

The School of the Natural Order, Inc.
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RESONANCE

July / August 2010

Around the Place

Maybe it is because our residents are getting older each year, but it seems that each summer at Home Farm is getting hotter. Gone are the days when we would work outside for 12 hours a day and not give it a second thought. We now try to plan our outdoor tasks for early mornings and late afternoons. The humidity also seems to be gradually increasing each year, making our swamp coolers less effective since they are designed for dry weather.

With the heat, the gardens have really taken off, requiring almost constant watering and weeding. This year we have added a second garden for potatoes and winter squash, and the main garden has been totally filled with a wide variety of vegetables, flowers and herbs. We have already harvested the cool weather crops such as spinach, lettuce, radishes, and some greens. We have also been harvesting and drying herbs such as lavender, feverfew, parsley and chives.

The current success of the gardens did not come without effort, however. First the fences had to be fortified against rabbits and deer. Then we had to deal with gophers. Then, once some of the early vegetables were set out, the plants began to

be eaten systematically. Organic sprays and mothballs were used to deter the culprits, but to no avail. One evening when we spotted a rabbit in the garden, we discovered that we did not in fact have a truly rabbit proof fence. One little cottontail had discovered the one hole. We also discovered neat little divots in the corn patch where another critter had methodically been scooping out the corn kernels we had planted. Over a period of two weeks we were able to trap eight packrats in our live traps and relocate them off the property. In spite of the challenges, those who help with the gardens find joy, beauty and a sense of purpose there.

With the addition of a riding lawnmower to our 'fleet' of outdoor equipment it is easier to keep up with lawn and pasture maintenance and the appearance of the grounds is much improved. The lawns are green and the beds around the buildings are full of blooming flowers which add a lush punch of color to the pastel buildings. The two outside porches of the Main House have been scraped, sanded and repainted. Many of the trees and shrubs around the main lawn have been pruned and dead wood

removed. The rock wall around the front lawn has also been repaired. The old farm equipment that was scattered around the property for years and years has been repositioned at the entrance to the Farm, which gives it an even more rustic look and acknowledges the historic nature of this location.

When it is not too hot and as schedules allow, the art space trailer in the orchard is bustling with activity. Enough progress has been made in rehabbing the trailer to start having children's art activities there now. It is a welcoming area with a swing, picnic table and sandbox. One of the Farm's new residents has donated a large play ground set that will be set up near the art space. We hope to see this area used more and more in the future.

All the materials for the new greenhouse have arrived and we are just waiting for a few cooler days to start construction. The greenhouse and the rehab of the south unit are at the top of the list for building projects at this time. The greenhouse should be ready for spring use and the south unit is due to be complete by Thanksgiving.

All of the effort put into planning, cleaning, painting, cooking, upgrading rooms, grounds work, etc., for summer seminar was well worth it since it was deemed a major success. We got excellent feedback from the ten people who attended from Oregon, California and Nevada. They found the guest rooms "beautiful", the food was "one excellent meal after another" and the program packed with helpful information. After a week of classes presented by very knowledgeable teachers

who covered many areas of natural healing, we closed the week with a summer solstice ceremony and drum circle. On Saturday several participants had the opportunity to go hiking in Great Basin National Park. The only consistent negative comments we received were that attendees did not have enough free time to assimilate all they were learning and they would have liked to have more time to enjoy the area.

We had a very productive post seminar review meeting where we shared ideas to improve next year's seminar, started thinking of themes, possible presenters, etc. To continue the momentum that we felt was generated at this summer seminar we are intending to have a short seminar the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving Day since so many people come to visit that long weekend anyway. Specific plans will be forthcoming.

As if we didn't have enough to keep us busy, we also participated in the second annual Snake Valley Water Festival which raises money to help fight the Southern Nevada Water Authority's efforts to pipe our water to Las Vegas. By selling donated books and our homemade lavender lemonade, we raised over \$500. Several local School members were also in the parade driving everything from tractors to golf carts.

We are now looking forward to harvesting more and more from our gardens and to cooler weather!!

Be sure to check the school's website for Seminar 2010 pictures and news. <http://www.sno.org>

—Jane Murray, 2010