

The School of the Natural Order, Inc.
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RESONANCE

September/October 2010

Around the Place

Summer may be slowly winding down, but activity here at the School headquarters continues at a brisk pace. From the newly painted sign out at the highway to the neatly mown fields around the pond, Home Farm reflects the hard work and loving care of our various work parties, large and small, short- or long-term.

The late summer mowing of pastures and around old corrals knocked down tumbleweed and slowed the re-seeding and takeover by Russian thistle and other weeds. The lawns, too, have been trimmed and invite people to sit in the shade of our trees and enjoy the beautiful view across the valley. From dusk till dawn the lawns are a favorite of both the rabbits and the deer, who find the grass a tender and tasty treat.

The orchard, despite the many trees that are fruitless this year due to the late spring frosts, has also been a busy place. Periodically during the summer, the art trailer has been the scene of much activity as children play in the sandbox (which is actually a livestock watering trough filled with sand), making a terrific sandbox for digging and climbing) and use some of the art materials in various projects. And the art trailer itself has taken on a new look as its walls and trim have been touched up with cheerful paint.

The trees which are bearing fruit are the apples, pears, and plums, the "old faithful" of our orchard. These are just now ripening, and we will be having picking and preserving parties as the fruit matures over the next few weeks.

Summer growth of weeds in the ditches around the lower springs has started to choke down the water flow, so work crews have spent time cleaning out watercress, grasses, and wild rose bushes from the water courses. Crews have also worked on clearing the pond of dead cattail stumps and algae. This is hard, slow work, and we try to get it done early in the morning before the temperatures get too warm.

The greenhouse has been completely rehabilitated, using special greenhouse plastic. These rigid sheets allow full spectrum sunlight in and also provide some insulation value for winter use. We are planning to put some potted tomato plants and herbs in the greenhouse this fall as a wintering-over experiment. We are hopeful that the new roofing materials will allow plants to thrive all winter long.

Once the greenhouse was completed, the carpentry crew set its sights on renovating the south unit. The cinderblock building, erected in the 1960s, had settled unevenly, causing the walls and floors to separate. Additionally, at some point in the

last forty years, the roof leaked, causing several floor sections to rot.

After removing all the furniture and tearing up the carpet, the men replaced the flooring that was damaged by dry rot. Then they removed the wallboard and discovered that there was no insulation between the outside cinder blocks and the sheetrock. Over the past several weeks, the crew has put in insulation and hung the sheetrock. Taping, topping, and painting will complete this part of the project.

Next they will focus the south unit bathroom, changing out the older plumbing for an updated design with new pipe, replacing the lavatory, and installing a new shower, in addition to repairing the floor that was damaged by water. The wiring will also be updated so it can safely handle the heavier electricity loads drawn by modern appliances. Finally, the kitchen countertops will be replaced and insulation will be installed between the two apartment units.

Although other parts of our county have had many nights of below-freezing temperatures this fall, our valley continues to enjoy very warm daytime temperatures and frost-free nights. This means that our garden continues to produce abundantly. Once the plants got big enough to withstand the packrats and gophers, we began to enjoy a wonderful bounty of all kinds of vegetables. We have picked, eaten and processed chard, corn, cabbage, cauliflower, sweet and hot peppers, tomatillos, summer and winter squash, beets, beans, turnips, lettuce, carrots...everything that we planted ended up thriving this summer.

Not only have we enjoyed all these delicious garden vegetables ourselves, we have had plenty to share with friends and neighbors. And the two potato gardens continue to grow, showing a few flowers even now, so we have quite a potato harvest to look forward to once the weather turns colder.

The garden crew this year did a great job of planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting. For the first time in quite a few years, more people helped more regularly, and the gardens reflected this increased attention.

In addition to canning, freezing and drying our garden produce, we will also utilize the lower root cellar for long-term storage of potatoes, onions, and winter squash. This root cellar has been thoroughly washed and vacuumed, and will be ready for vegetables as soon as the door frame is jacked up and the doors have been re-hung.

As we work around the place, or walk through the orchard, or stroll down the road, we can look up at Mt. Wheeler and see the marvelous display of fall colors. We can also let our gaze rest on the hillside just to the west of Home Farm and see the glorious reds and oranges of the wild rosebushes and the gold of the rabbit brush.

This is a lovely time to be at Home Farm.

And now, may the peace and power of the infinite spirit, which passes all understanding, hold us and keep us in the love of the Christed consciousness, while we are seemingly separated one from another.

Susan Wetmore, 2010