



Stone Soup

May 1, 2007

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture
862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 508-371-4310 May Newsletter



ORIENTATION OF NEW SHARERS AND A REFRESHER FOR SEASONED SHARERS Saturday, June 9th at 1:30 PM Rain or Shine!

Remember to mark your calendars for this orientation. We will begin by discussing the ins and outs of picking up your vegetables, what to do with them when you take them home and how to handle "VEGETABLE OVERWHELM" or "NEW VEGETABLE SYNDROME".

Then I will lead a tour of the farm and discuss the techniques we employ in growing your food. We will talk about crop rotation, soil health, organic practices and how we work with nature to grow food that nurtures the body and mind. We will also meet several vegetables at various stages of growth. Even if you have been with us for awhile, come and join us. There is always something more to learn.



MOTHER'S DAY, MOM'S DAY MAMMA'S DAY, MA'S DAY By Kathy Huckins

However you say it, we have a great gift idea for you. Honor your favorite mother with a **FLOWER GIFT CERTIFICATE** from Stearns Farm CSA. We are selling a stunning card containing three coupons that entitle the bearer to pick three beautiful bouquets of any of the 50 species of flowers we grow, anytime from late July to the end of September. Just imagine the joy your mother would have coming to pick flowers in someone else's garden. No weeding. No hoeing. Just choose from a vast variety of colorful, scented, organically grown flowers. Maybe you could make an outing of it and come along. The cost for THREE bouquets is just \$20.

This is a gift she will always remember. To purchase a FLOWER GIFT CERTIFICATE, come to the farm any time Tuesday through Saturday from 9 to 5 PM. or order it on our website: www.stearnsfarmcsa.org.

PS: This is a great gift for other occasions as well. Think of people in your life who would love this thoughtful gift, and support the farm as well.



WEAVING BASKETS & NATURE By Kathy Huckins, Farm Manager

Photo by Claudia Gustafson

BASKET WEAVING ANYONE?

Each spring we cut back the willow bed in the flower garden. We carefully collect the canes and hope and wait for someone to come forth and lead a session on basket weaving. This year is no exception. The willows are waiting. Are you the person to do this? If so, let us know. We are looking for someone to lead a basket weaving session at our May Day Celebration.

NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER

I saw this statement on the cover of a book recently and was both dismayed and saddened by its message. Yes, we have moved ourselves and our children, by example, to value indoor time more than outdoor time. Our heads are busy with lots of activity, but the rest of our bodies are lacking in movement, especially the outdoor variety. We even exercise indoors now. We all have terrific excuses.

Here at Stearns we offer everyone the opportunity to be in **NATURE**--to breathe it, to see it, to smell it, to taste it, to walk on it, especially to listen to its message. We welcome families to come and work. We accommodate everyone to the best of our ability. We serve Stone Soup at lunch for everyone. We have created a Children's Garden and have lots of pick your own crops that can keep younger hands happy.

Next time you come to the farm, encourage your children to get out of the van and come with you to pick up your share. Plan your farm visit after your children come home from school, instead of rushing to pick up your share so you can meet the bus. Make the time. Give this gift to your children.

We all need to soak up the sunshine, get some soil between our toes and gaze up at the moon. We all need to feel the connection we have to not only the earth, but to our larger universe. Let's all take a few more deep breaths and express our gratitude for our special place in the sun. Then we need to start taking care of it. What better way then to teach the young, by example, the caring of our humble earth. I vote for a technology deficit disorder.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FARMER

By Nomi Sofer, Sharer

Photo by Claudia Gustafson, Sharer

For her fiftieth birthday Kathy Huckins got a new job—Farmer at Stearns Farm CSA—and her sons gave her a new wardrobe: overalls. Kathy's father, a dairy farmer from Minnesota, was on hand to teach her what each pocket was for. That was nine years ago. In the intervening years Kathy has learned how to grow every kind of crop imaginable, how to manage a diverse workforce and the importance of taking time off during the growing season.

Growing up on a working dairy farm taught Kathy humility and a work ethic, she says. But it didn't teach her how to grow vegetable crops. That she taught herself. Having founded a non-profit to produce and sell crafts made by older adults and home-schooled her two sons, Kathy was ready for a change; she'd been looking for a way to get involved with a farm that was growing vegetables for needy people when she heard about the open position at Stearns Farm. After she got the job, she set to work learning how to grow vegetables on a large scale. Kathy was hired in the fall, and after putting the farm to bed she spent her first winter talking to every CSA and crop farmer she could find. That spring her first crop of carrots generated more compliments, and thanks, than anything she had done as a home-schooling mom for the previous twenty years, and the satisfaction was tremendous.

Kathy's mainstay at the farm is her husband, Brian Huckins, who might be described as "volunteer-in-chief." Recently retired from his career as a software engineer, Brian takes care of all the machinery and infrastructure on the farm, builds and repairs anything and everything, trains new farmers and field hands, and generally does anything that needs to be done. When he isn't working at the farm Brian makes farm equipment and metal sculptures, one of which is being shown in an exhibit in Brunswick, Maine this spring. Brian says that his favorite things about working at the farm are being useful and working outside doing tangible, real work.

Now in her ninth year of running the farm, Kathy has developed processes and practices that help her fulfill her mission of working in partnership with nature. She is especially proud of the ways she has increased efficiency and balance at the farm, as it has grown from 50 sharers in 1999 to 160 today. Her greatest challenges, Kathy says, are maintaining her trust in herself and working closely with the diversity of people at the farm. This year brings a fresh challenge for Kathy, as she takes over the job of managing all the workers on the farm: field hands, work-for-sharers, volunteers, and sharers performing their required work. This will leave less time to spend in the fields, and finding a balance between field work and managerial duties will be a challenge.

Kathy feels tremendous gratitude for the gifts the natural world gives us; in every decision she makes about the management of the farm she strives to achieve and preserve a balance between the needs of humans and nature. Kathy often describes Stearns Farm as a little piece of heaven in the middle of suburbia; look for her as she tends to our shared paradise this summer.

SO, WHO ARE THESE VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS?

By Sara Abramovitz & Gudrun Baubock

Ok, so you have been reading about the new structure at the farm that is being worked on and that now there are 2 people who are working to try and 'manage' all these additional volunteer opportunities....

It is time to formally introduce ourselves. **Gudrun Baubock** has been involved with the farm since 2000. She has been a work-for-share ever since. Gudrun served on the Board from 2005-2007 and began leading the Children's Garden in 2006.

Sara Abramovitz joined the farm as a sharer in 1998, a year before Kathy! She served briefly on the board in 2000-2001 and is now in her 4th year as a work for share. Both Gudrun and Sara have always been drawn to do some of those little 'extra' tasks at the farm, helping Kathy or working to keep the farm running smoothly. They are now willing to help energize and encourage other people to join them in a feeling of a collective sense of responsibility.

This is our farm -- it belongs to all of us. There are jobs available that are a one hour commitment and those available for the whole season. We are looking to find people who are willing to work closely with others and be coordinators in a wide variety of areas on the farm. There is something for everyone!

If you have not filled out your survey, click <http://stearnsfarmcsa.org/volunteer-ops-form.htm> or it is now available on our website. Please do consider helping out and giving beyond your required field commitment. We are hoping that everyone who is part of the farm will find something that is meaningful to do. We are open to any ideas for tasks -- Please feel free to contact us!

We will be calling all those folks who have responded in the coming weeks. We really want to make this new organizational structure work. It will take effort from everyone and we need your input! We look forward to connecting with you and getting your input!

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Sara Abramovitz
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Stearns Farm Volunteer Coordinators



SPRING FARM WORK REPORT By Kathy Huckins

The greenhouse is buzzing with lots of activity. Thousands of seedlings are busy growing for us and thousands more need to be transplanted both in the greenhouse and out in the field. We planted the **peas and spinach last week and have been preparing beds for our collards, kale, chard, onions, bok choy, lettuce, greens, carrots, beets and scallions.** We have been pruning and composting the raspberries, removing the straw on the strawberries, giving our onions a haircut and building the beds in our new herb garden. We have put up the deer fence so we will have vegetables to enjoy. Yes, the farm is a busy place and we appreciate all your help. Keep it coming. This next month is our busiest time. Remember not to come when it is pouring rain. After all it is Springtime!!

To sign up for a work shift, just go to our online system, following this link: <http://www.mysignup.com/cgi-bin/view.cgi?datafile=stearnsfarmcsa>

If you have any questions, please call Tom Yelton at 978-443-5138 or send email to webmaster@stearnsfarmcsa.org



EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

We have four machines that we are not using and need to move on. If you can give one of them a new home and some use, please come by the farm, **make an offer**, and cart it off. We do not have room to store them.

Mantis 50cc garden tiller/cultivator: It is an older machine, used, but we have never run it.

Yardman 5 HP front-tine rototiller: It is an older machine, used, but we have never run it.

Roto-Hoe Cut'n Shred shredder, approximately 5 HP: We used it for a time a couple years ago, but it's been under a tarp outside for the last 2 or 3 years.

Older Craftsman 10HP riding lawn mower, electric start: It runs and works, we have used it, but it is unsuited for the combination of weeds, grass and ridges that we have at the farm.



SHARER SURVEY SHEET THANKS YOU! From Kathy Huckins

The Grey cover-that houses our two Farmall Cub tractors and a variety of other farm equipment, was punctured last year by a tree limb. Last Saturday a new green covering was installed by **Sharer Brian Holland.** He had filled out the SHARER SURVEY SHEET, so we called him and he agreed to manage the task. Thanks to his work and the help of two other sharers, we now have a dry space again to store our farm equipment. It is wonderful to have the generous support of our sharers when we need jobs done at Stearns.



STEARNS ANNUAL APPEAL From the Stearns Farm Board of Directors

Back in the Fall of 2006, it was with hopeful hearts that we turned to the shareholders for your support both in the form of funds to support the infrastructure and physical plant of the farm and with your ideas for improving our operations.

You heeded the call—**31 amazing sharers contributed funds and together raised \$4,086.** Thank you for your generous donations. With those funds, we are:

- Purchasing a yellow and white 20 X 20 tent with 2 sides for the pick-up area
- Building the cold frame replacement benches that will be installed next week
*Thank you Brian for building and installing these
- Building a chicken coop/tractor for our farm
*We have the funds; however we are looking for a volunteer to take this on
- Investigating the instillation of a winter water system.

We continue to welcome your input, your skills, and your help as we dream and plan for the needs of the Farm. Please call or e-mail any one of us <http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/index.htm#boardofdirectors>



STEARNS FARM

SPRING CELEBRATION

SUNDAY, MAY 6TH, 2007

10:00 – 12:00

Strawberry Planting

12:00

Potluck:

Bring a dish to share

Remember to bring **plates, cups and silverware. We will not provide disposable dishes.**

Farmer's Welcome
By Kathy Huckins

Stone Soup
Read by Brian Huckins

1:00

May Pole Dance
Music by Jim Guinness

Playing music together (bring your instruments!)

Sunflower planting