

# Community Farms Outreach Newsletter

## WALTHAM FIELDS COMMUNITY FARM

240 Beaver Street, Waltham, MA 02452 781-899-2403 [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org)

March 2003



### Message from the Board President

*Dee Krickler*

I am happy to report that the CFO Board has been swirling with activity and a renewed sense of purpose dedicated to this unique community farm. This, your Board, that meets once a month, is also assuming responsibility for a broad array of tasks described below. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of our Board members for their time, their dedication and their investment in our organization. Thanks too to our staff, John and Derek, for their ongoing valuable work in support of the Board and the organizational mission.

We welcome our two newest members, Jane Hammer and Liz Fuller, who bring new energy, commitment and skills to the Board. Jane, a long term CSA member from Arlington, has already taken on the task of investigating the exciting prospect of having an *Americorps* contingent of volunteers come to work on the farm later in the summer. She has been busy researching the issue for the Board, filling out the application and helping us to identify housing and other needs that they will have. Jane will have more information to report on this in the next newsletter. Liz, who now makes her home in Waltham, was new to our CSA last year. She and her friend Ken Green have volunteered to update and redesign our web site. We thank Liz and Ken for taking a turn in the Webmaster seat. CFO expresses its gratitude to Dan Melnechuk, a neighboring GROW gardener, for his generous work all these years administering our web site and maintaining our computers, not to mention donating his band for our *Cinco de Mayo* fundraiser in 2001!

The Board now has several committees up and running in an effort to review and oversee programs and organizational needs. Our Development and Finance Committee has been meeting regularly to develop fundraising strategies and to develop fiscal policies. Jonathan Kirschner, our Treasurer and resourceful recycling guru, has researched the area of internal accounting controls; Elise Hoblitzelle, our Secretary, is coordinating the Spring Fling Fundraiser and Silent Auction again this year, and Oakes Plimpton has written to everyone he knows since college, raising more than \$2000 from over twenty donations, including his old law school buddy, a former Massachusetts Governor! Talk about networking!

*"...The Board now has several committees up and running in an effort to review and oversee programs and organizational needs."*

Gretta Anderson, our Vice President and chair of the Membership Committee, has done a phenomenal job of identifying and working on membership goals, including membership and volunteer retention and recruitment in farm activities. Much of what you'll read in this newsletter is the result of Gretta's work. She has also developed a comprehensive orientation packet of materials that will be available on the web site, as well as in other formats through the season. Gretta, whose taproots are nourished by her mid-Western heritage, contributes many nutrients to our New England farm!

Two new committees have sprung up as the seasons have changed: the Education Committee, powered by Anna Linakis, Adam Lessor and Elise H., will first be looking at the Children's Learning Program and giving some deliberation and oversight to our efforts in providing a farm experience to urban campers this summer. Longer-term goals will be to explore how better the farm can connect with other educational efforts through the entire season. Much of the work of this committee work will be done online, through email, our new chat line and conference calls! Distance learning comes to the farm!

Speaking of distance, Chris Yoder, Farmer, has made frequent trips to Waltham this winter from his Vanguarden Farm in Dover. As a Board member and experienced professional farmer,  
**Continued...**

### Around the Farm

*with John Mitchell, Farm Manager*

#### **Farm manager update**

The 2003 season has already started as I write this in early March. All the onion plantings have sprouted (3 plantings — 2 yellow storage varieties and one sweet mild variety). The first planting of celery is growing closer to its time of greenhouse transplanting, which is when we relocate the seedlings from a nutrient-poor seed starting mix to a compost-rich potting soil. The first brassicas are just poking above the soil (chinese cabbage and green cabbage). By the time you read this, we will have started the leeks, the kales (red and green), collards, peppers and eggplants.



*Continued...*

This newsletter edition is underwritten by **Progressive Asset Management**, a socially and environmentally responsible investment firm, Wellesley, MA 781 239 1187, [www.pamboston.com](http://www.pamboston.com). We are pleased to donate back to Waltham Fields Community Farm 10% of fees generated from new accounts opened by its members.

**Community Farms Outreach  
Board of Directors**

Dee Kricker Waltham <i>President</i>	Liz Fuller Waltham
Gretta Anderson Arlington <i>Vice President</i>	Jane Hammer Arlington
Jonathan Kirschner Waltham <i>Treasurer</i>	Adam Lesser Newton
Elise Hoblitzelle Watertown <i>Secretary</i>	Anna Linakis Somerville
Oakes Plimpton Arlington	Joe Orlando Waltham
	Norma Wint Waltham
	Chris Yoder Dover

**Queries and questions can be forwarded by the staff, which can be contacted at 781.899.2403, or send email to [walthamfields@communityfarms.org](mailto:walthamfields@communityfarms.org) [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org)**

**Staff**

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Newsletter submissions should be sent to the farm manager.

Waltham Fields Community Farm is a project of Community Farms Outreach, a 501(c)3 nonprofit charitable corporation.

Board meetings are open to the public. Check the calendar for the time and location of regular monthly meetings.

*CFO Mission:* The purpose of this corporation shall be to promote, support and manage community farms and farms in the community; community farms are farms which are charitable and educational: growing produce for soup kitchens, shelters and food pantries; educating children and adults as to how and where their food comes from, and generally to preserve the open space and beauty of farms.

**From the Pres. continued**

Chris provides valuable consultation and support to our staff and to our Personnel Committee. Joe Orlando, also a valued member of our Personnel Committee, is a retired Biology professor who has spent many summer days volunteering in the fields. Joe donated our tool shed and rumor has it that he may be out there on that tractor this year helping to eradicate those nasty weeds. Weed control is high on Joe's agenda, as well as preserving this land, Waltham's last true farm. Norma Wint has contributed many valuable insights on issues brought before the Board, and she longs to be able to get back out to those fields to harvest.

The Produce Donation Committee is also newly formed in order to examine how we can streamline and improve our charitable work. Advisory Board member Graeme Williams is our liaison with the Waltham Salvation Army, our largest local produce recipient. The committee has identified the necessary components for a successful food distribution model in affiliation with the WSA this season, one that we hope to replicate with other agencies with whom we work. In addition to setting up a weekly distribution schedule that gets the food to the agency in time for the lunch time meal and food pantry schedules, we will be looking to find storage bins for transport that will fit into refrigerators, multi-lingual food labels and descriptions of unfamiliar foods and how to prepare them for clients. Where possible, we hope to pre-bag veggies such as carrots, to facilitate handling and distribution. With respect to our hunger relief efforts, we believe that CFO can increase our ability to make a critical difference in the lives of people in need.

Thanks to Jeff Sciortino, for his behind the scenes input the past several months with thoughtful insights and suggestions about all things CSA! Last but not least, I want to express our appreciation for the work of our Newsletter Editor and Advisory Board member, Martha Creedon, a long term CSA shareholder. Martha's invaluable contribution helps to knit the fibers that bind us together as members of this community farm.

**See you all at the Spring Fling!**



**Around the Farm continued**

**CSA: Get ready now**

If you are not a vegetarian and you eat fewer vegetables in the off-season, it's tempting when you bring home your first share in June to load up every meal with farm-fresh, high-flavor, organically grown veggies.

The transition to a vegetable-intense diet later will be more enjoyable if you start to increase the fresh vegetables you eat now. Suddenly and radically changing your diet could prompt gastro-intestinal problems and overwhelm your system. So start cooking today to get the most out of your CSA experience this summer, especially greens, since the first few shares are always heavy with spring greens.

**Join Us!**



Eat dessert at the **Third Sunday Gatherings:**

Join fellow shareholders and supporters once a month for a picnic lunch and dessert. Bring a picnic lunch and something to drink. The farm will provide dessert. Stay to work in the fields or just relax with family and friends.

May 18 is our first gathering; join us at 12:30. We will also be collecting non-perishable food for donation to the Waltham Salvation Army food pantry.

## Friends of Cornelia Warren Farm (FCWF) Steering Committee Report

In February, the Committee met with Dr. John Mullin, UMass Amherst Vice Chancellor of University Outreach, to begin discussing the current status and future plans for the Field Station.

Dr. Mullin stated that UMass is firmly committed to keeping this property and he emphasized that UMass wants a strong presence and visibility here. However, the state fiscal crisis requires the University to examine all of their programs with a view toward increasing revenue streams. "Every asset has to be used, but every asset that is a cost is a problem," he explained.

**Dr. Mullin must reconcile how the University can increase revenues at the Field Station and maintain the current agricultural and horticultural uses.** He referred to programs such as the Professional Education Center at UMass, Westborough, and their long distance learning programs as revenue producing models. Being located so near to "America's Technology Highway", this site would be prime for these types of programs. However, Dr. Mullin was clear that there are no immediate plans for any such changes.

In addition, he was very interested in learning about the current activities on the site and supportive of our efforts to work with UMass in future planning efforts. He is committed to preserving the agricultural core of the site.

We discussed the advantages of having FCWF incorporate as a 501 C (3) nonprofit corporation to be able to partner with UMass and the UMass Foundation in future planning and funding. As a nonprofit, FCWF could work with the UMass Foundation to find revenues to fix up the property, for example, the historical mid-nineteenth century barn roof across the street needs an immediate \$20,000 for a corrugated roof. UMass has no money for the barn roof repair. Dr. Mullin indicated the need to develop a five-year master plan, but he suggested the development of a one-year plan for starters, with a budget to match.

The Steering Committee will reconvene in March to discuss our next steps. Important decisions about whether and how to form a new nonprofit representing all site users will need to be addressed in order to further our interests in preserving this site.

**A question for CFO members to mull over: could CFO build the capacity to undertake such a venture in the future?** It would certainly be consistent with our mission, but what resources would it take and how would we integrate the various horticultural and other users within such a project? Please check our web site in the near future for the FCWF draft Vision Statement, the Survey Summary and a list of other site users. -Dee Kricker

## Inspiration

A handful of CFO supporters were asked, "What is it about this farm, this organization, that inspires you to be involved?" Here are some of their responses:

**"This land feeds my artistic spirit. I love the forms and the spatial aspects of the farm. The charitable mission feeds my soul."** Dee Kricker, Supporter since 1995, CSA shareholder 2003, President, CFO Board of Directors

"The first reason is the vegetables; this is what initially got me interested. The first year I was absolutely enthralled by the quality of the produce, and I still am. I love eating organically and I love for my kids to eat organically. That first year, we picked up our share in Arlington. We didn't know the farm was so close. When we finally got ourselves to the farm, that added a whole new level of experience and we quickly changed our pick up site to the farm. **The experience of gathering vegetables at the farm with my kids is just wonderful.** They get to meet other kids and learn about where their food comes from. The charitable component is also a draw for me. It feels good to be involved in something that benefits me and other people. The farm has been easy to get involved in. I can feel my impact when I do my little part. I really like being a small part of this farm."



Elise Hoblitzelle, CSA Shareholder since 1996, Secretary, CFO Board of Directors, Finance and Development Committee

"I support the farm by working in the fields because I love to grow things. I just love watching plants grow and taking care of them. I love to grow flowers for people. I really like growing my own food and eating what I've grown throughout the year. I love physical work and working hard. **I love eating with the seasons and being in tune with the natural rhythms of the world.** Over the years I've worked with terrific people, made some good friends and learned a lot about farming. The mission of this organization — preserving farmland, providing nutritious food to those in need and educating people about how their food is grown — is really important to me, too." Linda MacMillan, WFCF Herb and Flower Grower since 1999

"In this crazy futuristic world of ours, simple pleasures are underrated. Isn't incredible how you can email your sister's cell phone in Boston while she's sitting on a plane about to take-off for Cambodia, yet it is hard to find apples grown in your hometown? How about the fact that you know seven people who've had cancer yet you struggle to find a single non-chemically treated vegetable sold in your local grocery store? On top of this all, did you say you have never met the farmer who has been harvesting your potatoes? And what? You don't know what a cucumber plant looks like, you say?! ...Preposterous, but join the family.

Access to fresh, local, organic vegetables is, unfortunately, rare nowadays. Also rare is getting food without packaging, grown in season, which doesn't waste 250 gallons of gas per truckload to be



### Farm Classifieds

If you would like to respond to a farm classified, just call 781.899.2403, or email the farm at [walthamfields@communityfarms.org](mailto:walthamfields@communityfarms.org).

### Seeking for Donation to

**the Farm.** Electric stove, refrigerator (full size and small), office furniture, pickup truck for farm vehicle, trusses used in building construction, wood for construction material, 6-foot fence wire, 7-foot metal fence poles.

**Housing for Farm Hands.** Seeking inexpensive housing for two farmhands who will begin work in April.

**Spring Fling Donations.** Seeking items for silent auction. Get friends and/or local businesses to contribute: a weekend at your beachfront or mountaintop cabin, a gourmet meal, artwork or jewelry from a local artist, tickets to local theater, music performance or sports event, membership in an environmental or other organization., etc.

**Workshare Positions.** Work in exchange for a share of vegetables produced on the farm. Various positions available. 6-8 hours of work per week (depending on work assignment) from June through October.

**Distribution Coordinator.** Seeking somebody to monitor the CSA share distribution on Sunday evening, from 2:30-7 pm, in exchange for a full share of vegetables produced on the farm.

**Back-up Drivers.** For delivery of box shares to Arlington, Cambridge and Somerville. Some weeks during the summer the regular driver will not be able to drive. The farm is seeking someone with a good driving record who could help with delivery to our pick-up sites. The farm may be able to provide a vehicle. Must be available Tuesdays.

**Wanted. Volunteer Drivers** to help drive donated organic vegetables from Waltham farm to Waltham charity. Late May through October, or any period within those months. Days and hours flexible, but seeking a weekly commitment. Prefer if you have your own vehicle, but one may be provided. Must have good driving record. Call 781.899.2403, or email [johnmitchell@communityfarms.org](mailto:johnmitchell@communityfarms.org).

driven 3,000 miles before arriving on your dinner table. Not to mention the fact that we have actually seen where this food comes from, and helped to till the land in which it grows!

Clearly, *I feel lucky to be a member of this farm: A farm with a mission beyond making money — a mission that supports good health, a healthy environment, a sense of community, employment of local farmers, and increasing our understanding of the local food system.* After all, what more could a girl of the 21<sup>st</sup> century want?" *Anna Linakis, CSA Shareholder since 2001, CFO Board of Directors, Education Committee*

### You Can Make a Difference

This year, we estimate that we need an average of 8 hours of field labor from each CSA shareholder over the course of the entire farming season. We also estimate that we need 1000 non-staff hours dedicated to non-food production tasks (delivering produce to food programs, membership and community outreach including event planning, and policy and program development).



### Why do we need so much help in the fields?

Raising vegetables organically is labor intensive. For example, putting row covers on the squash to guard against striped cucumber beetles, then taking row covers off the squash so pollination can occur requires many hands, as does picking horn worms off tomatoes. Our farm has a serious perennial weed problem

that adversely affects vegetable production. Our weed control plan depends on a good deal of hand weeding and tractor cultivation. Your help with fieldwork and non-production tasks keeps our expenses down, increases our ability to carry out our charitable mission and allows us to pay our farm staff reasonable wages, including health insurance benefits.

*We know that a few of you won't be able to make it to the farm or help in the fields for reasons of time, logistics, etc. Some of you will drop in once or twice a month and there will be a handful of you that we will see every week, rain or shine, laboring with us in the fields, greenhouse or office.*

**We value every kind of involvement in CFO and WFCF and we trust that each of you will contribute as best you can.**

Check out our new e-mail list at <http://topica.com/lists/cfo-wfcf-chat/>  
Visit us on the web at [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org)

**Contact us directly** If you are interested in helping out with greenhouse work and early planting in April, contact John Mitchell. If you are interested in doing field work, we will be offering fieldwork orientation sessions starting in late April. Please e-mail the farm office at [WalthamFields@communityfarms.org](mailto:WalthamFields@communityfarms.org) or call (781) 899-2403.