

Food Link Nanaimo – DIGEST # 1 – August 10th, 2007

Welcome! This is the first issue of the Food Link Nanaimo Digest which is a new initiative of the Board to increase communications with its Members and others interested in food sustainability initiatives, locally & beyond. News, updates, resources, reports and events that are relevant to food security, food systems, and sustainability will be included. Please forward to anyone who might be interested. Advance apology for any cross-postings.

FLN Board update:

- √ We are working on selecting someone to help redesign and expand our current website, adding a component for community information sharing. We also hope to host a local food map on this site.
- √ This Fall we are planning a community network event, as well as to support initiatives of member groups and community events that will facilitate bringing together as wide a range of people involved in food sustainability.
- √ We are still in need of a Board member to sit in the role of Treasurer. As well, we are looking to hire a Bookkeeper; please refer anyone you think would be interested and experienced in keeping books for a nonprofit society.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHT FOR THIS DIGEST: Check out this local website at <<http://100miledietnanaimo.com>> which features the good work and initiatives of Jen Lam, a food activist, who wants to promote the 100-mile diet challenge as an adventure or discovery of local food culture. You will find a useful list of local farms and farmer markets to begin your exploration.

Her website includes an article by Jenny MacLeod, “Farming Facts of Life”, followed by a sample letter and contact information in support of changes to improve meat regulations for farmers. This is an important political issue that needs your support & action NOW.

Jen Lam & Jenny MacLeod are also working on a project to develop a food shed map for this region. Contact them directly if you are interested in volunteering for this important initiative.

DIGEST: SUMMARY (& short submissions)

1. Update from Nanaimo Community Gardens Society regarding the pending sale of part of their current demonstration site located at Pine Street. See information below, including a survey they would like completed and returned by August 12th.

2. The 7-10 Club and Loaves and Fishes are also working on a relocation strategy. Please let us know if you'd like more information about this situation, or would like to give a hand. Contact: Gord Fuller at <gorfathome@yahoo.ca>

3. Email received June 13th, 2007: **Reclaiming the Food System** Working in conjunction with Edible Strategies Enterprise Ltd [<http://www.ediblestrategies.com>](http://www.ediblestrategies.com) , the **Centre for Community Enterprise** is developing strategies and mechanisms to increase local food production and accessibility. It is also exploring the policy shifts that would best support the local food sector. Are you involved in a local food initiative? Care to share your knowledge and research? Please e-mail the CCE Business Development Officer, Paul Cabaj [<mailto:paul.cabaj@gmail.com?subject=Revised CRM>](mailto:paul.cabaj@gmail.com?subject=Revised CRM) . To learn more about local food initiatives and issues in Canada, download Growing Hope [<http://www.cedworks.com/mw1702e_01.html>](http://www.cedworks.com/mw1702e_01.html) , the 2006 special edition of **Making Waves** magazine. (*Aussi disponible en français* [<http://www.cedworks.com/mw1702f_01.html>](http://www.cedworks.com/mw1702f_01.html) .) To read the results of a member survey on food and agri-food policy development completed by the **Canadian CED Network**, click here [<http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/docs/pubs/Growing_Hope_Canadian_Agriculture.pdf>](http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/docs/pubs/Growing_Hope_Canadian_Agriculture.pdf)

4. Results from the Canadian Community Health Survey of Health Canada (2007) have recently been released. The report contributes to a wider understanding of the prevalence of food insecurity in Canada by identifying population sub-groups in which food insecurity is more prevalent and by highlighting socio-demographic factors associated with food insecurity. See http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/eval/reports-rapports/income_food_sec_sec_alim_e.html

5. CBC: Genetically Modified Food: A Growing Debate
http://archives.cbc.ca/IDD-1-75-1597/science_technology/genetically_modified_food/

6. New from GRAIN, June 2007, "NO TO THE AGROFUELS CRAZE!",
<http://www.grain.org/nfg/?id=502> (see article below)

7. Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, June 2007, "McGuinty government investing in better health for Northern Ontario children: Northern Fruit And Vegetable Program Increases Access To Healthy Food Choices"
www.HealthyOntario.com (see article below)

8. Food, Culture and Society, Summer 2007, Volume 10 #2
Special Issue: Food and War (see summary below)

DIGEST: FURTHER DETAILS

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1. Subject: update: community gardens for sale

Nanaimo Community Gardens Society
271 Pine St Nanaimo BC V9R 2B7
(250) 722-2292

July 30, 2007

Dear Friends of Nanaimo Community Gardens,

As I hope you are already aware, the property at 265 Pine St which hosts the Community Gardens is privately owned and now for sale. Last week the board members and staff of the Nanaimo Community Gardens Society (NCGS) participated in a strategic planning session to address this pressing issue.

This letter is to update you about the strategic plan and to invite you to get involved in shaping the future of Community Gardens in Nanaimo. ***It is important that we hear from you today.***

Firstly, I'd like to assure you that we are doing all we can to maintain our Community Garden facility at 265 Pine St. While our preference is to keep this Gardens location, we recognize that not all factors are within our control. We can not predict when the property will sell, nor if a new landowner will be agreeable to us staying for the short or long-term.

No matter what the outcome, to stay or relocate, we are striving to minimize disruption and meet your needs as garden participants and supporters. To do this we need to hear from you today. ***We need to know what you value about the Pine St Gardens.*** How does it enrich your life? What makes it important to you? What would you need in a new location if we had to move?

Ultimately we are striving to develop long-term security for our Community Gardens sites in Nanaimo so we can avoid this situation in the future.

We developed the following four Plans of Action at our recent meeting and will be pursuing them concurrently. We invite you to devote your energy into whatever stream of action best serves your needs and vision.

Plan A – Explore feasibility of purchasing 265 Pine St or another property

Plan B – Negotiate with future landowner of 265 Pine St in order to stay

Plan C – Move to a temporary or permanent new location by spring 2008 or 2009

Plan D – Vacate 265 Pine St on short notice if necessary

Plan A – *Explore feasibility of purchasing 265 Pine St or another property*

We have notified the landowner that we are interested in purchasing 265 Pine St and are

exploring our options. Volunteers are researching and drawing up a rough financial sketch of what would be required in order to purchase 265 Pine St - or another property that would meet the needs of our participants. On August 23rd the NCGS board will make a decision whether the option to purchase land is feasible and worthy of further pursuit given our resources and mandate. ***If you have contacts and resources that might help us, such as a community partner with assets who could secure a down-payment and would benefit from the land in some way, please let us know.***

Plan B - Negotiate with future landowner of 265 Pine St in order to stay

By August 8th the current owner of 265 Pine St will have in hand an informational package about Community Gardens to give to prospective buyers. This package invites the buyer on a tour of the Garden and indicates our desire to speak with them about continuing to host this Community Garden in their backyard.

But let's not just sit back and wait to see who buys. ***You can help us find a new landowner who would be receptive to a Community Gardens in their backyard.*** Tell your friends and share with us your ideas to make this a reality.

Plan C - Move to a temporary or permanent new location by spring 2008 or 2009

We want to be prepared for the outcome of having to move. Therefore we are researching options for a new Community Gardens location. Some options we've identified are to secure a long-term lease for Community Gardens in City Parks or on closed school grounds, or to purchase a property. By October 14th a report of options will be prepared and our Board will be making a decision on what short and long-term options to pursue.

You can help us by researching, networking, report writing, serving on the Property Committee and sharing your vision of what would make an ideal Community Gardens to best serve your needs and those of our community.

Plan D - Vacate 265 Pine St on short notice if necessary

In the unfortunate event that we need to vacate 265 Pine St on short notice, we will be prepared with a detailed action plan to salvage and store as many assets and plants as possible. ***We would need your help to dig up perennial plants, disassemble our greenhouse, move things from here to there, and for a myriad of other tasks.***

To ensure that our current gardeners still have access to great organic food and a Garden community this season - we would assist you in getting to our farm site at Cranberry and 14th St. This beautiful 2 acre farm is only a 10 minute bus ride from downtown and boasts an abundance of vegetables and friendly people.

Get involved now

You can get involved in many ways; from hands-on in the Garden, to making phone calls, organizing a celebration, research, networking, fundraising, and serving on the Property Committee.

Please take 5 minutes to fill out the attached survey, write us a letter or speak to a staff person and tell us how you feel. What do you value about the Pine St and other Community Gardens? We need to know what you need and desire so we can make decisions that will best serve our garden participants and the community.

We know we could never replicate the unique place we have co-created in the backyard of 265 Pine St. However, given our track record, imagine the precious new place we could create working together!

Call Lee today at 754-0782 to get involved.

And please join us at our community vegetarian potluck on Sunday August 12th, 6pm at the Foodshare Centre, 271 Pine St. This potluck will be an opportunity to share information and ideas and to celebrate good food from the Gardens.

Sincerely,

Jessica Snider, Executive Director, Volunteer and Garden Participant

PS. Please fill out and return your survey today. We care about your needs. Surveys and input **must be received by Sunday August 12.**

Nanaimo Community Gardens Society – Survey of Members and Supporters July 30, 2007

Please return survey **by August 12th** to Nanaimo Community Gardens, 271 Pine St, Nanaimo BC, V9R 2B7, or by email to info@nanaimocommunitygardens.ca . If you'd prefer, please feel free to talk to staff or board members instead by calling 754-0782

Name:

Phone number (optional):

Email (optional):

1. In what way have you been involved in the Nanaimo Community Gardens Society and for how long?
2. Do you or have you participated in the Pine St Community Gardens? For how long?
3. Have you participated at our greenhouse or farm sites? If so what do you value about them?
4. How do you feel about the Pine St Community Gardens and why?

5. In what ways do the Community Gardens enrich your life or the lives of people you know?

6. If we were required to find a new Garden site, what are your needs that you want considered in this decision?

7. Do you have any ideas, concerns, visions or anything else you'd like to share? (please use reverse side if you need more room)

8. In what ways would you be happy to help?

- making phone calls
- organizing a celebration
- serving on the Property Committee
- serving on the Fundraising Committee
- moving the gardens if necessary
- research
- other? _____

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6. New from GRAIN, June 2007

<http://www.grain.org/nfg/?id=502>

NO TO THE AGROFUELS CRAZE!

GRAIN has just published a special issue of Seedling which focuses on biofuels, or as we like to call them, agrofuels - over 30,000 words of in-depth analysis from around the world.

In the process of gathering material from colleagues and social movements around the world, we have discovered that the stampede into agrofuels is causing enormous environmental and social damage, much more than we realised earlier. Precious ecosystems are being destroyed and hundreds of thousands of indigenous and peasant communities are being thrown off their land.

Worse lies ahead: the Indian government is committed to planting 14 million hectares of land with jatropha (an exotic bush from which biodiesel can be manufactured), the Inter-American Development Bank says that Brazil has 120 million hectares available for biofuels, and lobbyists in Europe are speaking of almost 400 million hectares being available for biofuels in 15 African countries. We are talking about expropriation on an unprecedented scale.

We believe that the prefix bio, which comes from the Greek word for 'life', is entirely inappropriate for such anti-life devastation. So, following the lead of non-governmental organisations and social movements in Latin America, we do not talk about biofuels and green energy. Agrofuels is a much better term, we believe, to express what is really happening: agribusiness producing fuel from plants as another commodity to in a wasteful, destructive and unjust global economy.

In this special issue of Seedling, launched today, we zoom in on the situation in different parts of the world: Latin America, Asia and Africa. We analyse what is happening and talk to the people

involved. The conclusion is pretty much the same across the board: the push for agrofuels amounts to nothing less than the re-introduction and re-enforcement of the old colonial plantation economy, redesigned to function under the rules of the modern neoliberal, globalised world. Indigenous farming systems, local communities and the biodiversity they manage have to give way to provide for the increased fuel needs of the modern world.

One of the main justifications for the large-scale cultivation of agrofuels is the need to combat climate change, but the figures make a mockery of this claim. According to the US government, global energy consumption is set to increase 71 per cent from 2003 to 2030, and most of that will come from burning more oil, coal and natural gas. By the end of this period, all renewable energy (including agrofuels) will only make up 9 per cent of global energy consumption. It is a dangerous self-delusion to argue that agrofuels can play a significant role in combating global warming.

As is spelt out in this special edition, the wide-scale cultivation of agrofuels will actually make things worse in many parts of the world, notably South-east Asia and the Amazon basin where the drying of peat lands and the felling of tropical forest will release far more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than will be saved by using agrofuels.

One of the main causes of global warming is agro-industrial farming itself, and the global food system associated with it. Although it is scarcely ever mentioned, farming is responsible for 14 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. Within farming, the largest single cause is the use of chemical fertilisers, which introduce a huge amount of nitrogen into the soil, and nitrous oxide into the air. Changing land use (mainly deforestation and thus linked to the expansion of crop monoculture) is responsible for another 18 per cent. And a large part of global transport, which is responsible for a further 14 per cent of emissions, stems from the way in which the agro-industrial complex moves large quantities of food from one continent to another.

It is abundantly clear that we can only halt climate change by challenging the absurdity and the waste of the globalised food system as organised by the transnational corporations. Far from contributing to the solution, biofuels will only make a bad situation worse. GRAIN believes it is time to declare unambiguously 'No to the agrofuels craze!'

Agrofuels resource page: <http://www.grain.org/go/agrofuels>

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7. Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, June 2007

McGuinty government investing in better health for Northern Ontario children: Northern Fruit And Vegetable Program Increases Access To Healthy Food Choices

TORONTO, June 25 /CNW/ - The McGuinty government is expanding the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program so that more elementary school children in Northern Ontario have access to a healthy supply of fruits and vegetables, Health Promotion Minister Jim Watson announced today.

"Developing healthy eating habits in young children is critical to their health and wellbeing," said Watson. "That's why the McGuinty government is expanding the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program to promote awareness and increases consumption of fruits and vegetables among young people."

In 2007/2008, the \$900,000 Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program will run in 61 elementary schools in the Porcupine and Algoma regions. Approximately 12,000 children will be provided with two to three

servings of fruit and vegetables each week, as well as education on the benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption.

"This program supports the agri-food sector in Ontario and the government's Pick Ontario Freshness campaign," said Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "The McGuinty government is working with the agri-food industry to promote the fresh foods grown and produced in the province."

"As the pilot location for the program last year, we worked very closely with a variety of partners and look forward to sharing our experiences and best practices with our counterparts in Algoma Public Health who will be responsible for the implementation of the program in the District of Algoma,"

added Dr. Dennis Hong, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit.

"As well as improving the health of our children in Ontario and encouraging the development of healthy eating habits, this project supports our provincial agri-food industry by promoting the consumption of fresh, high quality Ontario produce," said Brenda Lammens, the Chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA). "It also gives these school children the opportunity to try these foods, perhaps for the very first time, and provide them with more options for healthier snacks."

Northern Ontario was chosen based on statistics showing the lack of variety in children's diets, the number of overweight children and youth, as well as the fact that 62% of children aged 12-19 do not eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.

The Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program is run in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, the Porcupine Health Unit, the District of Algoma Public Health Unit, local schools and school boards.

The Ministry of Health Promotion was established to improve and deliver programs that contribute to healthy living and wellness in this province, as well as develop healthy public policies that contribute to a healthier Ontario. Key priorities include Ontario's Smoke-Free Strategy, healthy eating, active living, sport and recreation, injury prevention and mental health promotion.

Disponible en français

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www.HealthyOntario.com

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For further information: Ministry of Health Promotion, Adam Grachnik, Minister's Office, (416) 326-8497; Julie Rosenberg, Communications Branch, (416) 326-4833

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Summer 2007
Volume 10 #2

Special Issue: Food and War

From the Editor

'We Were a Soft People': Asceticism, Self-Discipline, & American Food Conservation in World War I HELEN ZOE VEIT

"Hard as the Hubs of Hell": Crackers in War JOY SANTLOFER

The Columbian Exchange and the Two Colonizations of Aotearoa New Zealand JOHN FITZPATRICK

Hunger and Consumer Protest in Colonial Africa during World War I: The Case of the Gabon Estuary, 1914-1920 JEREMY RICH

On vit mal: Food Shortages and Popular Culture in Occupied France, 1940-1944

KENNETH MOURE and PAULA SCHWARTZ

Conflict, Food Insecurity, and Globalization ELLEN MESSER and MARC J. COHEN

Food Security and Food Sovereignty in Iraq: The Impact of War and Sanctions on the Civilian Population MUSTAFA KOC, RUPEN DAS, and CAREY JERNIGAN

Book Reviews

Roger Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation*. Reviewed by Coll Thrush Bruno Laurioux, *Une histoire culinaire du Moyen Âge*. Reviewed by Terence Scully James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell (eds) *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. Reviewed by Katarzyna J. Cwiertka

From the Editor:

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed."

Dwight D. Eisenhower

"War is a beastly business, it is true, but one proof that we are human is our ability to learn, even from it, how better to exist."

M.F.K.Fisher

Historically, war has been both an agent of destruction and a catalyst for innovation. To be sure, at the moment the destruction seems more apparent than the innovation. In 2005 Project Ploughshares - an ecumenical agency of the Canadian Council of Churches -- counted thirty-two "significant armed conflicts" raging throughout the world, with another thirty-two classified as "recently-ended." The world spent over \$1 trillion to fight these wars and prepare for others; of this amount just \$5 billion were spent for United Nations "peacekeeping."

And that was generous compared to the \$2.8 billion allocated that year by the United Nations World Food Programme to feed 100 million of the world's hungriest people - many of them victims of those very wars. Meanwhile, in FY2005, while the U.S. Department of Agriculture allotted a little over \$405 million to feed the world's hungry, the U.S. Department of Defense spent about \$6.5 billion to feed its own troops.

Anxious for scholarly perspectives on such contradictions and ironies, we invited essays that would look at the myriad ways that war has affected food production, distribution, and consumption. Specifically, we were interested in topics such as: how military personnel and civilian war workers are provisioned; the agro-ecological effects of warfare; government food policies during wartime; how military needs have affected food technologies; civilian adaptations to wartime deprivation; inequities in wartime food consumption, and the impact of occupying armies on local foodways (and vice versa).

In *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, journalist Chris Hedges writes, "The enduring attraction is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living. Only when we are in the midst of conflict does the shallowness and vapidness of much of our lives become apparent." While Hedges writes mainly of the psycho-religious appeal of warfare, our first three papers show how these collateral "benefits" may apply to food and diet as well. Examining food austerity policies and messages promulgated by the United States government during the First World War, Helen Zoe Veit demonstrates how homefront food consumption can become a means to promote government control and moralistic domestic reform. Diet thus becomes a vehicle of political and cultural profiteering by elites. For a history of more straightforward economic opportunism, Joy Santlofer relates how military needs stimulated the development and growth of the cracker industry - a classic example of the military-industrial food complex. And in a surprising take on the inadvertent side benefits of colonial warfare, John Fitzpatrick argues that, in New Zealand at least, the Columbian Exchange - the dietary component of European colonization - may actually have strengthened initial Maori resistance to British conquest and settlement.

To be sure, in a second wave of colonization, the Maori eventually did give way to the more familiar imperial weapons of guns, germs, and steel. In a careful case study of that familiar pattern, Jeremy Rich examines the struggle over food supplies in the French colony of Gabon during World War I and shows how metropolitan European political conflict, local consumer resistance, and climatic fluctuation interacted to produce devastating hardships, both immediate and long run. In a dramatic and ironic turn the colonizers became colonized themselves in 1940, when Germany occupied France. Kenneth Mouré and Paula Schwartz offer an in depth look at how the citizens of an affluent imperial power with a glorious culinary heritage struggled to alter their eating habits, develop new social relationships, and reorganize their lives to survive the shortages of the 1940s. Taking us into the postcolonial era, Ellen Messer and Marc Cohen then analyze the complex causes and contexts of more recent conflicts in the developing world - particularly the problematic mix of

export cropping, globalization, local social inequality, and bad government. And bringing us up to the moment - and to the original rationale for this issue -- Mustafa Koc, Rupen Das, and Carey Jernigan detail how two U.S.-led wars had disastrous health and nutritional effects on the Iraqi population between 1990 and 2006.

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END OF DIGEST

NOTE: If you would like to add or delete an email from this list, or make a submission, please reply to: info@foodlinknanaimo.com