



The Whole Villager

Whole Village is a Sustainable Farm Community

We are a group of people from a variety of backgrounds, singles and families, who have come together to build an ecovillage, creating an ecologically and environmentally sensitive farming community based on biodynamic principles and practices.

The Whole Villager is our quarterly newsletter, designed to keep our associates and friends up to date about our project and to help them develop stronger ties with our farm community. We plan to share information regarding community living, sustainable agriculture and land stewardship to promote our mission, vision and guiding principles.

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In This Issue

Maple Madness

New CSA Gardener
Grows
Biodynamically

Permaculture Plan
in Action

Greenhaven
Construction
Update

Recumbent
Bicycles

In Tribute to Peter
Viswanathan

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Maple Madness

By Meg Shirley

Writing this article in the heat of June makes me long for those cool March evenings we spent huddling around the fire for warmth, watching the sunset dance through the heat waves emanating from the crooked chimney, tending the boil often long past midnight...

Brenda and I began tapping trees on March 20th, with help from Matthew and Angela. We were just in time for the first and highest quality sap run of the season. We put approximately 40 taps in 30 trees, although the maple forest has much greater potential, that was more than enough to keep us busy.

We received a quick maple syrup lesson from Jay Mowat on the night of our first boil and then we were on our own. Despite being thoroughly confused by a special thermometer that seemed to have a mind of its own, the first boil was a huge success, producing almost 7 litres of syrup. The next day we consumed most of it when we had a big pancake lunch to celebrate.

We collected an average of 40 gallons every 2 days, which would take between 8 and 12 hrs to boil into 1 gallon of syrup. Mary, Brenda, Logan, Alta, Shelly, Joan (Shelly's mom) and myself all took turns tending the boils and bottling the syrup. Just about everyone made the trip out to the maple forest at least once to collect the sap.

A special thanks to Jay Mowat for lending us the equipment, to everyone who helped out and especially to the trees.

New CSA Gardener Grows Biodynamically

By Brenda Dolling

The tomatoes are ripening earlier than ever before. Brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage) are finally growing successfully in the gardens. Cheerful flowers appear among the vegetables. Chicken manure is composting on an earth energy line. Yes, there's new energy in the CSA gardens, not to mention busy activity, laughter and a zest for producing healthy, tasty food.

Lucie Bouffard is the reason. She is an experienced grower from Quebec, hired in February to manage the CSA gardens until November. Lucie's internship with the Saugeen River CSA has prepared her well, complemented by high stan-

dards, careful planning and an enthusiastic attitude. WV members are delighted to welcome her and pleased to see the garden expansion and infrastructure building.

Lucie's passion for producing high quality food is evident every day. From early morning until the light fades, she can be found planting, irrigating, teaching interns, weeding, and harvesting. The first lettuce resembled oversized roses and the herbs provide so much aroma and flavour. Both greenhouses are planted with heat loving plants to extend the season: peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes and eggplant.

"I'm pretty pleased with how things are growing," remarked Lucie. "I have an intimate relationship with the plants and I can observe their cycles. It's almost like they're my children. Some of the biggest challenges have been planning accurate quantities and delegating tasks." On a recent garden tour, the Farm Land Stewardship Mandate Group was impressed with the variety and quality of the produce.

Come and visit Lucie to learn about biodynamic agriculture, then view the gardens she manages so proudly with the help of two capable volunteers, Lyssandra and Rayne. Lend a hand with weekly weeding and harvesting. Better yet, purchase a CSA share and enjoy her wide variety of organic vegetables for 21 weeks.

Permaculture Plan in Action by Brenda Dolling

With the help of Credit Valley Conservation and, in particular, Brian Boyd, WV has planted 3200 more native trees on the farm this year. This results in a total of 8000 trees planted in 3 years. As part of a permaculture plan, designed with the help of landscape architect Brad Peterson from Guelph, the trees have been situated to provide shelter belts, wildlife habitat and corridors, sun traps, and windbreaks. Some have been planted to buffer the provincially significant wetlands, adding protection and replacing trees that had been destroyed by cattle in years past.

Many of the saplings have been mulched by volunteers and Grade 10 students from Robert F Hall Secondary School. Wood chips are waiting to be placed around the rest by future volunteers and members. The Whole Village tree planting program is also part of a formal conservation plan with Credit Valley Conservation. Members delight in watching the small trees become established and foresee the benefits in 15-20 years when they reach a good height.

Native shrubs and bushes have also been purchased and await transplanting from the nursery to the landscape around Greenhaven. The tree nursery exhibits diversity and beauty. We invite you to join us in bringing back natural borders and wildlife homes.

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Greenhaven Construction Update, July 3, 2005 by Jeff Gold

In the fall of 1998 I moved to what was then called Karalane Farm, a beautiful 200 acre property in the rolling hills of the Town of Caledon. I came there with my wife, Roslyn Levin, to live in and look after the farmhouse and grounds for her cousin, Pearl Karal. At the same time I began to work with a group of people who were collectively trying to realize a dream of sustainable living: a cohousing community on a biodynamic farm, sometimes referred to as an ecovillage. They called themselves Whole Village King. Many were parents with children in the Toronto Waldorf School in Richmond Hill.

Two years after joining Whole Village King, Roslyn and I suggested that the group consider Karalane Farm as a possible site for the project. Pearl was eager to sell the property. She fully supported the Whole Village vision and was willing to sell the farm privately. In the fall of 2000, eight members of Whole Village King took a leap of faith and signed an agreement of purchase and sale. The remainder of the original group gradually dropped out, as the new location was too far from the Waldorf School. In July 2002, after slowly but steadily rebuilding the membership, Whole Village completed the purchase. By March 2004 a building permit for our cooperative residence, Greenhaven, was issued.

The permit had been preceded by years of design meetings: learning Pattern Language, evaluating materials and methods; visiting and researching other ecovillages; meeting with planners, consultants, straw bale builders, engineers and architects; using a consensus decision making process to move things along. The original design program was very ambitious: passive solar layout; superinsulation; energy efficient windows and doors; ground source heat pumps supplying a radiant floor heating system; photovoltaic panels; wind generator; solar hot water heater; 'green' building materials; life cycle costing and

analysis; a mix of private, semi-private and public spaces; accessibility for the aged and the differently abled.

The basic layout of the house and its component parts had been fixed by the time work on the building pad was begun in February 2004, driven by a combination of the design Program, a restricted budget, insurance and bank loan requirements, zoning and Official Plan restrictions which only allow a “one-family dwelling”. The challenge for Denis Bowman, architect for Greenhaven and one of the founding members of Whole Village, has been to take the needs and desires of the members, combine it with our ambitious agenda, work within the bureaucratic restrictions and limitations of the chosen location and produce a building that meets the original expectations.

Greenhaven’s superstructure is built on a structural and thermal concrete slab, 8 inches (20 centimeters) thick. The slab rests on 3” (7.5 cm) of sprayed in place polyurethane insulation (R20 insulation value), which in turn rests on a platform of engineered fill excavated from behind the barn on the Whole Village farm. 17,000 feet (5,181 meters) of ½ inch PEX (cross-linked polyethylene) tubing are incased in the floor. Warm water from the ground source heat pumps circulating in the tubing heats the building. Greg Allen, whose firm engineered the mechanical and heating systems for Greenhaven, told us that, given the levels of solar gain, thermal mass and insulation, the building would never freeze!

The shell of Greenhaven consists of structural insulated panels (SIPs), manufactured by Thermapan in Fort Erie. SIPs have a core of polystyrene insulation with a skin of Oriented Strand Board on both sides. SIPs are four feet wide and from eight to sixteen feet long. They are extremely strong yet light weight and form the exterior walls and roof. Doors and windows have fiberglass frames. North, east and west-facing doors and windows are triple glazed, Argon filled, with low-E coating and an insulation value of R 7.7. South facing doors and windows are double glazed. The septic system starts with conventional low-flush toilets and ends with biological waste treatment through an engineered wetland.

Plumbing, ventilation, electrical and heating rough-ins have been completed. The next step in the interior of Greenhaven will involve inserting mineral wool sound insulation batts in all partition walls. After that the installation of dry-wall on the walls and ceilings will begin. Some members will merely stain and seal the concrete floors in their suites, but in the common areas we will use various combinations of slate, engineered hardwood or bamboo strip flooring and ceramic tile. The trim in the building will be oak we have milled ourselves from trees kindly donated by Denis Bowman. Cabinets made from strawboard will be assembled and finished on site.

At present, the exterior of the building is nearly complete. A layer of 1” rigid foam was applied to the outside of the wall SIPs to offset any thermal bridging due to the insertion

of solid wood farming at door and window openings, and along the top and bottom of the wall SIPs. A combination of cedar shingles, cedar siding and trim, and cement stucco has been used to great effect on the outside walls. The flat roof has been given an initial waterproofing with a layer of polyurethane foam. Additional layers of foam will be applied to create a 1% slope from the centre of the roof to the edges. Then a polyurea waterproofing membrane will be sprayed on. Topping that will be a drainage layer and then 4” (10 cm) of growing medium, followed by 15,000 plants, grown by Whole Village member Brenda Dolling. The final result will be a green, living roof!

Final grading of the site, installation of walkways, patios, flower beds, shrubs, trees and other landscape features are still to come. Thousands of perennial plants have been propagated on the farm in preparation for the final greening of Greenhaven.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated work crew, some of whom have been living in community with us for more than a year. Their skill and dedication have allowed Whole Village to construct a unique and beautiful building that, once it is complete, may attract attention from all over North America and even the rest of the world. I also want to thank the members of Whole Village for their unstinting devotion and hard work in making a dream of sustainable living into a living reality. And behind all of this are the hundreds of people who have pushed the Whole Village project along in various ways, and the thousands of people who created and transported the materials that we have used to create this complex and functional building.

We are looking forward to showing off the results of all this effort at an Open House scheduled for October 22, 2005.

Recumbent Bicycles By Mike Spark

My name is Mike Spark I live at Whole Village as a construction worker. On the side I build bikes - recumbent bikes or “bents”, as well as conventional upright “wedgie” bikes. I love recumbent bikes for many reasons. They’re a lot more efficient then wedgies, as in when you are doing

40 kph you expend 75% less energy riding a “bent” than you would if you were riding a wedgie. Of course, they’re both environmentally friendly modes of transportation. Bents also give you a better work out for your important quad muscles in your legs. Bents are incredibly comfortable, because your whole bum and back are supporting your weight. As you are surely aware when you ride a road bike or a mountain bike, your weight is being supported by a small area of your bum, your wrists and your feet. Naturally, it’s not too comfortable. Bents are also still fairly infrequently seen on the roads, so people notice you, which is good for safety, and, if this is important for you, may make you seem more interesting.

There are different types of bents: first there are two-wheeled bents available in short-wheel based (SWB), long wheel based (LWB), and compact long wheel based (CLWB) variations. Plus we have three-wheeled bents available in tadpole (two wheels in the front) and delta (two wheels in the back). And, of course, you can make most of these types of bents tandem, where you can have two cyclists on one bike. So there are a lot of options to choose from.

The question is - which one interests you the most? It’s a question of personal preference as well as a question of practicality. If you are a little older or if you simply want the best, a three-wheeler might be the way to go. If you live in the city and need maneuverability then a SWB would be the way to go or possibly a CLWB. If you bike mostly in the country a LWB or a CLWB would be the best for you. Trikes are the best in all situations because they are very maneuverable and very visible because they are the most unique bike on the road today. They are the easiest to ride because you don’t have to worry about balance at all, that’s not to say balancing a two-wheeler is hard but on a trike you don’t ever have to put your foot down unless you are getting off.. You can add a flag to any of the bikes to make them even more visible.

If you want help to decide which one is best for you, please don’t hesitate to call me at the village, I’d be glad to help you.

As for possibilities with a recumbent, you can add a fairing to deflect the wind and make your bent even more aerodynamic, making it even easier for you to get up to and maintain speed. Or go a step further and get a velomobile, which is a trike with a hard body-fully enclosed too! These are the ultimate in recumbents. The speed possible with these are amazing and the effort required is a fraction of that of a road bike or mountain bike. Velomobiles are meant for commuting. They can replace your car. Well, at least your second car. I can hardly wait until I can afford a velomobile.

I have a lot of upright bikes available, classic bikes, road bikes and mountain bikes. If you or someone you know is in need of a bike, call me, I’m sure I have a bike that would be perfect for you.

Thank you for your interest in recumbents and bikes in general! I hope to hear from you if you have any questions. Here is my email if you prefer. sparkmike@gmail.com

In Tribute to Peter Viswanathan

By Jeff Gold

When I first met Parameswara (Peter) Viswanathan, he seemed an unlikely candidate for membership in Whole Village. A native of India, now retired after many years as a Professor of Social Work at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Peter was a slight, frail man who with no experience in agriculture or intentional community. Still, he pursued membership with a quiet determination, in spite of the obvious reservations of his wife, Shantha and sons Hari and Sundar.

Passionately concerned with issues of social justice, sustainability and ecological restoration, Peter did not let the distance between Alton and Sudbury prevent him from reading and responding to a steady stream of Whole Village emails. He eagerly anticipated the day when their suite would be ready and he and Shantha would move to Whole Village.

Peter and Shantha, having a chat with Vic, in 2003

The members of Whole Village looked forward to living and working with Peter. He was enthusiastic about all aspects of Whole Village. He thoughtfully laid out plans for a garden devoted to heritage plants, which he called Vegetables of Variety.

In the middle of an exhilarating work bee, we learned of his sudden and unexpected passing on June 4, 2005.

I liked Peter very much. His gentle demeanor and quiet speech masked a fearless spirit and a strong will. At his memorial service in Sudbury I learned of the depth and breadth of his integration into the academic and social life of that city. I suddenly realized how much courage it took for Peter and Shantha to leave their support networks, their close friends, hundreds of acquaintances and the cultural life they had worked so tirelessly to create, to move to a strange place and live an unfamiliar life with a group of people they barely knew. I felt privileged that they had chosen to throw their lot in with Whole Village and I was saddened that Peter would never get to plant his seeds. I know Whole Villagers will gladly plant those seeds on Peter’s behalf and look after his garden with care and thoughtfulness.