



# News from Provident Organic Farm



[www.providentfarm.org](http://www.providentfarm.org)

Season 3, 2004

“dedicated to a safe, just, and sustainable food system”

Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>

## Notes from the Field, v. 3, #30

### THE STATE OF THE ONION ADDRESS

Given the present trajectory of **our** country, the need for well organized groups like ours has become an imperative. I never saw the CSA project I started with Amy 5 years ago as anything other than an imperative. This was not some wild idea I had while lounging in my hammock. This is something that absolutely **must** happen. Just like Jake and Elwood, we are on a mission from God (the **real** One that is tolerant, loving and kind).

For the last 3 years, I have given this my all. The first year we all took a hit. I took a severe financial beating and the members didn't get nearly enough food. A drought and my inability to evoke life from dead soil were mostly to blame. But most of you shared my dedication to this and signed up for another round. Our retention rate for the first year was 65% (typical retention rate for first year CSA's is 35%). Miraculously, Amy and her recruitment army were able to convince another 35 families to join us and we achieved the goal for our second season of 100 members.

Our second year was another disaster in the field and gardens. It rained and it rained and it rained. Every harvest day reminded me of the biblical story of the loaves and fishes. I looked over the field and gardens and wondered “How on earth was I going to distribute this little bit of nothing to so many people”. Somehow it worked out and most of you understood and accepted the light shares. We created LESSON, the non-profit that will enable us to attract grant money and achieve some of our outreach goals. We also started the Share the Harvest Fund to get food to those in need. We helped 3 families. Once again, most of you stuck by the CSA and we started our third year with our goal of 100 members.

This year has been infinitely better in many ways. The weather, for the most part, has been agreeable. To expect better is ludicrous. Some crops suffered, some we lost altogether, but according to the surveys returned thus far, you are satisfied with the amount of food received. My tally of the year's shares shows you received more than dollar value. The volunteer harvest crews have been, in a word, **amazing**. In spite of the pressure to get so much food picked, washed, and packed up, Tuesdays and Fridays have become the

fun days of the week. We renamed the Share the Harvest Fund to honor Medora Cockey and were able to distribute 6 shares worth of food to our neighbors. LESSON was able to get a small grant to identify potential member farms to establish a network of farms that could supply the CSA and beyond with more, if not all, of our food needs. There is much more work to be done on this project. Your kindness helped Anne see a brighter future.

The budget we projected last fall showed we would operate at a deficit of \$13,000 this year. A modest increase in farmer's market sales has left us with a \$10,000 deficit. There is only one place in the budget this money can come from --- my pocket. The first thing that needs to be sustained on any sustainable farm is the farmer. I have been graced all of my life (so have you) and know as long as I have the good sense to not expect more, I can hope for more. I do not expect the membership to be wholly responsible for my financial security. I am seeking new and alternate markets, but the CSA has to be the backbone of this farm for it to be able to achieve the goals I believe we all share.

As I make plans for the '05 season, I am forcing myself to accept the fact that I can no longer work the way I have for the past 3 years. I must admit to my physical limitations. Nor can I continue to operate at a loss. If we are able to attract 130 members and involve an additional 20 families in the Medora Harvest Fund, I will be able to hire an experienced assistant farm manager. This is where all of our members can help out. We will need your help in recruiting new members and marketing the Medora Harvest Fund to new venues such as businesses and churches. We will have steering wheels meetings this winter to further develop these efforts. We welcome your involvement here too. In the meantime, please help recruit. You have sign-up sheets for yourself attached. Brochures will be ready by the end of November. Anyone can get a membership form or find out how to give to the Medora Harvest Fund on our website [www.providentfarm.org](http://www.providentfarm.org)

Onward,  
Jay

P.S. If you have not returned a survey yet, please take the time to fill it out and return it. Even if you do not plan to join for the '05 season, your input is valuable.

## Winter Squash and Roasted Red Pepper Soup

2 – 2 1/2 lb	winter squash or pumpkin, peeled, seeded, cut into half-inch dice
2 c	water
2	bay leaves
4 c	vegetable stock
2 tbsp	olive oil
1 med	onion, diced medium fine
6 cloves	garlic, minced
1 lg	red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, seeded, cut into large dice
1 tbsp	dried thyme leaves
1 tsp	salt, if stock is unsalted
---	freshly ground black pepper
2 dashes	ground cayenne pepper

Simmer squash and bay leaves, covered, in a heavy-bottomed pot with water and stock. Reduce heat and cook at a very low simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a small sauté pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute or so. Stir in bell pepper, crumble in thyme leaves, and stir. Transfer sautéed vegetables to the soup pot with squash. Cook over low heat, covered, for 5 to 10 minutes.

Purée the soup in batches in a blender or food mill. Return to the pot and season with salt, pepper, and cayenne. Cover and heat gently for about 5 minutes.

Ladle soup into bowls and scatter a scant tablespoon of the garnish over each bowl, or pass it in a separate small bowl.

### Pepita Parsley Garnish

1/2 c	toasted and salted hulled pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
2 cloves	garlic
1/4 to 1/3 c	fresh parsley, tightly packed
3 to 4 tbsp	olive oil

Combine pumpkin seeds, garlic, and parsley in food processor and pulse a few times. Add 3 tablespoons of oil and pulse to blend scraping down the sides. If mixture seems too thick, add another tablespoon of oil or water. Do not over process — the garnish should be coarse and have some texture.

Serves 6.

**Prep Tips** Any winter squash or pumpkin may be used. If you are not feeling ambitious, omit the garnish and sprinkle with toasted sunflower seeds instead.

Adapted from *Natural Home.com*.

### Comments & Contributions

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to [ubuubok@dmy.com](mailto:ubuubok@dmy.com) or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.

These are two of Jay's favorite quotes that are so appropriate to what the CSA movement is all about:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

Margaret Mead

"You never change anything by fighting the existing, to change something, build a new model and make the existing obsolete."

Buckminster Fuller

### Provident Farm CSA

#### Final Harvest Celebration

Join your fellow CSA members for an afternoon of good food, good fellowship and a chance to glean the fields for Fall's final bounty!

**Date:** Saturday, November 20, 2004

**Site:** Provident Farm (directions when you RSVP)

**Time:** Feast at 2pm, followed by final field harvest

**How to:** Please **RSVP** to Charlotte England 410 546-2791 or Susie Wood, 410 341-7663. Do call if you have any questions.

**What to Bring:** In keeping with the philosophy of treading lightly on the earth, please bring your own plates and utensils. Cups and napkins will be provided. Iced tea and Water will be served; please feel free to bring your own beer and wine. Weather permitting, we will be dining picnic style; do bring a blanket or whatever you normally use for an Al Fresco meal.

**Food:** Choose from the categories below and let Susie or Charlotte know what you plan to bring:

Entrée/Potato, rice, pasta/Vegetable/Salad or Fruit/Dessert

Please bring cold foods in a cooler. For hot foods, here's a good catering trick: put a layer of crumpled newspaper in a box that will hold the dish. Put dish in box and pack more crumpled newspaper all around; seal box. Plan on enough for food to share with 8 folks.

Bring the family — see you Saturday the 20th!

Charlotte England and Susie Wood (Potluck Persons)

