



Stone Soup

Stearns Farm CSA • Community Supported Agriculture
February 16, 2006 862 Edmands Road, Framingham, MA 01701 508-371-4310 Vol 7, No. Wtr NL



SEASONAL THOUGHTS

From Scott Cleveland,
Stearns Farm CSA President
Board of Directors

“Whenever I stop by the farm during the winter, particularly after a beautiful snowfall, I try to imagine what it looked like on one of those humid August days of last summer. Long winter shadows have replaced eight-foot tall sunflowers; the occasional chickadee or titmouse looking for morsels of winter food replaces busy butterflies and hummingbirds of summer.

Yet, several days of warm sunshine remind us all that spring is coming with exciting new life blossoming all around. The Board of Directors has been busy getting ready for the 2006 season. The budget has been finalized and seeds have been purchased. We are looking forward to another productive and enjoyable growing season, and we hope that as shareholders, you make the most of your experience at Stearns.

We will soon be setting dates for the spring cleanup and Opening Day. We need your help in those early weeks of the season to give our crops a strong and early start. Please plan to volunteer some of your fieldwork hours in this busy and vital period.

For our Farm Manager, Kathy Huckins, and the Board of Directors, I welcome back our loyal shareholders, as well as newcomers who will experience the delight of naturally grown, local produce, fresh from the farm to the dinner table.”



ASSISTANT GROWER NEEDED

A great opportunity for an experienced person to become an integral part of our farm. Click on <http://www.stearnsfarmcsa.org/asst-grower.htm> for a detailed description of the position.

Send resume and cover letter via email or post to:
huckins@charter.net Kathy Huckins
Stearns Farm CSA
67 Cedar Hill Road
Northboro, MA 01532

IT'S A BOY!

Sharers Sarah Larson and Mike DiPalma welcomed a baby boy, Anthony Jacob Larson DiPalma, “AJ” for short, on February 11th. He weighed 7+ pounds, welcome to Stearns family!



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING THIS WINTER

By Kathy Huckins, Stearns Farm CSA
Farm Manager

A couple of landscaping companies delivered numerous loads of fall leaves that were piled by the exit for use on the fields in the spring, and back by the compost pile to be mixed with the manure that was delivered during the farm season. Brian started to build our next compost pile using the front end loader on the tractor, but it was too mucky so he'll wait till it dries a little. In early December, he put about 4 inches of leaves on all the garlic beds as well as the 2000' of strawberries, using our manure spreader. He had to apply them over the snow, because we needed to finish the job before we left for Guatemala on December 12th.

MORE VARIETIES THIS YEAR:

Last week we met a delivery truck with two pallets of greenhouse potting soil from the Vermont Composting Company, that we will use this season. With the help of a couple of sharers, we moved the 50 pound bags to the greenhouse. The Crop Plan has been completed for this coming year and the seeds have just been ordered. We will plant 129 varieties of vegetable seeds representing 44 vegetable crops; That means we'll be growing 13 varieties of tomatoes, 7 varieties of sweet peppers, 8 varieties of winter squash, and 4 varieties of beans, broccoli, onions and eggplant, to name a few. For the cutting garden we will grow 81 varieties of flower seeds representing 37 flower species. As last year, we will have some perennial herbs and the small fruit varieties of strawberries, raspberries and a taste of blackberries and blueberries. It is a full, varied and colorful pallet to anticipate.

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR:

Following the suggestions on the survey you filled out at the end of the growing season, we are adding the following crops and varieties to our crop plan:

- A spring and fall variety of Broccoli Raab; Collards; Golden Beets
- A summer squash called Flying Saucer (I hope it stays in the field)
- Three new varieties of Basil, Thai, Lime and Red Rubin
- A few more flower species.

So get yourselves ready for lots of wonderful tastes and textures this season!

NUMBERS FROM THE 2005 GROWING SEASON:

During the last season, we harvested a total of 48,000 pounds of produce on the 40 harvest days. That did not include the Pick Your Own produce. 5,000 pounds of that was tomatoes; 3,000 beets, 3,000 carrots, 2,200 sweet peppers, 4,500 summer squash (remember all that squash!!) and 3,400 head of lettuce.

HERE'S TO ANOTHER BANNER YEAR IN 2006!

WORK FOR SHARES NEEDED

We need about 10 people who would be interested in becoming a work for share-er. You must be physically fit and commit for the whole season. Some of the duties you will be performing from mid-April through mid-November are: early on planting work, bed preparation and harvesting during the week. Just be aware, we work under any conditions, but within reason. A "WFS" would be responsible for working 1 day a week from 8:30am-12:30pm which includes a "Stone Soup" lunch afterward. You will have 2 days off during the season. There is a \$75 administration fee for this position.

In exchange, as a WFS, you will receive a generous share each week, become a part of a community of people you see often, take in the meditative surroundings of our beautiful farm and, as a plus, you get first pick of the day's bounty!

An **Herb Garden Coordinator** is also needed. Knowledge of herbs is required. Please contact Kathy Huckins for more information on this position. Benefits are similar to the WFS listed above.

If you are interested in any of the above, contact Farm Manager, Kathy Huckins at 508-393-8695.

FOOD DONATIONS

Last year **5,370 pounds** of produce was donated to hunger relief. This was the food that was left over after each pick-up day.



"Who Gets the Rest"

By Cecelia Parks (Article reprinted from August 29, 2005 Stearns Farm Newsletter)

"Have you ever wondered what happens to all those beautiful vegetables still on the stand after you've filled your hod with your share of the day's harvest? For many years now, Kathy has intentionally planted a slight surplus, over what is committed to the sharers. As a not-for-profit farm, we have recognized our obligation to share our abundance with our neighbors. Every Tuesday the surplus veggies left on the stand at the end of the pick up are loaded up and taken to the Food Pantry at St. Bridget's church. Early on Saturday morning, the surplus from the Friday pick up is divided into three lots and delivered to three shelters in Framingham and Ashland. Two of the shelters are post-release shelters, the other is a short-term homeless shelter. Between them, they house fifty or more people at any given time. The cooks at these shelters are excited to see what's in the bags each week and the residents are always enthusiastically appreciative of the fresh, organic food. Volunteers from one of the shelters have come to the Farm to help Kathy with harvesting, in the past, and she plans to call on them again. Last summer she sent them home with lots of tomatoes after they had helped harvest. It seems the perfect way to round out the satisfaction we sharers get from the produce by sharing it with others.

STEARNS FARM CSA ANTHOLOGY SUBMISSIONS

A Hawk's Gratitude

By Tim Jung

Stearns Farm sharer

You may not think I'm watching, but I am.
From my perch I see you work the land.
Planting, weeding, harvesting
You take good care of all the things
My own prey like to eat.
I would tell you thanks if I could speak.

You may not think I'm watching, and that's OK.
I'm glad you don't use any nasty sprays
That burn my eyes and feet and tongue
And stick inside my tender lungs
And make my egg shells weak.
I would tell you thanks if I could speak.

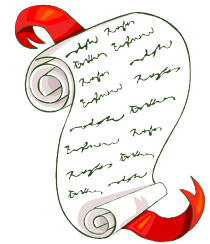
You may not think I'm watching, but I do.
Sometime I'd like to come and talk with you.
But when I light upon a post
The words get stuck down in my throat
Or in my hooked beak.
But I would tell you thanks if I could speak.

Basil, July

By Karen Soorian
Stearns Farm Sharer

In the high hot sun
the long row
sways
a great green conga line
the shiny leaves like
so many
outstretched hands

Everywhere
the air
fills
with their perfume
they are merrymakers
reveling
in their own
precious abundance



LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO STEARNS

To Kathy and the Stearns Farm Board,
"As the 2005 growing season becomes a memory – and a freezer full of delicious organic vegetables for my family during the winter – I would like to thank all of you for making community service such a strong factor at Stearns Farm. That attitude makes the farm a very special place."

Joan Friedman
(2005 work-for-sharer)

READ ON!

ANOTHER LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO STEARNS FARM



New England Aftercare Ministries, Inc.

P.O. Box 136, Framingham, MA 01704 • Telephone and Fax (508) 872-6194

October 13, 2005

Ms Kathy Huckins
Stearns Organic Farm
864 Edmands Rd.
Framingham, MA 01701

Dear Kathy,

Almost another harvest has passed and once again Stearns Organic Farm has blessed us with a bounteous and varied array of vegetables for which we are very grateful.

Please extend our gratitude to all who have participated in this years sowing and reaping of the wonderful squash, carrots, beets, lettuce, spinach, cukes, tomatoes, peppers and so much more. It was also a joy for Keith and some of our residents to spend some time out in your fields to get a hands on for how our creator provides.

Thank you again for the wonderful work you do and again, I pray the Lord's blessing upon the fields, equipment and people employed to bring such a wonderful harvest to ours and I'm sure others' programs.

Sincerely Yours,

Ed Bolton
Director of Operations

GUATEMALA

A Trip Made by Farm Manager Kathy Huckins

This past December Brian and I traveled to Guatemala to visit our sons Galen and Andrew. They have been living in the city of Xela, in the western Guatemalan highlands, for the past year. While we were there Galen turned 19 and Andrew 21. They rent a house with a few other people and make their living playing jazz gigs together in restaurants and cafes. They also teach music, Galen the keyboard and Andrew the guitar. The boys are thriving there, highly respected and appreciated for their talents and inclusiveness. Through them we met dozens of people who love and admire them. They have fostered a reputation that would make any parent proud.

From the time we arrived, Galen had been preoccupied with a concert that he was putting together. He had gotten the Xela Municipal Marimba Band interested in jazz, arranged some jazz standards for them, and organized a few more musicians to join them. We don't know what we expected exactly, something like a concert in an open square or maybe a few tunes at a festival and then some beer and tamales. The concert flyer, however said "Galen Huckins and the City Present...." The venue was the classical 3-tiered municipal theater in the center of the city. Andrew was the sound technician. Several hundred people showed up for the 1 1/2 hour show. We sat in the second level center box seats, where the mayor would normally sit. It was an excellent program of jazz. The musicians were Galen leading on the grand piano, a saxophone, a clarinet, a bassist, 2 marimba players, a singer, snare drums and congas. Just before the end, Galen took the microphone and introduced the band. He then dedicated the next song, a jazz version of the Beatles "Blackbird" to "mi Mama". This is the song that he played at home for me the day he left a year and a half ago. Brian and I both sobbed happily. We had arrived in Guatemala two days earlier and if we had left the next day the trip would have been worth it. It is a memory I will cherish always.

But we stayed a whole month and had a wonderful time. We visited a village of Mayan people who have been displaced since their village was destroyed by hurricane Stan, so Brian could repair some gasoline-powered corn grinding machines for them that were not working. Brian went to Itzapa 3 hours away from Xela to visit Maya Pedal. They build pedal-powered machines, corn grinders, nut shellers, blenders, etc., for local people, using parts from used bicycles donated by groups in Canada and the US. Galen and I went to a nearby town to see the dying of the cotton thread that is used for weaving their colorful clothing. We went to Momostenango, an hour away, to visit Luis and Thelma and their children, a Mayan family who make their living selling yarn and blankets that they weave at their home. Yasu, a Japanese man promoting organic farming in Guatemala took us an hour west to meet Victor, a Mayan farmer, and to see Victor's organic farm. We went to Panajachel on Lake Atitlan to visit Jane Mintz, a woman from San Francisco who runs a weaving cooperative that helps local Mayan weavers and doll makers market their work in the US. She also grows an acre of medicinal herbs. I took a steam bath at a natural heated volcanic vent after hiking almost straight up for a few hours. We hiked up to a volcano on New Years Day.

The best part, though, was the time with our sons. They let us be part of their lives by living with them. There were long talks, shared meals, etc. And, we attended every performance they played. Their group, "Soltura", had regular gigs five nights a week, plus a couple of special shows. Their house has become a gathering point for local musicians. We woke up one morning to find 3 acoustic cellos in the living room. It seems that a string group from Guatemala City was performing at the theater in two days and needed more cello players. The group's director heard that he might have



Andrew and Galen playing at one of their Gigs



Displaced children from the Mayan village

some luck with the gringos. It turned out Yasu plays cello and so does Mia (our assistant farmer from Stearns who is also living with our sons). We went to that concert too.

We are now back, but I miss our sons already, I miss the everyday simplicity, I miss the energy, I miss the music. I miss the beautiful volcanic scenery and the gorgeous colors of Guatemalan Mayan clothing. At the same time, we were both thrilled to get back to our own firm bed, our own heated home, our own creature comforts. We're finding too, that the time spent in Guatemala has given us another push towards simplifying our lives and that is a good thing. I feel fortunate to have had this time in Guatemala with our boys. It's a great entry for our memory bank.

Cheers,

Kathy



Myself and a Mayan woman who helps cultivate and process the medicinal herbs

Here's a winter recipe for those of you who froze some of the vegetables last year!

Old-Fashioned Vegetable Soup

Makes 12 to 14 servings.

3 pounds stew beef	1 cup carrots, sliced
2 quarts water	1/2 cup celery, chopped
2 tablespoons salt	2 cups green beans
2 bay leaves	1 cup cabbage, shredded
10 peppercorns	1 medium onion, chopped
1/4 teaspoon marjoram	2 cups corn
1/4 teaspoon thyme	2 cups peas
2 cups potatoes, peeled and diced	2 cups tomatoes

In a large stockpot, cook beef in salted water until meat is tender. Remove beef from broth. Set meat aside. Into the stockpot, add the bay leaves, peppercorns, marjoram, and thyme. Then add in the potatoes, carrots, celery and cabbage. Cook until potatoes and carrots are tender. Add the onion, corn, peas, and tomatoes. Cook until all vegetables are soft. Add meat back into the soup and stir. You want to cook the soup with the meat 5 to 7 minutes longer.