



AROUND THE PLACE

February 2017

Each season brings its special beauty, and this winter has been notable for its clouds. Our part of the Great Basin averages over 310 days of sunshine each year, which means that we should get perhaps four or five cloudy days each month. This winter, however, has given us storms, much wind, and regular snowfalls, along with an unusual number of overcast days.

One unique weather event here are the inversions that occur when a layer of cold air is held close to the ground by a blanket of warmer air on top. In cities, this produces smog but out here, where our air is exceptionally clean, we experience fog. The fog can fill our entire valley so that, from our vantage point here on the side of Mt. Wheeler, which is usually above the cloud layer, we look across a vast expanse of whiteness ringed about by the tops of mountains—sort of like looking at a huge white lake with a rugged shoreline. Depending on air currents and temperature

interactions, Home Farm too can be enveloped in this cloud layer, which then becomes a thick fog, wreathing everything out our windows in a ghostly gray and covering hard surfaces in white hoarfrost.



Other times the fog appears as more isolated, sometimes on the east side of the valley, or perhaps to the north or the south—blankets or fingers of white, luminescent in the sun and usually disappearing as the morning progresses.

The interactions of water vapor in the sky with the winds and temperature variations make visible the dynamic features of air which are usually hidden from us. The results are dramatic and beautiful.



We've had a fair amount of snow this winter. Three or four snowfalls of eight inches or more have occurred, as well as many smaller events where we see an inch or two on our porches and steps. Needless to say, the plowing expertise of the snow plow crew has increased with all these opportunities to hone skills. We are thankful to have a reliable truck and snow plow equipment and we are grateful for the skill and all the

hours of work that go into keeping our roads and driveways passable.

Our Home Farm Thanksgiving, as usual, was a special affair. This was one of Vitvan's favorite holidays (July 4th was the other). He said it was a truly American holiday, and then, as now, students at the School celebrated together to give thanks for the many gifts in their lives, including the School, its teachings, and the privilege of living in "these blessed United States," as Vitvan put it.

We had a lovely Christmas celebration as well. Although some Home Farm residents were away, friends and neighbors joined us for an evening of fellowship and delicious food amidst the festive decorations in the Main House dining room.

Winter time is an in-drawing time, its short days are a good time for indoor projects. However, there are some outdoor activities underway as well.



In early November the south trailer began to get a much-needed new roof. The original roof was nearly 50 years old, and in addition to leaking in several places, it lacked insulation. The new roof, tar-papered and not yet shingled, has withstood the wind and snow. The additional insulation has made a huge difference in terms of heating bills and inside comfort. When the weather clears, the shingles will be stapled on to finish up the project.

Deep winter is well-suited to pruning, and several of the men have been working on pruning our 'heritage' orchard trees, most of which are 'elder trees' now. The

prunings will be shredded and added to the next compost pile.



The School has been upgrading its internet capacity over the past three or four months. In addition to providing faster and more reliable internet for the School and residents here at the headquarters, we are looking toward the time when classes can be streamed on-line. This project has involved acquiring some specialized equipment and a whole new set of technology skills, as well as learning how to deal with unexpected glitches along the way. (For example, we have learned that both thick fog and very cold temperatures can adversely affect our internet equipment.)

Now the days grow slowly longer. We know there is still much cold, ice and snow in the near future, but we also look forward to the new beginnings that accompany springtime.

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
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