



## *AROUND THE PLACE*

*October 2016*

The sun is moving southward now. Each morning our sun rises farther south above the mountains on the east side of the valley, and each day the sun appears a little bit later.

The world surrounding us responds dramatically and beautifully to these shorter days. Each year during early September we look up at the mountains around us, searching for the faintest hint of leaves lightening to yellow. Often this occurs first in the mountain draws southwest of Baker, which are high in elevation and packed with aspen trees. About three weeks ago we could see a slight tinge of yellow at the top of one canyon, and that modest beginning soon cascaded into brilliant yellow, gold, orange, red, and scarlet appearing on all the slopes of our Snake Range.

Although these autumn leaves are always lovely, this year was truly extraordinary with its intensity of color in the various groves scattered over the mountainsides, all arrayed in fall finery. And then, after several weeks of cool nights and very warm days—summer-like in fact—last week a storm blew in and we awoke on Friday morning to see Mt. Wheeler and Jeff Davis Peak covered in snow. Those freezing temperatures turned the leaves black, so our display now is much more muted. But oh, it was glorious while it lasted!

A few days after I wrote the previous *Around the Place*, a lightning-caused fire broke out five miles north and west of Home Farm in Strawberry Creek Canyon. The fire lasted for almost two weeks. It burned mostly up into the national park, and pretty much destroyed the lovely meadows, riparian areas, and trees along Strawberry Creek and neighboring canyons. At its height the skies were filled with smoke and more than 500 firefighters were brought in to prevent the fire from burning essential high-tension wires and to eliminate the possibility of houses being destroyed. Tragically, one firefighter lost his life as the crews struggled to contain this very unpredictable wildfire.



Now, when you walk up into the burned areas, it's as though you are walking through a black-and-white photograph—blackened trees and white ash covering the ground. However, down along the creek's edge

grasses are already beginning to re-grow, so the black-and-white of the burned forest is relieved by a blue ribbon of stream and tiny patches of spreading green.



These last weeks of summer have been busy ones. A new firebreak west of the garden units was constructed on the advice of the fire assessment team that visited during the wildfire. A new compost pile was assembled which heated quickly up to 160 degrees. The field east of the road was mowed. We continue our daily irrigation and maintenance chores. The garden has given us beans, cabbages, corn, tomatoes, peppers, squash, carrots... and lots and lots of flowers.

This year is a good orchard year. We have eaten many delicious plums, as well as sharing some with Snake Valley neighbors. Our two peach trees gave us luscious fruit and the pears are now raining down from our venerable pear trees. We divide the fruit up with the deer, some for us and some for them.



We have a nice little deer herd here right now – one buck, two or three does, and four or five yearlings. In addition to checking out the pear trees on a daily basis, they graze in the orchard and fields, and regularly stop by the pile of pulled weeds and garden cullings (old bean plants, cabbage leaves, corn stalks, etc.) that we have taken outside the garden to be shredded. They almost always find good things to eat in that pile and they have gotten so used to us humans that they hardly notice as we walk by.

We've been hearing the coyotes at night again as they hunt in the fields and east of the pond. Several owls continue to nest in trees around the property; one of them, Mr. Hoots, especially enjoys the large hardwood poplar in front of the Centrum.

We said good-bye to one of our residents, Brooke Safford, who moved to Durango, Colorado, earlier this month after living here for several years. We wish her well in her new home, and thank her for her contributions to our Home Farm community while she lived here.

One final note about our summer seminar. Mike Schneider created a really nice page as a summary of what happened at seminar. It includes short sections about each presentation and videos of each presenter, along with a changing photo gallery. It is now posted on the SNO site. You can access this by linking to the page from the SNO home page <http://www.sno.org> or go directly to it at <http://www.sno.org/seminars/2016/rpt/>

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

Susan Wetmore  
September, 2016

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