

RESONANCE

January - February 2012

AROUND THE PLACE

News of Home Farm, Headquarters of the School of the Natural Order

We are still waiting for winter to arrive out here in the high desert. Although we have had some cold temperatures, there has been very little precipitation. We have had only a couple of very light snows and a few rain showers. We are relishing not having to deal with ice, slush, snow and mud but we know how important moisture is, in whatever form, in our area.

Owls are roosting in our biggest trees and hawks and ravens swoop over the place on their daily search for food, perhaps a tasty mouse that someone has emptied from a trap for them. Usually our feeders would be covered with several kinds of birds this time of year, but they are few and far between. Enough food is still available to them since the vegetation is not buried in snow. In great abundance, however, are jackrabbits and cottontails. Since our farm dog has passed on and the coyote population has been reduced by government trappers, it seems that the rabbits find the Farm a wonderful place to reside. Gardening might be even more of a challenge come spring.

Speaking of gardening, our veteran community gardeners recently held a meeting to celebrate the success of the first community garden here at Home Farm. We reviewed last summer's garden and made plans for the new season. We will have another meeting in March to which we will invite

any new folks from the local community. We have already been contacted by several local people who would like to participate this year. Since we had such a prolific garden last year, we are hoping to set up a small local farmer's market and also donate food to local people who are struggling financially.

The gardeners are also excited that the brand new log cabin style garden shed has arrived.

It was quite a job getting it in place, and it still needs a little re-positioning and leveling, but it looks right at home on the north side of the garden. We are looking forward to moving all our garden tools and supplies into a large, clean space and demolishing the old rickety shed that is a haven for mice, packrats and wasps. We have also made plans with a local rancher to deliver several dump truck loads of manure/silage to the Farm where it will be composted for spring use. It will then be tilled into both of our large gardens to provide much needed organic matter and nutrients to the soil.

Vitvan deliberately located his Schools in rural settings to enable students to literally "Get their hands dirty" while learning about, and participating with, Mother Substance and nature's formative forces. With this in mind, our summer seminar will focus on using the garden as a

learning tool for our own self development. Long time SNO student and science and art teacher, Michael Schneider will be our main presenter, with Home Farm staff also contributing classes. We have had several productive planning meetings and have scheduled the seminar for the last week in July. More information will be available soon in a mailing and on our website.

After many days of rehabilitation efforts, spread over the last few months, the pond is once again filling with water. Work could not continue on the pond due to the cold temperatures but will resume in the spring. At that time more reeds will need to be cut and dredged out of the pond so that they do not decay in the water. It is amazing how many fish survived while the pond was nearly drained and so many fish spent the summer and fall in a stock tank. Eventually, when the pond is healthy again, we would like to re-stock it with edible fish, such as bass and blue gill, which we could use as a food source.

Our buildings and grounds committee has had several productive meetings in the last few months. Plans for spring repairs and maintenance are being drawn up. One of the biggest projects scheduled for March is to excavate large amounts of dirt from behind the main house to facilitate better drainage behind the building and prevent seepage and flooding in the basement. Over the years dirt and rocks from the hillside behind the building have been caving in and filling in the drainage ditch behind the house. Consequently, the cinder block foundation has taken on water and started to deteriorate in several places.

Other smaller projects such as replacing broken windows, replacing doors, cleaning, painting and repurposing rooms are also planned in the near future. Even though these mundane activities do not seem particularly "spiritual" we are reminded of such sayings as "Work is love made visible" and

"After the ecstasy, the laundry." These tasks are opportunities not only to serve the School but to consciously channel life energies and develop our own faculties.

While it is appropriate in the winter to hole up and turn inward, most of our residents also stay active in the local community and attend many of the events in the valley. Even in the winter there are various school events, yoga classes, musical jam sessions at one of the local restaurants, weekly activities at the community center, Baker advisory board meetings, bi-weekly ladies' lunches, special events such as the Shepherders Gathering, national park presentations, fundraisers, baby and bridal showers and the occasional funeral. At the School we strive to provide a place for personal ("inner" and "outer") work but also recognize the interconnectedness with each other and the many "communities" to which we belong.

Several students here continue the on-going, time consuming process of digitizing Vitvan's taped lessons to MP3 format. Now a student in the Denver area has added her efforts to the project which can speed up the process and help make all of Vitvan's material available in a quality digitized format.

We value the support we receive from you, on so many levels, as we work to support and manifest Vitvan's teachings around this place. Thank you.

Jane Murray