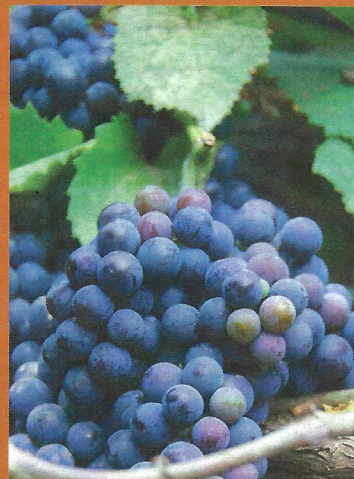
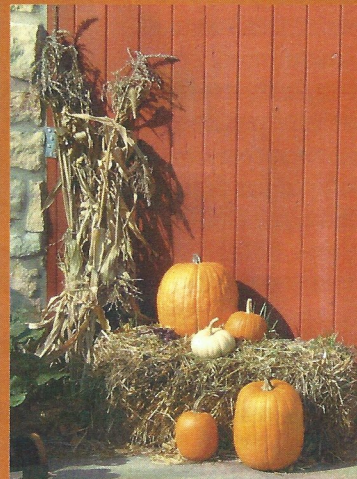
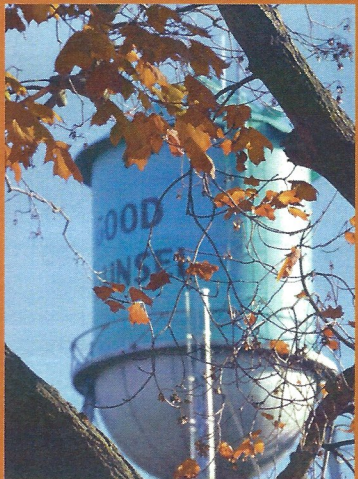


center for
Earth Spirituality
& Rural Ministry

FALL 2013

EARTH ALMANAC



Photos by Mary Kay Gosch, SSND

Earth Education



School Sisters of Notre Dame
Central Pacific Province

center for
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& Rural Ministry

Our Lady of Good Counsel Campus
170 Good Counsel Drive
Mankato, MN 56001-3138

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STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS, CREATING HOPE

“I do not allow myself to be overcome by hopelessness, no matter how tough the situation. I believe that if you just do your little bit without thinking of the bigness of what you stand against, if you turn to the enlargement of your own capacities, just that ... creates new potential. ... I think what we owe each other is a celebration of life and to replace fear and hopelessness with fearlessness and joy.”

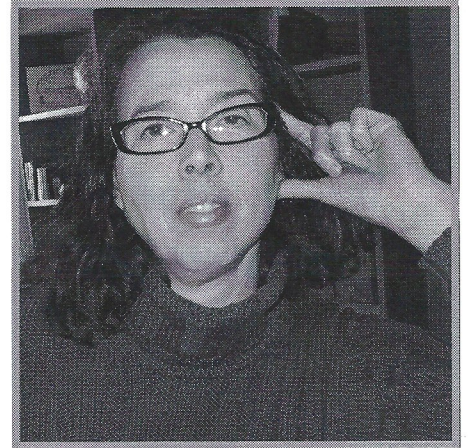
—Vandana Shiva

I return to these words of Vandana Shiva's at times when my spirit needs a little buoying. It's so easy to get overwhelmed by the sad, bad news that abounds. There really seems to be a lot of it. However, there is little room for hopelessness in our Earth work. So how do we NOT get overwhelmed by fear and hopelessness? I find in Shiva's words, the prescription for that ... “what we owe each other is a celebration of life ...”

We who are called to this work (if you haven't gotten the call yet, consider this newsletter your call!) often find ways to celebrate life whether it's in the form of a the newly sprouted seedling in the garden or the birds careening around in search of insects

or seeds or it's the gentle hand of a grandparent reaching for a small child who is seeking comfort. These daily celebrations of life allow us to find joy in the moments that enfold us. And these joyful moments do more than just make us happy. I believe they expand our hearts, our abilities and capacities for loving, even more. And it is in this expanded capacity where we can find our voices, our passions and indeed, our backbones to do our “little bit without thinking of the bigness of what you stand against.”

During these challenging times, it's important to take care of our hearts – and I don't mean a heart-healthy diet (though that's probably a good idea, too). In the Transition Movement, this is referred to as “Heart and Soul” work, the very important work that allows us to be transformed, to make an inner Transition even as we are working on transition initiatives in our



communities. I believe this growing recognition that there is an important inner component to our work is a good one. After all, isn't this what impels us to keep moving forward with courage and yes, even joy, to do our little bit?

Organically yours,
Lisa
lcoons@ssndcp.org



Red Barn damaged by fire to be rebuilt

THE BAD NEWS: The iconic Red Barn that greets visitors to the Hill was damaged in a fire early this past spring. What initially and from the outside of the barn looked like fairly contained damage turned out to be surprisingly bad. The entire second level was essentially burned out although the boards remained standing. The century-old and extremely dry wood structure fairly disintegrated in the heat of the fire and everything stored upstairs was a loss. However, all the tools and supplies in the main level were spared and gardeners were grateful to have these to use in their garden plots.

THE GOOD NEWS: The Red Barn will be rebuilt! Working with a local company, we are hoping to get the barn framed in and enclosed before winter sets in.

THE BEST NEWS: We will have a big celebration and blessing of the new Red Barn next year! (We are tentatively planning around the time of the Summer Solstice.)

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Melissa Martensen
Paul Prew
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Jeanne Wingenter, SSND

WHAT DO WE VALUE ABOUT FOOD AND AGRICULTURE?

BY KATHLEEN MARY KIEMEN, SSND, CENTER CO-DIRECTOR



If you were given the chance to share some values you have regarding the type of food you eat, what would you say? Do you think the majority of food companies, legislators, and your peers would agree with you?

Recently, I joined a group of 20 people at St. Peter Community Center who have been invited by Land Stewardship Project (LSP) to explore the theme Food, Farms and our Future. This gathering started with a sharing regarding the question posed above and joining nine other organizations in nine states doing the same. Why? We want to create a new **public narrative** about agriculture and food that will highlight and enforce our deepest values about these important aspects of our life.

You may ask, what is a public narrative and its purpose? One description is this: public narratives are certain stories that have power to shape people's conscious perceptions or understandings of what needs to

be done and what is possible about any given issue or aspect of life. Its purpose is to influence thinking and behavior. When a narrative is powerful and pervasive, **it becomes a dominant narrative that has much control in the market, with legislation and with the public.**

LSP and other groups are very concerned about what can be called the dominant narrative of agriculture and food. What would you consider the dominant narrative of agriculture and food? At this first gathering, the St. Peter group also explored this question and included these ideas among our long list of ideas:

- America has a responsibility to grow food to feed the world and can do so.
- Bigger and fewer farms and corporate production systems are better because they produce more food in the most efficient way possible.
- Profit is the best way to measure successful farming and food systems.
- Our food system is good because it provides choice, abundance and cheap food, giving freedom to consumers to choose what food they want and when they want it.

With members of these other organizations, this LSP group wants to create a strong narrative that offers another great option that the public can claim. It will indeed be a challenge! We at CESRM will continue to update you about this movement. Meanwhile, we know that leaders in Big and Corporate Ag are concerned

about the weakening of their dominant narrative. They have joined forces, and in the past year, 50 plus corporations and even non-profits have formed a group called Alliance to Feed the Future, whose mission is stated:

Raise awareness to improve understanding of the benefits and necessity of modern food production and technology in order to meet global demand.

You can find out more about them on their web site: www.alliancetofeedthefuture.

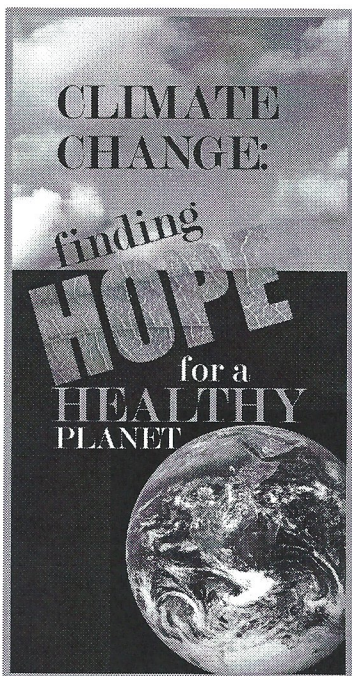
You can also check out a national group that we at CESRM respect, Center For Food Safety, to see how one can counteract this alliance movement: www.centerfoodsafety.org/alliancetofeedthefuture.

Meanwhile, I ask again: What are your values about food and agriculture? If you care to share them with us at CESRM, we will pass the ideas on to those involved in this great venture to create a better dominant food and agriculture narrative. Email at kkiemenssnd@yahoo.com.

CESRM would include these ideas in our list of values about food and agriculture: locally and organically grown; meat from animals that are treated rightly; food that is harvested and processed by people receiving fair wages and good working conditions; holding in esteem, persons in all phases of agriculture who claim and live these values.



UPCOMING EVENTS



8TH ANNUAL EARTH CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 9, 2013 • 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Climate change is happening. We will come together in a spirit of positive energy to answer the questions, "What kind of life will I live? What kind of life will we live together?"

In this conference, we will focus on how we can move ourselves further than simply changing a light bulb or shopping with reusable bags. We recognize the need to move past the disbelief, the apathy and the fears holding back ecological balance and recognize climate change for the moral issue that it is.

Duane Ninneman, the keynote speaker for the 8th Annual Earth Conference, understands citizen engagement well. He is an educator, organizer, and network weaver and believes that the climate movement needs to grow deeper roots with people to be effective. Ninneman recognizes the need to engage everyday activists on a regular basis in a strategy that encourages new leaders, new relationships, and a new climate story that is values-based, deeply moral, and just.

Our afternoon panelists addressing climate change will include the perspectives of J. Drake Hamilton from Fresh Energy, Rob Bergh from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Monika Antonelli from Transition Mankato. Join us on this learning journey!

To register, contact Lisa Coons at 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndcp.org.



WINTER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Saturday, December 21, 2013

4:30 p.m. Snowshoe hike

5:30 p.m. Light supper and seasonal reflection

7:00 p.m. Bonfire

In the midst of the hectic holiday season, plan in some simplicity through this gathering. The ancient tradition of a community bonfire will celebrate the sun's return.

\$10 – \$20 sliding scale donation

RSVP by December 18 to 507-389-4272 or lcoons@ssndcp.org

And in January... Watch for re-skilling workshops, films and the winter book club!

Our work is deeply enriched through the volunteer support and financial gifts made by supporters. We have many people to thank for their generous donations of time, talents and resources toward our work. We are grateful for how the following people and organizations have enabled and expanded our work over the past several months.

Your gifts make a difference – thank you!

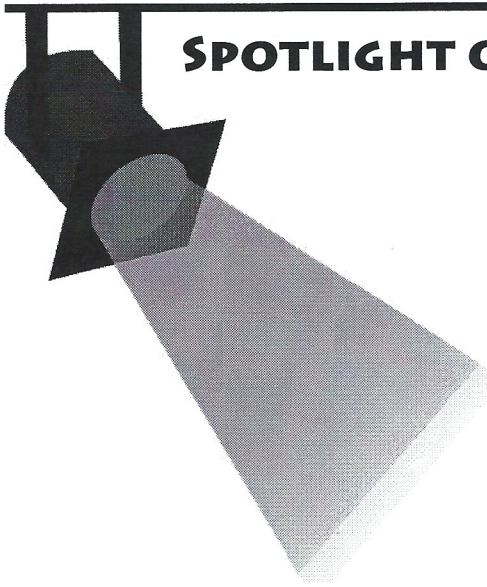
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Lynn Russ
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Jason Toupence
Jim Vonderharr
Jeanne Wingenter, SSND
Terry Wolf

Drummer's Garden Center
Riverbend Academy
student volunteers:
Holly Barkheim
Christian Meyer
Alex Simmons
Mac Tiegs
Manda Tietje
Jim Timmerman

SPOTLIGHT ON A VOLUNTEER



Many thanks to Sheila Onzere

for her work in the gardens this season! Sheila helped to harvest and deliver produce from our gardens to the Welcome Inn and Theresa House, our local homeless shelters, all season.

"My motivation is mostly selfish," she says, "I love the gardens. They are so lush and beautiful. I love to see the effort people put into their gardens."

She says that the peacefulness at the gardens is the thing that she loves the most.

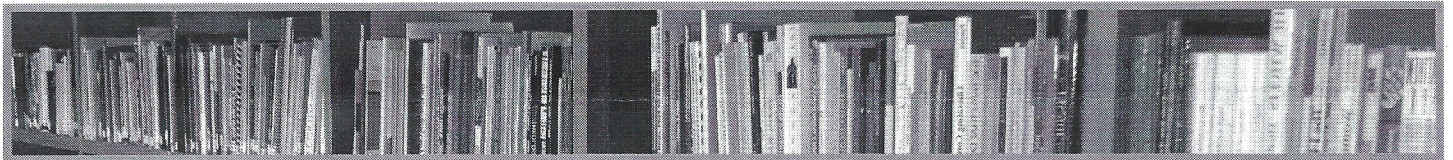
"At the end of a long day, working in the garden is stress relief for me. And I like that the food is going to a homeless shelter. Food is a way to connect to other people."

Sheila remembered the story of a friend who found herself in a homeless shelter. The friend felt depressed and worried about her future and her children. The thing that gave her friend the most solace was to make homemade salsa in the kitchen with fresh garden produce that someone had donated.

"I saw how much having that fresh produce transformed her feeling." Sheila was moved by how such a small thing can give someone hope.

Sheila is not new to the concept of food as community connection. She works for the University of Minnesota Extension as a community food systems educator. Changing community food systems is a new way to shape public health. "We used to think of health in terms of an individual. Teach them to make healthy choices, and they will. But we are finding that a person's access to healthy food and their food environment is more important in shaping a person's health."

Thanks again to Sheila for offering her time and providing much needed service.



BOOK REVIEW

Tomatoland: How Modern Industrial Agriculture Destroyed Our Most Alluring Fruit

BY BARRY ESTABROOK

In *Tomatoland*, the author takes the reader along on his journey to trace a typical eating tomato from farm to plate. The style of the book is journalistic, as the author's background is that of a journalist. We meet many people along the way: farmers, migrant workers, tomato researchers, lawyers, activists, and spokespeople for agribusiness.

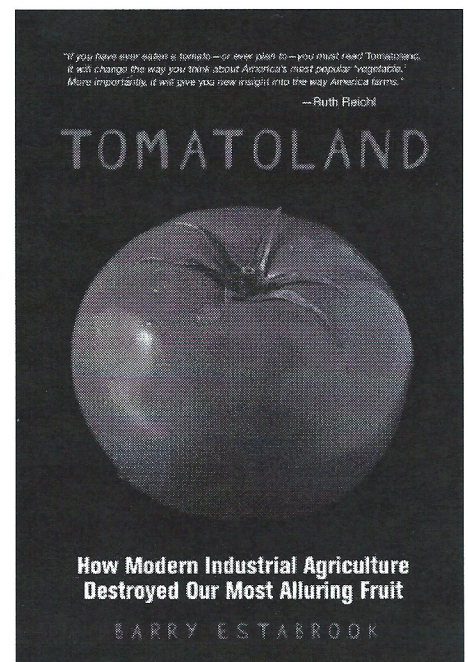
Sometimes the book reads like a jaunty travel-log, sometimes it spotlights people who are working to change the system, but most of the time the book chronicles the stark and horrifying reality behind the growing of America's eating tomatoes in Florida.

The reality is a system dominated by large companies and politicians that

turn a blind eye to abuse of workers and use of toxic pesticides. Even a cynical consumer such as myself was shocked by some of the things I learned from *Tomatoland*. I did not know that modern day slavery exists in Florida, not virtual slavery or slave like conditions, but actual slavery, where undocumented migrant workers, who do not speak English, are recruited, kept in confinement, sold to other bosses, threatened and beaten if they do not work or try to escape.

If you can stomach it, *Tomatoland* is worth the read. It may change your mind the next time you are dying for a fresh tomato in the middle of the winter and reach for a plastic pint of perfect little plum tomatoes from Florida.

REVIEWED BY LYNN ROZEN



THE CENTER FOR EARTHY SPIRITUALITY AND RURAL MINISTRY'S **REAL FOOD FOR REAL PEOPLE**

The key to good local eating in winter is to take advantage of easily stored vegetables. A refrigerator, emptied of unused condiments and questionable beverages can be packed in with locally-grown great tasting root vegetables like carrots (with the tops trimmed off to discourage sprouting), turnips, beets and rutabaga (reclaim the rutabaga!) and stored for many months. Locally grown storing potatoes, onions and garlic kept in a cool dark place also keep for months.

Reclaiming-Our-Roots-Root-Veggie Fries

Use any root vegetable and get adventurous because roots are a great way to add local food to your fall and winter menus! Choose from starchy potatoes, carrot, turnip, sweet potato, beet, parsnip, celery root, or rutabaga.

Root vegetables of your choice!

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cut the vegetables into ½-inch-wide spears and toss in a roasting pan with olive oil and garlic to coat. Keep peels on; that's where the vitamins are.

Roast for approximately 40 minutes, turning regularly until all sides have turned a golden brown and the fries are cooked straight through.



Super Sweet Potato Kale Soup

This combination is a locavore's dream. Stock up on local sweet potatoes and enjoy this soup all winter. Kale gets sweeter after a frost and can be harvested even after being frozen!

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup chopped onion

2 teaspoons minced garlic

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

4 packed cups roughly chopped kale

1¼ cup peeled and roughly chopped, orange sweet potato

4 cups vegetable or chicken broth

salt & pepper to taste

Saute onion and garlic in olive oil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are soft (about 4 minutes). Add the nutmeg and cayenne and stir gently until it's very aromatic (about 30 seconds). Mix in the kale and sweet potato and cook to soften slightly and combine all the flavors (about 5 minutes). Pour in the broth or stock and bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer until the kale and sweet potato are very tender (about 25 minutes). Pour the soup into a blender and blend on high until it's smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

