

CSA Newsletter

WALTHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY FARM

240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452 781-899-2403



January 2003

Message from the Board President

Dee Kricker

As we begin our new fiscal year, Community Farms Outreach has taken some important steps toward addressing the critical issue of stability necessary to achieving the viability of our organizational goals. We now have two full-time staff positions responsible for managing all aspects of our nonprofit business, including farm management, program and policy implementation, financial management and fundraising. With John Mitchell as Executive Director/Farm Manager, and Derek Christianson as Associate Director/Assistant Farm Manager, we have progressed to a new phase that replaces part-time seasonal and volunteer pro-bono managers with a model that supports the continuity and commitment of responsible paid staff. At the same time we've expanded our Board of Directors, whose agenda will be to review programs and develop policies that will define the context of our work. With new office space and improved communication networks, we are building the capacity to more effectively accomplish our ambitious mission. The future of CFO holds great promise.

As an incorporated nonprofit, the goals of our enterprise are inspired by the challenging potential embedded in our mission statement: ***to promote, support and manage community farms and farms in the community; community farms are farms which are charitable and educational; growing produce for soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries; educating children and adults as to how and where their food comes from, and generally to preserve the open space and beauty of farms.***

Waltham Fields Community Farm has been CFO's primary project dedicated to fulfilling our mission by growing produce for charity, by educating children and adults about food production, and by transforming fallow fields into organically grown vegetables. For many years, WFCF has successfully met the challenges of balancing a charitable and educational mission within a sparse economic underpinning. The development of the Community Supported Agriculture program added yet another dimension to the project, enhancing both the economic viability of the farm while also providing shareholders with an opportunity to learn about food, to promote a local farm and to support our charitable food

donations. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement, one that has much more fertile ground to be explored.

Moving forward, the Board will initiate a process of analyzing our current programs to assess how best we can proceed within the three broad areas of our mission: ***hunger relief, education and farmland preservation.***

One fundamental aspect is to begin examining the broad needs of the 56-acre site itself, commonly known as the UMass Field Station. This site has a rich history, beginning with the Waltham philanthropist, Cornelia Warren, who originally owned and farmed this property and who bequeathed the use of the site to the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1921 to be used for agricultural and educational purposes. From that time to the present, the property has hosted numerous agricultural and educational programs. Today, a diverse group of tenants ranging from botanical scientists to horticultural therapists, from community gardeners to the National Park Service, and from the Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets to 4-H program administrators, all use this site. For many decades, the Field Station has supported regional chapters of renowned Horticultural Societies, including, The New England Rose Society, the Day Lily Society, the American Gloxinia and

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Around the Farm

Changing crop plan for new year

by John Mitchell, Executive Director and Farm Manager

Each year, the farm manager uses your responses from the end-of-year surveys, shareholder comments during the season, and the previous year's farming experience to improve the selection of varieties and vegetables grown. I also change some of the rarer vegetables to keep the mix diverse and exciting. Some choices are made to improve yield as each season new varieties are identified that grow well on this site, or specific conditions of this location are realized that preclude growing certain vegetables at certain times of the year. We also plan some plantings to better address the charitable giving portion of our program.

Shareholders said in surveys that they wanted parsley, dill, fennel and edaname (soybeans) back in the share this year, and we will grow them. Some shareholders told me during

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Community Farms Outreach Board of Directors

Dee Kricker Waltham <i>President</i>	Liz Fuller* Waltham
Gretta Anderson Arlington <i>Vice President</i>	Jane Hammer* Arlington
Jonathan Kirschner Waltham <i>Treasurer</i>	Adam Lesser Newton
Elise Hoblitzelle Watertown <i>Secretary</i>	Anna Linakis Somerville
Oakes Plimpton Arlington	Joe Orlando Waltham
	Norma Wint Waltham
	Chris Yoder Dover

*Board Nominee

Queries and questions can be forwarded by the staff, which can be contacted at 781.899.2403, or send email to walthamfields@communityfarms.org

Staff

John Mitchell
Waltham

*Executive Director
Farm Manager*

johnmitchell@communityfarms.org

Derek Christianson
Somerville

*Associate Director
Assistant Farm Manager*

Newsletter submissions should be sent to the farm manager/executive director.

Waltham Fields Community Farm is a project of Community Farms Outreach, a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable corporation.

Board meetings are open to the public. Check the calendar for the time and location of regular monthly meetings.

Farm Mission: The purpose of this corporation shall be to promote, support and manage community farms and farms in the community; community farms are farms which are charitable and educational: growing produce for soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries; educating children and adults as to how and where their food comes from, and generally to preserve the open space and beauty of farms.

Gesneriad Society, and Ikebana International among others. However, all users are concerned about the future of the site given the precarious financial situation of the University of Massachusetts, its current lack of programs, and a cautionary warning received two years ago. At that time, an informal committee of users was convened by Oakes Plimpton to discuss how to secure our tenancy. A subcommittee of The Friends of Cornelia Warren Farm (FCWF) has been working the past six months to survey user needs and to develop a vision statement with tangible goals to guide future planning. Meetings with University representatives are continuing as FCWF seeks to establish itself as the primary voice representing those with a vital interest in this site. The University has made it clear that their priority need will be to identify a long-range financing plan to continue operations and to improve the aging infrastructure including deteriorating greenhouses, barns, and buildings. To ensure our own security at this farm and in accordance with our mission, Community Farms Outreach will need to take a leadership position in the efforts to preserve, protect and promote this unique urban agricultural resource. Stay tuned for updates about these issues and how we all might become actively engaged in preserving this historic property and Cornelia Warren's legacy. -DK

Introductions: CFO Board Officers and Advisory Board members

Board of Directors

Dee Kricker—*President*, CSA shareholder, Steering committee Friends Cornelia Warren Farm, Waltham Land Trust, GROW community gardener, Retired Teacher (Waltham)

Gretta Anderson—*Vice President*, CSA shareholder, farmhand volunteer, Sustainable Living Study Circle, Social worker (Arlington)

Elise Hoblitzelle—*Secretary*, CSA Shareholder, volunteer Silent Auction fundraiser event, Teacher (Watertown)

Jonathan Kirschner—*Treasurer*, CSA shareholder, graduate of Brandeis' Environmental Policy Studies, Regional Recycling Coordinator (Waltham)

Oakes Plimpton—*Clerk*, Founder, Former President and Executive Director (pro-bono) (Arlington)

Anna Linakis—CSA shareholder, Program Assistant for Environmental Grant Foundation (Somerville)

Adam Lesser—CSA shareholder, Therapist, Former CFO Vice President (Newton)

Joe Orlando—CFO long term Board member, GROW gardener, retired Boston College Biology Professor (Waltham)

Norma Wint—Volunteer and long term supporter of farm, neighborhood resident, Mental Health Careworker (Waltham)

Chris Yoder—Professional organic farmer who manages Vanguarden CSA in Dover, MA (Dover)

Advisory Board

Martha Creedon—CSA shareholder, CFO Newsletter Editor, previously served on CFO Board (Waltham)

Lynn Harris—Owner and operator, Autumn Hills Orchard, which provides fruit for farm's fruit share program (Groton)

Jeff Sciortino—CSA shareholder with previous experience on Genesee Valley Organic CSA (NY) (Cambridge)

Graeme Williams—Waltham Salvation Army volunteer cook, interested in working with us to link our charitable donations to Waltham area food pantries (Waltham)

Volunteers Needed for "Spiff-Up Day" at the UMass Field Station, Saturday, Jan. 25th

For painting and general cleaning of the lounge, women's bathroom and kitchen areas.

For further information and to sign up
call Dee @781 899-3738 or email: kricker@theworld.com



2003 Community Farms Outreach Calendar

January-March	
January 20	Board of Directors Meeting, 8 p.m., third Monday of every month, at the farm
January 23	Waltham Field Community Farm CSA shares opened to new shareholders
January 25	NOFA Winter Conference, Barre, Mass.
January 28	Northwest Earth Institute Study Circle: Introductory Meeting for shareholders and friends Fox Branch Library, 175 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, 7 p.m. Call to sign up for introductory session, 617.628.8695, or e-mail DerekChristianson@communityfarms.org
February 17	Board of Directors Meeting, 8 p.m., third Monday of every month, at the farm
March 17	Board of Directors Meeting, 8 p.m., third Monday of every month, at the farm

Around the Farm continued

the season that they missed the escarole that Jenny Hausman grew during the year she was farm manager here, so I will be including a planting of that. We will be offering more and different (usually heirloom) varieties of kohlrabi, beets, radishes, tomatoes, peppers, carrots, lettuce, summer and winter squash, watermelons, spinach, etc. -- the list goes on. One new variety of tomato to look for is an heirloom called Big Rainbow, that, as it ripens, becomes tri-color in appearance (green, gold and red), before ripening to gold and crimson. Another "new" variety that will be offered was originally grown here by farm manager Henry Howell called Green Zebra. Some longtime shareholders have spoken fondly of this variety, so we'll reintroduce it to the share this year. In 2002, I experimented with several varieties of Asian greens that performed much better than some of those I had planned in succession for the main harvests. This year, with that experience to grow on, I expect better yields from the main harvest successions of Asian greens.

Some plantings are being dropped, though you probably won't notice them missing from your share because they probably did not succeed well enough to appear there. Conditions on these Waltham fields are probably going to be too difficult in the spring most years to grow an early crop of broccoli, so I've dropped that planting from the lineup. I also moved the first planting of raddichio, which was distributed in the first pickup in 2002, because some shareholders complained about it being too bitter (again, a result of high winds and temperature extremes in the early

spring). However, we will be adding early spring plantings of fava beans and snow peas, so, if all goes as planned, the first share will actually be larger this season than last.

Due to heavy weed infestation - especially one tough invasive weed that started in our fields as a cultivated herb called Sweet Annie and has now infested nearly an acre of land and is spreading to a second field -we will be plowing under the current strawberry bed in 2003. If we decide to start a new strawberry planting, we don't harvest from it the first year to allow the plants to establish themselves.

Last year we distributed 9,103 pounds of watermelon, with more going to charity than went to the CSA. The large poundage was partially because we grew several heirloom varieties that produced melons that weighed as much as 35 pounds. However, I also received complaints that these large melons were overwhelming for small modern families and friends who split a share. Back when the heirlooms were originally bred, families were much larger than they are today. I intend this year to grow different, smaller heirloom watermelons that will better meet the needs of the modern urban population we serve. I anticipate that the sheer poundage of watermelon grown next year will go down, but families and friends, whether the beneficiary of the CSA or the charitable program, should be better able to utilize the resulting melons and waste less.



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Split share/carpooling coordination

If you are interested in sharing a ride to the farm to pick up a share, for pick-your-own crops, or any other reason, board director Anna Linakis will help you locate other shareholders in your area who are interested in carpooling. Anna is providing the same assistance for potential shareholders who are looking for someone with whom to split a share. Contact Anna at linakis@yahoo.com. If you don't have email, just call the farm office and we will pass your information on. The only information that will be shared is your name, the city in which you live, your e-mail address and/or phone number.

Changes next year for box share distribution

Shareholders who pick up their shares in boxes at locations in Somerville, Cambridge and Arlington were relieved last year when the board of



directors voted to recommit to the continuation of box share deliveries. There will be new locations this year at two sites in Somerville and Cambridge.

Cambridge

In Cambridge, the new location will be at 25A Kelly Road, which, for returning shareholders from last year, is about a five-block walk down Magazine Street from the previous distribution site at the church. The new pickup site is the always-shaded driveway of the home of Linda MacMillan, the distribution coordinator in Cambridge. The new arrangement will allow the farm to reduce its need to coordinate with other organizations (the church), and to largely eliminate the need for someone to sit with the boxes, as the new location is less public than the church. The boxes will be distributed directly from the back of Linda's truck.

Directions: (From church/Central Square) Walking - Walk 5 blocks down Magazine Street (toward the river). Turn right on Kelly Street (opposite Dana Park). 25A is six houses down on the right, directly behind #25. The truck with the shares will be parked in the driveway. Driving - Kelly is a one-way street, so if driving, go past Kelly and take the next right, then take a right on Pleasant Street and another right on Kelly.

Somerville

The new Somerville pickup is actually just over the Somerville/Cambridge border near Marino's restaurant off Massachusetts Ave. at 175 Harvey Street. The address may be in Cambridge, but this site is intended to serve the Somerville shareholding community. The new pickup site is the air-conditioned common dining room of the Cornerstone Village Co-Housing development, an intentional community developed by the residents. The air-conditioning will help to address some of the issues of freshness that have arisen on hot summer days when the shares were left outdoors.

Directions: From Massachusetts Ave, turn onto Harvey Street near Marino's restaurant. Drive past Cambridge Lumber and the housing development will be on your right. For those walking, the development is adjacent to a bike and walking trail that begins in Davis Square.

Farm receives \$10,000 grant

In November, Community Farms Outreach received a \$10,000 grant from the Massachusetts Vitamin Litigation Fund. The money is to be applied toward defraying the

cost of operational expenses for our food and nutrition programs, and to purchase equipment and make repairs. The grant was awarded as part of a class-action settlement against vitamin manufacturers who were accused in the lawsuit of price fixing and controlling the availability of vitamin products in such a way that Massachusetts consumer protection law was violated. As part of the settlement, the manufacturers created a \$20 million fund to provide money to be distributed to Massachusetts charitable organizations that address food and nutrition issues through their programs. -JM

Farm Classifieds

If you would like to respond to a farm classified, just call 781.899.2403, or email the farm at walthamfields@communityfarms.org.

Seeking for Donation to the Farm. Copier, fax machine, office furniture, pickup truck for farm vehicle, trusses used in building construction, wood for construction material, 6-foot fence wire, 7-foot metal fence poles.

Housing for Farm Hands. Seeking inexpensive housing for two farmhands who will begin work in April.

Spring Fling Donations. Seeking items for silent auction. Get friends and/or local businesses to contribute: a weekend at your beachfront or mountaintop cabin, a gourmet meal, artwork or jewelry from a local artist, tickets to local theater, music performance or sports event, membership in an environmental or other organization, etc.

Workshare Positions. Work in exchange for a share of vegetables produced on the farm. Various positions available. 6-8 hours of work per week (depending on work assignment) from June through October.

Distribution Coordinator. Seeking somebody to monitor the CSA share distribution on Sunday evening, from 2:30-7 pm, in exchange for a full share of vegetables produced on the farm.

Back-up Drivers. For delivery of box shares to Arlington, Cambridge and Somerville. Some weeks during the summer the regular driver will not be able to drive. The farm is seeking someone with a good driving record who could help with delivery to our pick-up sites. The farm may be able to provide a vehicle. Must be available Tuesdays.

Special Events Organizer. Set-up and take-down, recruit and supervise helpers for special shareholder gatherings (Spring Fling fundraiser, shareholder picnics, Annual meeting), gather supplies and help create fun, successful events. Seeking a few shareholders to help board members coordinate several community gatherings at the farm in 2003.

Computer Skills. Help update and maintain our web site, enter and analyze data from surveys and harvests, advise the board and possibly implement an e-mail list for CFO.