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Genesee Valley Organic Community Supported Agriculture

<http://www.gvocea.org>

GVOCSA News

On the way to your stomach something happens to your soul.

January 2005



Preserving Peacework Organic Farm

December 2004

By Elizabeth Henderson

In the spring of 2003, Becky Kraai offered to sell us the old Humbert Farm. It consists of 135 acres of which we have been renting 18. Greg and I founded Peacework Organic Farm in 1998 on 15 of these rented acres. We have had a 5-year rolling lease with the Kraai family – a moderately secure form of tenure. Greg and I, (and since

Flower CSA

If any members are interested in participating in a flower CSA that would like to work with us for the coming season, please email Jana Lamboy at warran-jana@flare.net

2000, Ammie) have provided continuity and guidance based on a cumulative total of 38 years of farming experience, while CSA members have been unstintingly generous with support, both practical and moral. We could not have built this farm without the contributions of time, energy, and money of GVOCSA members. Peacework is truly a cooperative effort.

We are deeply appreciative of the

good will and supportive attitude of Doug and Becky Kraai, and their generosity in allowing us to help steward this fine land. It is a rich and beautiful place – the farmland, woods and wetland areas. We would like to protect it in perpetuity – so we have turned to the Genesee Land Trust to partner with us.

The GVOCSA dates back to the winter of 1988-89 when I first moved to Rose Valley Farm in Wayne County. In Gill, MA, I had wanted to do CSA, but did not have the right conditions. Alison Clarke, founder of Politics of Food, recruited Jim Marx to brainstorm with David Stern and me; we decided to ask everyone to participate in the farming and distribution work and in setting CSA policy. At the end of our 16th year, I can say that we have created a model that works. In 1989, the CSA started with 31 shares for 29 households. Gradually, we expanded – 45, 90, and then 130.

When Greg and I left Rose Valley in 1997 the GVOCSA came with us and helped us find the Kraai land for our new farm. We spent the 1998 season building infrastructure – the beds, greenhouse, cold frame, cooler, and packing shed. After a January snowstorm, eight friends and members helped me move to the house I was able to buy next to the Kraai lands. Greg and I built an apartment for interns on the ground

floor of the house. The GVOCSA purchased food from four other organic farms during that transition year for the 100 families that stuck with the project through this upheaval. For 1999, our first production year at the old Humbert Farm, we attracted 160 families. Since then, we have expanded to 263 shares that support three full-time farmers and two interns. This season we fed a total of 817 individuals: 564 adults and 253 children! We plan to expand the farm business a little more so that we can add a fourth partner since it has been our great good fortune to attract Katie Lavin. Hopefully, bringing a farmer from the next generation into our partnership will set a pattern for future successions and many years of sustainable, ecological production.

Greg and I looked long and hard to find a place to grow food for the GVOCSA. We examined 20 other sites before deciding on the Kraai's land. We were very excited when

Member Action Items!

- Pledge your support for the Preserving Peacework Project. See page 5 for details.*
- For those who have not paid in full for last season, please mail any remaining payments to Judy Emerson.*
- Pre-register for the 2005 CSA season.*

we discovered that the old Humbert Farm offers prime soils, Palmyra sandy and silty loams, as fine as any in the Northeast. Since 1983, when the Kraai's bought the land, Doug used no chemicals on this or the adjacent lands he owned. He purchased contiguous parcels to try to protect the entire watershed from pollution. The land is criss-crossed by streams and has enough ground water to assure the irrigation necessary to grow annual crops on such well-drained soils. The combination of rich soils and adequate water makes this land a treasure that must be preserved for the future food security of this region.

The soil scientists in the Cornell Soil Health project have been doing extensive testing on the farm. At a field day in October, 2004, Professor George Abawi was lavish in his praise of our management of the soil resource. Our additions of compost and manure, our rotations and consistent cover cropping, as well as our reduced tillage and use of minimally damaging equipment have resulted in soil health that has already begun to set the standard for vegetable production in NYS. Managing for soil health is a long-term investment that is not compatible with insecure tenure of the land. To allow a soil to reach full maturity and peak capabilities, one needs to use organic methods for at least a decade. We can look forward to ever greater ecosystem benefits over the years to come.

For all too many farmers, selling their farmland represents the best hope of financing retirement. Greg, Ammie, and I are committed to a different path. The decision to partner in stewardship with the Genesee Land Trust follows from our commitment to a long-term vision of social justice and environmental responsibility. By GLT owning the land, it will remain affordable for future farmers to farm here. We want to make our

farm business solid enough financially that we can provide living wages, full benefits, and retirement to the farmers without selling the land. Without the financial burden of a mortgage, the total investment in the farm business will be smaller, allowing someone like Katie, who wants to farm but does not have a lot of money, to become a full partner through sweat equity over only a few years. We will lease the land from the GLT at a fair market value that will cover the taxes, but fit in the farm's annual budget. We will own and maintain all farm buildings so that the land trust will be able to monitor the land use, but will not be burdened by farm maintenance.

Too much of the food we all eat in this country is cheap because it is taken out of the flesh of the people who work to grow, pick, wash, transport, and sell it. At the recent Slow Food gathering for 5,000 small scale farmers in Turin, Italy, Carlo Petrini, founder of the group, said: "We must make a conscious, cultural choice to support a good quality of food that meets the needs of customers who appreciate the producers of their foods. Producers and consumers share a common fate. Protection of our food heritage is a common task. Customers must become co-producers and understand that when production is threatened, they are threatened."

As members of the GVOCSA, you have become co-producers with us, your farmers. The social investment in the land resource that the GLT purchase represents will make Peacework sustainable into the distant future and help us produce food that is traded fairly and distributed justly. Greg, Ammie, and I will be able to pass the farm on to Katie, maybe Helen, and others as yet unknown, and this rich land will feed your children and grandchildren for generations to come.

Creating a New Type of Preserve

By Gay Mills

Dear CSA Member,

Genesee Land Trust has nine preserves in the Greater Rochester area, each with its own unique character. Some are areas of prime birding habitat, where large numbers of birders visit to see the thousands of migratory species that pass through each spring (and fall). Others are neighborhood treasures that provide an oasis from a busy suburban life. All are quiet natural spots that are home to a variety of wildlife.

GVOCSA Vision Statement

We envision the creation of a land-based community of people of diverse ages, backgrounds and incomes, farmers and non-farmers, who are committed to love, justice, equality, democracy and cooperation, and honor the intrinsic value of nature and food, and the dignity of labor.

The members of this community will work gently together to learn and teach others to live sustainably, in the broadest sense, for the health of all living creatures and the planet. We will practice an agriculture that supports a whole, healthy, sustainable and loving community.

NEWS

Volume 15 Issue No. 1

Editors:

Marilyn Ajananada
marilynaja@hotmail.com

Rick Griggs
rick_griggs@hotmail.com

Mark Pierce
mark.pierce@rochester.edu

Published bi-monthly by:

Politics of Food
Genesee Valley Organic Community
Supported Agriculture (GVOCSA)
121 N. Fitzhugh Street
Rochester, New York 14614

In developing a partnership with the Genesee Valley Organic Community Supported Agriculture and the farmers of Peacework Organic Farm, Genesee Land Trust is envisioning a new type of preserve. It is a preserve that will protect working farmland on prime and unique soils, as well as protecting high quality wildlife habitats and scenic views. As part of this partnership, Genesee Land Trust plans to purchase 140 acres of land that includes the vegetable fields farmed by Peacework Organic Farm as well as woods filled with marvelous spring wildflowers, wildlife ponds and wetlands, a steep sided wooded drumlin, and hay fields. It is the Trust's intention to allow and support the continued farming and, in fact, to encourage future farming and stewardship of the land through a long-term lease with the farmers.

Preserving and protecting a variety of lands requires a variety of tools and partners, and this partnership is a new, promising direction for Genesee Land Trust. We hope you will join us in making this exciting project possible. You may visit our web site at: www.geneseeandtrust.org or call me at 256-2130 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gay Mills

Executive Director

(P.S. Here is some more information about Genesee Land Trust.)

What is a land trust?

A land trust is a tax-exempt non-profit organization that protects land resources for the public benefit. Founded in 1989, Genesee Land Trust is one of 1,500 land trusts nationwide.

Genesee Land Trust's Mission: Preserve and protect waterways, wetlands, farmland, natural and unique habitat, scenic and

recreational lands.

How do we accomplish our mission?

- Acquire land by donation or purchase.
- Work with individuals who voluntarily enter into conservation agreements to preserve their land's scenic, habitat or farmland values.
- Partner with like-minded organizations to identify and protect unique properties.
- Participate in the efforts of municipalities to enhance the quality of life in our region through open space protection for public enjoyment.

Where do we work?

- Greater Rochester region including Monroe and Wayne counties and portions of Genesee, Orleans, Livingston, Ontario, and Cayuga counties.

Past Trust successes:

The Trust maintains preserves in the Towns of Greece, Chili, Penfield, Caledonia and Macedon; protected lands through conservation agreements in Greece, Penfield, Pittsford, Perinton, Mendon, Arcadia and Ontario; and municipal partnerships in Macedon, Victor, Walworth and Brighton. Projects include:

1. Protection of Corbett's Glen: negotiated the sale from the landowners and partnered with the Town of Brighton to preserve a unique natural oasis located between Rte 490 and 441. The Trust continues to partner with the Town as active members of the Corbett's Glen Advisory Council and supporting the acquisition of new connections to the Glen.
2. Protection of 500 acres of farmland in a joint initiative with the Town of Macedon: received USDA funding jointly with the

Town to acquire agricultural conservation easements on three farms. An additional 500 acres will come under easement in the next few months.

3. Creation of 9 nature preserves open to the public from Penfield's Hipp Brook Preserve to Island Cottage Woods, a birding hotspot in the spring, in the Town of Greece.
4. Partnerships with conservation and research organizations as well as individual volunteers to manage our nature preserves.
5. Protection of woodlands, wetlands, stream corridors and open fields with conservation agreements on 500 acres of privately owned land.
6. Education through the annual Backyard Habitat Tour – a special garden tour exploring the significant role gardeners can have on the health and wealth of wildlife habitat in our community.



THE PRESERVING PEACEWORK PROJECT

By Suzanne Wheatcraft

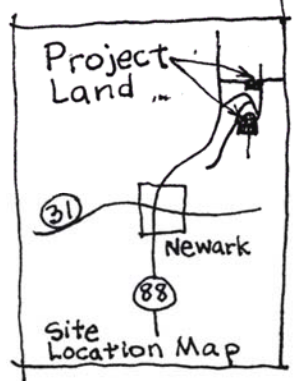
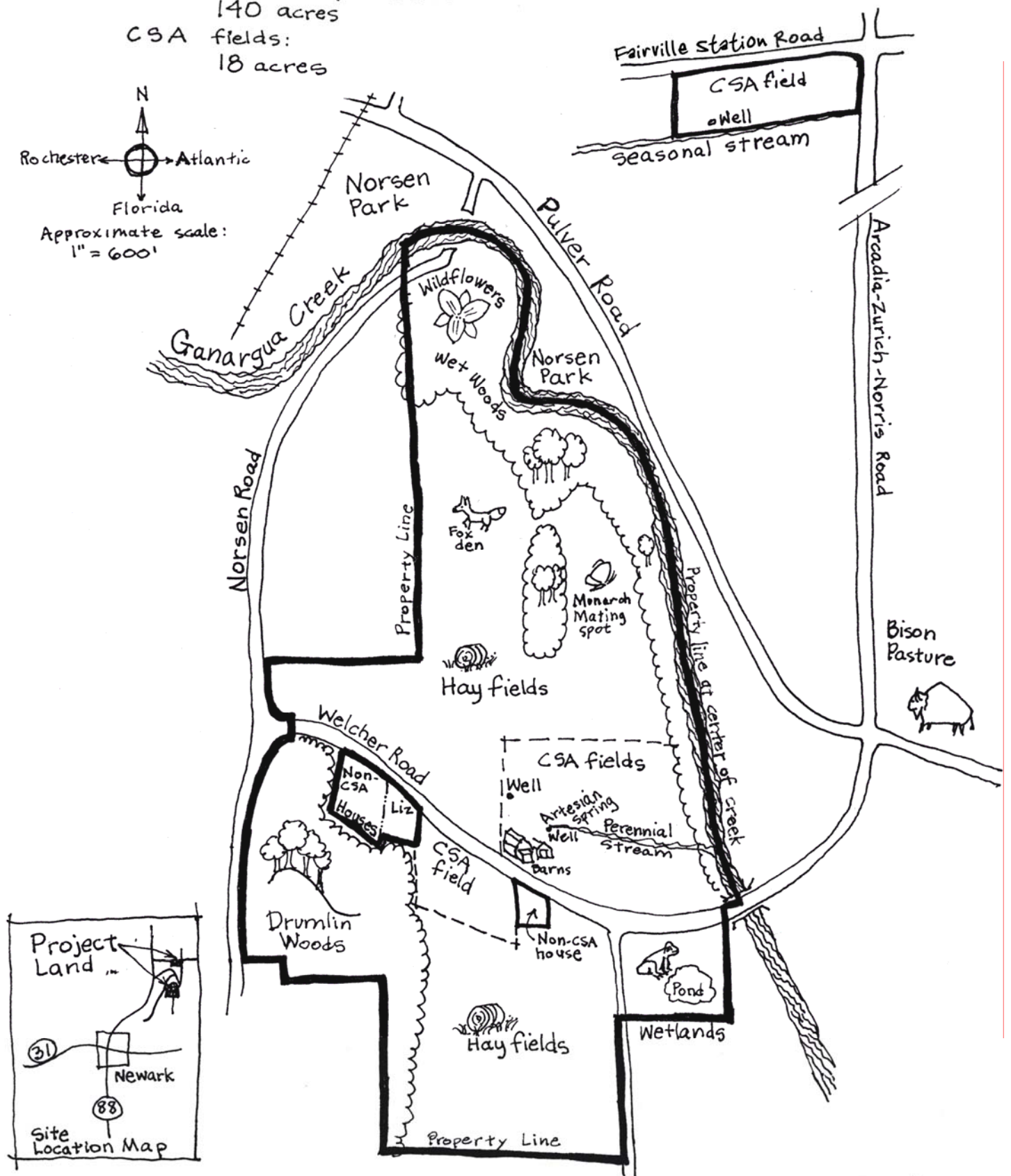
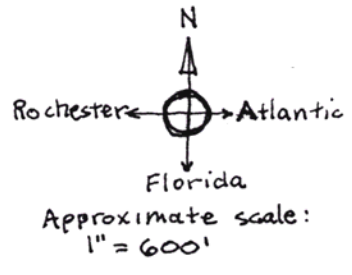
I have been a member of GVOCSA and the Genesee Land Trust (GLT) since the late 1980s. I joined both groups in their infancy and have been active in each organization (as a former GLT president and current board member and as a long-time Thursday night GVOCSA distribution coordinator). The prospect of GLT purchasing the Humbert Farm from Becky Kraai and leasing the land to Peacework Organic Farm to farm for the GVOCSA is certainly an exciting partnership opportunity in my eyes, due to my profound admiration and respect for the work that each group does, as well as the principles for which each group stands.

Preserving Peacework Project

Lands to be purchased by Genesee Land Trust:

Total land to be purchased:
140 acres

CSA fields:
18 acres



12/04

Securing this land is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all of us to make something happen that will have a long-lasting impact on generations of Rochester's families. GLT has always viewed itself as an organization that must conduct thoughtful and thorough evaluations of the land preservation projects that we embark on – "for perpetuity" is a long time to say we're going to take care of something. GVOCSA is an organization of nearly 300 like-minded but diverse families who, while we may strongly believe in the work of Peacework farm, are usually only able to show our commitment to the work of Peacework by our season-long membership. This is our chance to show that we, the families of GVOCSA, care about farmers and farmland for the long

term!

It will take GLT approximately \$150,000 to purchase the Humbert Farm. GLT has embarked on the largest capital campaign of its history, and the purchase of the Humbert Farm and subsequent leasing of it to Peacework Farm has been identified as one of the top three priority projects in this campaign. Since we, the GVOCSA families, are the citizen constituents who stand to benefit the most from this arrangement, it is expected that we will be the primary source of financial contributions to make this project a reality.

A small group of your fellow CSA members have been working toward this end for several months. We've been working with the Peacework farmers and the GLT

Executive Director to provide assurance that purchasing this land is not only a unique land preservation opportunity for GLT and a powerful means of securing future farming resources for Peacework farmers; it is also a way for all of us to assure our families will have a source for wholesome, locally-grown organic food for generations to come!

Please therefore consider thoughtfully what level you and your family will be able to support this project as you are filling out the pledge card that is included as part of this newsletter. And thank you for helping to secure the future of our farmers, our farmland, and our delicious GVOCSA vegetables.



Genesee Valley Organic Community Supported Agriculture Preserving Peacework Project pledge

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

YOU MAY CHOOSE TO SEND A GIFT TODAY FOR ANY AMOUNT
OR MAKE A PLEDGE FOR LARGER CONTRIBUTIONS

I have enclosed a check for \$ _____ to preserve Peacework.

I pledge my gift of \$ _____ over 1 or 2 years (please circle choice).

Please remind me of my 2005 Pledge of \$ _____ and my 2006 pledge of \$ _____

Signature _____

The GVOCSA Preserving Peacework Committee, the farmers of Peacework Farm and the Genesee Land Trust thank you for your gift.

*Your gift is tax-deductible. Please make check out to Genesee Land Trust and mail to:
Genesee Land Trust, 500 East Avenue, Suite 200, Rochester, NY 14607*

2004 END OF SEASON SURVEY

By Ammie Chickering

It's a pleasure to sit at home early in the New Year and read our members' responses to the End of Season Survey from the previous growing season. The overwhelmingly positive (and often glowing) expressions of appreciation and satisfaction with the CSA are a tribute to the hard work of the Core Committee (including the farmers) and give us a marvelous boost of energy as we begin the planning process for the upcoming year. Your thoughtful comments on ways to improve the CSA are very much appreciated and will be brought to the Core Committee for discussion.

Forty-four members responded to the 2004 Survey and of these, ten were first year members. Of these new members, two had heard about us through Abundance Co-op, one through City Newspaper, and one through Rick Austin (thank you, Rick!). But most of these new members had heard about us through word of mouth from existing members. As always, happy, satisfied members are our best recruiters so thank you all for spreading the word. New members were asked to give feedback on the orientation presentation we gave them at sign-up. Most found it very helpful, comprehensive, and informative. One person was particularly glad to hear about scholarships, which made it possible for them to join. One person said the most helpful part of the orientation was the slide show about our farming practices and another said it was the least helpful.

All respondents were asked to rank their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with eleven aspects of the CSA: sign-up, food, price, farm work, scheduling, distribution, special orders, newsletter, web site, Member Guide, and e-mail listserv.

New members were generally "pretty satisfied" to "very satisfied" with all aspects. A couple of members had difficulty with scheduling work shifts; one found our process for choosing work shifts at sign-up overcrowded and confusing. A couple of new members were ambivalent about both the web site and the farm work. Suggestions for improvements were overwhelmingly requests for recipes for the less familiar veggies. This was a common request from second and third year members as well. Suggestions range from a web site cookbook to fliers for individual vegetables available at distribution. The GVOCSA web site is already set up for recipes by vegetable. ANYBODY CAN ADD RECIPES TO THE WEB SITE COOKBOOK! When we're talking about food around the wash sink at the farm (which is often!) we're always asking members to put their recipes on the web site. A recent check of the web site found that this hasn't been happening very often: recipes are pretty scant or non-existent for many veggies. Maybe we can all make an effort this winter to contribute. We also have a CSA Food Book available for sale to members that comes in a loose-leaf binder so new recipes can be printed off the web site and added to it. I just spoke with a man who was a CSA member for just one year over ten years ago. He said he really wasn't into being in a CSA but he'd bought a copy of the Food Book and he loves it and still uses it. We'll discuss with the Core how to make more people aware of the book.

A couple of new members also requested advanced notice of what will be in the shares – particularly an issue for people who pick up Sunday night but do their food shopping over the weekend. An easy solution for Sunday people would be to call a friend who picks up on Thursday, although

sometimes the Thursday and Sunday shares are not exactly the same. This issue seems to disappear for members after the second season; some actually enjoy the adventure of not knowing what they're getting until pick-up. But I also know we have lost a few members who really felt the need to plan their weekly menus ahead of time. It's tricky for us at the farm to give advance notice of what's available because it's SO weather-dependent. The distribution sheets are constantly being tweaked as we're picking the vegetables and the sheets aren't complete until the vegetables leave the farm with the members each Thursday and Sunday noon. Those of you who have picked peas and beans with us know that we're often picking till the very last minute, weighing the harvest and dividing by the number of shares to complete the distribution sheets as the food's being loaded into your cars. It can be somewhat frantic in the packing shed but it assures that you get the maximum amount per share that's ripe that day. On the bottom of the distribution sheets, we write what will "probably be in next week's shares, weather permitting." We will start writing this information on a separate sheet so it can be posted at distribution. Debbie Taylor, a local member from Newark, took it upon herself this year to post each week's shares (and potential next week's shares) on the listserv. Some of you asked if just giving us your e-mail address automatically put you on the listserv. It does not. You have to sign yourself up on the web site.

As with the new members, the response of the returning members was overwhelmingly positive for all aspects of the CSA. The highest number of "very satisfied" responses were for the food (and it was a wet year so we farmers were happy to see this!) and the newsletter (three cheers for Rick Griggs, Mark Pierce, and Barbara Mitchell!). No one used the "very

2004 END OF SEASON SURVEY RESULTS

Number of responses: **44**

Number of seasons in CSA: first: **10**, second: **7**, third: **5**, fourth: **7**, fifth: **3**, sixth and higher: **12**

Number of respondents that completed table (below): **43**

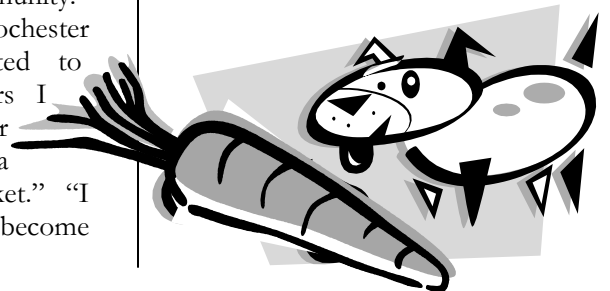
	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	In between	Pretty Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Doesn't apply to me
Sign-up process		3	4	14	22	
Food				7	35	1
Price				13	29	1
Farm Work			2	10	29	2
Scheduling		1	2	15	25	
Distribution			1	12	28	2
Special Orders			1	6	17	19
Newsletter				9	34	
Web Site		1	5	6	12	18
Member Guide				14	23	5
E-mail Listserv		1	1	2	11	28

dissatisfied” column but the most “somewhat dissatisfied” and “in between” responses were to the sign-up process (7) and the web site (6). For some reason, fourth year members were most bothered by the sign-up process and asked if there were some way to do it on-line. Many suggestions were made for improving the web site: keeping it better updated, more recipes, having the directions to the farm easier to find on it. It is interesting to note that 18 of the 43 people who responded to this section of the survey checked “doesn’t apply to me” for the web site though most of our members have e-mail addresses. I’m not sure what this means but it will all be brought up for discussion with the Core.

In closing, I’ll share more of the comments that make us smile. A

new member who responded to how she found out about the CSA by writing “can’t remember – senior moment!” also commented, “I’m a farm girl – I’ve returned to my roots.” Another new member admitted it was “a little overwhelming sometimes” but overall, “It was great!” Comments from returning members included: “Very positive experience for our family. Even our dog enjoys the fresh veggies.” “My kids love to go the farm. Our daughter is convinced she’s dug every potato she eats.” “Wonderful, heartfelt community.” “Best darn thing in the Rochester community.” “I’m addicted to buying food from farmers I know and have shared their dinner table – not just a friendly face at the market.” “I realize how educated I’ve become

about farmer issues and food quality.” “Anyone who really wants to reform health care in this country would recommend that every person get a prescription from their doctor for membership in a CSA – especially one that requires working on a farm. We could heal our bodies and our souls.” “Wonderful food and people. Can’t imagine summer without it.” “Appreciate CSA more and more: food, community, shared values.” “Wonderful as always. Miss the tomatoes already.”



GVOCSA and the Internet

GVOCSA has a number of excellent resources on the internet. Our website is located at:

<http://www.gvoCSA.org>

There you can find the squirrel bulk form, 2005 signup info, recipes, news and events, schedules for the farm and distribution, past newsletters, and much more!

Also, GVOCSA has an electronic mailing list to which you can subscribe. This is a wonderful way to receive timely information regarding special orders, news from the farm, recipes and special events right in your e-mail inbox! Also, it provides a method of actively conversing with the membership. To join, point your browser to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gvoCSA/>

Politics of Food

Are you a member yet?

GVOCSA began as a project of Politics of Food Program, Inc. and we are still intimately connected. We share the vision of a sustainable food system that supports farmers, consumers, and the environment.

As the urban sponsor of the GVOCSA, Politics of Food continues 30 years of education & advocacy, working with youth in our Rochester Roots School - Community Garden program, sharing information through our newsletter, and working toward a healthy, local food system.

Please join us by sending \$25 to:

Politics of Food, 121 N. Fitzhugh St., Rochester, NY 14614

2005 PLANT ORDER FORM

Peacework will grow these plants in our greenhouse using untreated seed and our own compost-based potting soil. We will deliver them to Rochester in the Spring on May 19, the day of the first share distribution. This includes the plants for both Sunday and Thursday shares!

PRICES: \$1.50 per single plant (larger plant in 4 in. pot)
 \$2.50 per flat (6 smaller plants to a flat)

VARIETY	# OF SINGLE PLANTS	# OF FLATS	AMT. PAID
Herbs:			
Parsley (A)			
Basil (A)			
French Thyme (P)			
Rosemary (P)			
Sage (P)			
Flowers:			
Marigolds (A)			
Petunias (A)			
Nasturtiums (A)			
Snapdragons (A)			
Columbines (P)			
Hollyhocks (P)			
Sweet Williams (P)			
Echinacea (P)			
Vegetables:			
Red Cherry Tomato (A)			
Yellow Cherry Tomato (A)			
Regular Red Tomato (A)			
Broccoli (A)			
Sweet Peppers (A)			
Other			

Make checks payable to Peacework Organic Farm.
 Send to Peacework Organic Farm, 2218 Welcher Rd., Neward, NY 14513
 Deadline for Advance Orders: March 1, 2005



OPEN
SEVEN DAYS
M-F 8-8
Sat 9-6
Sun 11-6

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