

LUSH Valley Food Action Society



Chris Byrne (pictured above) is relatively new to Lush Valley. He joined last spring after catering the Lush AGM. There was a mutual connection made there and Chris signed on as treasurer.

Chris is a local vegetarian/raw food caterer who has studied macrobiotic cooking and living. The simple macrobiotic principles of eating what is growing around us, endeared Chris to the Fruit Tree Project. When an opportunity arose to be the project coordinator he was happy to step in.

Chris stated "it was great to meet the volunteers, the owners and to know that the harvest was distributed to community members who have little access to fresh fruit."

We gratefully acknowledge the financial and other support of:

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA), Comox Strathcona Regional District, City of Courtenay, Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, Rotary Club of Courtenay, Bob Warren & Panoramic Homes, Jennifer Charles Design, Armen Vartanyan, 3D Contracting, Baxandall's Ford Country, Central Builders, Hyland Readt Mixed Concrete, Cumberland Ready Mix

Another Successful year of picking

The growing season in 2007 will not go into any 'best of' books, but 79 owners and 82 volunteers picked more than 6000 pounds of fruit, nuts and berries. This harvest would have been wasted, may have caused pest problems and would have created a mess, except for the efforts of the fabulous volunteers, Director, Chris Byrne and the summer Volunteer Coordinator, Bonnie Kirk.

The School in Every Garden

"A garden in every school... What a great idea. This is the ambitious goal of the California School Garden Network. It has received widespread support from agriculturists, environmentalists, nutritionists, and educators. This goal represents an encouraging step toward a better understanding of how closely linked we are to our food supply and to nature. A garden in every school also offers us the best opportunity to expose the invisible crisis in our country (and world), chronic malnutrition. Whether in the form of hunger or obesity, both of these symptoms of malnutrition are taking their toll on the lives of so many in our world through an insidious ignorance that plagues urban society. The lessons to be learned from a garden come at a very critical time."
www.ecoliteracy.org/publications/rsl/ag_kawamura.html

Bonnie Kirk is studying Liberal Studies through Malaspina, at the North Island College Campus. She enjoyed marketing the Fruit Tree Project as festivals over the summer. She grew up on Denman Island where she was first captivated by fruit trees. Bonnie was attracted to the project because of its grass roots community emphasis, "A favourite experience from the Fruit Tree Project is the opportunity I had to arrange fruit picks for a mom's group. They were wonderfully organized, positive and picked more fruit than anyone else. Those encounters are a blessing."

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Food Security Web Sites Of Interest

www.alternet.org/environment
www.wildfoodplants.com
www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca
www.climatechaos.ca
www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/hungryplanet.html

iTunes U: Download free food-related lectures from the iTunes U podcast directory. Open the iTunes application, go to the iTunes Store and search for iTunes U.

NPR Food Podcast: National Public Radio (NPR) creates a weekly audio compendium of food-related radio segments.
<http://www.npr.org/rss/podcast.php?id=1053>

American Public Media, Marketplace segment: Why aren't energy, food in inflation rate?:
<http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2007/12/13/inflation/>



Lights, Camera, Action!



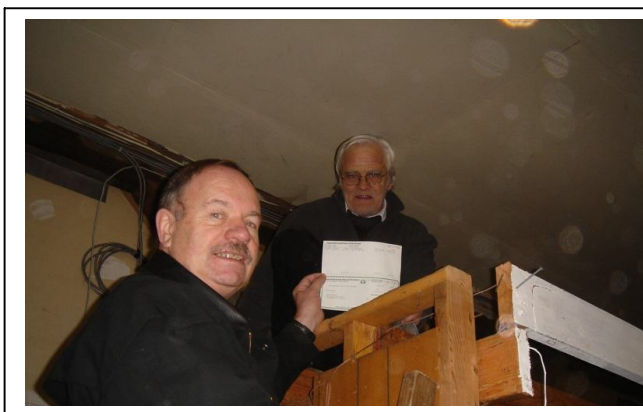
The Lush Valley Food Action Society is now implementing the third phase of the Comox Valley's Community Food Action Initiative developed under Planning for Plenty 2. This is in addition to its core activities of the Fruit Tree Project and development of non-profit social enterprises. The objectives to be achieved over the year include: strengthening the food security capacity of the Comox Valley; determining the feasibility of a centralised bulk buying club for non-profit food distributors; establishing a permanent home for the organization; and developing an action plan for 2008/09. To lead these activities, LUSH Valley engaged Bill Musto, who many of you know from his previous work with Planning for Plenty 2. It is with regret that they accepted his resignation as he did excellent work. The pull of lucrative out of country consulting contracts could not be resisted. As one door closes another opens – Sue Moen, [see bio pg 4] an individual with extensive experience in the food security world accepted the offer of a position.

Betty-Anne Juba, Lush Valley President stated "I know all of you will wish Bill luck in his new endeavors and welcome Sue aboard."

Sometimes the universe answers a wish in its own time. Lush Valley has been actively searching for a permanent home for its programs and for the Community Food Action Initiative and one stepped forward – although a little earlier than planned. When the Comox Valley Food Bank chose not to renew their lease at their long-time home on Piercy Avenue in Courtenay, Lush Valley approached the landlord to have a look. The amount of space and the terms of a lease were appropriate, so they signed up. Immediately, several professionals in the community stepped forward to offer their services and designs and plans were underway. Bob Warren (Panoramic Homes), Jennifer Charles (Jennifer Charles Design), Gordon Campbell (Panda Gas), Daren Nelson (Complete Plumbing), and James Street have already put in significant time and expertise to help plan the renovations. Several community groups have assisted with volunteers, cash and material donations and spreading the word.

Demolition is in process and renovations will include a warehouse and distribution centre, a commercial kitchen with processing space for gleaned and donated perishables and an administration and training centre for Lush Valley and other community groups to offer food security programming and workshops. It's a very tall order and the Society welcomes any and all pledges of support. Sue Moen declared "There is nothing like hitting the runway just before take off! I am thrilled to work with the Society to build this community asset and increase food security in the Valley."

Vancouver Island Real Estate Board representative Marty Douglas, hands a cheque for \$2,000 to LUSH Valley volunteer, Keith Haslam for the HUB.





Clean food is 'actually the cheapest food you can buy... all of the costs are figured into the price. Society is not bearing the cost of water pollution, of antibiotic resistance, of food-borne illness, of crop subsidies, of subsidized oil & water – of all the hidden costs to the environment & the taxpayer that make cheap food seem cheap... the choice is simple: You can buy honestly priced food or you can buy irresponsibly priced food.'

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006) p.243

Agro-fuels

Agro-fuels are changing the face of the agriculture commodity market around the globe. Planting extensive plots of land for fuel is causing enormous environmental and social damage. Precious ecosystems are being destroyed and peasant and indigenous communities are being displaced from their land. The Indian government is committed to planting 14 million hectares of land with exotic jatropha, and Brazil has 120 million hectares available for agro fuels. European lobbyists talk of expropriating 400 million hectares of land in 15 African countries for agro fuel.

One of the justifications of agro fuels, referred inappropriately as bio-fuels (bio meaning life), is global warming. Felling forests and the drying of peat soils and wetlands will release far more carbon dioxide than can be justified by using agro fuels. Agro-industry already contributes 14 per cent of the carbon emissions. And that does not include the significant 18 per cent input of chemical fertilizers and pesticides plus an additional 14 per cent for transportation of agro-commodities (Grain <http://www.grain.org>).

The growing of agro fuels has already diminished food reserves and raised the price of many foods beyond the purchasing capacity of the World's poor. In Mexico the price of corn is so high that many people are turning from their traditional corn tortilla to low nutrient refined noodles that cannot support the body's nutrient requirements.

Diminishing Water

After experiencing a wet spring and summer, depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer is not the first thought concerning food security. This huge groundwater reserve underlying the Plains from South Dakota to Texas and west to Kansas is in many areas already gone. Most of the water accumulated in the aquifer over 10,000 years ago. And, yet it has only taken us 40 years to shrink the reserve to one-third and at the present rate of pumping water for irrigation it will be gone in less than 60 years. Only 158 irrigation farmers in Sherman County use more water than over a million people in Denver to grow corn for livestock and ethanol.

Farmers are not the only heavy users. Many city dwellers water lush lawns in desert climates and buy food that has traveled more than 3,600 kilometers to reach the supermarket. By changing the way we use water and grow food the Ogallala Aquifer could be sustained hundreds and perhaps thousands on years.

It is obvious that we need to adapt our food system to our regional climates and work with the natural world to obtain food security and healthy communities. Building our capacity to grow healthy local food on Vancouver Island and especially in our verdant Comox Valley is a goal that all citizens should support. FMI: <http://www.alternet.org/environment/58244/>





Our Mission

We seek to respond holistically to hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in the Comox Valley, focusing on using local resources to meet local food system needs. We implement and support partnership with practical community food-related projects to educate, encourage and empower the people of the Comox Valley towards personal wellness, community health, and environmental stewardship. We believe that public health, social justice and ecological sustainability are inextricably linked.

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Executive Director:

Sue Moen

Saving the Harvest — for Generations to Come

"While we spent last month talking about preserving the harvest by canning and freezing, seed saving is one of the easiest things you can do to preserve heirloom varieties. Even if you return the seeds to your farmer instead of planting them yourself, he will likely thank you all the more. The practice of seed saving predates the glossy seed catalog by hundreds of years. With many heirloom varieties, were it not for seed saving, they would have become extinct. Seed saving is one way to preserve the harvest, for the next season, and for generations to come."
www.eatlocalchallenge.com/2007/09/saving-the-harv.html

Introducing Sue Moen

Sue Moen moved to Black Creek last year, and was recently hired by LUSH Valley Food Action Society to implement several community recommendations under contract to VIHA. She is also the Chief Executive Officer responsible to the Board of Directors for all aspects of planning, development, implementation and evaluation of LUSH Valley programs and operations.

Moen's previous experience includes joining A Loving Spoonful in 1997 to develop an alternate meal delivery program to address the specific needs of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside IDU population. She succeeded to the Executive Director position at A Loving Spoonful in December 2001 and served in that position until September 2006. She came from seven years as a care-team volunteer in the AIDS community and two years managing an HIV Drop In for street-involved transgender clients. Moen was a leader in the Food Provider community in Vancouver with a particular passion for capacity mapping and development and was member of the regional Health Board's Food Advisory Committee. Moen also sat on the Board of Directors of the Association of Nutrition Services Agencies.

Moen was the main spokesperson for the organization and the community liaison to the Vancouver Emergency Food Providers Coalition, Vancouver HIV/AIDS Care Coordinating Committee (VH/ACCC) and Pacific AIDS Network. She co-chaired VH/ACCC for three years and managed the five-year strategic plan for this intra-sectoral coalition of more than 30 community agencies, government ministries and departments and health centres. She also served one term on the Vancouver Food Policy Council.

Moen is a graduate of the Leadership Vancouver Program and is currently studying for a Certificate in International Development at UBC.

Goodbyes and Hellos

It is with regret that we have accepted William Musto's [Bill] resignation from the Hub project. He has done excellent work but the financial pull of lucrative out of country consulting contracts has necessitated that Bill move on. As one door closes another opens – Sue Moen an individual with fantastic experience in the food security world has accepted our offer of a position.

I know all of you will wish Bill luck in his new endeavors and welcome Sue aboard.

Betty-Anne Juba, President

