

RESONANCE

January / February 2009

AROUND THE PLACE

There is a proverb in general semantics that states, "Whatever we say a thing is, it isn't." We find this so often to be the case when we try to describe the weather here at Home Farm. Invariably, when we say the weather is dry, we get a massive storm a day or two later. If we say the weather is snowy, we are then visited with warm, dry weather. So let's see what happens this time when I report that we are experiencing an unusually warm, dry winter. In fact, we are in the midst of a drought. Our springs water output, which usually increases dramatically the first of October and into December as the mountain snows gradually percolate down to our elevation, never increased this year. We still have enough of water for our purposes, but the decrease in precipitation is dramatic.

One positive aspect that goes with little winter precipitation is the lack of dangerous sheets of ice surrounding our buildings and covering our roads like we had last year. This makes getting around a lot less treacherous for those on foot as well as in vehicles. Speaking of getting around, a couple of our residents have purchased electric golf carts to get around the Farm. It saves gasoline and is a very efficient way to zip around the Farm. However, we don't think anyone would mistake this for a golf course community quite yet!

The lack of snow has allowed more outdoor activity than in past winters. Sites are being prepared for two new residences at the north end of the Farm where other 'permanent' homes have been developed over the years. Trees are being pruned in the orchard. A new landing, stairs and awning have been installed outside the east entrance to the garden units. In addition, the finishing touches on the pump house for the water system have been completed. We also have purchased a gasoline powered generator that can be used to pump our water in case there is an electrical outage that lasts any length of time.

The Centrum roofing project has been buttoned up for the winter and will resume in the spring. We are truly grateful for all the donations we received to help cover the costs of this large, difficult and expensive project. Anyone who has seen the slopes and angles of the roof can appreciate what a challenging project this has been.

One inside project that we have started is cleaning the basement of the main house. As a result, we were able to take a pick-up load of items to a thrift store, but we still have a lot more to do down there. It seems as though this kind of cleaning, sorting and discarding breathes fresh energy into a place as well as lightening the load of unused 'material' possessions. We are also

continuing our recycling efforts and are able to take glass, metal and plastic to a recycling center in Cedar City, Utah. One of our residents is recycling our cardboard in a shallow water lagoon that decomposes the cardboard. It can then be dried, shredded and used for mulch and in compost.

Our holiday season this year was very low key. With so many of us getting older and not a lot of children around to decorate for, etc. Christmas is not the event it once was. We did, however have a delicious Christmas dinner by candlelight. It was by candlelight (and flashlight) since a fast moving winter blizzard blew in a few hours before dinner and we lost electricity for several hours. Even though the final preparations for our dinner were a little challenging (when was the last time you whipped cream for 25 people by hand?!), it was actually fun and the subtle lighting was beautiful. Unfortunately for the clean-up crew the electricity came on in time to wash dishes and load the dishwashers.

For New Year's Eve there was a game night in the dining room with lots of snacks. This was followed by quite a fireworks display up on our north hill.

We have really enjoyed watching our little herd of mule deer that have taken up residence on the Farm (at least for the winter). Usually we do not see so much mingling of the bucks and does together, and so many generations hanging out together. There are several young bucks that seem to be about the same age and one

beautiful mature buck with a truly awesome antler rack and elegant demeanor. In addition there are at least a dozen does with young ones at their sides. They bed down in the orchard and even right outside people's houses in really bad weather and graze in the upper pasture in the late evening. We have some evidence that there is a mountain lion living quite close to the Farm since we have found a killed deer, remains of sheep and paw prints.

January is always a time for pouring over garden seed catalogs and this January is no exception. The choices are truly overwhelming and everyone seems to have their own favorite varieties but we will manage get a cooperative order together in a week or so. We have been trying to use up most of our old seeds the past couple of years but this year we felt it was wise to get a good stock of fresh seed as well as get varieties from which we could collect own seeds if necessary. We are really looking forward to expanding our gardens this year.

Marj and Bill Coffman are instrumental in getting seeds planted, sprouted, tended and transplanted at their house every year. They meticulously water and move the grow lights to ensure that each seed tray gets the right amount of moisture and light for optimal growth. With Marj's successful hip replacement she will be even more raring to go with the gardens this year.

May all of your "gardens" grow in the coming year!!

—Jane Murray