getting together.

Community is paramount. Community, the result of cultural activism, is the key to preserving and passing on seeds, traditions, ideas, farms, etc. Community is a multi-level relay race where we pass on the batons. In such a place there would never be a shortage of next generation farmers. All generations would overlap in tight weave. The solution is in the cultivation of 'rathers'.

I know where I'd 'rather' my next meal come from.

Lynn Ralph Miller is the editor and publisher of the *Small Farmers Journal*, an international farm quarterly. He has authored several books of non-fiction, fiction essays and poetry including: *The Small Farm Dream is Possible*, *Why Farm?*, *The Workhorse Handbook*, *Buying a Farm*, *Work Horses Today and more*. He has conducted workshops and lectured extensively throughout the US and Canada. For twenty years he has produced and managed a large and vibrant annual auction and swap meet market event for small farms and horse farmers. He is father of five children (three surviving) and lives and farms part time with his wife, Kristi, on their high desert horse powered organic ranch.

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where a lone wolf howl may prompt wolf song from an elusive wolf pack. At the conclusion of the weekend share in interactive discussions on current regional and global wolf issues.

The entire weekend fee for field trips, educational sessions, accommodations, and all meals is only \$130 per person with all profit going to support wolf research in Manitoba.



Gloria Goulet is an authority on the gray wolf inhabiting the Riding Mountain Region. Since 1994, she has been monitoring the southwestern Manitoba wolf population. Results of her work and her research involving wolf DNA are in extensive reports prepared for Riding Mountain National Park and Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Gloria has experience as a university biology instructor, a natural history interpreter with Parks Canada, and as a facilitator in wolf conservation workshops. She is currently involved in developing a long term wolf conservation project.

For more information and registration call Sarah Goldstein at 204-755-3438.

The Manitoba Eco-Network, 2-70 Albert Street Winnipeg, MB R3B 1E7

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