



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 and support an ecologically sensitive farming program (CSA) based on organic, biodynamic and permaculture practices.

The Whole Villager is our periodical 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.

Winter 2009/2010

Whole Village in 2009

By Brenda Dolling



Whole Village Ecovillage turned seven this past year with many new and continuing initiatives to celebrate. Seasonal changes were marked with community celebrations of solstices, holiday meals and a harvest party for our gardeners. Our Bed and Breakfast business brought in new and returning visitors to spend time in community. We hosted a series of house concerts featuring touring Canadian and international artists. Neighbours, family and friends joined the community for dinners, work bees, games nights and outdoor fun days. Many generous volunteers helped us on the farm from March until November, bringing new energy to the community.

Our Community Supported Agriculture project worked autonomously this year with Graham and Yehuda co-managing the project as a separate farm business. The addition of Yehuda's draft horses for cultivating and seeding added a more sustainable dimension to the garden work (in spite of the broken fences and runaway team during haying!). The vegetable harvest was quite successful, although challenged by cool and rainy conditions. Extra food production allowed a winter CSA for outside subscribers. Graham introduced milking shorthorns in late summer so the antique butter churn is busy again. A few thousand bales of hay have filled the upper barn after eight days of collecting and stacking.

The CSA team and Whole Village members prepared new land for cultivation as we expand our fruit, dry beans and grain production. Additional native and fruit trees were planted to increase our totals to over 12,000. A record harvest of maple sap was collected from the maple bush in the spring. Harvesting and preserving of our own herbs and perennials kept us busy throughout the summer and fall, as well as 35 new laying hens. Our antique apple press provided delicious juices through the fall. Many students toured and participated in farm tasks to learn about their food production. Shane Snell has been helping to manage the project, repairing equipment and eco-renovating buildings, as our first Property Manager. In 2009, two former CSA gardeners, Natasha and Lucie, returned and are living here again.

In This Issue

Whole Village in 2009

2009 CSA Season in Review

Great Year for Maple Syrup

Solar Hot Water in Greenhaven

Interviews with the Young People at Whole Village

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2009 CSA Season in Review

By Graham and Amy

The Whole Village CSA continued to grow this season to provide vegetables for 65 families and members as well as to the Orangeville and Bolton Farmers' Markets. While there was not quite the heat that tomatoes, eggplants and peppers would have appreciated, other crops such as broccoli, cauliflower and greens benefited from the relatively cool and wet season. We all enjoyed a warmer than usual fall, which gave a little more time for some of the later crops and provided us with several nice days during which to bring in the winter storage crops.

The Winter CSA program was a new addition to the offerings from the farm this year. Our main CSA season runs from June through to the end of October. But this year, from November until February (2010), we provided a selection (albeit narrower than in the summer) of vegetables for our members. It gave us great pleasure to be able to extend our offerings into the winter season. A great deal of learning took place in the gardens and on the farm this year. We welcomed and toured visitors, volunteers and CSA members. Three apprentices developed an understanding of what it takes to grow food and support the farm.

Yehuda prepares a field with Sam & Sally for the 2009 Whole Village CSA.



To increase our ability to extend the season, we built a new moveable hoop-house. It can be moved back and forth in the garden when pulled by a tractor. The hoop-house provides a jump-start for early greens in the spring, then some extra heat units for heat-loving crops in the summer, and finally extends the season for greens into the fall and winter.



The 2009 CSA gardening team consisted of (from left) managers Graham and Yehuda, and apprentices Maurizio, Amy and Shannon.

We harvested and brought in 4500 bales of hay to fill the barn and feed our draft horses and dairy cows. Sally and Sam (Suffolk Punch horses) contributed their power to the work in the gardens and Penny, Dixie and Lily (Milking

Shorthorn cows) arrived in August to add the dairy dimension back to the farm. We have all enjoyed getting to know these animals, working with them, and developing our milking muscles!

Soon, as the days get longer, we will be starting seeds for next season's garden. We are looking forward to continuing the learning and growing and to the arrival of a calf in February. Many thanks to all those who made the 2009 growing season a success!



In July 2009, Whole Village members bought a nicely equipped used tractor to take over many farm jobs from the aging (1959) Massey Ferguson which has been used until now. The CSA team utilized the 'new' Kubota and here Yehuda is shown working on the machine that will make sheaths out in the back fields.

Great Year for Maple Syrup

By Shane Snell

On Thursday, March 5th, 2009, Yehuda and I headed up to the sugar bush to tap out our trees for maple syrup production at Whole Village. The group decided this season to use all metal gear in the forest (buckets and spiles) instead of plastic, so the number of actual taps was reduced to 152, from 167 last year.



Kathleen, Mary and Yehuda collecting sap.

We had just experienced some late winter thaws at the farm, in the weeks prior to tapping, so the snow was not nearly as deep in the bush as it was last year. The walking was therefore a lot easier, and we made good time, inserting all 152 spiles in ten hours. At the end of the day, we felt very good about our accomplishment.

It wasn't long afterwards that the sap started to flow as daytime sunshine and warmer winds started to wake the trees from their winter slumber. As usual, we began the daily routine of assembling an eager crew of Whole Village residents and friends to head up to the forest and empty the waiting buckets. We then would proceed to fill several large 40 gallon barrels, close to the road, so

that Jay Mowat (a neighbourhood farmer and good friend), could pick up the precious liquid at regular intervals throughout the week and haul it back to his place for evaporation. A few of us were involved with the boiling process at his farm as well.

Hearing reports from other sectors of the province, it is clear that 2009 was a fantastic year for sap collection, and we found that the experience at Whole Village was no exception. I believe we enjoyed our best year of maple syrup production on record! Many syrup producers think the vast quantity of sap running was a result of the weather conditions from the previous year, when the above average rainfalls built up the ground saturation levels. The 2009 season also lasted several weeks.

In the end, we sent enough sap to Jay Mowat's farm that the final amount boiled down added up to well over 200 litres of syrup! Maple sap boils down to syrup at a ratio of 30:1 to 40:1, depending on many complex variables throughout the season. Because we agree to give Jay half of the product in exchange for his boiling services, this means that Whole Village still received over twenty-five gallons! And so we have enjoyed the product all year, with more than enough for rationing it for ourselves throughout the months, using it for cooking and baking in our common meals at Greenhaven, and also gifting it to volunteers and special friends of the community. Everyone was delighted that it was a very good year for this locally produced food.

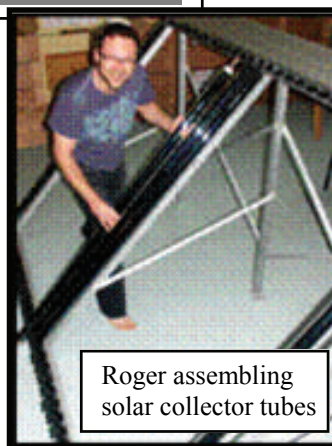
Solar Hot Water in Greenhaven

By Brenda Dolling (interview with Roger)

On the path toward reducing our dependence on the grid, Whole Villagers have been trying to reduce consumption while investigating a variety of renewable energy sources. Our Energy Committee recommended a solar hot water system to provide heat for our domestic hot water purposes as the most cost efficient renewable technology.

Roger Wapniarski, a Whole Village provisional member, took responsibility for managing the project. He researched the literature, signed up for courses, networked with others in the solar industry and is working toward obtaining his certification as a solar hot water installer.

The first step was finding efficient and good quality evacuated tube collectors. Since none are manufactured in North America yet, Roger ordered directly from a company in China. Instead of installing the system on the roof, the decision was made to mount the tubes on a



Roger assembling solar collector tubes

post and beam structure immediately east of Greenhaven. After working with an engineer and other expert professionals to design the system, Roger

obtained two permits from Credit Valley Conservation and the Town of Caledon. The hot water system will include two tanks and a pumping station procured from Canadian sources and lumber from Muskoka. Before the installation began, Whole Village obtained pre-approval of an eco-energy grant from the Department of Natural Resources Clean Energy Canada program of 25% and additional 25% from the Ontario Solar Thermal Heating Incentive program.

In November 2009 the post and beam structure was erected and soon the ten collectors, featuring evacuated solar tubes, will be fastened to the upper level 10 feet above the ground. Greenhaven residents look forward to reductions in electrical energy use, lower hydro bills and another small step toward energy self-sufficiency. The next planned renewable energy project is expected to be the installation of used photovoltaic panels to take even more advantage of nature's bounty.

Interviews with the Young People at Whole Village

By Brenda Dolling (and Kulikauskas family)

Robert Kulikauskas (age 14) – I was excited when I heard we were moving to Whole Village. First we camped out one summer then moved into Greenhaven in 2006. At Whole Village I've been doing things like gardening, archery, exploring and building forts. I've helped dig up potatoes, mulch, weed and I have eaten some of the edible ones. I've also been splitting wood for the masonry heater at work bees.

In a way we're isolated from kids my age now but the adults I've met here I know better than people I used to know in Oakville. At Whole Village we have community suppers where the cook prepares different meals for different diets (vegan and vegetarian).

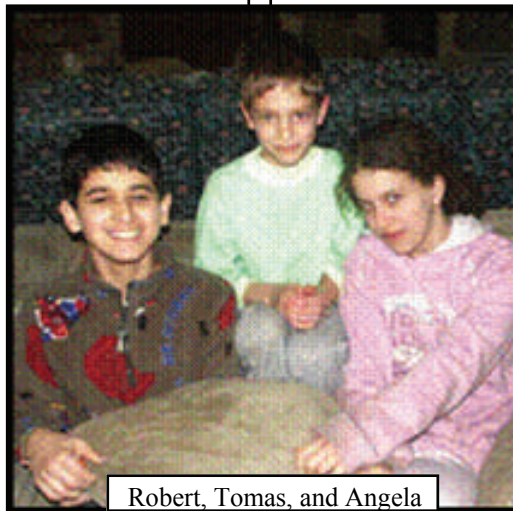
I dislike how animals are raised on conventional farms. If they're raised with respect then I will eat their meat, e.g. free range, organic and preferably local. I have greater respect for the animals which are raised on this farm because I have looked into their eyes and see them as living creatures, not only as food.

At craft nights and work bees I've gotten to know a lot of people in the community. Sometimes it can be frustrating with consensus decision making and waiting until check-in meeting before I can bring my concerns to the community. I would like to live in Whole Village or a place similar to Whole Village when I'm an adult. There are changes I'd like to make in the design and construction of Greenhaven, i.e. a green roof and multi-storeys. I don't think I could go back to living in the city or inside an apartment or small house with less green space.

Tomas Kulikauskas – I was 5 when I came to Whole Village and now I'm 8. The farm is a pretty good place. I like the nature and all of the animals. My favourite ones are dogs, horses,

chicks, ducklings and cats. Sometimes there are cool trees that fall down then their roots make a wall. I like to climb the roots because it's just as good as a tree. I also like to build forts. I have a tree fort, a stick fort and a dirt fort. I like walking in the creek to find islands. We discovered an old shack one day and some cows nearby.

Once in the forest we discovered an old farm dump with buried implements. There's a large pit by the driveway I like running into. Behind the barn there is a sand pit where I climb and jump. In the winter it's a great place to sled. Some of the grown ups can get frustrating. Soon my friend Calli will be coming to live here. Then it won't be so lonely.



Robert, Tomas, and Angela

Angela Kulikauskas (age 11) – When I first came here I missed my old home but now I'm used to it. Living on a farm has been different because libraries and parks are farther away, but

the farm is like a park. The hills are nice to walk on, play on, sit and think, picnic and for sledding in the winter. I like the kittens and chicks but I haven't known the horses for very long. I still miss the farm dogs that used to be here. I also like to name the trees like 'Climbing Tree' and 'Marker Tree'.

In the summer I like swimming or just hanging around the shore of the pond. But I don't like the leaches. I feel more appreciative of the environment because I live here now. All the food here is delicious. I like to make up stories in my mind but I usually don't write them out. When I was younger sometimes people would write them out for me. I am home-schooled by my mother and the community can also teach me. Living in a community feels awkward sometimes, but it's also nice to talk to different personalities. I think I'll probably move away from Whole Village when I've grown up but I'm not sure yet.