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## *AROUND THE PLACE*

Dawn arrives a little earlier each morning at this time of year, and daybreak is accompanied by birds hooting, twittering, and cackling, a chorus which steadily intensifies as the light brightens and we humans rise to greet another day. So much goes on at this time of year! Partly this is due to more residents. In addition to a long-term summer resident in the upstairs Centrum, we welcome three long-term guests in the Garden Units, too. Charles Davis has moved into the south end of the Garden Units and in addition to making those two rooms into a cozy apartment, he has some landscaping ideas for the desert area outside his south windows. Helena Morse and her four-year-old son Onyx are filling the north end of the Garden Units with much energy, too.

All three of these newcomers bring wonderful new ideas and enthusiasm to the community and the activities here. The flower beds get extra attention and more consistent watering, new areas are being cultivated and made lovely, and the Main House, which is in constant use, receives daily care and cleaning. We learn a great deal from each other, and have lots of fun together, too.

Helena is finally, after two years of planning and preparation, able to realize her dream of developing a

*June 2015*

permaculture garden – what she calls a ‘food forest.’ She is transforming the plum thicket garden into a “Secret Garden” filled with bushes and trees, carefully planted and arranged to promote the growth of a sustainable source of food. She and Onyx have spent many hours this spring preparing soil, making gopher-proof cages to protect vulnerable tree roots from hungry rodents, channeling water, and generally transforming this fallow ground into a happy and vital garden.





In addition to the permaculture project, Helena, with help from several others, has revitalized the old chicken house. She brought her chickens up here for the summer and they are thriving, both in the chicken yard and in the chicken 'tractors' which can be moved from area to area as the chickens eat the grasses and weeds inside their cage area. Many of these chickens, which were tiny chicks just a month ago, are now noisy and active adolescents. We hear roosters crowing once again!

The main garden is now almost completely planted. Despite the cool rainy days that were so prevalent in May (we have joked that March came in May this year), we've gotten some good work parties together and now the garden actually looks like a garden. The tomatoes and peppers, tended so carefully from seeds, are now in the garden and doing well. The cabbages, Brussels sprouts, and broccoli are healthy and luxuriant. (The cauliflower plants, alas, were eaten by packrats several weeks ago.) The mild winter has allowed the rodent



populations – rabbits, mice, gophers, packrats, and antelope squirrels – to explode, and we are having to take extra precautions to protect our gardens and keep these critters out of our buildings.

Also planted are the summer and winter squash, carrots, beets, potatoes, and spring greens like lettuce, spinach and chard. We have many plant volunteers this year – tomatillos, parsley and cilantro (of course), dill, calendula, cosmos, and marigolds are sprouting everywhere. Now we need to turn our attention to weeding!

Our community garden members pitch in as their time and work schedules permit, and we accomplish a great deal during our garden parties. Some of us are old hands at gardening, and some are newcomers, but the satisfaction of working in our lovely garden, with desert on one side and orchard on the other, seems to appeal to all of us.



The orchard and meadows have had their first mowing – this event synchronized with the first cutting of alfalfa on ranches down in the valley – and the lawns around the Centrum and the Main House have also been cut, so our grounds are looking very nice and cared-for.

Several weeks ago we noticed that the area by the Main House septic tank looked suspiciously damp, and after monitoring this for a while, several of the men started to problem-solve this situation, which was exacerbated by no one's really knowing how the pipes and cleanouts had been installed and how they functioned together. None of the angles matched up to allow the plumber's snake to get at the blockage near the entrance to the tank.



After moving a great deal of dirt and clearing away the cinder block structure that protected some of the pipes, the source of the blockage, which was a truly impressive mass of roots, was located. The root mass was removed, new pipe was installed, and the water and sewage systems are once again running smoothly.

Late last week the wonderful work crew from California and Denver showed up to finish the inside trim in the Meditation Center and to install vents in the garden units attic. The windows in the Meditation Center look

terrific, matching how the outside of the Meditation Center looks with its new siding, installed by the same crew a year ago. From the Meditation Center the men went up to the Garden Units to work on venting the hot air in the attic. They finished that job just before leaving.



We are so fortunate to have devoted and generous students who are willing to donate their talents for the good of the school. We appreciate the work of the staff who are here year-round working to maintain the school and its work, we are grateful for the work of specialized helpers who are willing to take time from their lives and travel to Baker to help the school with particular projects, and we are very thankful for you, the students who support the school on so many levels to help keep Vitvan's work alive.

Susan Wetmore  
June, 2015

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## The Internship Program

We have extended invitations to two more prospective interns and anticipate their arrivals soon this summer. We look forward to many more interns who are willing and able to contribute to life at the headquarters of our School at any time of year. It is an enormous task to make Vitvan's teachings available and to maintain a welcoming place for students to visit and study the teachings of Vitvan.

Encourage someone to become an intern here!

Positions are open to people who will work and study for all or part of the growing season, April – September 2015 so that the participant can see many aspects of the process. This will involve soil preparation and seed starting all the way to harvesting and food preservation. Participants can expect to work in the gardens and orchard about 4 hours per day, 5 days per week.



Willing participation in other activities at Home Farm will be encouraged. Some visiting workers may be invited to stay long-term if we find that we are a good fit for each other.

Potential visiting workers should realize that Baker NV is one of the most remote locations in the US. Appreciating the beauty, silence and peacefulness of the valley is a great joy. The valley has a population of about 200 people, spread far and wide. Transportation is not absolutely necessary, but would be very convenient. The nearest towns with grocery stores, banks and medical facilities are Ely, NV, 75 miles away and Delta UT, 95 miles away.

Workers will be offered a small stipend for personal expenses. They will prepare most of their own meals in shared kitchen facilities, with full access to the garden produce. They will stay in rooms with modern amenities and shared bathrooms.

Internet is now available at Home Farm. Cell service is available in most parts of the valley.

Learn more at <http://www.sno.org/intern.htm>

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