



The Good Life Center Newsletter

Fall 2015

Issue #3

OUR MISSION

To uphold the legacy of Helen and Scott Nearing through preservation of the Historic Forest Farm Homestead and educational programs that teach skills in sustainable living, social justice, organic gardening and vegetarianism.

Greetings from the Good Life Center!

After a wonderful summer at Forest Farm we are pleased to present to you our Fall e newsletter. This issue contains an impassioned tribute to Forest Farm by Resident Steward Sam Adels, an informative piece on the health risks of GMOs by Bob Jones and a heartfelt article by Doris Groves on Veganism and the Nearings. A second contribution by Sam Adels details the renovation of the Forest Farm yurt, and we are happy to include introductions to our newest Board members, Charles Stephens and David Zachow.

Warm wishes for a peaceful, healthy year from the Good Life Center Team!

Kim Peralta, Editor

ALL THINGS MUST PASS

- Sam Adels, 2015 Resident Steward

Our season as resident stewards of The Good Life Center at Forest Farm has come to a close. We leave transformed.

Maine's gorgeous fall weather is upon us, as time continues its onward march. Now we close up Forest



Farm for the season. Yesterday we took down the last of the trellises and removed old plants, piling them high in the compost heap - a lasting testament to our work and a little

contribution to the garden's future growth.

When we arrived at Forest Farm in May, the entire garden contained a cover crop of buckwheat, with one exception: garlic. It had been planted the previous fall, and yesterday we planted more. It will greet next year's stewards just as it greeted us.

Our season as resident stewards of The Good Life Center at Forest Farm has come to a close. We leave transformed.

Today, Forest Farm is a beacon to all who value simple, sane living in an increasingly complex, insane world.

Helen and Scott Nearing built a special place, infused with their eternal, earthly glow. Caring for it has been an honor and a privilege. We are proud to join the long line of caretakers whom Helen and Scott entrusted with the keeping of their legacy.

The Nearings pursued an experiment in alternative living to see if they could remove themselves as much as possible from market capitalism and rely instead on their own hard work to provide for themselves. They succeeded. They showed generations of citizens that we can eschew the status quo of the dominant power structures and live according to our principles. Today, Forest Farm is a beacon to all who value simple, sane living in an increasingly complex and insane world, reminding us that sustainable, vegetarian living is a

possible, necessary form of activism.

The Good Life Center breathes new energy into tired lives. It is a happy, powerful place to visit, wander through, get lost in, and care for. Visitors depart uplifted, with renewed hope.

We will live simply. We will live wilder and freer. We will live our "Good Life."

Our stewardship of Forest Farm has inspired and pushed us farther along our path. We were nourished here. We grew here. What began as an experiment to live the life of a homesteader has galvanized into a desire to build our own energy-neutral homestead. We will install solar panels, which are becoming cheaper as the technology advances, and utilize passive solar to maximize the heat gained from the sun. We will grow much of our own food, avoiding the supermarket as much as possible. We will live simply. We will live wilder and freer. We will live our "Good Life."

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to wise friends who helped us on our path. Thank you Helen and Scott. Thank you Warren and Nancy, farm managers, for the incredible and unforgettable experience. Thank you David and Annie, Bob and Doris, Kim, Carolyn, and Mary for enriching our lives with guidance and friendship at Forest Farm and beyond!

We met many hard working, dedicated people who treasure the passion, zeal, and beliefs which Helen and Scott brought to their life's work. Thanks to all of the visitors who shared their time with us!



A farewell haiku

*Sun and rain-washed face
Hands worn of soil and flowers
Ever opening*



THE HEALTH RISKS OF GMOs IN FOOD

- Bob Jones

What are GMOs?

GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms) are produced when the genes of a species or chemical are spliced into the genes of a plant to alter its DNA.

Where did they come from?

In the 1930s, some geneticists became fascinated with Eugenics - the idea that it is possible to improve the human species by allowing only people with better genes to produce children. John D Rockefeller III, who, concerned with projected over-population of the world and how to feed the masses, was interested in Eugenics. He put millions into researching how to limit population growth. Unfortunately this research led to some disastrous practices, including the creation of GMOs.

The two major risks of eating GMO foods:

1. *Insecticide (Bt - toxin)* genes are spliced into plant genes to kill pests like corn borers. The DNA is changed so that **every cell in the plant contains this poison**. When GMO corn or soy products, or animals who have ingested GMO foods are eaten by humans, the poison is ingested and accumulates in our bodies.

2. *Glyphosate*, a herbicide, is sprayed onto these plants to kill weeds. That poison is absorbed by the plants and ingested when we eat GMO plants such as corn or soy. Glyphosate is a "probable" carcinogen.

How prevalent are GMOs in our food?

Very. In the U.S., commercial production of GMOs began in 1995. Today, 89% of the corn and 94% of the soy grown here are GMO crops.

How safe are GMOs in food?

This depends on whom you ask. Monsanto, which produces GMO seeds says, "...these Bt toxins are safe for consumption by humans, other mammals, fish and birds." Should we believe that Bt doesn't harm humans when we know it kills corn borers? When it has been proved that birds who eat bugs killed by pesticides often die? When Monsanto lied about the health impact of DDT, PCBs and Agent Orange, which they produced? Monsanto claims to have done extensive studies on the health effects of eating GMO foods and to have found no adverse results. However, their "extensive" tests on rats were conducted for only three months, which is not sufficient time for the effects on human health to surface.

Moreover, they will not release any specific information on how the studies were done, even to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

There has been no long term (greater than ninety days) study of the toxic effect of GMOs in food products in the U.S. In two European, longer term studies (*Dr Pusztai, Scotland, 1995 and Seralini, France, 2012*), rats fed GMO corn developed tumors, cancers, liver and kidney damage, smaller brains and testicles, reproductive problems, and many died prematurely. These studies were accepted in Europe but their validity was denied in the U.S.

Special Risks for Women and Children

Women need to be aware of the health risks for themselves and their children. Tests indicate that levels of glyphosate in American mothers' breast milk are approximately 10 times the levels found acceptable in European drinking water.

According to the Environmental Working Group, <http://ewg.org>, there are over 200 chemicals in the umbilical cord of a newborn child and mothers' breast milk. In European studies, GMO corn fed to rats produced health and reproductive problems in their *grand* babies. Think of the implications for our grandchildren. Of all the GMO health risks, of greatest concern is the deteriorating health of children, who, because of their size, are much more susceptible than adults to the adverse effects of these poisons. Internist Angela Hind, MD, says, "*Before the 1990s, kids in the U.S. rarely got seriously ill. Now, 1 in 6 children struggle with allergies, ADHD, autism, learning disabilities or developmental disorders.*"

A 600% increase in autism since the mid 1990s..

There has been a 600% increase in autism since the mid 1990s. Hind believes the primary cause of this is the explosive growth in the planting of GMO crops and the



concurrent spraying of glyphosate on these crops, which started in the mid 1990s.

The FDA should be

protecting consumers, but it is not.

Most Americans are unaware that many chronic diseases like Alzheimers, Parkinsons, Cancer and Diabetes have also sharply increased during the same period. The FDA should be protecting consumers, but it is not. Its "revolving door" policy of moving board members between itself and Monsanto creates a major conflict of interest.

For a good article about this see <http://renew.com/general33/fd.htm>

How to avoid GMOs in our food:



1. Read all food labels. Look for the Non GMO Project label (above), which verifies the product contains no GMOs.
2. Scientists have estimated that 70% of processed food contains GMOs. Minimize eating processed food. Avoid drinks and processed foods that contain corn or soy that are not marked *Non GMO*.
3. Buy organic produce. It should contain no pesticides, herbicides or GMOs. Avoid non-organic dairy products that contain GMOs.
4. Consider becoming a vegetarian (no meat) or vegan (no animal products of any kind).
5. Consider growing some of your own food organically.
6. If you continue to eat meat, consider reducing portions, eating it less often and only eat organic meat. Non-organic meat comes from factory farms that use GMO feed. Farmed fish are also fed GMO grains, and should be avoided.

Resources:

Books: Seeds of Destruction by William Engdahl 2007.

Genetic Roulette by Jeffrey Smith 2007.

Websites: Institute for Responsible Technology (IRT)

<http://responsibletechnology.org>

Non GMO Project <http://nongmoproject.org/>

GMO Free USA <http://gmofreeusa.org/>

Documentaries: Seeds of Death

www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6OxbpLwEjQ;

15 Harmful Effects of GMO's in Food

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e6kKZmHzuTE>

- Bob Jones is a vegan farmer, researcher and environmental/political activist who lives in Brooksville, Maine on Sweet Dog Farm with his partner, Doris Groves. He does not claim to be an expert on GMOs. bobjonesinnz@yahoo.com



VEGANISM: A STAND FOR JUSTICE

- Doris Groves



"Flesh-eating by humans is unnecessary, irrational, anatomically unsound, unhealthy, unhygienic, uneconomic, unaesthetic, unkind and unethical. May I elaborate?" - Helen Nearing

Animal rights is one of the greatest social justice issues since the abolition of slavery.

It is not a diet, nor a lifestyle. Veganism is a stand for justice. There is nothing sadder than the cruelty, suffering and injustice to our animal cousins that is accepted without question in our present day food system.

The benefits of veganism to human health and the environment are undeniably huge, yet it is the unnecessary human exploitation of other species that remains the most compelling reason to become vegan.

"Nonhuman animals – most especially the mammals, birds, and fish who are the common victims of our appetites – are sentient; they experience suffering and joy, pain and pleasure that are as urgent to them as ours are to us. They are aware of themselves and their surroundings, and they pursue their lives and their interests with intention and understanding. They are capable of love and compassion. And they have individual personalities, just as we do." - Norm Phelps, author, founding member of the Society of Ethical and Religious Vegetarians (SERV), former outreach director of the Fund for Animals. Read the entire article here: <http://www.animalsandethics.org>

Dairy cows undergo more pain and suffering than those slaughtered for their flesh alone.

Veganism is a moral imperative, challenging the [speciesist](#) idea that imposing unnecessary suffering and death on animals can ever be "praiseworthy". Not eating flesh while continuing to consume dairy and eggs makes no logical sense, as there is as much suffering and

death caused by the consumption of eggs, fish and other

animal products as there is in meat, and dairy cows undergo more pain and suffering than those slaughtered for their flesh alone.

http://www.animalsaustralia.org/factsheets/dairy_cows.php.

"...we have largely ceased to use dairy products and have allied ourselves with the vegans..."

Helen and Scott Nearing were unquestionably in agreement with this line of thinking. They clearly and repeatedly stated so in their writings:

"We do not eat animals, or their products, and do not exploit them."

To those who recall Helen's penchant for ice cream – the Nearings were only human, and did not always live up to their stated ideals perfectly. However, their belief in veganism was undeniable, as illustrated by this quote from page 134 of *Living the Good Life*:

"Long ago we decided to live in the vegetarian way, without killing or eating animals; and lately we have largely ceased to use dairy products and have allied ourselves with the vegans, who use and eat no animal products, butter, cheese, eggs or milk. This is all in line with our philosophy of the least harm to the least number and the greatest good to the greatest number of life forms."

Please consider going vegan. It is the right thing to do and a lot easier than you might think:

<http://gentleworld.org/vegan-easier-than-you-think/>.

- Doris Groves is a member of the GLC Board of Directors, co-owner of Sweet Dog Farm, a vegan farm in Brooksville, Maine, and co-founder of Vegans DownEast.



A NEW FOUNDATION FOR BILL COPERTHWAITE'S FOREST FARM YURT

- Sam Adels, 2015 Resident Steward



On a beautiful sunny day just after Labor Day the yurt at Forest Farm received a new foundation, providing

increased structural support and ensuring its continued use as an inviting, multi-functional space for friends and visitors for years to come. Volunteers David Raitt and

Jason Miller and GLC Farm Manager Warren Berkowitz joined Resident Stewards Sam Adels and Claire Briguglio in a communal effort that recalled the yurt's original construction.

David and Warren oversaw the project, and in the spirit of the Nearings and Bill Coperthwaite, a crew was formed to get the work done.

In addition to his labor, David Raitt, a good friend and former student of Bill Coperthwaite, donated \$300 toward the cost of materials for the project.

David met Bill when he was 17 and fell in love with yurts. He formed his own company, *California Yurts Inc.*, and besides building custom yurts for clients across the globe, has embarked upon a personal mission to perpetuate Bill's legacy by caring for the yurts he constructed and renovating them as needed.



The renovation took place over two days, and involved a considerable amount of teamwork. First, with some digging and pulling, the crew removed most of the old metal posts that were sunk three feet into the ground. The remaining few, stuck deep in the clay-rich soil, had to be cut with a metal saw. Once the poles were removed, the crew dug large holes, which they filled with pea gravel. The gravel provides drainage to clear the foundation of excess moisture.

Next we raised the yurt onto new metal jacks, which sit on the gravel beds. Neat wooden trim overlays the posts, giving the yurt a very handsome, new look. We are deeply grateful to David Raitt for contributing his expertise, materials, and labor.

Sanctuary, classroom, meeting place and a memorial to Bill Coperthwaite..

A big thank you also goes to GLC Board member David Zachow, who lent his chop saw, and to Nancy Berkowitz, her daughter Jenny and Jenny's husband, Ian, who provided a great lunch for the work crew. The improved yurt remains an important addition to the Good Life Center at Forest Farm and will continue to serve as a sanctuary, classroom, meeting place and memorial to Bill Coperthwaite.



MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

Charles J. Stephens

Charles Stephens first met Helen and Scott Nearing



while serving as minister of the Ellsworth and Castine Unitarian Universalist Congregations during the 1980s. Charles officiated at Warren and Nancy Berkowitz' wedding at the Nearing homestead and, after Scott's death, conducted a Sunday morning memorial service at the Common Ground Fair. He

and his wife, Alison, were Resident Stewards at the Good Life Center in 2012.

Born into a farming family in rural northern Wisconsin, Charles learned to garden from his parents and has gardened all of his life. Originally a Lutheran minister, he transferred to Unitarian Universalism in 1981, drawn by its liberal position on religious/spiritual beliefs and social justice.

Past ministries include Unitarian Universalist congregations in Concord, NH and Washington's Crossing in Titusville, NJ. He was Spiritual Director and adjunct staff member for the Spiritual Guidance Program at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Maryland, where he worked with people from a variety of faiths.

Charles was especially attracted to the Nearings' outspoken stand on peace and social justice.

During his forty plus years of ministry he has advocated for peace, marriage equity for same-sex couples, mental illness awareness, taxation equity, affordable housing, school funding, and immigration policy.

In 1982 Charles and Alison cut and peeled logs to build a cabin in Maine, where they retreated with their three children for summer vacations.

When Charles retired they built a year-round home on the original property where they garden, tap maple trees, keep bees and continue to advocate for social justice.

David Zachow

Born in Philadelphia, David Zachow grew up in Bryn Mawr, PA. Not having had the opportunity to meet the Nearings, David has nevertheless been influenced by the people who worked directly with them, whose



"..obvious humility, humanity, love of the earth and generous good nature carry on the teachings that Helen and Scott offered the world."

David has been involved in building homes and installing electrical systems for much of his life. In 1993 he developed Ancient Hills

Cottage Builders, a green home building business focused on strawbale and cob construction. In 2007 he started *Direct Connect Solar & Electric*, concentrating on the installation of solar electric systems.

"Going green was inspired by the natural beauty and environmental consciousness of my adopted home, Floyd County. Grid-tied solar systems may be an evolutionary step toward cleaner, affordable electrical generation that will serve, not bankrupt future generations."

David and his wife, Annie Guppy, divide their time between Harborside, Maine and the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.



THE GOOD LIFE CENTER BOARD

Warren Berkowitz
Doris Groves
Greg Joly
Bob Jones, Chair
Kim Peralta, Secretary
Charles Stephens, Treasurer
David Zachow



Seeking Resident Stewards for 2016

The GLC is seeking an outgoing couple to live and work at Forest Farm in the summer of 2016. Details are posted on our website: goodlife.org/residency. To learn more about how you can become a Resident Steward, please drop us a line: information@goodlife.org



THE 2016 GLC WISH LIST

- *Apple ladder (or two)*
- *Cider press*
- *Apple picker with long handle*
- *Display screen for photos*

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the GLC! <http://goodlife.org/donate>

Visit our website goodlife.org and check out our Facebook page.

Thank you!



Masanobu Ikemiya entertained a full house at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ellsworth, ME with stories about Helen Nearing, interspersed with passionately played "Classics to Ragtime" pieces at the GLC Piano Concert Fundraiser last August.