



## Notes from the Mountain - By Jay Martin

*“If we dream big enough and work hard enough this world that is will become the world we hope to make it.”*

It has been awhile since I have written a newsletter, so I guess it is my turn.

I would like to share my retreat experience at The Center for Whole Communities on Knoll Farm in Fayston, Vermont with you. Fayston is a small town in the Mad River Valley near Burlington. It is home to some of Vermont’s most popular skiing resorts. Knoll Farm is a 440 acre hillside farm that overlooks the valley. Peter Forbes is the Executive Director of the center and his wife Helen manages the farm. Helen grazes sheep and grows the tastiest blueberries in the world, which we all helped pick one afternoon for Helen’s CSA and local markets. I think her yield was lower than usual that day, but so was her labor bill. The farm and Center employ 4 young women whose duties overlap with farm and gardening chores as well as seeing to the needs of the retreaters. The meals were simply amazing, entirely accessed from local farms, and served buffet style in the barn.

I arrived on Thursday afternoon, July 17<sup>th</sup> and settled into my tent with my “buddy” Daniel. Daniel is a young man who is the Executive Director of the Santa Fe Conservation Trust in New Mexico. We had some time that afternoon to introduce ourselves to each other and get settled in. We had been asked to bring an “object of significance” and be prepared to share its story. That evening we met in the mountain yurt with our objects, told their story and placed them in the center as an altar. I brought my favorite hoe which I call “The Old Woman” because it was given to my by my very best gardening friend, Carlton. It had been his wife, Madeline’s, hoe until her death. In true Eastern Shore tradition, Carlton always referred to Madeline as the old woman. I think if he had called her the old woman to her face he would have pre deceased her.

The theme of our retreat was “Race, Prejudice, Power and Privilege”. We had been asked to read 3 essays on these issues in preparation for the dialogues before coming to the retreat. Each dialogue session began with meditation led by Wendy Johnson of Green Gulch Farm and Zen Center in Muir Beach, California. Wendy trained with Thich Nhat Hahn, the well known Vietnamese Buddhist monk. With our minds cleared and focused the dialogues began with a story from one of the 3 facilitators and a prompt for us to relate our stories. Each of us could respond to the prompt if we chose to do so with the understanding that we should “speak to the center” (altar) rather than each other and try to build on what had been said by the others. Being a bear of little brain, I usually

did not offer a story until most of the others had told theirs, but as the only farmer in the group I think I offered a unique perspective to the dialogues. As the week passed we all came to know each other intimately and appreciate each others’ struggles as well as rejoice in each others’ joys.

After our evening meal we had opportunities for quiet time by ourselves, carving our spoons, or just sitting with one another and sharing our thoughts on the day’s dialogues. At 10 o’clock we were not allowed to speak to each other until 10 o’clock the next morning when the dialogues began. What I remember as perhaps most significant is how we came to acknowledge each other’s presence without words. Nods of the head became smiles, smiles became pats on the back, pats on the back became embraces and we became brothers and sisters.

On Wednesday morning as we all prepared to leave Knoll Farm, tears flowed and long, hearty hugs abounded. Peter offered a few words of caution for us about re- entering the “real” world. We all shared some thoughts on how we intended to use our retreat experience in our real life-work world. I offered the observation that I did not see the experience at Knoll Farm as an unreal world and my work world as the real world. I choose to view the first as a world that could be and the second as the world that is. If we dream big enough and work hard enough this world that is will become the world we hope to make it.

“Imagine all the people.....”

Onward,

Jay

<h3>In Your Share This Week</h3>
Eggplant
Red Tomatoes
Heirloom Tomatoes
Green Beans*
Spaghetti Squash*
Sweet Corn*
Lima Beans*
* Due to the nature of these crops and time of the season, some or all may not be available.

## Partial Season Now Available

If your neighbors or friends or coworkers have expressed an interest in the CSA this year, please let them know to talk with one of our farmers or send them to one of the pick-up sites to join for the rest of the season. Jay and Ted will have partial-season application forms available and they can be downloaded from the website as well.

Go to <http://www.providentorganicfarm.com/join.htm> and click on the link for the Partial Season Application. There is a full explanation of the part-season membership in the 1 September, 2008 CSA Newsletter (Week 14), also available at the web site.

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*Don't forget - If you have a favorite recipe that you can recommend to the membership, that uses ingredients we are likely to find in our distribution, e-mail it to me at [sheltonlankford@mac.com](mailto:sheltonlankford@mac.com).*

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## Recipe of the week

### Tomato and Bread Soup - ([www.foodfit.com](http://www.foodfit.com))

I tucked away a couple of large bowls of this recipe not more than an hour ago, and it will be making a return appearance on our table. The fully ripe, red tomatoes that have been coming from Provident Farms the last few distributions are perfect for this dish. It's vegetarian, but you may substitute chicken broth for the vegetable broth to introduce a richer flavor, and I used a loaf of the Artisan Garlic bread instead of day-old french bread for a robust chewy texture.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Serves 4

### Ingredients

1/2 tablespoon olive oil

1/2 cup finely diced onion

1 clove minced garlic

10 large fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped

1 pound, very ripe tomatoes (about 6 small tomatoes or 4 medium), peeled, cored and roughly chopped

2 cups vegetable or chicken broth

4 thick slices, day-old baguette, or above mentioned Artisan bread

salt to taste

freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. In a medium saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add the basil and tomatoes and simmer for 15 minutes.
2. Add the broth, bread, salt and pepper, and simmer for 15 minutes more. Stir with a wooden spoon to help break up the slices of bread. (I broke the slices into chunks before adding them.)
3. Ladle the hot soup into bowls and garnish with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese or an Italian cheese blend, like Asiago. Enjoy!

**Note:** A tip on peeling ripe tomatoes for cooking or freezing whole (veteran cooks forgive me, please): Don't use a knife to peel ripe tomatoes. Boil a pot of water and drop the tomatoes into it, letting them sit for about a minute and a half. Core with a knife and lift the peel. It will slip off cleanly, and your tomato is ready.