

CSA Newsletter

WALTHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY FARM

A project of Community Farms Outreach

240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452 • 781-899-2403 • www.communityfarms.org



Notes from the Farm:

Endings and Beginnings

It's a beautiful October morning as I write this, and we are doing the usual work of autumn on a New England farm: starting to tally up the results of the member surveys, disking fields and planting cover crops, and looking ahead to next season. Our 21-week distribution season will end October 28th, but beginning right around then we'll be taking on a new project: building our very own heated greenhouse.

As many of you know, we have traditionally used the beautiful old greenhouses owned by the University of Massachusetts to start the seedlings for the vegetables that you enjoy all season. These greenhouses have become inordinately expensive for UMass to heat and maintain, and this spring they did not turn on the heat to our portion of the greenhouse. We used a combination of electric space heaters, heat mats, plastic "mini-houses" and reemay to grow our seedlings in the unheated space that they provided for our use, using our cold frames and hoop house as additional space. As of August 2004, UMass closed the greenhouses altogether to our use, leaving us without any heated space for 2005. At our October board meeting, the CFO board of directors voted to purchase and construct a 30' x 72' heated greenhouse for us to grow our transplants in for the 2005 season.

This represents a major step forward for our agricultural operation as well as our educational programming. The new greenhouse will be more sanitary and energy-efficient than the old ones, and will provide a safe, spacious, woodchuck-free indoor classroom where volunteer and school groups can help with our seeding throughout the season. It will enable us

October 24–28, 2004

(Distribution Week #21—the last pickup)

Have you turned in your member survey?

to grow the varieties of vegetables that our members love and that our hunger relief partners request.

So: new beginnings. But all these beginnings come at the price of endings, and this, of course, is the last week of the CSA distribution for the season. I am happy that this profession provides us with so many opportunities for transition, not least because they are also opportunities for emotions like gratitude. So many of you have shared your gratitude with us, in the form of kind words, helpful feedback, a carrot cake, jar of pickles, apple pie or warm coffee on a cold morning; so now it is time for us to say thanks to you all.

Thank you for taking the time and energy to be part of something larger than your body, larger than your family, larger than your busy life and day-to-day priorities. Thank you for becoming, however unwittingly, people of faith: faith in our hands, our judgment, our valiant little piece of land and our perilous New England weather. Thank you for meeting the inevitable messiness and imperfections of the season with grace, curiosity, and enthusiasm for the challenge of eating in season. You are part of a small farm and a growing movement dedicated to correcting the imbalance and injustice of our food system. You are, in a very real sense, the future of farming in New England.

We'll miss you all. We look forward to seeing you at our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner on November 21st. And we look forward to seeing you again next spring.

—*The Farm Crew: Amanda, Meryl, and Ryan*

Michael Rozyne of Red Tomato to Speak at CFO Annual Meeting

Join the rest of the Community Farms Outreach community at our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner on Sunday, November 21st, from 6:00–8:30 at the farm. Enjoy fabulous food while looking back over a wonderful year and voting on our new slate of board director nominees.

During dessert we will hear from Michael Rozyne, founder and managing director of Red Tomato, a not-for-profit marketing organization that brings produce from New England family farms to the supermarkets of greater Boston. Red Tomato's goal is to keep small farmers afloat, while at the same time giving the public access to high quality products. He previously co-founded Equal Exchange, which trades directly with small farmer coffee cooperatives in Latin America and distributes their products nationwide in the U.S.

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To reach us:

Amanda Cather: farmmanager@communityfarms.org
Marla Rhodes: walthamfields@communityfarms.org
Volunteer Coordinators: volunteer@communityfarms.org
Newsletter Submissions: newsletter@communityfarms.org
CFO Board of Directors: board@communityfarms.org

Coincidences and Old Agricultural Practices

by Oakes Plimpton

At the Spring Fling last May, Kathy Diamond, CFO newsletter editor, bid for my Silent Auction tour of Borderland State Park in North Easton, MA, which is on land that belonged to my grandparents, Oakes and Blanche Ames, botanist and artist. After birding the 1,500 acres of woods and fields and ponds, and viewing some Ladyslipper Orchids, we toured the town, where Oakes Ames's ancestors made fortunes selling shovels and owned a model dairy farm known as Langwater, which raised Guernseys. In the 1930s and '40s, Kathy's great uncle, Clifford Shaw, was the Farm Manager at Langwater! Now the farm belongs partly to Stonehill College, and to descendants of John Ames, no longer raising prize dairy cows.

Kathy just sent me a letter from a daughter of Clifford Shaw, about her memories of growing up at Langwater, and one sentence so struck me that I quote it here. "We loved the crops on the farm, the apples in the fall were great, and there was and probably still is a cold room in the cellar where apples were stored. I remember the men polishing the apples to get the arsenic spray off"



CFO's Annual Appeal is underway. Make a donation to support the farm and our hunger relief and education programs. And come to our Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner on Sunday, November 21st.

Community Farms Outreach is a nonprofit organization dedicated to farmland preservation, hunger relief, and education.