



**Cavendish Community and Conservation Association**

**Our Vision:** *CCCA is committed to a vibrant Cavendish/Proctorsville community that supports its human and natural resources, building a legacy of health, integrity and vitality for future generations.*

[www.CavendishCCCA.org](http://www.CavendishCCCA.org)

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Cavendish will present a summer music series this year on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 on the Proctorsville Green. The lineup: July 6<sup>th</sup> Gypsy Reel, July 13<sup>th</sup> Alison Turner, July 20<sup>th</sup> Sensible Shoes, July 27<sup>th</sup> the Green Brothers Band, August 3<sup>rd</sup> Chris Kleeman, and wrapping up the series on August 10<sup>th</sup> Yankee Chank. CCCA will again coordinate the series. All concerts are free and open to the public, so grab your lawn chair, a picnic and a cold drink, and join your friends and neighbors to enjoy plenty of rollicking good music from the gazebo. The summer concert series has a long history in Proctorsville and many area residents reserve Wednesday evenings to listen to the live music. As always, the concerts will be held unless severe weather threatens. In case of rain, alternative plans will be announced on the Cavendish Facebook page.



## A Message from Robin

Dear friends and neighbors –

What is the “Working Landscape” and why is it important? The CCCA decided to ask a few of our local food producers about what their work means to them, and to support their work by doing what we can to bring their efforts to the attention of our community. This particular newsletter focuses on the growing and cultivation of food, but there are many other ways people in our community harvest the land such as the growing and cutting of hay, logging, hunting and the personal gardens that so many people depend on for healthy produce. So, we think of these interviews as the beginning of an ongoing inquiry.

We hope that you will join us at our Harvest Dinner on September 9<sup>th</sup> at Crow’s Bakery where the dishes will all be sourced from Cavendish. And, you can support the CCCA by buying a raffle ticket for our Cavendish basket which will include a gift certificate for dinner for two at the Weathersfield Inn (a strong promoter of the Farm to Table movement), jars of honey by local beekeepers Julie-Lynn Wood and Brian Eromenok, maple syrup by Belle McKnight, a bottle of Cavendish wine from Brook Farm Vineyards and a variety of other delicious and lovely items, such as a stained glass maple leaf by Peter LaBelle, a certificate for a two day stay at

Meadowbrook Campgrounds, fruit cakes from Old Cavendish Products, and more! Raffle tickets and tickets for the Harvest Dinner can be purchased at Crows Bakery or on the Proctorsville Green during the summer concert series.

What follows is a series of questions that we posed to local farmers and their answers. The responses are from Cara Tyrell of Little Village Farm CSA in Proctorsville, Pang Ting of Moonlit Meadows Farm in Cavendish, Julie Wood, beekeeper at the Golden Stage Inn, Belle McKnight of Meadow Brook Sugar House, and Brian Eromenok of Stix and Stones Farm in Cavendish.

**CCCA:      *What were your reasons for beginning small-scale farming?***

Cara: Although it is true that we, Jeremiah and Cara, are now a team running Little Village Farm, Jeremiah was the catalyst for the original idea of the venture. He grew up in a farming family and knew he wanted to make farming, on some scale, his future; however making money to support a family via farming seemed unrealistic. In the winter of 2009 Jeremiah began researching a farming model called a CSA, community supported agriculture; concluding that this was the way he could begin to live his dream. CSA's are built on a front-fed financial model, which allowed us to create a 'hobby farm' while still working jobs. The goal has been to transition to full time farming within 10 years.

Pang: The property, having been a farm since the early 1800s, just lends itself to farming. We simply continue to work the land as it was intended, and to care for the property as previous owners did.

Belle: Making maple syrup here at Meadow Brook Farm means a lot to me and to my family. I am fifth generation on the original farm with my grandson, Josh Parker being the seventh generation. Syrup was being made here in 1880 according to a diary by my grandfather Spaulding. We still use wood to boil the sap into syrup. It takes forty gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup.

Julie: I was drawn to beekeeping for the

connection to nature, and my interest was underscored by the immediate crisis of honey bees and the positive impact that hobbyist and small business beekeepers have on this situation.

Brian: I had just retired from a job of 31 years of not knowing when you were going to get stung and I knew that in bee keeping you are getting stung. In 2008, honeybees were at an all time low in the United States. We were importing cheap low quality honey from Asia, and people were okay with that because they did not know the truth about what they were buying and consuming. My wife and kids wondered what I would do at retirement so they gave me a gift for Christmas – a beginner's course in beekeeping at Rutgers University.

**CCCA: *If you believe that small scale (local) farming is important could you please tell us why?***

Cara: There are so many reasons we feel small scale, local farming is vital. The consumers in this country are finally starting to pay attention to where their food comes from, how it is grown, what is (or isn't) sprayed on it, and how overall health begins with what you put in your body. We firmly believe this too and feel that it is our job, as local farmers, to educate the community and promote a healthy lifestyle. Just a few reasons we feel this is an important venture are:

- Working together with community members,
- Teaching canning and preserving practices to eat well year round,
- Working toward year-round production,
- Offering a % off farmer's market pricing to members,
- Providing "care-shares" for families who cannot afford to eat fresh, but who want to,
- Practicing organic farming.

Pang: Small-scale farming minimizes the need for the broad-base use of preventive medicines in animals, or of harsh chemicals for management of insects and weeds in the field. The Cavendish landscape does not lend itself to large-scale farm operations.

Brian: In the bible, you strive for the land of milk and honey. So I started a hive at home in New Jersey and in Cavendish now

known as *Stix & Stones Farm*, thinking I can save the Bees. I believed that I had the best tasting honey because my honey was different. How is my Honey different? Well in 2013 and 2014 people tasted and voted my honey as the best tasting honey. How good? Cyndy and I had a short blurb in the national publication of American Bee Journal. I give you honey as it was created; pure, raw and perfect!

**CCCA: *What is your opinion regarding organic vs. non-organic farming.***

Cara: We practice organic farming in all our fields. We firmly believe that whole, healthy food must not be touched by chemicals. We do not, however, choose to pursue organic certification, as the term 'organic' has become more of a buzzword in America than a conscience food choice. As such we use a variety of non-chemical practices in our fields like: rotation and succession planting, companion planting with herbs and flowers as a natural pesticide, employing poultry (chickens and ducks) to eat field bugs, and making our own sprays to repel bugs/eggs from plants.

Pang: Organic farming seems to have lost its original meaning and has become a label for marketing. Here at Moonlit Meadows, we believe in farming responsibly. We have responsibilities to our local consumers to provide them with good quality, healthy products. We have responsibilities to our animals to keep them happy and healthy, and we have responsibilities to the land to keep it chemical-free.

**CCCA: *What have been some of your biggest challenges?***

Cara: Honestly, Mother Nature is your best friend and your largest nemesis every year. Annually, she deals a new hand and the issues you conquered the year before are moot as you regroup to find a solution to the new issues. For example, this year's winter was so mild we are dealing with bug infestations already on plants that usually are not affected. In addition, the drought conditions are making this year especially challenging in our off-site fields that do not have an irrigation system yet. Odd animals are causing

issues this year too: turkeys and crows, forcing us to replant.

Brian: Wintering the bees over into spring.

**CCCA:** *What has given you the greatest satisfaction?*

Cara: Aside from the overall health and well being that we are experiencing, our greatest satisfaction is hearing from our members and customers that they tried a new vegetable and fell in love with it. Our motto here at LVF is, "try it again for the first time" as so many consumers have made peace with the way produce tastes when purchased from the grocery store after being pre-maturely picked and sprayed to maintain freshness during its 3,000-mile journey to the northeast. We love hearing, "those carrots we bought last week were the best we've ever tasted!" Fresh. Organic. Delicious. That is the way to eat.

Pang: Our satisfaction comes from making improvements to the farm without diminishing its natural beauty, knowing that we play a small role in supplying our community with locally grown food.

Julie: Working with the bees has offered me an almost meditative, therapeutic practice that I did not anticipate. And then of course, there's the sweet reward of honey. A typical hive will produce enough honey for their own winter stores (80-100 pounds) plus a bunch more for the beekeeper. The beekeeper's share can range immensely but is typically 25-40 pounds (I'm guessing a little here) per hive. My biggest harvest was last year and I took 225 pounds from three hives.

Brian: People who try my honey come back for more, and I sell out every year.

**CCCA:** *What would you like your neighbors and community members to know about what you do?*

Cara: We would like our neighbors and fellow community members to know that we are committed to this little farm and to growing it until we reach our vision for the public farm stand that is currently under construction. We are

in our seventh year of farming and still hope to transition to full time farming within the 10-year mark.

Our mission is to establish a year round, community based, food system distribution market, offering: a health and education center for comprehensive well-being from the inside out, a wide variety of agricultural products grown by LVF and other local growers, culinary education for the home cook, and value added products that are organic in their basest form: made of the Earth, from someone's hands, or from a creative mind.

Pang: What we do is largely influenced by the support of our community at large. We expanded into raising beef at the request of friends years ago, at some point, we added Thanksgiving turkeys to that list, also at the request of friends.

Julie: I really believe that bees and beekeeping are connected to community. The networking among area beekeepers has provided me with a sense of community. The bees themselves gather pollen and nectar from an area ranging up to five miles or so from the hive. In this way, they are participating in the community by pollinating gardens, trees, and plants throughout an expansive area.

Brian: I give you pure honey from floral nectar. No sugar syrup, corn syrup, molasses, fillers, artificial flavors. Do not add or take away. It comes from my bees; I do not buy anybody's honey and slap a label on it. My hives are not chemically treated. I try to "Let Them Bee"!

**CCCA:** *Please feel free to add anything else that comes to mind and that you think would be of interest.*

Cara: We'd also like people to know that as of the 2016 season our CSA member model has changed significantly. Members now have complete choice of how much produce they take weekly and what percentage of savings off farmer's market pricing they receive. If you were a member in the past it is worth checking out the new model to see if it is a better fit for you.

Also - we'd love people to know that we always have rabbit meat for sale. Jeremiah and Julia (our farm manager) run the rabbitry. All rabbits are

born, raised, and processed here on the farm. In addition we raise 15 Thanksgiving turkeys annually, and process and sell on-farm for the holiday. There is no need to reserve a rabbit (a lean, healthy meat) but if you would like us to raise your Thanksgiving turkey you need to reserve one with a deposit of \$20.

Julie: I currently have three hives here at the inn. I've been beekeeping for nine or ten years.

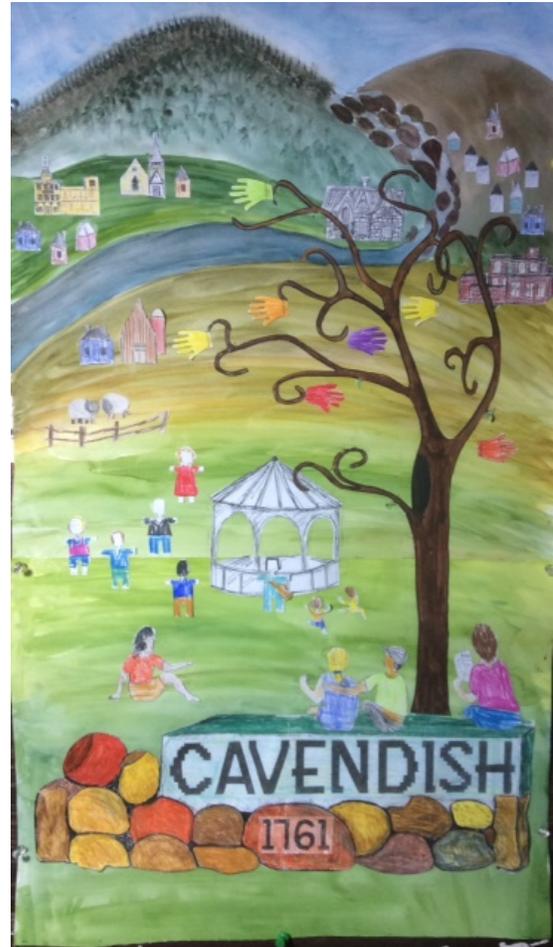
*Robin Timko*

## **Cavendish Community Fund: Update on Two Previous Grants**

During this past year the Cavendish Community Fund saw two of the projects that it supported in the past yield substantial results. The first project was publishing a book on the life of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, titled "Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: The Writer Who Changed History." The Community Fund provided a grant to the Historical Society to edit the manuscript and this year the book has been published. It includes many previously unpublished photographs and covers Solzhenitsyn's life including his time in the army and the gulag, his years in Cavendish and his return to Russia. Written for a young audience, the book appeals to readers of all ages. It is accompanied by a website: [www.thewriterwhochangedhistory.com](http://www.thewriterwhochangedhistory.com) and is for sale locally at the Cavendish town office, Minibeez, and the Historical Society Museum. It can also be purchased on line through Amazon.com.

The second project is not yet complete, but is well on its way. Project director Wendy Regier has brought the community together to create a Cavendish tapestry. She began by purchasing the materials – looms, bobbins, yarn, etc. – with a grant from the Community Fund. Throughout the

winter and spring volunteers learned to weave and then volunteered their time in the Cavendish Elementary School. Four classes were visited two times each by 4-5 volunteers (35 hours working with children). Volunteers are now supporting the project throughout the summer by assisting at various venues planned around town, including weekly craft workshops at the community library, the weekly Summer Concerts on the Green, and local fairs and festivals.



*The Tapestry Design Chosen for Cavendish.*

The Cavendish Community fund has distributed close to \$30,000 since its inception in 2007. Grants are generally between \$500 and \$1,000 and go to individuals and organizations for projects, programs and events that are artistic, cultural or educational in nature and are primarily for Cavendish citizens and residents.

Please call Barbara Dickey at 226-7187 or Peter LaBelle at 226-7250 for more information.

## Walk And Talk Series Continues

CCCA held two highly informative lectures this past spring. Thanks to the tireless efforts of our newest board member, Claire Walker, we hosted a presentation on March 23<sup>rd</sup> by the acclaimed Vermont based researcher Susan Morse who delighted the audience with a fascinating PowerPoint presentation about the cougars that are returning to New England. Claire reports that Susan will be returning to Cavendish this coming winter with an additional presentation as a follow-up to the last one.

A second well attended wildlife presentation was held at the town office meeting room on Beavers and Beaver trapping in Vermont with Fish and Wildlife expert Chris Bernier, head of the fur-bearer project, and James Stewart, long time trapper in our area. The discussion was held on May 24th at the Cavendish Town Office meeting room.

Several more lectures are being planned for the coming fall season. Watch for announcements in the local papers and on Facebook and on our website.

## Energy Committee Report

The Energy Committee recently hosted a forum on “Zero Energy Now” or ZEN. The program is administered by Green Mountain Power and offers substantial incentives for weatherization and other energy improvements by homeowners who live in the former CVPS territory. ZEN is a comprehensive home energy improvement program, providing efficiency upgrades, renewable heating (such as heat pumps and biomass) and solar photovoltaics that will reduce energy costs by 50% to 100%. One general contractor will conduct a detailed analysis and

Winter 2016; Page 6

present options for both increasing energy efficiency and switching to renewable energy sources. Up to \$7,500 per household is available for the improvements, along with up to \$2,500 from Efficiency Vermont, and continuing federal tax incentives. For more information on the program, please go to the program’s website: <http://zeroenergynowvt.com>

The Energy Committee in Cavendish is always looking for project ideas, and welcomes participation from anyone with an interest in alternative energy issues. If you would like to learn more, the committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at noon in the Cavendish Town Office meeting room. Please stop by. You can also call the committee chair, Peter LaBelle at 226-7250.

## Join us as a Member of CCCA!

Dues are a nominal \$35 per year for full membership. In order to join CCCA, please fill out the information below and send with a check payable to Cavendish Community and Conservation Association to:

CCCA  
P.O. Box 605  
Cavendish, VT 05142

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_