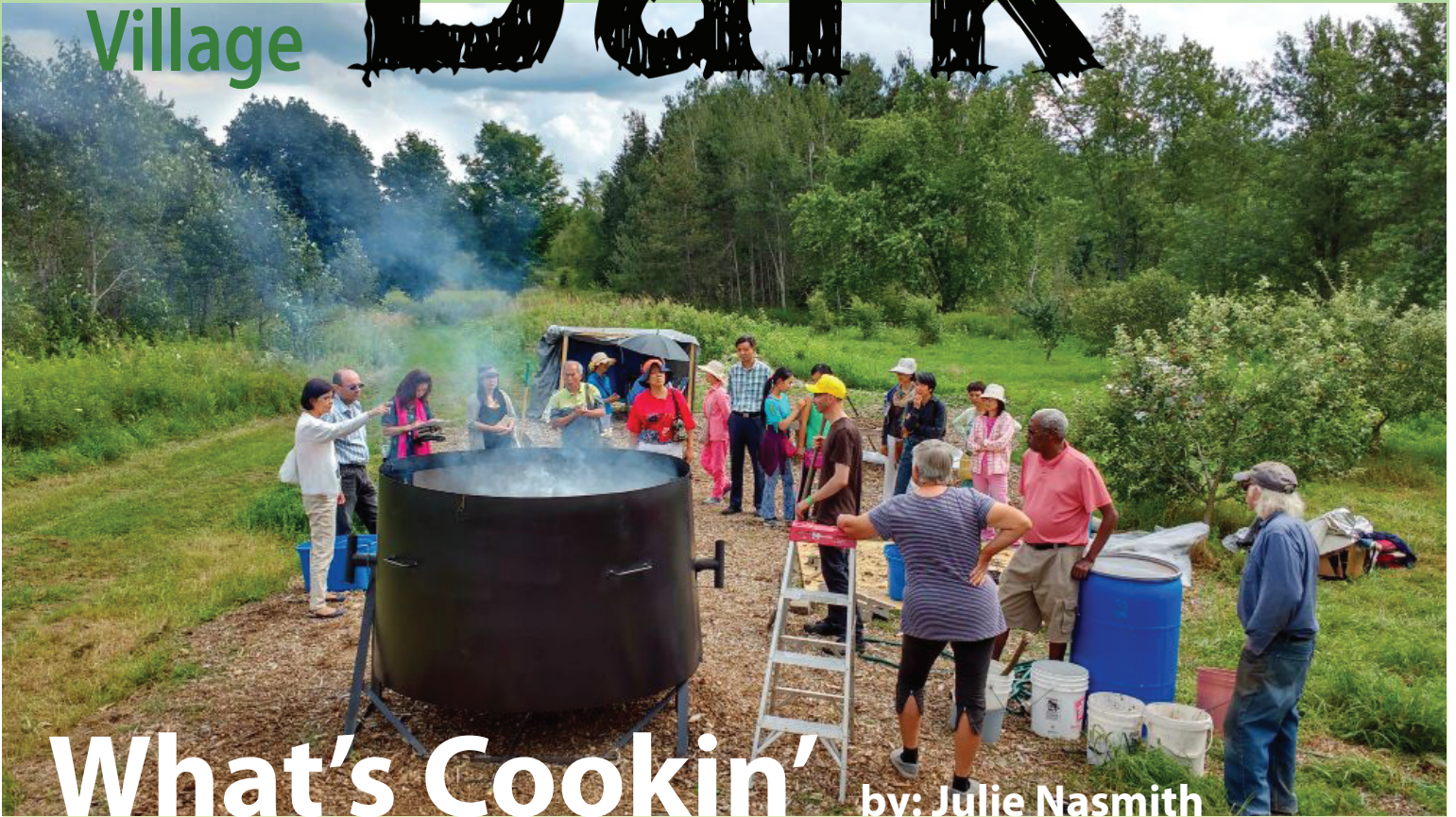


The
Whole
Village

Winter 2018

Bark



What's Cookin' by: Julie Nasmith

For over two years Milt and Barbara Wallace have been developing our Biochar program at Whole Village. Biochar is simply wood that is pyrolysed, or burnt without oxygen, so the finished product is char which gets inoculated with animal manure to make it biochar. It allows us to sequester carbon from wood or other agricultural by-products like sunflower stalks into the soil instead of allowing it to release CO₂ as it decomposes.

We continued to produce and use biochar this year with a new farm-sized piece of equipment. We got the plans for a KonTiki flame shielded kiln from Ithaca Institute -

an international open source network for carbon strategies with headquarters in Europe. Our neighbor John Rowe, who owns a metal-working business, along with a community member with welding experience, built the new kiln for us. We have had three burns so far, with almost zero emissions, producing 100 to 150 lbs (500 to 700 litres) of very good quality biochar each time.

We have three objectives in this project: to use the biochar to increase our farm's soil fertility, to use waste materials on our farm to remove CO₂ from the atmosphere permanently, and to demonstrate

this important method of addressing climate change to as many people as possible. There have been many people who have visited our biochar site and observed our burns and equipment. We are slowly building a more comprehensive demonstration site which will include various methods for producing biochar, examples of plants grown with and without biochar, and more.

If you would like to attend one of our burns which will be starting next spring, send an email at: mbwall149@gmail.com, and we will let you know when a burn is scheduled.

A Tale of Two Calves

by: Milt Wallace

Our Kerry cows produced two calves for us this year. Their births were very different, and resulted in personalities that were very different as well.

The first calf, a heifer, was born at the end of March. Her mother, Willow, had been raised with little human contact, mostly alone in pasture with her mother for her first year. We bought Willow and her mother Trina at that point and tried to civilize her, but she clung ferociously to her wildness. We had to lasso her in order to restrain her so that the artificial insemination technician and later the vet could work with her. When her calf was born, she rejected it, and kicked the calf in the head two times when it tried to nurse at her udder. The calf looked very poorly its first day of life. We had the vet in to administer to her, but as we left the barn that night we were sure she

would be dead in the morning. To our surprise, the next morning the calf was up and looking strong, although keeping as far away from her mother as she could. We thought Phoenix would be a fitting name for her. We milked Willow for several weeks at great risk to ourselves as she kicked at us too, often and hard. We kept Phoenix in a stall away from her mother, and fed her from a bottle. We finally decided that in the interest of our safety and to reduce the time necessary to feed the calf, we needed to get rid of Willow. We sold her to Rare Breeds Canada whose interest in her was to save and pass on her genetics. We continued to bottle feed Phoenix with powdered milk replacer. She was very excited to see us whenever we came with her bottle, and that interest in people remained after she was weaned and up to the present. She

often greets us with a moo when we arrive, and walks over to be scratched under her chin and on her back.

The second, a bull calf, was born in early October. He was 12 days past his due date, and we had begun to worry that his mother was not actually pregnant. She gave us no warning, we just walked into the paddock at daybreak where our three cows were lying, and suddenly noticed there was a fourth animal present. He was born outside in the dark, and appeared to be strong and well. From day one, this little boy did not want to be touched by people. His mother was a timid heifer who enjoyed having her back scratched by us. Although we worked at befriending the little bull calf, he mostly ran from us, only occasionally taking a sniff of a pant leg as we milked his mother after he had nursed. His mother turned out to be pretty easy to milk and has been providing us with lots of it – grass fed, easy to digest, and sweet. The little boy started to become a trouble maker. He escaped from his stall and ran out of the barn, crashing through the electric fence a couple of times. And more. We decided that his genetics would not work for us and sold him to Rare Breeds Canada who felt they could make better use of them.

Every cow is unique, and it is fun and interesting to live and work with them. They've been an important addition to our community. It has also been helpful in many ways to be working with Rare Breeds Canada and to help them in their work of supporting these wonderful heritage breeds like the Kerry cow.

The Bluebird and the Treehouse

By: Julie Nasmith

Whole Village Pigs

For the first time at Whole Village pigs can be seen rooting around. In April, Ted Baker acquired five rust-coloured Tamworth pigs from a local farmer. Using electric fencing, Ted is able to rotate them around our gardens while providing a main area that offers plenty for their curious minds - woodchips, leaves, and tree

stumps. Tamworths are a heritage breed that do well on pasture and enjoy rooting out twitchgrass. Considering the amount of twitchgrass we have to deal with, they are great additions to our farm. As well, the kids love them and have taught at least one of them to roll over for a belly scratch!

Many different paths have led people to Whole Village. This last year has been a reflection of that. We've welcomed back an old friend, answered a decade-long question and recruited someone who ran for the Green party in the last federal election.

Kathleen Dachuk left Whole Village in February of 2010 to pursue ownership of a health-foodstore and café. Several years later, having moved on from the store and living on a cattle farm, she began visiting Whole Village again. "I missed the fellowship of living in a community. I also wanted to again be a part of an organization actively doing something about climate change and other environmental issues. It is very difficult to make a dent when you are trying to do things on your own and frankly, when you live alone you "consume" much more. Why does every household need a washing machine?"

Kathleen now spends her days doing chicken chores, dehydrating vegetables, gardening and walking her cats. She remains passionate about the local organic food movement.

Mark Goldsworthy has known and followed Whole Village's progress for over 10 years and wondered if community living was in his future. As Mark puts it, living in community "seemed to float at the edge of my thoughts for so long that I was surprised when it became my reality."

Since he worked in Tar Sands activism out west and as a tour guide in Algonquin Park it certainly seems he would be a good fit in our community. His experiences have had an influence on his decision to finally join the community. "At times of deep isolation in Algonquin during frigid winter nights I realized that I was going back and forth from one extreme to another. As a wilderness guide I provided outdoor experiences to tour groups. Large groups would come to enjoy the outdoors and it was a privilege to show people the forests, lakes and rivers of Ontario. It was pleasant spending time with a variety of people of different backgrounds and ages. I would wait for the next group to arrive... days would pass and during that time I would reflect on what was important. My love for the environment and participatory experience led me to find my path back to community. He asserts his years of experience in the Algonquin Park community inspired that decision.

He is now an arborist, a highly sought after skill in our community, working for the city of Oakville. Meagan, his partner of three years, has been a key player in our new electric car charging station. In collaboration with two other community members she has also helped to bring bees back onto the farm! For her, Whole Village seemed like a great fit. "I was drawn to the idea of living on a farm in the country with others who care about the environment and are trying to reduce their footprint." As someone who does shift work and can have odd hours, living in community offers a chance to do something that fits her schedule. "There are always people around to interact with and work to be done



to keep me busy."

Nancy Urekar came to Whole Village in an unusual way. "I discovered Whole Village as a result of the 2015 Federal Election when I ran for the Green Party in Dufferin-Caledon. I'm an avid environmentalist and Whole Village provided a place to live with a smaller footprint as well as an opportunity to live in community – a whole new concept to me."

Her short-lived political career is just one of many projects and passions that has embedded her into the local community. She created and managed Chic-a-Boom, a second-hand boutique-clothing/furnishings store in Caledon and enjoys being part of choir and Morris Dancing groups in the area. Not surprisingly part of the

appeal of living at Whole Village is the social life.

"I am a person who thrives on the social aspects of the communities I am part of – and a person who values privacy as well. This community offers both." Nancy has now embarked on a new career, real estate, and enjoys gardening around Whole Village and hosting events, including our sold-out Garnet Rogers concert last November. Although she was no novice on environmental issues, community living was a new experience and, of course, offered a few surprises.

"It's certainly a life adventure. Living with 25 others is a constant pleasure and challenge. I really didn't understand how many meetings it takes to keep a community surviving and thriving especially as everything is decided by consensus. We talk about every little thing regarding our home and the running of the farm as well as the world outside. The meetings are interesting."

Maple Syrup Makeover

By: Jon Gagnon

What's in a vision?

Over the last two years we at Whole Village have been first re-visiting, then re-working, and finally reaching the oh-so-coveted consensus on a new vision, mission statement and guiding principles. It was an exciting and captivating experience, bouncing between personal anecdotes, dissection of terms and their meanings and inspirational content – videos, quotes, memes. All in the hopes of putting together some crucial maxims to help guide us in our strategic planning. Only two members remained that had crafted our original vision statement many years ago and, during preliminary discussions, we soon realized we were looking for a mission statement as well, a phrase that sums up what we're doing here to help create the kind of world we describe in our vision statement.

Bioregionalism, Voluntary Simplicity, Agro-ecology, Carbon Farming – many terms brought to the community to discuss as they relate to our ecovillage and the ecovillage movement more broadly. For some it was the first time hearing these terms, and for others, it was why they were here. It looked like sustainability was out and a new, more encapsulating phrase was introduced and discussed – Right Relationship. After sharing articles and interviews on the term and going through several go-arounds about how we felt about it we were, eventually, thrilled to put the term to paper.

We wanted to emphasize the role of place in our mission statement. How the land we are established on could inspire us and guide our community. To talk about what we value, what the land offers, how we, in our own small way, could best bring forth the world we wanted to see. We knew we had a farm with untapped potential and wanted to be holistic in our approach. We discussed key features of what a healthy, vibrant farm would look like – diversity was an obvious element we knew we wanted to strive for. We had also been trying to be better carbon farmers, understanding the importance (and privilege) for us, as land managers, to ensure we sequester carbon and minimize emissions as well as grow healthy food. The term regenerative seemed appropriate.

We also talked about semantics, or how these phrases could be interpreted by a visitor. What is a "farming ecovillage", anyway? We wanted to communicate that we are more than just a rural intentional community, we are on a farm and the act of growing and eating food is sacred to us all. We knew that. We felt our greatest potential for collective action lay in restoring this land cooperatively and within systems that were just and collaborative while feeding ourselves and our local community. This context guided us, but to represent the broader ecovillage movement, as well as to use our skills most effectively, education was a key component and the glue that held the elements of a diversified farm and intentional community together.

From the outside it may seem excessive, or perhaps even trivial, to spend hours agonizing and dissecting terms and their meanings. But we found these vision sessions were invaluable for community unity. They offered a rare chance to listen (and be heard) on big issues, on our individual passions and values and why we came to Whole Village, and how we, as a group of individuals, can synthesize some common ideas and beliefs to go beyond our personal desires for the benefit of a collective project.