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## *AROUND THE PLACE*

*April 2015*

Our glorious spring is fully upon us, and our flowers, bushes, and trees are blooming with color and bursting with green at least one month ahead of their normal schedules. Our orchard began to bloom in early March with the apricot trees showing their white blossoms, followed by the peach, plum, crabapple and pear trees. These bloomed so early we were afraid that there might not be enough insects on hand to pollinate them. However, the reassuring buzz of native pollinators and honeybees filled the air shortly after the first blossoms appeared, and we are hoping that our fruit harvest will be plentiful. We commonly have at least one killing frost after the fruit trees blossom, so we are keeping our fingers crossed that nighttime temperatures do not drop below 27 degrees or so.

The spring flowers have put on a marvelous display this year as well. Daffodils, jonquils, tulips, narcissus, and forsythia bring such cheery colors and wonderful fragrances. And now as I write this one week after Easter, the lilac bushes are full of fragrant purple clusters, the pollinators are hovering happily nearby, and butterflies are busily visiting each nectar-filled bunch.



The downside of all this activity is that we have had almost no precipitation all winter – less than two inches of moisture since December 1. We hope that April and May will bring us some much-needed moisture.

The garden is already a busy place. In addition to the garlic, which grows all winter long and really puts on growth in the spring, we have volunteer kale, cilantro and parsley, which we have already been enjoying. The onion plants from Texas arrived shortly before Easter, and we planted those in a bed adjacent to the garlic.



We will fill another bed with the onion plants that were started from seed here several months ago. These sets are in the greenhouse on shelves next to our flower seedlings and the cabbage family sets. All of these will be planted outdoors a little later in the season when the weather is more dependable.

Several members of the garden crew will be starting those perennial summer favorites of tomatoes and peppers very shortly. Once these sprout under grow-lights, they will be transplanted and cared for indoors until late May, when we will plant them out in the garden.



The community garden group will once again be active in the Home Farm garden. We are looking forward to working with each other, sharing ideas, and to the pleasure of each other's company. We have already had one planning meeting where we decided which vegetables to grow and learned how to make seed strips for small seeds like lettuce and carrots.

Other work has gone on outside, too. This includes clearing out several of the culverts that run underneath the main road, and re-digging ditches through the upper orchard so the water from the springs on the hillside can be directed to help irrigate areas farther downhill.

Preparations for summer have been going on inside as well. The upstairs Centrum kitchen, living room, bathroom, and southwest bedroom have been repainted and redecorated. New lighting has been

installed in the kitchen and living room, and new light plates add a clean finishing touch. All this work has helped turn this area into a lovely guest space.

For several years, the north bathroom in the downstairs Centrum has displayed a sign saying "Out of Order." It wasn't really out of order, but it was so grungy and grim that it didn't seem usable. Now this shower is in the process of being completely renovated. We are happy to see an updated shower emerge from the shadows, one that guests would actually want to use.

For the past three weeks we have had the pleasure of working with our first short term intern, who has been a wonderful help with gardening, housekeeping, canning and being available to do just about whatever needed to be done. Although she will soon be leaving since she has prior commitments for the rest of the spring and summer, working with her has been a good 'trial run' for our intern program. We hope that all our interns are as motivated and harmonious as Becky.

Our Home Farm community welcomes a new resident. Charles Davis, who attended the 2014 summer seminar, returned for a week in December to help work on our library. He arrived back here a few days ago. He has officially "retired" from his life a caregiver, and is looking forward to contributing to life here at the School headquarters as well as being able to take advantage of the opportunities that living here brings.

During the month of March, Marj and Bill Coffman worked together to help Bill make his transition. Bill was very clear about directing his energies toward this goal, and Marj was by his side for the entire month that he was in hospice. We are including the obituary that Marj wrote to help us say farewell to this remarkable man. Bill was devoted to the School and to a life well-lived, and we will miss him.

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.

Susan Wetmore  
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