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Drs. Clements’ Hippocrates Life Change Program
Pioneering program teaching a living foods lifestyle. Teaches people how to take control of their personal well-being, allow the body to maximize its natural healing potential and discover how to detoxify and recharge physically, emotionally, and spiritually!

Dr. Hranicky’s Psycho-Oncology Program
Comprehensive regeneration medicine program for anti-aging and prevention. Ageless vitality and energy are the treatment goals of this cutting-edge approach based on natural Regeneration Medicine, addressing three steps in Anti-Aging Medicine: drain toxins; balance metabolism and hormones; and regenerate organs.

Dr. Galitzer’s The Younger You Program
Integrative Medicine program maximizes treatment benefits by integrating alternative and standard medical therapies. Combines a range of Regeneration Medicine treatments, Nutritional Medicine and the Hranicky PsychoOncology Program to enhance recovery. Dr. Janet Hranicky incorporates 30 years of clinical research with Carl Simonton, M.D. and the Simonton Cancer Center in the field of PsychoNeuroImmunology.

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HEALING OUR WORLD • THE HEALTH OF SOIL

From the Directors

Ann Wigmore once stated, “The most important way we can rebuild and strengthen the human body is by rebuilding and strengthening the nutrients in the soil that grow our food.”

Her image standing there with a handful of almost delectable, organically created, pitch-black humus in her hand will permanently be embedded in our minds. She went on to say, “Strong soil builds strong plants that build strong people.” Her straightforward insitinctual approach is sorely missing in most of the generations that followed.

For many decades now, food has been grown in mineral and nutrient depleted fields. Organic plants grown in nutrient rich soil with the proper amount of organic matter contain substantially higher amounts of phytonutrients, which not only prevent, but also reverse disease. Needless to say, these non-chemicalized varieties are better to purchase and consume than the poisoned types which provide marginal nutrition while enhancing chances of disease. The soil experts and authentic organic farmers we know tell us that soil should contain twenty to thirty percent nutrient rich organic matter (most important minerals). Having often consumed delicious fare grown in such earth, I can assure you that you do not need a scientist to tell you the difference. Shelf life is also greatly increased since the body of the plant has the wherewithal to resist breakdown.

We thought it appropriate to dedicate this publication, the last before the 30-year anniversary of HH’s magazine, Healing Our World, to a subject that is seldom discussed but fundamental to the future of humanity. While doing research for our latest book, Supplements Exposed, I looked at a report from the first global leadership meeting on the environment and climate change. One hundred and eighty top leaders from countries all over the earth nearly two decades ago were told that during the previous century, a minimum of three quarters of global top soil was then gone due to poor farming practices, climatic changes and good old disregard. The United States suffered an 85 percent reduction, whereas Europe had the least erosion standing at 72 percent. Now, years later, there is no doubt that the amount of degradation is higher: We always tell people to consume a variety of sea vegetables in their diet, since most of that absent soil sits at the bottom of the world’s oceans feeding its fauna. When highlighting nutrition as healer, Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine, said that we must not forget that all vegetables are not created equal. Beyond the above-mentioned catastrophe, consuming foods that were harvested days to weeks earlier, often from far-away lands, leave us very little to ingest in the way of health building elements. Local biological farming, personal gardening and sprouting are three ways to increase well being and reduce planetary pollution. Please begin to ask questions about the source of foods sold at farmer’s markets, health stores and supermarkets. As you raise your awareness, you help raise others.”

By joining organic buyers clubs and co-ops, you can help as a community to demand improved growing practices and higher quality produce. This is not only healthy, but also a way to increase the flavor, vitality, and benefit of the foods you consume.

Drs. Anna Maria and Brian Clement
More than trite clichés from the 60s or expressions appropriated from exotic cultures, kernels of wisdom such as We are all one or none; As above, so below or I am another you point to the unity underlying all life everywhere. This issue of Healing Our World explores the interconnection of life and its relationship to health.

When balanced, life manifests as an ever-changing and perfectly orchestrated symphony. The cycle of earthly life is continuous and concurrent. It occurs in three basic steps: invisible single-celled bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms feed on and decompose organic matter and create living soil; plants are nourished by this soil and share their roots, leaves, fruits and vegetables with sentient animals as nourishment, eventually, all things return to the earth, where micro-organisms continue the cycle. In the ongoing transformation of matter and energy from one form into another, each creature plays a unique role in the magnificent song of life.

But this marvelous process is in peril. The modern, corporate-industrial complex behaves more like an avaricious cancer than wise stewards and protectors of Mother Earth, exploiting the bio-inheritance of all life forms without regard for the consequences unleashed. This short-sighted perspective of living on borrowed bio-credit and accumulating bio-debt leaves future generations in a tenuous situation, carrying an immense burden.

In this issue of Healing Our World, we present what is possible when thinking beyond profit-driven orthodoxy. These stories highlight those who combine purity of consciousness, clarity of understanding and commitment to action. Beyond industrialized, chemical based agriculture is organic farming and gardening; and other models exist, going beyond.

Steve Solomon succinctly states, “the problem is not that there are residues of pesticides in our food, the problem is that there are residues of nutrition in our food.”

The problem we face is a limited, narrow-minded consciousness. Einstein once said that the thinking which gave rise to our problems will not be able to solve those problems. More important than symptoms are the conditions which give rise to symptoms. When plants need pesticides, herbicides and fungicides to grow, we must address the soil and the conditions giving rise to the soil: the microorganisms, organic matter and minerals. Powerful healing begins at the root level, not on the leaves: if the roots are sick the whole tree will perish. Similarly, when we are mired by illness, we must rectify the conditions giving rise to disease, namely toxicity and deficiency in the body, mind and spirit, and replace the conditions leading us away from our goal of vibrant health with ones taking us closer to our goals.

At Hippocrates, we are committed to healing our planet, individual by individual, from the deepest levels of the spirit through the mind and to the surface level of the body. We invite you to embark or continue on this process and “be the change you wish to see in the world.” We are interconnected, our actions reverberate everywhere.

Two new regular columns debut this issue. Shrink Rap, by our resident psychotherapists Andy and Antony, and Readers Respond, inspired by the many inquiries we received about Carmine Bello’s article Begone, Pain! which helped many of our readers overcome chronic pain. We also invite you to lend us your eyes and ears and send questions, comments, pictures, healthcare related stories and personal testimonies to ReadersRespond@HippocratesInst.org to share with our global community of friends. We will do our best to answer, reply, investigate and print your input. Until next time, be happy and healthy!

Ronny Bagdadi

FROM THE PUBLISHER
Jules Dervaes founded Path to Freedom, a viable, family-operated urban homestead project established in 2005 to promote a simpler and more fulfilling lifestyle and to sow a homegrown revolution against the corporate powers controlling the food supply. Since the mid-1980s, Mr. Dervaes and his three adult children, Anais, Justin and Jordanne, have steadily worked at transforming their city lot in Pasadena, CA into a thriving organic garden supplying them with food all year round. The family also runs a successful business; Dervaes Gardens, providing fresh produce to local high-end restaurants and caterers.

Jean-Loup Fayolle, author of Driving One’s Life and Joy Over Fear, leads conferences and workshops on communicating with the five senses. Jean-Loup uses Nurturapuncture, a western version of acupuncture, to demonstrate the relationship between eating and balancing vital currents or meridians. For more information visit www.JeanLoupFayolle.me. He welcomes your contact at JeanLoupFayolle@gmail.com.

Randall Fitzgerald is an author and investigative reporter for both newspapers and magazines since the early 1970s. He has written feature articles for The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and Reader’s Digest. His most recent book, Toxic Beauty, uncovers the truth behind feminine beauty products and gives women some guidelines for purposeful protective action. He worked as a congressional reporter for Capitol Hill New Service, founded by Ralph Nader.

Don Weaver has worked for 30 years as a grower focusing on the health and survival of humanity and the biosphere. After meeting the brilliant ecologist John D. Hamaker, Don co-authored The Survival of Civilization, produced 11 issues of The Solar Age or Ice Age? Bulletin and penned numerous articles for Remineralize the Earth, Acres USA and Living Nutrition magazines, among others. To Love And Regenerate the Earth: Further Perspectives on The Survival of Civilization includes additional Hamaker writings. Both Hamaker; Weaver books remain free as a planetary public service. Don assists Remineralize the Earth at www.remineralize.org and its worldwide network working for the health and regeneration of humanity and the Earth. He can be reached at: earthdon@yahoo.com.

Dr. Jonn McClellan is a lecturer and therapist at Hippocrates Health Institute. He entered the health field after overcoming health challenges using natural means and gaves all credit to the Innate Intelligence within. Currently helping people realize their full health potential through his chiropractic, diet, exercise, detoxification and stress management practice in Royal Palm Beach, Florida, he can often be found enjoying the wonderful cuisine at Hippocrates. You can contact him at: chrjonnymac@yahoo.com.

Henry B. Nathan is a passionate reader of social issues and history and an avid cinephile. He works as a real estate professional. You can visit his websites www.condo-southflorida.com and his blog condo-southflorida.blogspot.com.

Organic Connections is the magazine of Peter Gillham’s Natural Vitality. They sponsor Remineralize the Earth and Conservation International, both committed to protecting nature. The magazine highlights organizations and individuals making a positive difference. For more information visit www.OrganicConnectMag.com.

Anais Sanchez is a native of Miami who loves her community. She currently works in the financial industry and is involved in alternative activities that stimulate and inspire improvement in her well-being. She holds a Bachelor’s in Business Administration with concentration in Finance, a Bachelor’s in Arts and Sciences with concentration in Religious Studies and a Certificate in Women’s Studies. She can be contacted at anasc003@yahoo.com.

Don Bagdadi is a graphic designer and teacher based out of Miami Beach, FL. Working on accounts such as PETA, The Peace Collective and Planned Parenthood, he enjoys applying his talents towards worthwhile causes. Currently he works at Markham Unlimited, an advertising agency in Coral Gables, FL and teaches at the Miami Ad School. You can reach him at jacklagadad@gmail.com.

Susan Keiffer is a co-founder of Planet Organic, whose mission is encouraging helping start and supporting educational community and school gardens to address the ongoing, reduced soil quality and supply of fresh, organic, local produce. An Infidologist and Master Herbalist holding a Bachelor’s in Pre-Medical studies, Susan teaches raw food and gardening classes, travels researching the top natural health lifestyles and writes about the environment and soil and human health. The article in this issue is an excerpt from her book in progress, A Model Community Gardening. You can reach Susan at SusanKeiffer22@bellsouth.net and www.PlanetOrganicCSA.org.

Timothy J. LaSalle is CEO of the nonprofit Rodale Institute, an internationally recognized leader in regenerative organic agricultural research, advocacy and education founded in 1947 by J.I. Rodale to explore the scientific foundation of organic agriculture. Tim LaSalle holds a Ph.D. in Depth Psychology, a Master’s in Science in Populations Genetics and a Bachelor’s in Science. Tim speaks internationally on the environment and agriculture, serves on the Coalition on Agricultural Greenhouse Gasses committee and posts blogs on HuffingtonPost.com and Treehugger.com.

David G. Screven is Canada’s first full-time practicing lymphologist. His articles for Vitality Magazine have also been reprint-ed by the Well Being Journal, America, The Canadian National ME/CFM Association, the top organization in Canada for Fibro-myalgia and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, and Yoga Magazine. A certified lymphologist for 6 years, David currently teaches yoga instruction, anatomy and physiology. He holds degrees in basic, advanced and psychotherapy forms of Pranac Healing, and operates his holistic business at www.bodybgood.ca.

Steve Solomon has written ten vegetable gardening books in the last 30 years including Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades, Gardening When It Counts and Growing Vegetables South of Australia. Steve is married to Annis and together grow a lot of things, including themselves, through almost daily yoga practice, a peaceful lifestyle restricting contact with hostility and carefully monitoring their food intake. Steve founded and operates the Soil and Health Library in 1997 and considers himself one of the ten best veggie gardeners in the English-speaking world, but makes no claims to exceed the talents of the average Hunsong, Japanese or Chinese farmer. Learn more about Steve and veggie gardening by visiting www.soilandhealth.org.

Don Bagdadi is an art director, graphic designer and teacher based out of Miami Beach, FL. Working on accounts such as PETA, The Peace Collective and Planned Parenthood, he enjoys applying his talents towards worthwhile causes. Currently he works at Markham Unlimited, an advertising agency in Coral Gables, FL and teaches at the Miami Ad School. You can reach him at jacklagadad@gmail.com.
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Dear Healing Our World,

Thank you Dr Brian Clement and you, Ronny Bregadali, Editor at Healing Our World, for having the foresight and publishing Carmine Bello’s article in volume 29, issue 3 of HOW. I believe in angels and I have many. Thank you for being the messenger angel. Thank you for calling me back. Thank you for talking with me. Thank you for relaying my message to Mr Carmine Bello via email. And most of all thank you all for opening the door to a subject not often discussed, yet a problem that is a big pain in the butt for many of us.

I just got back from a three week treatment at the N.A. Traditional Chinese Medicine Hemorrhoids Treatment Center, in Toronto. After four and a half years of suffering I am very happy to report that I am now fully recovered. Dr. Alan Chen and his staff are amazing, caring, wonderful, knowledgeable and miracle workers. I am glad to be home, minus my bleeding hemorrhoids, with a clear bill of health!

In closing I’d like to say “I left them all behind!” Thank you all again.

Sincerely, Ziona Fink

Dear Hippocrates,

I wanted to thank you for the informative article you ran last issue titled The Myth of Mental Illness. I found it a useful addition in the information campaign I have been sending to my children’s school board and principal.

This spring two students committed suicide in our school district, a tragic occurrence and much discussion was had by the community. As a result of this the school district announced a partnership with a government and pharma sponsored program called Minding Your Mind Foundation. I looked up the website for this foundation and was dismayed to find the only mention of help was that of psychotherapy and medications. No mention of nutrition, detoxification and sustained damage from childhood vaccines. As a Homeopath and with many years of treating and researching these issues I was very dismayed that they still had not woken up to the fact that psychiatric drugs offer only a band aid for a number of complex issues that need addressing, and a very toxic one at that.

Attending the information session put out by the Minding Your Mind Foundation I found that the talk given was by a young man who had attempted suicide whilst being treated with antidepressive medication! His main focus was telling students not to feel weird or alone if they have negative thoughts or feelings of hopelessness, to tell someone, preferably a health professional. The whole program seemed to be geared at programming parents and teachers of the Biological imbalance theory of mental illness, which has not been proven but as a natural consequence of its acceptance, leads people to accept widespread medication for so-called imbalances.

I sent the school board a number of links and your article was read by many of the members. New research just out by Dr Andrew Wakefield shows that monkeys vaccinated with the Hepatitis B vaccine just after birth were more likely to develop autism (http://www.ageofautism.com/2009/09/blockbuster-primate-study-shows-significant-harm-from-one-birth-dose-of-a-mercury-containing-vaccine.html#more).

Autism is only the most severe form of the damage from vaccines; other subtle effects may manifest in the body and mind as immunological, gastric or emotional issues which many children suffer from today in varying degrees. I have had little response from most, especially the principals of the high and middle schools, but I was informed of a few that the information was having some effect.

I only hope to put the information out there to the people who are supposed to have a say in what goes on in the school community and what is being taught. Their consciences will have to guide them to do the right thing once they are aware of these facts. Good nutrition and detoxification of children is a far more sensible option than dosing them up with dangerous medications.

Keep on with those great reports!

Sincerely, Ziona Fink, Carmine Bello & Dr. Ahali Chen

Angela Walker, BSc (Hons) RSHom, CCH

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Angela Walker, BSc (Hons) RSHom, CCH

And lastly, from Bernice Jackson: The new look is outstanding!
What’s the News?

Facing a lovely pond, the first eight villas will house guests. The freshly remodeled guest rooms provide a relaxing atmosphere. It’s an exciting time at the Institute. There seems to be new information and technologies becoming available so regularly that we thought we should create a column just to introduce you to these cutting edge updates. And of course we will also fill you in and share photos of the expansion of the West Palm Beach facility.

HIPPOCRATES HEALTH INSTITUTE

What’s the Latest at

Pfizer Again!

Illegally Pushing Drugs

by Elias Zalavarria

Although its 2009 Corporate Responsibility Report is titled Doing the Right Things, Pfizer, the pharmaceutical giant, was recently busted for doing the exact opposite and was fined $2.3 billion for improper marketing practices after its own employees blew the whistle. Pfizer will pay $1.3 billion to settle a criminal charge urging doctors to prescribe not only higher than normal doses, but also broader than intended uses of Bextra, an anti-inflammatory drug. They also settled with federal and state prosecutors and will pay an additional $1 billion for improperly marketing Bextra as well as Lyrica, an epilepsy drug, Cedon, an anti-psychotic drug and Zyvox, an antibiotic drug.

Fines and penalties are microscopic blemishes on Pfizer’s balance sheet; these apparently gargantuan fines are actually lilliputian in comparison to the blockbuster profits generated by just one of these drugs. According to Tom Murphy of the Associated Press, “Pfizer fines are not likely to stop drug-makers from promoting drugs for unauthorized uses.” This $2.3 billion fine is but a mere slap on the wrist for this unscrupulous drug maker. Such actions on Pfizer’s part are not the first, but rather the fourth time they have settled for these practices with the Justice Department in the past decade, showing their indifference for the very patients they claim to care for.

We constantly strive to improve our guests’ stays and the Hippocrates program. Over the last several months we have renovated many of the guest accommodations and have been busy finishing the first eight villas to be utilized as guests accommodations. Opening date is slated for spring 2010 and will offer our future guests an opportunity to reside in spacious, two-story accommodations during their stay.

Our double decker circular building is now open and the doctors, many of the managers and the Health Educators have moved in. Guests enjoy visiting for consultations and advanced treatments in this bright, new space. We look forward to having you come for the first time and invite our former guests back to experience our campus’ booming growth.

Furthermore, we are adding a PERTH system. Based on pulsating magnetic field therapy, this system stimulates the body’s own repair mechanisms so it can target diseased cells while strengthening the immune system. Based on over 25 years of research and over 100,000 medical and clinical studies showing its effectiveness, this full body meridian therapy works with very low magnetic fields, in the pico Tesla range, similar to those naturally produced by the heart, brain, stomach, kidneys and other organs.

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Please RSVP for this Open House, as it is our most popular event. Learn about the Hippocrates living foods program and how it can change your life. This informative evening event includes a lecture by Director Brian Clement, a brief Question and Answer session and a sampling of raw living food cuisine. Our knowledgeable Program Consultants will also be on hand to help you get enrolled or simply to explain all of the available options.

Someone you know just might need to know us. So we invite you to come, and bring a friend, for a guided tour of our entire 40 acre facility. Get a first-hand look at what we do and how we do it. Learn about our various programs from one of our knowledgeable staff members. Stay for a raw, organic lunch or dinner for a mere $20. Reservations are required for all meals.
The natives of the beautiful island of Ikaria outlive Americans by 12 years on average. When Greek immigrant Yiannis Karimalis received startling news from doctors in Pennsylvania that he was diagnosed with abdominal cancer and had less than one year to live, he returned to his native island of Ikaria to live out his remaining days. Karimalis is now 102 years old, still alive thirty-nine years after his doctors’ prognosis. Ikarians outlive almost everyone in the world, with a high percentage of them living past 90 years. Some attribute this longevity to the physical exercise required getting around this majestic, mountainous 99 square mile island.

The Ikarians’ high lifespan caught the interest of the medical community, and a team of medical and demographic researchers funded by the National Geographic Society and the AARP was assembled and dispatched. They discovered one out of every three Ikarians live to reach 90 years of age and there is essentially no sign of Alzheimer’s disease or dementia in the population. They also have a 50 percent lower rate of heart disease than Americans and 1/9 the rate of diabetes. A majority of these benefits were attributed to the Ikarians’ lifestyle, who live in the high, rocky slopes where there are also active hot springs, which they believe to have healing properties. The lifestyle they follow consist of daily naps, consuming over 150 varieties of wild greens, daily herbal teas, strong social bonds and possibly more important, an overall attitude about time and work: things get done when they get done. These activities allow a high number of Ikarians to reach an advanced age of about 90 years, eclipsing the lower American average of only 78.

Farewell, Sam...

On November 2 at 8:55 AM, Sam Shepard, our beloved co-worker and former publisher and editor of Healing Our World went on to his permanent resting place. We will surely miss him. Thank you for sharing your light with us, Sam. You were always loved by all of us here at Hippocrates and we will cherish your memory.

What’s the News?

Trendy Greens
Demi Moore Goes Raw
by Elias Zalavarria

The raw and living food lifestyle continues getting exposure in the mainstream media as actors, designers and musicians alike embrace healthier lifestyles. The latest news reveal Demi Moore joining in on the fun. Other well known public figures on the raw path include Donna Karan, Woody Harrelson, and Sting. It’s simple: eat green, feel great!

Dr Brian Clement’s Speaking Schedule*

N O V E M B E R
22 South Miami, FL
27 Milton, ON
28, 29 Toronto, ON
29 Ajax, ON

J A N U A R Y
Tampa, FL
5 – 12 Sarasota, FL, Ft. Meyers, FL

F E B R U A R Y
7 – 13 Malibu, CA**
26, 27 New York

M A R C H
Northern & Southern CA
30, 31 Brazil

A P R I L
1, 2 Brazil (con’d)
11 – 16 Malibu, CA**

J U N E
6 – 11 Malibu, CA**

*Subject to change.
Please check HHI website for most current schedule.
**Hippocrates West at the Serra Retreat

We Know That Women Really Are Built Quite Differently Than Men...

What’s the News?

We Also Make One Specifically For Men.

These complete, 100% natural, whole-food multi-vitamin, herb, mineral formulas are created especially for LifeGive. Our extraordinary, hydroponically grown formulas blend the wisdom of ancient healing traditions with the best of modern science. Both of these formulas offer unprecedented levels of nutritional support, vibrant health, endurance and renewed energy.

What’s the News?

Extending the Golden Years
by Elias Zalavarria

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What’s the News?
The effects of the Green Movement are vast and far-reaching. From farmers’ markets and co-ops to hybrid vehicles and manufacturing, this movement towards ecological responsibility and healthier standards of living has permeated nearly every facet of modern life. Everyday, organizations and individuals are conceiving new ways to improve their environment and surroundings and promote a healthy and sustainable lifestyle. While some of these programs are well-organized and publicly or privately funded and promoted, it is important to note some of the more grass-roots and home-grown initiatives. One such initiative is the Guerrilla Gardening phenomena.

Guerrilla Gardening

Viva La Revolución!
By Anais Sanchez and Jack Bagdadi

Guerrilla Gardening is the act of planting and maintaining plants and crops on abandoned or unkempt property that does not belong to the individual or group. In the same way that a squatter takes residence in an abandoned building, a guerrilla gardener grows plants on an abandoned plot of land. While the concept of growing something on another’s property is certainly not new, only in the past few decades has it been defined as a movement. One could make a good case that the American legend Johnny Appleseed, who introduced apple seeds to large parts of Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, was a recent Guerrilla Gardener.

The term Guerrilla Gardening was first coined in 1973 when the Green Guerrilla Group, led by Liz Christy, turned an abandoned lot into a garden in the Bowery Houston area of New York. Since then, the term has been used to describe all sorts of radical gardening in which individuals or organized groups plant gardens or plants on abandoned or neglected land.

What About Rights?

Thomas Jefferson, in the Declaration of Independence, declares that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.” The right to life entails several facets, but only a few key components will be mentioned here: the right to life signifies the right to breathe clean air; the right to harmless, drinkable water and the right to eat nourishing food. These three rights are irrefutably fundamental to our existence; however, the right to eat wholesome food is a challenge in our modern centralized, industrialized and profit-driven economy.

While government was the initiating, advocacy entity for freedom to life and liberty, it is now allowing money-driven corporations to dictate the below-par standards of marketable foods. Despite the nutrient-deprived foods circulating in supermarkets, people can always resort to their natural right: the right to life. From this right, one can infer the ability to self-sustain oneself. A form of self-sustainability can be actualized by creating personal gardens. Having personal gardens allows individuals to control the quality of their diet by abstaining from toxic substances such as pesticides, herbicides, fungicides and fertilizers.

Is all Guerrilla Gardening Politically Motivated?

In the early spring of 2009, a co-worker and I casually conversed about our frustrations over our inability to have our own vegetable gardens since we lived in apartment buildings. These limitations led us to the idea of planting seeds in a meridian strip with a lonely palm tree behind our workplace. Everyday we took a 5 or 10 minute break and cared for the plot. In less than 10 minutes, we removed the weeds and watered the seeds. At the onset, our other co-workers thought we were lunatics; not only were we planting on someone else’s land, but we were also gardening during office hours. Nonetheless, we rationalized it through: could it be that we were doing something harmful? We decided against that idea, since we were also gardening during office hours. Nevertheless, we rationally thought it through: could it be that we were doing something therapeutic? We decided against that idea, since we were assisting plants’ growth in an area that was vacant and we were doing it at no cost. Moreover, smokers typically take several 5-10 minute breaks throughout the day. Since neither of us smoked, we were deprived of the added breaks. We figured that in the same time allotted for smoking breaks, we could adequately tend our garden. And so that’s just what we did. We cared for our garden everyday. During meals, we were mindful of what we ate and saved the seeds. We planted several kinds, mostly cucumbers and pumpkins. It became an extraordinary experience. As soon as the plants flourished other coworkers showed their interest. They asked whether the plants were taken care of and reminded us to water them if they seemed wilted. Similarly, the neighbors came to visit when they saw us outside caring for the plants. They befriended us and even offered tools and gloves. After 3 years working there, I did not know a single neighbor, yet the simple act of planting brought forth a positive interaction with those around us. It’s also highly therapeutic. When having a stressful day, simply ripping out the weeds settles my agitated mind. And the warm sun and light exercise not only helps circulate the blood, but also allows me to absorb vitamin D helping nature by promoting plant growth and maintaining the garden is beneficial on both mental and physical levels.

At the time I considered the concept of bringing life to an empty plot as something ordinary, which by default, did not need to be addressed. However, the term Guerrilla Gardening was brought to my attention, and after some research, I learned that guerrilla gardeners are individuals who have decided to initiate plant life in vacant lands everywhere. It is exciting to see a large number of people promoting plant life all over the world and creating beneficial areas for the public, while simultaneously building community relationships. This type of revolution improves the environment and encourages those near the garden to care for it and maybe even start their own garden.

Gardening is Reviving in the Unlikeliest Places

Getting involved in Guerrilla Gardening can be as easy as finding a neglected patch of land in your neighborhood and planting some flowers. Abandoned lots, unkempt traffic medians, anywhere the sun will shine and the grass can grow could make an appropriate guerrilla garden. Visit GuerrillaGardening.org, LAGuerrillaGardening.org, and SoCalGuerrillaGardening.org for more information.
Healthy soil produces healthy food

by Tim LaSalle

Organic food possesses a strong following around the world for many reasons, beginning with the conviction that it contributes to a more natural way of life. This is the central truth: organic farmers build healthy soil that yields healthy food. By harnessing the potential of biological processes, organic farmers actually improve the productive capacity of their soil over time, while protecting water quality and enhancing biodiversity.

In a world degraded by food-like substances, manufactured edible materials and industrially produced fruits and vegetables, the organic labels stands alone as a quality guarantee. Its integrity—based on a natural-systems approach—stands taller with every revelation of the hidden costs, ecological damage, negative health impacts and chemical dependency of the commodity food approach.

Organic food owes its unique health-giving qualities to its nourishment and home in healthy soil. Chemical farming focuses on maximum yield using any input needed, but organic producers have a whole different approach. It starts with building the soil to build healthy soil to create life-giving food for you.

The USDA’s National Organic Standards Board last summer reaffirmed the centrality of soil. It recommended that the USDA’s seven-year-old organic certification cover only soil-based systems, excluding hydroponics and aquaculture. These can be energy-efficient, well-controlled methods, but they can’t create the ecologically complex and self-sustaining food production milieu of well-managed soil.

This concept of regeneration—the continuously improving sustainability of a working natural system—was the provocative prospect held out by Robert Rodale that still fuels the most innovative thinking of the organic movement. It flies in the face of current agricultural practice, where the continuously diminishing nutrient content of food crops has been the trend for decades, according to USDA statistics. Worse, this loss of food value in crops is coupled with accepted soil erosion, net energy loss, contaminated water and net greenhouse gas emissions.

**Foundational connection**

Former Rodale Institute president John Haberern said throughout the 1990s that a time would come when people would recognize their farmer was as important to their health as their doctor. This prediction showed his confidence in two developments that continue today: a deeper understanding of the critical role for truly healthy food, and a recognition of the limitations of modern medicine due to its focus on fixing sickness rather than enhancing (i.e., wellness, protecting against environmental insult, and building strong immune systems).

J.I. Rodale, founder of what would become the Rodale Institute, got early inspiration from the UK’s Sir Albert Howard, who was in turn influenced by the traditional farmers he observed in India. Howard’s vision for bringing wholeness back to a fractured agriculture and fractured approach to medicine was that, “Health would describe the ideal condition... in which crop production, animal husbandry and health, as well as human nutrition and health, were all related to a single principle of health in the soil.”

This idea is quite relevant to our current situation of rampant food-related illness and disorders coupled with a dysfunctional medical system geared toward treatment rather than prevention. Testifying before Congress in 1997, Rodale “advocated for a preventative national health policy that addressed as its first item the health of the soil.”

Rodale believed organic farming contained the potential to free individuals from their ostrich-like dependency on doctors. He wrote relentlessly to convince readers that each individual had “the power to control their own health and nutrition” in the context of a “struggle for health autonomy against the medical and agricultural specialists, universities, big business and government bureaucracies encroaching on his freedom.”

**How organic soil is different**

Individuals taking control of their health can be confident that whole food from healthy soil is still the key. Nutrition is a primary consideration in food choice, and organic choices continue to be validated by nutrition studies from around the world. Researchers continue their effort to grasp the technical complexities of how organic food from healthy soil and natural systems differs from food grown with synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

On that front, a number of existing studies suggest that organic fruits particularly, have higher levels of phytochemicals (plant-based substances), although the reasons for this are not fully explained by the research. Phytochemicals, especially those from the Brassica family, in some studies show potential in reducing the risk of cancer, in stimulating immune function and in anti-viral properties. Virtually all of these natural health boosters are most available in fresh, raw vegetables and fruit.

The latest broad survey of relevant studies was reported last summer from a French government project. These researchers found that compared with non-organically produced crops, organic plant products tend to have more dry matter, more minerals like iron and magnesium, which are critical for calcium uptake, and more anti-oxidant micronutrients such as phenols and resveratrol. Reports from five years of cooperative research in the EU is under peer review for leading scientific journals and is expected to show other areas of positive nutritional differences for organic growing systems.

Much better understood and documented are the multiplicity of positive changes that grow directly and indirectly from faithful use of organic practices on farming soil. It’s the emergence of profoundly different soil quality that drives the logical expectation that plants drawing their vital force from the soil will also be distinctively different.

The Rodale Institute has championed the link between soil health and healthy food for more than 60 years and has been scientifically comparing organic and non-organic practices for nearly three decades. The Institute released a report in 2009 explaining the regenerative capabilities of organic agriculture as a solution to confront global warming, illustrating just how profoundly it differs from chemical-dependent ways of growing food.

In general, organic crop-production methods do not use synthetic pesticides and herbicides, protecting soil and water from additional insult of these toxic products. Organic farmers are required to have an ecological farm plan covering all aspects of their management, including fertility, pest management through biological practices and design products, enhancement of biodiversity in soil and the landscape and strict documentation of food quality control from field to store.

Core practices include crop rotations and the creative use of cover crops. By carefully selecting the sequence of crops grown in a field over a period of years, organic farmers both build up organic matter, provide some or all of the nutrients needed for their cash crops, reduce weed suppression effects and over time, often eliminate chronic insect damage to the crops. This has been our experience, as we have not used synthetic fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides on our fields for more than 30 years. We have much healthier soil in our organic plots, producing corn and soybean yields that are comparable to our non-chemical plots in...
HEALING OUR WORLD » THE HEALTH OF SOIL

Most years and actually out-producing them in dry and wet years due to improved soil tilth and structure. Cover crops are grown primarily to benefit soil health or as a succeeding crop. They may provide fertility (free nitrogen compounds are fixed by legume crops); sponge up residual fertility in soil after the growing season to prevent it from leaching away; serve as beneficial insect habitat or alternate food source; suppress weed germination and deter soil-borne crop diseases through a mulching effect; hold soil in place to prevent erosion, filter water runoff; and provide pollination support through their flowering phases. Cover crops boost life and biological complexity throughout an organic farm, adding resiliency in changing conditions and vitality that can be captured in the food produced. While regeneration and the U.S. organic standards call for improving soil quality over time, the UK and US government statistics indicate that levels of trace minerals in non-organic fruit and vegetables fell by 28 to 76 percent, depending on the crop examined, between 1940 and 1991. This time period tracks the rise of chemical agriculture and its predictable results. Crops uptake minerals, trace elements and other nutrients, but chemical agriculture relies primarily on chemical fertilizers with a few major elements. Moreover, herbicides and insecticides degrade the very soil microorganisms and living ecosystems that organic systems nurture and depend on. Adding to growing list of documented health risks from using toxic pesticides to produce food, new risks from genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food crops are also coming to the fore. Citing several animal studies, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) in 2009 that GMO foods “pose a serious health risk in the areas of toxicology, allergy and immune function, reproductive, metabolic, physiologic and genetic health,” called for a moratorium on their production and marketing. Requested a ban on GMO foods and advised physicians to consider the role of GMO foods in their patients’ disease processes.

More enhancements

Healthy soil in organic enhances the healthfulness of food and avoids the risks of pesticides and GMOs. Yet the parallel practices that organic farmers use to create balanced, self-sustaining systems also contribute synergistically to improve the healthful aspects of the crops produced. These include adapting crops to local conditions by saving open-pollinated seed and focusing on improvements to heirloom varieties already known for taste and disease resistance. Farmers producing for fresh sale to discerning buyers can further improve their healthful offerings by selecting cultivars for nutrient content more than shelf life, picking closer to optimum maturity and bringing a wider variety of fruit sizes to market. When more people demand organic, more farmers have opportunity to farm well.

“Can you imagine what will happen when a farmer, a nutritionist and a doctor get face to face and realize they are connected to each other in the chain of health?” Anthony Rodale asked in 1995, when he was the board chair of the Rodale Institute. The Institute continues “to lead the way into a future where what’s good for people and what’s good for the earth are seen as the same—where there needn’t be any trade-offs, if we feed the soil, the soil will feed us. It’s nature’s way.”

A contemporary of Anthony’s grandfather, J. I. Rodale, was Mohandas Gandhi. He also encountered fierce opposition while persistently seeking to change hearts and minds by championing a new paradigm of true wholeness. The increasing interest in truly healthy food based on the best insights into nutritional wellness from organic, and the best science documenting the risks from food produced in non-healthy soils, bear out the truth of Gandhi’s sage observation: “First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.”

To health — through healthy soil!

* http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/20080425/gw6

While many socio-ecologic problems worsened over the last thirty years, an ever higher percentage of the Earth’s 6.6 billion inhabitants are waking up to the need to transform our ways of living, go truly green, make peace with ourselves and end the war on Terra. This beautiful, living Earth needs each of us to consciously contribute to personal and planetary healing. You are needed, invited and welcomed to play a part in healing and restoring the Earth to a state of health and vibrance. I offer the following perspective after 30 years of replenishing soils, planting gardens and orchards and teaching about the health of the biosphere.

We need to swiftly, consciously and wisely become the generous species on Earth. We’ve taken so much from the soils, plants, trees and animals; we have a huge debt to repay to restore human- ity’s health as well as that of the whole interdependent chain of life. We can do this by remineralizing the world’s soils with natural mixtures of rock dust, returning the increased amount of organic matter back to the soil. This builds fertility and depth while enabling abundant production to meet our needs for pure natural foods, fiber, timber, bamboo, biomass energy like alcohol, bio-diesel, wood and hemp, as well as beautiful landscapes, parks, and wild lands. By choosing healthy vegetarian, vegan, or raw-food lifestyles, hundreds of millions of acres now used for animal-based agriculture and drug crops can be converted to organically mineralized orchards, farms and new forest land. Fast-growing tree plantations on remineralized soils can simultaneously build soil fertility and convert CO2 to leaf and wood for alcohol fuel and wood energy. Leaves and residues can be returned to the soil. This can replace the practice of burning carbon stored in the ground as oil, coal and natural gas, which is wrecking our interglacial climate. This conversion can eliminate what currently comprises 20% of total CO2 emissions from animal husbandry, enabling us to quickly plant the many billions of trees needed to bring CO2. Remineralizing much of the current forest land will greatly reduce widespread disease and insect and fire epidemics, enabling forests to again grow healthy and strong. This will pull in billions of tons of CO2 through renewed nourishment and vibration from soil microbes up to treetops while reversing soil acidification, allowing the soil life-system to hold much more moisture for year-round availability and ameliorate the increasing tinderbox conditions in many malfertilous forests. Stabi- lizing CO2 levels and the planetary climate is the sensible approach to save what is left of our forests and nurture the growth of new ones over much of the Earth.

Whether you lean toward the widely accepted Global Warming theory and related evidence, or the new Glacial-Period thesis and evidence as put forth by John Hamaker, myself and others, I think we can all agree on the wisdom of remineralizing and re-greening the Earth to reverse the current slide into climatic chaos. For example, in the winter of 2007-2008, there were record cold and crop-destroying snowstorms all the way into southern China, Greece, the Middle East and Florida as well as north to Alaska, Canada and Greenland, with the highest level of Northern Hemisphere snow cover in at least 53 years. Along with the understanding that we’ve reached Peak Oil, we need to realize our soil-devouring civilization has already passed Peak Soil. Earth is in urgent need of

RESTORING THE EARTH TO VIBRANT HEALTH

by Don Weaver
replenishment. Can the human mind and heart awaken and shift from ego-centric to ecocentric, from the short-sighted habits of exploitative materialism to regenerative compas- sion, simple living and co-creation of natural abundance and health for all?

Health and Ecology Education Are Key

The signs are hopeful that in time, we can all realize that a new earth is possible through our heartfelt understand- ing, vision and actions. The alternative is simply unbearable. A working knowledge of the basics of health and ecology is the key to discernment when it comes to the teachings of our current educational system on these subjects, as well as in detaching from brainwashing about Earth-detrimental products and so-called lifestyles touted by most media and the $66-billion-dollar advertising industry in the U.S. Ongoing self-education throughout life seems the wise course. John Robbins’ excellent new book, *Healthy at 100*, contains information on the wisdom of other cultures, including some of the healthiest and longest-lived lives. As John writes, “Depending on what we choose to affirm and cultivate within ourselves and our children, we can collectively turn this planet into a heaven or a hell. Whether we like it or not, and whether we accept it or not, our choices make an enormous difference. How we treat ourselves and each other always matters.”

“Thus, I believe that the world’s healthiest and most long-lived peoples offer us a vision of hope for our time. In Okinawa, Aikhabia, Vilcabamba and Hunza there is a deep sense of human connection and social integrity. People continually help one another and believe in one another. There are always ways for people to make amends for mistakes and be forgiven, so people are not discarded or rejected. Wealth is shared rather than hoarded because you are whole.”

Dr. Alan Rank, author of Hunza Land says, “In Hunza, I seemed to be in another world, a world of friendliness and good nature. Covetousness, envy and jealousy were nonexistent; no police force was needed to keep order; unlocked doors were not a temptation. People of these cultures eat a mostly raw and mostly plant-food organic diet, as well as lead an outdoors active life close to the land ing results obtained by the Hunzans.”

Since people of all of the cultures studied in *Healthy at 100* have eaten whole, mineralized, organic food through- out their lives, they’ve been virtually untouched by cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, etc. In contrast, Healthy- day.com reported on December 17, 2003 there are “12 million new cases of malignancy worldwide in 2007,” with almost 8 million dying from their cancer and/or their med- ical treatments. The incidence of obesity in the U.S. has in- creased from 13 to 32 percent since the 1960s according to a report from Acres USA from September 2004. Food addiction and hidden hunger for nutrients lacking in soils and foods are primary causes of obesity, along with sedentary lifestyles. With less energy to exercise, garden or even to think rationally when we are malnourished, we circle endlessly in this vicious cycle. Let us avoid seeking to fill our needs for emotional and spiritual nourishment with food. Consider how love for self and others can be the inspirational foundation to bring about a full restoration of human and planetary health.

Organic Can Restore the Earth’s Health

Fruition, a farm on Maui, is another model of the health- oriented agriculture of the future, thriving on 1 acres of previously neglected pastureland. Former San Franciscans Stephan Keeve and his mom, Dorli, have co-created an Edenic garden and orchard a la Hunzans with generous soil mineralization, mulching and composting. Fruition produces a growing abundance of mineralized avocados, mangos, papayas, lichens, jujkrut, sapotes, tangelos, ram- butans and many others, probably exceeding the variety grown in Hunza. Continued generous mineralization and compost return should soon allow Fruition to match the variety grown in Hunza. California. Continued generous mineralization and compost return should soon allow Fruition to match the quality of the Hunzans. We can all strive for such high standards of soil fertility, food quality, health and active longevity. While fortunate to have some mineralized fruits and vegetables year-round from my gardens here in California, my two weeks working at Fruition this past January was extra-nourishing and rejuvenating to body and spirit. Along with eating a variety of fresh, ripe, miner- alized produce, renewing great friendships and swimming often, my rock dusting of a new grove of olive trees was a highlight, as I love to help young trees grow to healthful fruition.

The marvelous fact is that when we grow foods in reminerlized and organic matter-enriched soils — animal manures and slaughterhouse byproducts are not needed, thank you — the crop growth and development of the flavor and all of the health-promoting compounds can, if you are truly hungry, make each food a favorite at the time of eating! The more we intelligently give to Nature, the more Nature gives back, often a hundredfold or more!

The fruits and vegetables grown by reminerlizing farmer Bob Cannard, chosen by Alice Waters to supply the produce for Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, and by Rick and Kristi Knoll at Tauro Farm in Brentwood, California, also come in for high praise. Many apprecia- te the unique flavor and tenderness of their own assessment of their farm and food as “beyond organic.” With Cal-Organic, California’s largest organic farm, adding at least 3000 tons of Summa Minerals rock dust to their increasingly remin- eralized acreage, it is clear that mineralized-organic can outperform the smallest garden to the largest farm and beyond. The need for global Earth Regeneration work can eliminate unemployment and make crime as scarce as it is in the well-nourished, engaged-with Nature cultures.

The fact that crime, war and ecological destruction are virtual unknown in cultures such as Hunza that Robbins writes of in *Healthy at 100*, tells us that these are extreme- ly unnatural practices, their existence in our own culture is telling us we must heal ourselves at every level of being, in every inter-relationship, from soil to psyche.

Wouldn’t it be great if, instead of spending $5 billion or more per week on warfare, we would use it to fund all the crucially needed Earth Regeneration projects? Is anything more important? A new and vibrant Earth calls us forward. Now is the time to exercise our response-abilities and express our love and gratitude for the gift of life! It is my hope that you will joyfully discover your own vital role in restoring vibrance to your health and that of your larger body, the living Earth!

Positive Steps to Consider

1. Start a garden, orchard, farm or Earth Regeneration Cen- ter to provide food and inspiration to yourself and others. Buy seeds and trees from independent and organic growers as there is a major corporate push to control, hy- bridize, chemize, and genetically modify agriculture and the food supply. Save seeds and propagate plants yourself as well. Start a permaculture and tree nursery.

2. Remineralize the soil, make compost, feed the microbes and earthworms to restore the balance of health and life.

3. Buy only organically grown foods and other natural products; try eating mostly or only plant foods and mostly or only fresh, raw, ripe foods; share the good news about soil mineralization and organic growing practices with farmers and as many people as you can.

4. Simplify every aspect of life to promote health for people and planet. Work together with those supporting global health; withdraw your support from those people and companies whose practices are harmful to the eco- system and encourage them to go constructively green.

5. Become knowledgeable about your own region as well as about the world in general so you may better influ- ence local and global politics and consciousness through writing, speaking and leading new positive initiatives. Community gardens, orchards, tree nurseries and tree planting projects are needed almost everywhere, as are more Community Supported Agriculture enterprises, natural food potlucks and healthy living education cen- ters and events.

6. Explore co-housing and cooperative community and eco-village options for you and loved ones, and retrofit your current residence for increased solar power, food growing and green living. Study Permaculture principles to see how they apply to your living and growing envi- ronments.

7. Help schools start organic, mineralized gardens and or- chards—the Edible Schoolyards founded by Alice Waters in Berkeley, California are an example to build upon. Share Nature’s beauty and miracles with children to prevent further spread of Nature Deficit Disorder.

Resources: Valuable Websites

TreePeople: www.treepeople.org

Trees for Life: www.treesforlife.org

Organic seeds resources: www.ttbh.org

Sudden Oak Life: www.suddenoaklife.org

Fruit Tree Planting Foundation: www.ftpf.org

General Eco-Agriculture: www.acesusa.com

Remineralize the Earth: www.remineralize.org

School gardens + ecology center: www.oac.org

Friends of the Trees: www.friendsoftrees.net

Soil and Health Library: www.soilandhealth.org

Whole Systems Education: www.wholesystemsbook.com

John Robbins’ Healthy at 100: www.healthyat100.org

Fuel and permaculture: www.alcoholcanbeagas.com

Organic seeds: www.vegparadise.com/heirloom.html
Steve Solomon interviewed by Ronny Bagdadi

The link between soil and health

Beyond Organic

It's different to know about a thing than to know that thing. Knowing about something entails having ideas, opinions and beliefs about that thing. It's what we read about and hear from others or perhaps the conclusion we arrive at after analyzing and synthesizing these ideas. But knowing a thing is different. When a child places her finger into a flame, she intimately learns that fire burns, not because mommy or daddy told her so or because she thought about it, but because of her direct experience. Most people mistake their mental constructions for the object of contemplation. Few take on the task of going beyond intellectual understanding to direct experience. Steve Solomon is of the later kind. A rare breed of natural story-teller, Steve draws the dots and lets you connect them, and his rich voice rings through you like a Tibetan bowl. While his expansive knowledge about myth, spirituality, history, gardening, chemistry, economics and politics is impressive, it's his quick wit, sense of humor, integrity and honesty, grown from direct personal experience which inspires and breathes life into what most would consider a stale topic: soil.

So what are you doing in Tasmania?

I'm hanging out, man! I'm 66 and a half years old, kinda retiring and taking it easy! I'm writing books, running the Soil and Health Library website and a market garden [Beyond Organic]. It's all been a lot of fun rather than any necessity to make money. It's a very fortunate circumstance. Have you read any books by Nikos Kazantzakis? He wrote on spiritual matters, God calling on people to do things, and the characters told God to piss off and leave them alone. "Don't bother me with that shit, man! I just want to enjoy myself!" Why put me at risk? To a degree the Soil and Health Library is a required duty making me $1,000 a month but before long I had

13 people working for me, dealing with international seed bandits and pirates, trying to get decent seed for people, having all the problems of credit, and employees and blah, blah, blah. I didn't want it, you see? One day I realized if I sold it maybe we could live on the proceeds just above the poverty level for the rest of our lives. But it didn't work like that. I found a buyer who didn't have enough money. But I liked him and we made a strange deal. Two or three years later I was standing in the middle of the field asking the Universe, "how come I'm getting 3 times more money than I expected?" The Universe said, "There's a reason, but you won't know for another 6 or 7 years. Save your money, stay out of trouble and keep your health because there's something that will require you to finance it yourself."

"So I did, without realizing that my wife Isabelle had to die so I could do this thing."

When hearing the tinge of sorrow in his words, the most appropriate response was silence. And then:

How does the Universe talk to you?

You have to listen, you see? Everybody talks to God, it's easy you know? The hard part is listening to the answer. It comes in thoughts or a sort of knowingness, I don't know how to explain it [silence]. Like a strong intuition. It's easy to deceive yourself about that sort of thing. Anyhow, there's a lot of really weird shit about Steve Solomon. I'm getting stranger as I get older and less concerned about what people think! Now, shall we get down to some business here?

Ok, bring it. How did you get into soil remineralization?

This is a good story. It's going to be challenging because you probably think organic is the way to grow stuff. When I started gardening I thought it had to be too. I learned from lots of mistakes, I read every organic gardening book, and I was completely taken in by J.I. Rodale's information. You gotta understand how the organic movement came about. J.I. Rodale in 1942 was an industrialist. He took a business trip to London during the blitz and found himself one night hearing a lecture by Sir Albert Howard and immediately had a purpose in his life far greater than making money. He returned to Pennsylvania, bought himself a farm and started Organic Gardening and Farming magazine, basically introducing the idea to the United States. Organic Gardening became the thing.

The nature of Organic then had mostly to do with what materials went into the soil. There was a good list and a bad list of things to use. The unstated belief was that if you ate organic food, you'd be perfectly healthy and never get cancer. From Alarm and the movie Sleeper by Woody Allen. We wake up in a hospital and the doctor explains that he's been frozen for 150 years, recently thawed and his friends are now dead. Woody says, "but I had a health-food store and we all ate brown rice, so they can't be dead!" Anyhow, that was kind of the belief and mystique of organic in those days. The fact of it is that a list of substances is not the best way to determine how to grow crops. But in my early gardening days I believed it, I didn't know any different. Like everybody else in the 70s, I thought that if you just put enough organic matter into any old clay pit or gravel heap you could turn it into a Garden of Eatin'.

Yes that's a common notion. What's the truth?

The truth is that in 1937 you only bought a 5 acre homestead in Oregon. All the topsoil had washed off the hillside from growing grains and heavy winter rains, leaving only the silty-clay subsoil. It looked pretty in the spring and all of us fools came up from the city and bought acres of useless, worn out farmland. I put in a garden and a couple of years later, a trials ground for the seed business I started. I took a half acre field and got that clay to behave somewhat like soil capable of growing veggies half as well as they'd grow on a proper piece of ground. The seed business didn't work so well in the beginning and I had little choice but to eat what grew from the trials ground.

At the time I developed a relationship with a lady named Isabelle Moser. She was a Natural Hygienist not of any dogmatic belief, she was always an eclectic and took from everybody. No matter what your beliefs, Isabelle recommended something you disagreed with [laughs]. She was very much into raw foods and eating lots of vegetables and almost no money. So Isabelle and I moved in together in 1982.

For the first 5 years of our life I ate almost 90 percent of my calories from the trials ground, so in a way I was a lot like a cow getting all her nutrition from the same pasture, you know what I mean? My body's health reflected the nutritional quality of the food I grew. And I started losing my teeth and weight. There I was eating all organically grown raw fruits and vegetables, working hard, living in the country and having a great life. It didn't make any sense! We thought it was due to the stresses of the business which was growing beyond anything I ever thought possible. In 1986, Isabelle and I took a 3 month sabbatical in Fiji, where we shopped everyday in the central produce market. During that time our health got better, my teeth tightened up, Isabelle's fingernails hardened, we had good energy and felt relaxed and comfortable again. We thought it was the lifestyle and lack of stress. We were eating everyday and we were very uncomfortable. We thought it was the lifestyle and lack of stress. We were eating everyday and we were very uncomfortable. We decided to take a look at where most of the vegetables being sold at the market came from. We hired a car and drove out to the government research station in the Sigatoka Valley and it was amazing. It was the first time in my life I lusted for a piece of land! There are two seasons in Fiji: a hot rainy season with an occasional hurricane stress. We swam everyday and squeaked the mattress a lot. The rains stop and we thought it was the lifestyle and lack of stress. We were eating everyday and we were very uncomfortable. We thought it was the lifestyle and lack of stress. We were eating everyday and we were very uncomfortable. We decided to take a look at where most of the vegetables being sold at the market came from. We hired a car and drove out to the government research station in the Sigatoka Valley and it was amazing. It was the first time in my life I lusted for a piece of land! There are two seasons in Fiji: a hot rainy season with an occasional hurricane and a mild temperate season when vegetable crops grow. When the hot weather starts, most crops get killed by fungal diseases or other things, so they're not suited to grow in those conditions. The grasses and weeds take over, grow fast and thickly cover the ground. The rains stop four or five months later and they till in the rank weed growth. That's all the organic matter that soil gets -- they use no fertilizer. Every two or three years there's a hurricane and the river floods, depositing a thick layer of silt coming from something called ultra basic igneous rock.

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is mostly potassium and carbon. But if you cut the grass to give it a good texture not suitable for growing vegetables. If you have too much moisture, you have a lot of plant produced. If the temperatures are warm, it decomposes rapidly, especially on the surface. Those are the factors at work. In a hot dry place like southern California, you tend to get soil that’s only 1% or so organic matter, while in a humid, cool place like Minnesota you often run into soils with 5% or 6 percent organic matter. If you look at anything a little cooler and wetter than northern Minnesota, you’ll find a peat bog. The organic matter level in soil is important, but it’s not of the supreme importance that the Organic Gardening and Farming movement makes it.

My theory is that what really matters is how much plant life roots every year on the soil, in turn providing phytonutrients which are the vitamin-like substances that ensure full healthy plants. For a plant to get its phytonutrients and for the thriving soil with lots of ecology happening in it, you don’t need more than between 1 to 5 percent organic matter.

The amount you want to develop in a garden mostly depends on your climate—unless you’ve got a soil that’s got a texture not suitable for growing vegetables. If you have a clay soil that won’t grow vegetables, you can try to make it into something like loam soil by upping organic matter content, but this is a must! As you build soil organic matter to high levels it’s almost inevitable that you bring into soils with 5 or 6 percent organic matter. If you look at anything a little cooler and wetter than northern Minnesota, you’ll find a peat bog. The organic matter level in soil is important, but it’s not of the supreme importance that the Organic Gardening and Farming movement makes it.

Factors in determining the nutritional results of your method is to perform a biological assay. You get a bunch of bunnies or mice or rats or something like that and divide them into two groups, one is a control and the other group you feed the food you’re testing. You have to do this for four generations, and the test animals will either be bigger or smaller by the same amount. They’ll live longer or shorter, have more babies or less babies, more disease or less disease. I can show you historical results of tests like these that were done by some of the founders of the Organic Farming and Gardening movement or by Albrecht himself and you can see massive differences in the appearances of the animals in just a couple of generations.

Based on those kinds of tests, Albrecht at the very end of his life published some suggestions. Based on this information I compiled something called Complete Organic Fertilizer (COF), and the formula makes an assumption in your soil there is no nutrition at all. We’re going to put it in as a proper ratio as Albrecht would like to see. The result of this approach is extremely good for the soil and also it’s actually one of the most inexpensive and most effective ways to grow a garden. COF is rock powder, meal, kelp, meal, bone, meal and often some kind of fertilizer. The ratio of 3 parts lime or wood ash, 1 part kelp, meal and 1 part bone meal. The seed meal is any kind of oil seed waste from things like canola, safflower, or linseed. It’s best for vegetable crops if the amount of phosphorus is roughly equal to the amount of nitrogen. Most seed meals run at about 6 percent nitrogen, 3 to 4 percent phosphorus, and 1 to 2 percent potassium, fairly close to the ratios you’d want in your garden soil but not ideal. We boost the phosphorus content a bit and add calcium and magnesium in the right ratios: 6 to 1. This is very important. Anything between 4 to 1 and 8 to 1 seems to work well. We don’t exactly know what the right ratio is and it might vary by crop. I add some kelp meal, which contains hormone-like substances and trace minerals. COF is rock, powder, meal, bone, meal and often some kind of fertilizer. The ratio of 3 parts lime or wood ash, 1 part kelp meal and 1 part bone meal. The seed meal is any kind of oil seed waste from things like canola, safflower, or linseed. It’s best for vegetable crops if the amount of phosphorus is roughly equal to the amount of nitrogen. Most seed meals run at about 6 percent nitrogen, 3 to 4 percent phosphorus, and 1 to 2 percent potassium, fairly close to the ratios you’d want in your garden soil but not ideal. We boost the phosphorus content a bit and add calcium and magnesium in the right ratios: 6 to 1. This is very important. Anything between 4 to 1 and 8 to 1 seems to work well. We don’t exactly know what the right ratio is and it might vary by crop. I add some kelp meal, which contains hormone-like substances and trace minerals.

It takes five of today's apples to get the equivalent amount of nutrition as one apple from 50 years ago. Where do you see the nutritional situation 50 years from now?

There was an article a few years ago comparing a recent USDA list of the nutritional content of food with one from several decades ago, and the nutritional content dropped about 25-33% across the board, more in some nutrients.
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A showcase for soil remineralization

The SEER Centre

By Organic Connections magazine staff writer Bruce Boyers

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If you were to choose a place to plant your dream vegetable garden, it would probably not be in the foothills of the Grampian Mountains in Strathardle, Perthshire, Scotland. The upland site is infertile, acidic and exposed to severe weather. Around 85 percent of Scotland is classified by the European Union as a less favoured area for farming, and this region, plagued by lifeless, silty soil and boulders, falls right into that category.

But it was exactly here that Cameron and Moira Thomson settled and decided to become self-sufficient by creating a garden and growing fruits and vegetables. “Our dream was to grow and use our own food, and to live as much from the local environment as possible and as little from the shops as possible. So we dedicated our lives to that—but it was hard work with such poor soils.”

In 1984, the couple happened to be listening to the radio one day and heard the review of a book entitled The Survival of Civilization by John Hamaker and Donald Weaver. The book describes the function of ice ages as that of glaciers crushing rock, releasing nourishing minerals into the earth, and the fact that at present, minerals are nearly gone from the soil. Armed with this new information about soils, the Thomsons had the answers they had been seeking.

“We read this book and thought, ‘this is it, now we’ll be able to grow the proper crops that will sustain us,'” says Thomson. “It just made such sense to us it seemed right so we started to use quarry dusts in our gardens and have never looked back.” The dust Thomson is referring to is obtained from the nearby Collace Quarry operated by Tayside Contracts. They suddenly saw their gardens come alive—quite literally. “We’re totally hooked. It definitely works.” Thomson remarked. “Not only does it put minerals back in the soil, it consequently grows giant vegetables—giant lovely vegetables that are full of minerals and trace elements that are missing in most of today’s soils.”

The beneficial effects of glaciers are replicated when rock dust is used. Sprinkled on top of the land, rock dust is digested by earthworms and thereby combined with organic matter containing nitrogen, carbon, minerals and thousands of microorganisms, ultimately becoming organic mineral-rich plant food. The process is known as remineralization. Remineralization also causes absorption of a higher amount of carbon from the atmosphere, locking it into soils and into mineral-rich plants. “In addition to growing wonderful food to feed the world, you can also take carbon out of the atmosphere and help stabilize climate change,” Thomson said.

As pointed out by Moira Thomson, there is the issue of nutrition as well. Dr. Arden Andersen, both a soil consultant and a medical doctor, has found that the nutrient content of foods today compared to a half a century ago ranges from 15 to 75 percent less—due to depletion of nutrients in the soil. Restoration of the soil nutrients brings back the full nutritional benefits to fruits and vegetables.

Telling the World

The Thomsons were impressed with their results they decided to make it their life’s mission to export their findings to the farmers who could really use the information. After 13 years of pioneering work, they established the SEER Centre in 1997, a charitable organization committed to regeneration of soils to benefit the grower and the environment. SEER is an acronym for Sustainable Ecological Earth Regeneration. Armed with two shovels and a wheelbarrow, along with the rock dust and Dundee Council’s award-winning locally made compost, they had their magic formula for soil creation. Beginning with 200 tons of these resources, they created two deep terraces of Rocksoil for growing vegetables and thus began the building out of the remarkable showplace that the Centre would become.

By July 1997, the Thomsons’ five children were biting into the first of the Centre’s remineralized crops, and by 2000 the young remineralized trees were beginning to grow profusely, providing shelter and wildlife habitats around the perimeter. And the word spread. First to the local media, then national and eventually the international media came to see. The esteemed BBC aired television news items and specials focusing on the SEER Centre and the work of Cameron and Moira Thomson.

“It was a publicity campaign from the start, trying to attract attention to what we were doing,” Moira Thomson related. “It started locally, and eventually it widened out and became more national, and we’ve had quite a bit of international interest too. A leading Swedish daily newspaper came over in 2006 and did a big spread—a cover story. This was after they had learned of the release of a book called We Want Real Food by Graham Harvey, in which he addresses the decline of minerals in modern foods. We’ve since gone to Sweden to launch our Rockdust product and organized a supplier over there. Swedish TV News has also featured our achievements.”

Today the SEER Centre is open at different stages of the growing season, offering tours, courses and working holidays. Cameron and Moira will even travel to give talks and demonstrations of their discoveries. The SEER Centre Trust owns a trading subsidiary, Rockdust Limited, which sells their own brand of minerals, called Rockdust, all over the UK and beyond. Sales information links can be accessed directly from the Centre website. They make and sell two different rock-dust/compost mixes as well. Rocksoil is their growing medium used in the SEER Centre terraces, and Rockmix, the top dressing used at SEER Centre, an organic, chemical-free fertilizer. Proceeds all go to support the Centre and its activities.

The Results

A good measure of the results of remineralization at the SEER Centre comes in the example Moira Thomson gives of their growing of potatoes. “We have also done trials here at SEER Centre with soil, simply because we want our visitors to see the remineralized, rich compost soils alongside the poor soil that is naturally here,” Thomson said. “You can grow potatoes in the native soil, but they’re not high yielding. “So on half of a soil terrace we went with no rock dust and on the other half we put rock dust. We had bigger plants and bigger crops on the rock-dusted side, bigger potatoes. We reckon we quadrupled the yield in comparison with the original soil, because not only did we have bigger potatoes but we had more of them.”

The Thomsons have found a successful formula in their Rocksoil blend. Compost is mixed with rock dust in specific ratios and let it lards for years. For the first 13 years they simply planted into the Rocksoil mixture and added no more rock dust, taking bumper crops year after year. Even though it didn’t seem to need it, they’ve recently added more rock dust, just because they recommend it be added every 5 to 10 years.

In another experiment, the Thomsons discovered the potency of the rock dust by itself, even without compost-enriched soil. Within a greenhouse, they divided up two areas separated by a cement and...
Jules Dervaes interviewed by Ronny Bagdadi

Urban Homesteading

Path to Freedom is a grassroots, family-operated urban homestead located in the heart of Pasadena, California. Surrounded by urban sprawl and just a short distance from a major freeway, the Dervaes family has steadily transformed an ordinary 66’ x 66’ city lot into a lush, organic and sustainable micro-farm teeming with butterflies, edible flowers and even chickens, ducks and goats! This modern, electronic-media savvy family are neither anachronistic farmers nor Luddites; they chronicle their homesteading lifestyle on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and MySpace. They also run several websites and business ventures online: Dervaes Gardens sells produce locally, Peddler’s Wagon for eco-goods, Freedom Seeds sells non-GMO and open-pollinated seeds and the nonprofit Dervaes Institute and community outreach programs support their pioneering lifestyle while educating the public. Healing Our World salutes this inspiring family for taking a stand and walking the talk.

Why did you start an urban homestead?

Since the late 60s I’ve been searching for a better way of life, believing that to be possible by living off the land. But I found myself in the early 1990s living in the city of Pasadena, California, yet I still desired to be self-sufficient in providing for my family’s needs. Genetically Modified Organisms introduced into the food supply in 2000 led me to take action, as I realized I had lost access to real and wholesome food. I decided to do something radical—where I was and with what I had. I founded the original modern urban homestead in 2001. This was my way of providing a healthy future for my family.

What inspired you to be the change?

Part of my inspiration came from working alongside my dad when I was young, as well as people like John and Robert Kennedy, Rachel Carson, the Nearings, Wendell Berry, and Wes Jackson. More accurately, I would say I was “scared” into becoming the change in the face of the unknown threat of GMOs. More than inspiration, it was fear of what had happened and what could become an even worse situation that was the motivation for me to take the course of action I did. The consequences of inaction were unacceptable, so I took the first steps in blazing a new trail.

What did your vegetable garden turn into an urban homestead?

Growing vegetables for at least some of our diet was the ground work which enabled me to begin the process of achieving self-sufficiency. Success there led to a desire to take on other challenges and see what more I could do. Thus, over the last nine years, the garden—as the foundation—has supported the other aspects of my freedom quest: energy, fuel, water, waste reduction. After a good start with growing my family’s food, we advanced to tackling our energy supply by installing solar panels and cooking with solar ovens. Next, we learned to brew our own fuel for our vehicle, making biodiesel out of used vegetable oil and are now experimenting further with water conservation schemes. One by one, all these factors combined to construct an urban homestead, and, along the way, these actions have led to a homegrown revolution movement that now inspires others worldwide.

What is the condition of American soil?

I believe we are at risk in America; there is not enough good soil left to produce the food we need. It is noteworthy that the most under-utilized land is found in residential backyards. In our current situation, this often overlooked piece of property is a valuable asset.

How did you get here?

We got here because we are always trying to get somewhere else! We are in pursuit, most often, of what is faster, bigger, and easier. Nature, by contrast, takes 500 years to form one inch of topsoil. America was a “blessed” land, and we took it for granted that the original fertility would never be used up. But we are in pursuit, most often, of what is faster, bigger, and easier. Nature, by contrast, takes 500 years to form one inch of topsoil. America was a “blessed” land, and we took it for granted that the original fertility would never be used up. But I believe we are at risk in America, there is not enough good soil left to produce the food we need. It is noteworthy that the most under-utilized land is found in residential backyards. In our current situation, this often overlooked piece of property is a valuable asset.

What were the starting conditions like on your property?

On our one fifth of an acre, we had a typical front lawn and a backyard that had extensive concrete areas. Underneath it was adobe-type soil that dried hard like a brick, and we took it for granted that the original fertility would never be used up. But it is difficult for people to pay attention to something so low. Soil does not get much respect, we treat it like dirt!
What are some strategies we can use to revitalize the topsoil on personal, community, national and global levels?

It all starts with personal responsibility as a priority, with everything beyond that built on the personal level. That is what Path to Freedom is all about. Without this solid foundation of individual change, greater programs cannot achieve long lasting results. The strategy would be a stewardship strategy, as the earth definitely needs careful maintenance and dutiful upkeep. According to The Land Institute, 38% of global agricultural lands are currently designated as “degraded.” Education is the key to informing and encouraging people to take responsibility, beginning when they are very young children. For instance, right now one strategy is to buy local, as advocated by the Slow Food movement [Editor’s note: see Healing Our World, 29/3].

Do you have any suggestions people can use on their land to get off chemical fertilizers and start rebuilding the soil?

The three most important suggestions are: compost today, compost tomorrow, and compost always! The chemical fertilizers are drugs for plants. In February of this 2009, Time Magazine highlighted a report claiming today’s supermarket vegetables are up to 40% lower in minerals than those grown fifty years ago, due to soil depletion and harvest methods. To rehabilitate from these powerful sideshows, some fruit, and if all else fails, lots and lots of zucchini!

What opportunities exist for urban homesteaders?

Urban homesteading, like old-time farming, is not lucrative. Independent, small farmers are thrilled just to break even sometimes, staying afloat to the next year. The payoff is not in monetary riches. If you truly want to be self-sufficient, you shouldn’t look at urban homesteading as a business, but as a passion. However, there are opportunities to engage in business as a sideline to support the urban homestead. The obvious commercial aspect is to grow a surplus to sell to customers. We are able to do this and sell organic produce to high-end local restaurants and caterers. Other commercial opportunities include selling at farmer’s markets. In addition, working at home can provide you with an opportunity to make income from the homestead through sales of handicrafts, eggs, honey, etc. Once we got totally involved in this, we found there were many outlets for creativity resulting from living a self-sufficient lifestyle.

How do you enroll the future generation of urban gardeners?

I chose to do more than talk or write; I chose to build a model, a demonstration of an alternative for the next generation. I realized that for anything to be truly successful, it must be passed on to those who need to deal with tomorrow’s challenges. Path to Freedom reaches out to them through the Internet via our blog, social networking site, videos and at local events. When we can, we open our doors to students for tours. Our community outreach is about living this new way, as an ongoing process—not a stunt—so that young people can see that this is a real life choice. They can take these tested solutions (not just on paper) and implement them in their own lives.

What would you say to someone interested in gardening but who has never planted a single seed?

1. Soil is the most important thing. Feed the soil, not the plants. Soil is more than just dirt—it is a living thing. Put everything you can back into the soil in the form of compost. Don’t put in anything artificial or unnatural. Copy natural ecosystems, such as tropical forests. Don’t abuse the soil and just take from it over and over without replacing the loss.
2. Get to know your planting area—how much sun, shade and wind different areas receive. Be creative in where you plant—use containers, hanging baskets, and trellises for extra planting space.
3. Spend time at a local nursery. See what’s in season in your area. Buy both seeds and vegetable transplants.
4. Start with a few plants, hardy ones that will do well even for beginners. Plant some herbs, such as basil and chives, and summer crops like tomatoes and squash.
5. Keep notes of what and when and where you plant your crops. Weigh your harvest and chart your progress!

6. Remember: nature does well on her own. Usually, there will be some success. Analyze that success and build on it by repeating the steps. There are many factors, but for those who have not planted before, don’t give up. Somewhere, sometime, there will be a result, and that will be your motivation to keep on going.

Tell us about the Victory Gardens which sprouted across America WWII?

This was a historical happening where people saw the bigger picture and knew that they could support the cause of winning the war by growing their own food. It was a sensible matter of using resources wisely, and it was also promoted by the government and given national recognition, but the movement was a pointedly nationalistic one against an outside enemy. Today, with corporate control of our food sources, there can be no such program without wrecking havoc on the economy. Furthermore, we’re facing a global crisis involving all nations, not one country against another. So, at Path to Freedom, we are going beyond that idea, making it a common cause for all people to garden, for freedom through our online social network, www.FreedomGardens.org.

Any thoughts on President Obama’s vegetable garden?

It is good when the President sets the example so that others can know this is an important matter. This gets the message out that there is something others should copy. However, presidents do come and go, and one cannot depend on the example from the top. Trends pass, but people should stay the correct course. A vegetable garden should not be a fad or a green status symbol but indicative of a lifestyle, one capable of bringing about a better future.

To see what the Dervaes are currently up to, visit them at www.dervaesgardens.com, www.peddlerswagon.com and www.freedomseeds.org.

The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on Earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but only to have the law of nature for his rule.

Samuel Adams
A Soi Primer
Looking closer, digging deeper
by Susan Keiffer

Not coincidentally, in many languages the words humus and human share the same etymological root: Earth. Just as human intestines have friendly bacteria and microbes, so too does the soil of the Earth, functioning as the digestive tract of all organic material that ever lived. As plants and animals die, microorganisms begin their job decomposing and returning the nutrients to the Earth. This life cycle continues to create new life in the soil, in turn feeding the plants and the animals eating those plants.

Apearing at least 3 billion years ago, bacteria are the earliest form of life on Earth. Bacteria are single-celled organisms reproducing by single cell division. One bacteria can produce 5 billion offshoots in just 12 hours with enough food. Bacteria grow in every habitat on Earth: in soil, acidic hot springs, radioactive waste, water and deep in the Earth’s crust, as well as in organic matter and the live bodies of plants and animals.

When talking about healthy soil we must talk about the microorganisms completely responsible for making it healthy. More than half of all organisms alive are decomposers living under the soil. In one gram of undisturbed soil there can be up to 4 billion bacteria, and on Earth there are approximately five nonillion bacteria – that’s 5 followed by 30 zeroes! Bacteria are vital in recycling nutrients. A teaspoon of healthy garden soil contains as much as one billion invisible bacteria, several yards of fungal hyphae, several thousand protozoa and a few dozen beneficial nematodes. Additionally, 10 to 50 earthworms per square foot naturally inhabit soil when all these other soil dwellers are present.

Second only to fungi, bacteria are among the earth’s primary decomposers of organic matter. Without them, we would be smothered in our own wastes in a matter of months. Rarely dying of old age, most are either eaten or killed by environmental changes and then consumed by other decomposers, often other bacteria. Bacteria do not have mouths, instead they intake food directly through a film wall, composed of proteins which assist this molecular transport. This is also how human cells absorb nutrients. Once inside the bacteria, the nutrients are stored until something eats them or they die.

In every drop of water are tiny organisms, distant relatives of the cells which constitute the human body. cells still needing water to live inside our bodies. Like bacteria, cells absorb nutrients, excrete wastes, reproduce and die. Bacterial cells are much smaller than human cells, and there are at least ten times as many bacteria as human cells in the body. Humans are made up of an estimated 100 trillion bacterial cells, and only 10 trillion human cells. We are essentially multi-celled beings comprised of trillions of single-celled organisms.

Fertilizers
One hundred years ago, topsoil in some areas of the Great Plains measured nearly a dozen feet deep. Today, we measure remaining topsoil in inches. In some areas, less than four inches remain, and in extreme cases the land has become desert. Sudan and Ethiopia used to be 40 percent forested land with more than adequate food supplies for their people as late as 1940. Today they are both nearly 100 percent desert due to over-farming and over-development. Industrialized civilizations have taken over the entire planet, destroying the majority of the habitats of trees and killing off 90 to 95 percent of all species sharing this planet. We live in what is called The Sixth Great Mass Extinction. Species are becoming extinct 100 times faster than during any prior age, all of it directly due to pollution and habitat destruction. We have done no differently to soil life. We need to feed the microbes by returning the organic matter we took out.

Disgarding the existence of microorganisms and the role they play in the life cycle, mainstream agriculture uses chemical fertilizers to meet the basic needs of plants without feeding the microorganisms in the soil, whose waste products are natural plant nutrients. Soil becomes lifeless due to a lack of organic matter and minerals to feed microorganisms, leaving nothing available to continue the cycle. Since no food is supplied to the microorganisms, they die or migrate in search of food. Too much fertilizer will cause indigestion in the soil and kill the microorganisms due to excess gas. While chemical fertilizers tend to run-off into the groundwater, bacteria attach themselves to soil particles and the nutrients remain in the soil. Furthermore, chemical fertilizers are salt based and therefore irritating, and the gut microbes responsible for worm digestion die when fertilizers are ingested. Additionally, when soil microbes come in contact with fertilizers, they excrete extra water to absorb the nutrients, losing about 12 inches of water to absorb a two inch rain. When soil becomes too dry, many soil bacteria become dormant. Understanding how microorganisms create healthy soil helps us understand how they similarly function inside the human body. Similar to human cells, they require moisture to assimilate nutrients, release wastes, move about and transport the enzymes used to break down organic matter.

Soil and human bowels

Insects and bacteria turn death into life. Insect tunnels in soil parallel our circulatory system; arteries in the soil make the flow of nutrients possible. In the human body, the colon has the greatest number of bacteria and the most variety of species, and the activity of these bacteria make the colon the site where most metabolic activity takes place than in any other organ of the body, just as in the top few inches of soil.

Many of the bacteria in the digestive tract, collectively referred to as the gut or intestinal flora, break down nutrients such as,
Many of us have bought into the hope and belief that organic fruits and vegetables are not only less toxic to our health, due to lower pesticide residues, but they are also higher in nutrients that help to protect us from illness and disease.

Now we are confronted with this summer’s release of a review of science studies, published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, telling us that the $48 billion spent annually on organic foods is a waste of money, a huge scam against all consumers. “Organic food is not nutritionally superior to conventional food,” concluded lead survey author Alan D. Dangour, a London public health nutritionist.

Funded by the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency, these findings generated a blast of global media attention, especially in the U.S., where corporate agricultural concerns are seizing on the findings as evidence that we need to apply even more synthetic chemicals to lower our overall food costs.

For a moment, let’s cast a skeptical eye on this latest claim of organic fraud. What is the real story behind it and what explains the pathological willingness of many media outlets in this country to embrace anything negative as gospel?

Depending on the standards and parameters of evidence drawn for a science study, researchers can find just about any result they consciously or unconsciously desire. This doesn’t necessarily mean the British researchers set out to undermine the organic food industry, but they decided to survey just 55 science studies done between 1958 and 2008 that compared organic and non-organic foods. This means they discarded many hundreds of other more positive studies that didn’t meet their sniff test. Not only that, but the survey just 55 science studies done between 1958 and 2008 that compared organic and non-organic foods. This means they discarded many hundreds of other more positive studies that didn’t meet their sniff test. These findings aren’t the only study results directly contradicting the recent organics are a nutrient fraud survey. Just since the research for the British survey was completed in February 2008, new science findings have been released supporting the nutrient superiority of organic foods. Here are just two, both from The Journal of the Science of Food & Agriculture:

Rats were fed diets of vegetables using organic or pesticide growing methods; the rats eating veggie grown from pesticides and chemical fertilizers showed significantly worse health effects than those eating organic. Organic farming of mandarin oranges “resulted in juices with higher contents of minerals and carotenoids (a phytochemical family) and of better sensory quality” than non-organic oranges.

Why do much of the news media unquestioningly trumpet without skepticism just about every negative study, whether it’s about organic food, nutritional supplements, or alternative health modalities, and in the process serve to reinforce the dominance of synthetic chemicals in the marketplace?

It would be easy to ascribe dark motives tied to advertising dollars from corporations dependent on synthetic chemical use. But as a general rule, this cavalier treatment by reporters is merely a symptom of laziness. It’s a condition sometimes married to a cynical view towards any health trend that doesn’t fit their better living through chemistry model of consensus reality.

Plants produce seven major families of phytochemicals as a response to the growing cycle stress of warding off insects and disease. Thousands of medical science studies over the past two decades have demonstrated that many phytochemicals in edible plants, like those in tomato, broccoli and garlic, can prevent or even reverse every human ailment known, from Alzheimer’s and cancer to cardiovascular disease. The more phytochemicals that plants produce, the better it is for human health. But when pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers are added to food crops during the growing cycle, plants react by producing many fewer phytochemicals, thus diminishing their health value to humans. The greatest advantage of organic fruits and vegetables is that they generate higher levels of health-protective phytochemicals than do chemically grown crops. Phytochemical levels in organic soils also accumulate and intensify over time, in contrast to conventionally grown crops, which is another factor the British survey failed to take into account. The most important study making this point appeared in The Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry in June 2007, examining the family of phytochemicals called flavonoids in tomatoes, measuring the content of quercetin and kaempferol, two of the most powerful human health supportive natural chemicals ever identified.

This study, titled Ten-Year Comparison of the Influence of Organic and Conventional Crop Management Practices on the Content of Flavonoids in Tomatoes, concluded that: “Comparisons of archives of analyzed samples from conventional and organic production systems demonstrated statistically higher levels of quercetin and kaempferol in organic tomatoes. Ten-year mean levels of quercetin and kaempferol in organic tomatoes were 79 and 97 percent higher than those in conventional tomatoes. The levels of flavonoids increased over time in samples from organic treatments, whereas the levels of flavonoids did not vary significantly in conventional treatments.”

Another pioneering study, one that has never been re-futed, concentrated on measuring just the mineral content of the organic vs. non-organic plant foods found on Chicago-area grocery store shelves during the early 1990s. Appearing in a 1993 edition of The Journal of Applied Nutrition, it reached the following conclusion:

Over a two-year period the mineral content of organically and conventionally grown apples, corn, peas, potatoes, and wheat was analyzed. The average elemental concentration in organic foods on a fresh weight basis was found to be about twice that of commercial foods. Organic foods were higher than conventionally grown in these eight mineral categories: calcium 63% higher; chromium 78% higher; iodine 71% higher; iron 53% higher; magnesium 158% higher; potassium 125% higher; selenium 90% higher; and zinc, 60% higher.

Organic produce contains higher levels of valuable phytochemicals.
Hydroponic gardening is a productive way to grow all varieties of plants full of fresh flavor and vitamins with maximum yield. Inspired by the hydroponics exhibit at Epcot Center in Orlando, Florida, Darrin Swank, his wife Jodi and their three children are the proud owners of Swank Specialty Produce, a natural hydroponic farm in Loxahatchee, Florida. Their vegetables, herbs and specialty greens are prolific, tasty, colorful and nutritious. A few of the many delectable edibles are lettuce, kale and micro greens which are used for eating and presentation.

The term hydroponics, from the Greek meaning water and root, meaning growing in Latin, is the practice of growing plants in a flow of highly oxygenated, nutrient-rich solution, which does not harm the environment as does runoff from chemically fertilized soil. Darrin Swank designed his innovative farm, a 23,000 square foot shade house. The Swanks grow over 150 different vegetables, herbs and edible flowers without the use of herbicides, pesticides or fungicides. Their produce is picked when ripe and living with roots intact, making their shelf life longer while preserving nutrition. This method reduces disease and is far safer to eat than the pre-bagged salads in grocery stores, usually not only run through a chlorine bath for sterilization, but often gassed or irradiated as well.

The Swanks believe in the Slow Food philosophy which is all about supporting a clean and fair food system, about knowing the farmers and where the food is grown, supporting the local farm economy and educating the public and especially children. Editor’s note: see issue 29/3 of Healing Our World for more on this movement. Jodi welcomes field trips from schools all over South Florida. Hippocrates Health Educators visit the Swanks three times per year.

Besides selling their products to local, high-end restaurant chefs, the Swanks also market their goods at local farmers markets in the area and have a Community Supported Agriculture club allowing the public to buy locally grown produce. Since this hydroponic, nutrient-rich solution is contained, it does not harm the environment as does runoff from chemically fertilized soil. Darrin uses neem oil from the evergreen tree to control the aphids and mealy bugs and a natural bacterium for the caterpillars. Hydroponics is an excellent alternative for dry areas where very little water is lost to evaporation. Hydroponic plants have their food and water delivered directly to their roots, thus the energy normally used to develop long roots is redirected to growing more plant. Darrin Swank designed his innovative farm, a 23,000 square foot shade house. The Swanks grow over 150 different vegetables, herbs and edible flowers without the use of herbicides, pesticides or fungicides. Their produce is picked when ripe and living with roots intact, making their shelf life longer while preserving nutrition. This method reduces disease and is far safer to eat than the pre-bagged salads in grocery stores, usually not only run through a chlorine bath for sterilization, but often gassed or irradiated as well.

The body has between 500 and 600 lymph nodes with the heaviest concentration existing in the neck, groin, chest, abdomen and underarms. About the size and shape of a bean and having a honeycomb structure, lymph nodes play an extremely important role in maintaining health by filtering bodily fluids and trapping foreign particles as well as fighting disease. Lymph nodes also house lymphocytes (B, NK and T Cells) which are critical at fighting infections. Lymphocytes pass through these nodes and when the presence of pathogens are detected, antigens from the pathogens are bound to lymphocytes, producing antibodies. These newly activated lymphocytes, like an antigen-antibody lock and key, have the information needed to identify and neutralize invaders. Other types of lymphocytes contain a toxic compound destroying the invading pathogen. Another critical pathogen component housed in lymph nodes are macrophages, which trap or engulf the problem intruder. When detecting pathogens or fighting infections, lymph nodes can swell up due to an increase of lymphocytes, antibodies and macrophages.

One of the lymphatic system’s functions is removing impurities or toxins from the body. Carbon dioxide, sodium and other substances are by-products of cellular feeding on oxygen, minerals and nutrients. The lymphatic system removes these impurities and the body disposes them as perspiration, bowel movements, urine and the breath. Without a lymphatic system, the body’s cells would perpetually float in a stew of toxins. Other types of toxins not readily removed by the lymph include environmental air pollutants like vapors from ammonia, bleach and gasoline, chlorine or fluoride from municipal drinking water and pesticides from agriculture and landscaping. These and other toxic chemicals are detrimental to overall cellular health. Being foreign in nature to the body and since they are not cellular food, cells do not know how to process these substances. Like a clogged filter in an air conditioning system, the toxic build up in the surrounding porous membranes prevents the cells from adequately nourishing themselves, and the health and vibrancy of the entire body organ system decays. Over time, the lymphatic system – the body’s primary cellular waste disposal system – operates more inefficiently and provides less life-giving nourishment at the cellular level. The decreasing amount of life-giving food a cell receives will cause it to not only age faster, but to become weak and vulnerable to disease.

The Lymphatic System
Misunderstood, undervalued, and underappreciated
By David Scrivens

Most people know little about the importance of the lymphatic system. In fact, the lymphatic system is as extensive as the blood circulatory system and just as valuable in its own unique way to maintaining overall life force. The lymphatic system allows each cell to have unimpeded access to nutrients. When discussed, it is usually equated to the lymph nodes.

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Over the course of many years of living with altered environmental conditions, the lymphatic system becomes quite clogged. Fortunately a good lymphologist understands how to safely restore this system to a pristine state and how to mobilize it after years of inappropriate use and treatment using the correct type of rebounder. A rebounder is very efficient and properly works the lymphatic system by massaging the millions of one way lymphatic check valves. If there is toxic build up in the body or if a disease has already developed, the rebounder will only scratch the surface of your problem – a lymphologist is critical to quickly restore health.

Microscope: photograph of a lymph node
Growing up playing athletics, I had some experience with chiropractors: I visited one for my pre-season physicals and a classmate’s father was a chiropractor. Other than these limited encounters with chiropractors, my view of them was fairly simple — they help people with “bad backs.” As a practicing chiropractor, I’ve heard of many misconceptions and false beliefs about this profession, things like: chiropractors are not real doctors, they’re quacks; chiropractors might break your neck, or make your spine worse so you keep going back; chiropractic is only good for neck pain, back pain or headaches; or my all-time favorite, chiropractors give great massages, right?

Over the months following Harvey Lillard’s miracle story, many came to Palmer with diverse problems including flu, sciatica, migraine, headaches, stomach complaints, epilepsy and heart problems. Under Palmer’s care, fevers broke, pain ended, infections healed, vision improved, stomach disorders disappeared, and of course, hearing returned. D.D. Palmer found each of these conditions responded well to the adjustments which he was calling hand treatments. Later, with the help of friend Reverend Samuel Weed, he coined the term chiropractic, from the Greek words, cheo, meaning hand, and practos meaning to practice or to be done by.

As more people sought out Palmer for various conditions, he was often surprised at the effectiveness of his adjustments. He knew what to do for these people, but he didn’t know why his treatments were so effective. He became interested in finding out the mechanism and returned to his anatomy and physiology studies to find the answers.

He quickly realized spinal adjustments were correcting misalignments called vertebral subluxations, meaning less than normal, and thus meaning dislocation. These small misalignments of the spinal bones which were putting pressure on the nerves caused nerve interference. He concluded these vertebral subluxations were interfering with the patient’s innate intelligence which he determined flowed from the brain down the spinal cord and out the spinal nerves to the rest of the body. The concept of innate intelligence was based on the Hippocratic ladder, designed by Hippocrates, 460–377 BC. The Hippocratic ladder, designed by Hippocrates, 460–377 BC, was a diagram of the body from the head down to the feet, illustrating the belief that the body was composed of many parts, each with its own function.

Hippocrates taught that the essence of life and the ability of the body to heal was the result of a vital spirit.

This concept, called Vitalism, persisted throughout ancient writings. The premise of Vitalism considers the human body and psyche as being animated by the vital force, which starts flowing at the moment of conception and which ceases with the death of the body. The flow of vital energy through the body nourishes, heals, develops, and sustains the body. This concept of vital spirit or Vitalism was later replaced with innate intelligence by D.D. Palmer, the founder of chiropractic.

D.D. Palmer was interested in getting the truth about this concept a little over 114 years ago when performing the first modern chiropractic adjustment. Palmer was an interesting man, and as many ahead of their time, he was ostracized, especially by those in the medical field. But before discovering chiropractic, Palmer held various jobs as a beekeeper, school teacher, and grocery store owner. He also had an interest in the various health philosophies of his day, such as magnetic healing and Spiritualism. Palmer began focusing on magnetic healing, a common therapy at the time, beginning in the mid-1880s in Burlington and Davenport, Iowa. Working late in his office one night, Palmer noticed a janitor working nearby who had no reaction to a noisy fire engine outside the window. Palmer attempted to strike up a conversation with the janitor, Harvey Lillard, only to realize the man was deaf. Palmer managed to communicate with the man and learned that he had normal hearing for most of his life. However, 17 years earlier he had been working in a cramped, stooping position, and he felt something pop in his back. When he stood up, he realized

He couldn’t hear Palmer, who had a knowledge of anatomy, asked to examine Lillard and found a vertebrae, meaning less than normal, or dislocation. These small misalignments of the spinal bones which were putting pressure on the nerves caused nerve interference. This healing power is hindered by a misaligned spine, but this can be released through an adjustment.

D.D. Palmer once said, "Chiropractors correct abnormalities of the intellect as well as those of the body." By broadening the understanding of this and other powerful healing arts, we each have the power to fuel the already shifting paradigm in our health care system.
Sensual Eating
The French way
by Jean-Loup Fayolle

How do you eat? Do you use your five senses?
The following questionnaire will take two minutes
to complete and provide you with valuable information
to understand how you relate to eating.

Step one: On a piece of paper, write down
the five senses without asking anyone for help.

Step two: Look at the following illustrations
and select the one which best describes
the way you ate when you were very young.

1. Did your parents explain to you why you had to eat food?
2. Did you eat in fear?
3. Did you eat in order to become someone or for
   a good purpose?
4. Did your parents engage in emotional tricks such
   as eating to please mommy, daddy or something else?
5. Were you forced to eat beyond your needs?

What it means
1. If you couldn’t remember the sense of taste or it was the
   last one you wrote down and especially if you also chose the
   first illustration, the most sensitive parts of your body are
   prostate or uterus, stomach, pancreas and bones.
2. If you couldn’t remember the sense of hearing or it was
   the last one you wrote down and especially if you also chose the
   second illustration, the most sensitive parts of your body
   are kidneys, bladder, veins, thyroid and ovaries or testicles.
3. If you couldn’t remember the sense of smell or it was the
   last one you wrote down and especially if you also chose the
   third illustration, the most sensitive parts of your body are
   the lungs, colon, muscles, sinus, vagina or penis and breasts
   or larynx.
4. If you couldn’t remember the sense of vision or it was the
   last one you wrote down and especially if you also chose the
   fourth illustration, the most sensitive parts of your body are
   the heart, small intestine and arteries.
5. If you couldn’t remember the sense of touch or it was the
   last one you wrote down and especially if you also chose the
   fifth illustration, the most sensitive parts of your body are
   the liver, gall bladder, skin and hair.

Hopefully you already learned something from this test so
that you will improve your pleasure of eating and enjoy your
life with better health.

What does proper eating entail?
Eating should involve all organs of the body. If the purpose of eating is to
regenerate new cells, we better make sure the whole body is
participating in this vital and sacred job. Unfortunately, from
day one, what we learned from our parents is another story
and oddly enough we may still be unconsciously stuck with
that way of eating. What is more important is knowing its
influence on our general behavior and health.

How does it work?
All organs in the body are connected to each other and to the
outside world. The internal communication happens at the
cellular level. Each organ of the body has a physical mission
inside the body and the way the job is accomplished reflects
that behavior. For example, liver issues are linked to anger.
Additionally, each organ belongs to one of five groups which
are also related with the five senses and the five elements. It
makes sense to pay attention to the way we eat and to the
environment.

Respecting the five senses
Food has a taste; we can hear different noises when chewing
or when breaking a piece of bread; food has a smell; we
see different colors in food; and we can touch the different
textures of the food.

Respecting the five elements
Choosing a place to sit or standing while eating affects the
earth element. Having a fountain nearby enhances harmony
with the water element. Access to natural air to breath is in
accordance to the air element. Correct lighting or even a
simple candle supplements the fire element. Making sure
the place you eat in is clearly defined by walls, furniture, a
rug, bushes or trees helps to establish natural boundaries in
accordance with the ether element.

Respecting the five attitudes
This is about respecting the food, being happy to eat, feeling
the uniqueness of the ingredients, loving the moment and
eating with serenity.

Eating properly entails balancing the experience of eating
using the five senses, the five elements and the five atti-
dutes, to ensure that what we ingest is properly assimilated
by our bodies and in harmony with the planet’s energies.
I feel overwhelmed by the changes that go with following the Hippocrates lifestyle. Do you have any helpful tips?

Andy: Change is a marvelous thing most of us yearn for but secretly hate and resist. We’ve come to rely on our fami-
lary systems of bad habits because they’ve worked to keep us where we are for so long. Change can mean discomfort, even when the move is away from bad habits into good ones. We are quirky that way.

The best way to make change is through total immersion. Learning a new language is a good example. Overwhelm,

anxiety, and confusion are important markers along the path of change. Be gentle with yourself and recognize that these are a normal response to total-immersion change.

Consider yourself in kindergarten at first, and get all the help you can. Hook up with old-timers and bask in their ex-
perience and wisdom. Let them inspire and guide you as you navigate through the rough initial times.

Break down whatever needs to be done on the path of implementing a new lifestyle into small manageable tasks.

When your universe is in chaos, I say straighten your sock drawer. Deal with the stuff you can in fact control, you’ll grow in competence and expand your sphere of influence. Cultivate a change-friendly attitude, which includes raising your tolerance for chaos and making mistakes, and accept a temporarily steady, higher-than-normal level of frustration.

It is a healthy practice to visualize the positive outcomes of our lifestyle choices; it will assure us that our efforts and

challenges and successes are worthwhile. Once we are fully aware of the value of these changes, our challenges will become more manageable.

I want to eat better and take care of myself better, but I feel deprived when I do things that are good for me. What can I do about that?

Andy: People hardly ever stick with anything framed in terms of deprivation. As you continue making healthful lifestyle

choices, you release things that in the past helped you feel comforted. That’s not easy. Getting through this period

calls for lots of encouragement, inspiration and reminders of where we are for so long and then add one more change at a
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Healing Our World = The Health of Soil

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Portland is blessed to now have a “real” food restaurant gracing its picturesque, cobblestone streets. Mainers have always been known for their good sense and grand American history. That tradition continues with food that both fills and feeds you. Walking into this homey, brick laden café, you are greeted with smiles and a staff committed to your health. You cannot help notice the fresh Shiitake mushrooms growing in the back part of the restaurant. Some of the most effective and certainly best researched raw foods come from this family affair. What a pleasant surprise for us to sip our familiar green drinks after shooting down two ounces of wheat grass! Next came a bold large salad laced with dehydrated goodies and delectable dressing. We could not help notice that although GRO was a special addition to the culinary genius of Portland’s notable restaurant scene, it was new, yet filled with consistent health seeking New Englander’s and enthusiastic tourists. Igor Rakuz founded this splendid culinary creation knowing that the typically hearty diet of North-easterner’s would have to be greatly altered to have them begin to appreciate the nutritional common sense of raw foods. His courage turned out to be effective; there is a rumble, growing to a roar, in the local community.

For newcomers to the raw food world, Igor’s café offers mouth-watering raw vegan crepes, breads, soups and nut meatballs, among other dishes. The dessert menu includes everything from the traditional American apple pie in its raw and delicious state, to a variety of uncooked treats like cookies and cakes. For those residing in the northeastern corridor, take a weekend trip to the beautiful harbor town of Portland, Maine and don’t forget to visit GRO. Fortunate people living in this jewel of the north should make it a habit to regularly fill up their bodies with Igor’s building blocks of living food. The rest of us can take a holiday in Northern New England and share not only the texture of America’s original culture, but the taste that will renew our spirit once again. Visit GRO at 437 Congress St. Portland, Maine or call 207 541 9119.
In the distant past, humanity learned to grow food from the land, sharing and passing down this knowledge through the centuries. A common practice was preparing part of the harvest as seeds for planting the following year. The exceptional quality of certain seeds over others was progressively identified and naturally propagated. The 20th century would bring about some important changes. Through genetic studies, a handful of scientists would bring to the farmers, many of them without merit, solely for self-enrichment be held responsible? If you think tobacco is a catch: a cow’s digestive system is meant to process grass, but corn-feeding turns cows into meat factories, their legs meant to walk by every day, gathering and discarding carcasses in a ditch while the rest of the chickens are converted into neatly package treats on supermarket shelves.

Farmers have become the losing link of the chain. Required to continuously update their equipment and forced into high-cost loans and unending debt, they are the working victims of the industry. It costs from $250,000 to $300,000 to build one of these poultry concentration camps. A $500,000 investment yields about $18,000 each year to the farmers. Caught in the tangle of the meat machine, they are transformed into a human-chicken, enslaved and unable to escape this nightmarish environment.

A Latino family of immigrant-workers is shown at the fast-food drive-in. They need their daily amount of calories to survive. Grossly underpaid, their only source of calories is the inexpensive burger and French fries. Fruits and vegetables are inaccessible. Their per-calorie cost is way too high. So, they can only dream of pears, lettuce and tomatoes. Do you believe that fried food, fat and beef are the free choice of the working class? A quick look at vegetable price tags in the supermarket will convince you.

Cheap calorie production has been identified by the food industry as an extremely profitable business. Corn and grains, partly due to government subsidies — basically tax-payer handouts — have undeniably become the cheapest source of calories available. However, the real cost to society is not commonly accounted for. Cheap energy is a fundamental component of beef production. Unsustainable, cheap oil-based energy has disastrous global warming consequences, political dependency and trade deficits. Cheap grains are dependent on cheap energy and tax-payer subsidies. If you think cheap corn is a bargain, think again.

Furthermore, the excessive consumption of all kinds of meat is undoubtedly a leading cause of in our health problems. Heart disease, arthritis and diabetes are just a few of the ailments linked to obesity and a predominant trait of our population. The constant use of corn derivates and other chemicals in our diet are also associated with many types of cancer.

The food factor is not correctly addressed when our legislators talk about health reform. Can a food industry oriented to self-enrichment be held responsible? If you think tobacco is bad for you, take a quick look at the food...
Promote Global Warming!
Film review: Dirt! The Movie
by Babs E. Keller

Narrated by Jaimie Lee Curtis, Dirt! The Movie is more than a well produced award-winning documentary about soil. It is one of the best wake-up calls of all time to the environmental challenges facing humanity, bringing to life the economic, social, environmental and political importance of soil. Based on William Logan’s inspirational book Dirt, The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth, the film tells the story of Mother Earth’s most valuable source of fertility – from it’s miraculous beginning to it’s crippling degradation.

The directors employ a playful combination of animation, pictures and personal accounts from farmers, activists, physicists, anthropologists and others to learn all about dirt, where it comes from, how it sustains life, how it is endangered and what we can do about it. The Dirt Movement is about educating viewers, spreading the knowledge and gaining global support for a more viable and greener environment. Dirt is the living, breathing skin of the Earth. The upper, outermost layer of soil is usually the top 2 to 8 inches, or 5 to 20 cm, has the highest concentration of organic material derived from plants and animals, and very diverse microorganisms like bacteria, fungi (yeasts, molds and mushrooms), archaea, microscopic plants (green algae) and animals such as plankton and the planarian. A handful of soil may have tens of billions of microorganisms in it and contain more life than ourselves! Most of the Earth’s biological soil activity occurs in this upper layer where plants generally concentrate their roots in and obtain most of their nutrients from. Tragically, it is in danger.

According to the film, the way we treat dirt is affecting global warming. Agriculture produces significant effects on climate change, primarily through the production and release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide and also by altering the earth’s land cover which changes it’s ability to absorb or reflect heat and light. Deforestation and desertification, along with the production and use of fossil fuels, are major anthropogenic sources of carbon dioxide; agriculture itself is the major contributor to increasing methane and nitrous oxide concentrations in the atmosphere. When the trees in the forests are cut down or when farmers plow the land and the soil is left bare, it eventually blows away by winds and is washed away by rains, and along with it go the critical nutrients.

The Open Space Institute, a nonprofit environmental group based in NYC, says that the United States is losing over a million acres of both farms and open space every year. Most of this wildland is being cleared for parking lots, shopping centers and new housing developments, approximately two acres of land disappearing every minute of every day. The Dirt! production team filmed this movie in more than 20 locations including America, Argentina, France, Kenya and Brazil, where the entire rainforest is being cut down has been lost in the past 100 years due to floods, droughts, and poor farming and mining practices.

Industrial farming has created a huge demand for nitrogen fertilizer and over 2 million tons of pesticides are used in the soil each year. The use of a pesticide carries associated risk and raises a number of environmental concerns. Besides poisoning humans and animals, affecting the quality of soil and causing serious threat to food crops, most of the sprayed insecticides and herbicides used today reach other destinations via pesticide drift and water pollution. The results are devastating to marine life.
for the expansion of agricultural land. It features interviews with global visionaries who are determined to repair the damage before it is too late. This is becoming an emergency. There is much to do and time is of the essence. We need to rethink the way we grow things. Instead of plowing, we should compost using food scraps, adding nutrition to the soil and making a surface layer rich in organic matter which is critical to keeping the planet healthy. The film uncovers many surprising ways to repair our relationship with soil and after viewing it, you may never look at the ground beneath your feet in quite the same way.

Co-director Bill Benenson is an award-winning filmmaker with over 20 years of filmmaking experience. He served the U.S. Peace Corps as a Wildwood School Board member, was an initial investor in Seeds of Change and is active in the Frances and Benjamin Benenson Foundation, the Violence Policy Center, the National Resources Defense Council, Bioneers, Rainforest Action Network and Ploughshares. He says: “the real inspiration for this film has been our growing awareness of the Earth’s plight and the people who are striving to fix our only planet as we spin on a ever-wobblier orbit right now.”

Dirt! The Movie won the audience award for best green documentary at the Mali International Film Festival, was noted by the Los Angeles Times as one of the best documentaries at this year’s Sundance Film Festival. Dirt feeds us and gives us shelter; it holds and cleans our waters; it heals us and makes us beautiful; it regulates the Earth’s climate; it is the ultimate natural resource for all life on Earth. Visit www.DirtTheMovie.org to learn more.

Healing Our World – The Health of Soil

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Healing Our World – The Health of Soil

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he Buddha said, “Do not dwell in the past; do not dream of the future. Concentrate the mind on the present moment.” In other words, yesterday is a thing of the past; tomorrow is a possibility; now is the only thing that counts. People beat themselves up thinking of all the poor choices they made because they are attached to and have difficulty letting go of the past. Regrets and guilt about things done or not done plague most people. It is almost impossible to move forward when mired with worry about what might happen in the future. There is nothing that can change the past and the future does not exist yet. The critical time is now.

In Stress Rx, Dr. Riley describes how constant anxiety and the cumulative effects of long-term stress can severely affect our life. “Our stress response is triggered by the mind; fearful or worrisome thoughts that produce a chemical reaction in the body. When this fight-or-flight response is invoked by a situation we see as threatening, the hormones cortisol and epinephrine, also known as adrenaline, are released into the bloodstream. When this happens, the heart beats faster, blood pressure soars, the muscles tense and the extremities might feel cold and clammy,” he says. Some symptoms of harboring stress are obsessive thought patterns, all kinds of compulsive behavior towards sex, drugs, eating and drinking; and panic attacks, which feel like heart attack symptoms such as chest pains, rapid heartbeat, throat constriction, dizziness, trembling and shaking. These stress symptoms are often followed by feelings of despair, depression and fear that it might occur again. As Dr Brian Clement states in the foreword to Dr. Riley’s book, “there is no better way to devastate your immune system than to have gnawing, destructive thoughts pervade your consciousness.”

Medical experts say that between 80-95% of illness today is stress related. Stress can cause nausea, migraines, insomnia, and if prolonged, serious illness and disease. Stress Rx contains many suggestions on how to better handle almost any life situation such as:

Know that it is okay to cry; let the tears flow; don’t keep stress bottled up.

Pay close attention to gut feelings and physical symptoms like sharp pain, twinges, constipation, and trembling eyelids, cheeks and hands.

Chronic colds, sinus infections and rashes are all signs that something is out of balance.

When feeling attacked with aggressive or hostile behavior, don’t take it personally; instead practice patience and understanding. You are the target of someone else’s anger. Their behavior is a reflection of their inability to handle the stress in their lives.

Be mindful of your thoughts and reactions. It is amazing how a smile and a positive attitude quickly diffuse stress.
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For nearly three decades we have been training Certified Health Educators to enable them to make a difference in this world. Having the tools and the knowledge of Hippocrates’ 50+ years of experience builds the self-confidence that can inspire and teach others to make and maintain the important lifestyle changes required to attain superior personal health, and ultimately secure the well-being of our planet.

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- Mental-Therapy
- Basic Counseling Skills
- Reflexology
- Science of Living Foods
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- Proper Supplementation
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The Health Educator Program at the Hippocrates Health Institute

A Sou Panna, cont’d from p. 37 carbohydrates which humans otherwise could not digest, similarly in soil, a plant cannot absorb nutrients without bacterial help. Fungi, protozoa and yeasts such as Candida, are also present in the human gut. Some plants need fungi to produce strong acidic enzymes capable of digesting tough cellulose instead of the alkaline action of bacteria, so too in the human body, different organs need acidity to digest food while other times alkalinity is needed.

Unfriendly bacteria – both in soil and in human intestines – will breed in anaerobic conditions, where there is little or no oxygen, emitting foul odors and killing off beneficial aerobic bacteria requiring oxygen. Aerobic bacteria are not normally known to cause bad smells. In fact, certain kinds produce enzymes that give soil its clean, fresh, earthy aroma. When these beneficial bacteria are in the intestines, human feces lacks its rank odor, a foul smell, indicates the presence of pathogenic bacteria feeding on foods like meat and dairy.

Other parallels: cancer and disease thrive in anaerobic environments both in the soil and in our bodies. Air nourishes the beneficial soil organisms while keeping harmful bacteria in check. The high temperature in a compost pile kills off pathogens, like a fever in the human body defends against pathogens causing infection. Like the healthy practice of repopulating the gut with friendly bacteria after a treatment of pharmaceutical antibiotics, compost quickly replenishes an area of ground with microbes supporting a soil food web. Properly made, compost contains the entire spectrum of soil food web microorganisms: fungi, bacteria, protozoa and nematodes. It is also full of organic matter, providing living space and nutrients for the microorganisms it contains.

Putting it all together

The Sun is the source of all food on Earth – humans and animals cannot generate food from light, only plants can do this and feed animals. The remains of plants and animals feed worms, bacteria and fungi, which in turn feeds vegetation. By returning unused plant material to the Earth, we feed the microorganisms in the soil. Invisible microbes are involved and responsible for feeding plants. Soil food web gardening requires that the soil be disturbed as little as possible to keep these microbes alive and well. Yard and garden care cannot be only about the plants. We must understand the existence, role and needs of microbes if we are to partner with them in growing healthy plants. Like the Dr. Seuss character Horton Hears a Who!, microbes are down there and want to be heard! They are the ones we need to properly feed. If we take care of their needs, they will take care of ours. Happy Gardening!

The SEER Centre, cont’d from p. 29 brick path, with a deep rubble infill to prohibit the passage of worms between the trial areas. One side contained compost and rock dust, while the other contained poor soil and rock dust. Both sides grew equally giant tomatoes!

Into the Future

The SEER Centre now has eleven thriving terraces and a large bed where they grow a full range of produce as well as bushes, hedges and fruit trees. “We grow as many different things as possible to make a whole biodiverse ecosys-
tem,” Thomson explains, “and we try to show as many different plants as possible so different kinds of growers can see how their particular specialty would grow with rock dust.”

The success of their venture can be seen simply by its contrast with the surrounding landscape. “It’s very much an oasis in the glen, as we like to call it,” says Thomson, “its lush growth surrounded by hedges, which we’ve creat-ed since we came here. The rest of the landscape is very barren and bleak—Scottish hillsides with lots of sheep on them.”

The SEER Centre is connected with Remineralize the Earth (RTE), an organization that helps facilitate projects such as SEER Centre around the world. “Remineralize the Earth has been closely aligned with the Thomsons since the 1980s,” says Joanna Campe, RTE’s executive director. “Cameron and Moira are pioneers of turning barren lands into incredibly fertile soils with the addition of rock dust, and with a minimum of garden maintenance they are demonstrating the potential of remineralization to SEER Centre visitors on a daily basis as well as through the enthusiastic media coverage they receive from the BBC and others. Seeing these dramatic results from the Thomsons and various growers elsewhere has sustained my mission for the last 25 years to remineralize and regenerate soils everywhere.”
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Beyond Organic, cont’d from p. 27

Should we grow our own food then?

You’ve got to! There’s no way to depend on the industrial food system. It’s not designed to produce nutritious food, it’s designed to generate profits. Even organically-grown food is only marginally better. Using seeds as the basis of your food, especially sprouting them, is a really good idea. The plant is going to concentrate the very best of everything it accumulated into the seed. However the potency of those seeds is going to vary widely. You need high quality seeds. What we’re doing here besides running the Soil and Health library and publishing books is raising vegetables for sale. We’ve got a couple of refrigerators on the corner of the property and an honor box for cash. People come and take their veggies, we earned $18,000 last year, all with hand tools, shovel, rake, hoe and wheel barrel. Some children in this community will no longer eat carrots from the supermarket. They’re finding out what real food tastes like! We’re actually creating a change in consciousness in our community where we can do something. I think that’s probably the only viable answer.

One last thing, Steve: how did the Soil and Health Library come about?

In 1994 Isabelle came to the end of her rope as a caregiver taking in sick people into her home for extended fasting, but she couldn’t reckon how to get away from the ongoing flow of inquiries and requests for help. I suggested that she write a book, at least she could answer inquiries with a book instead of a flat refusal, and her book might inspire someone to take her place. So we went to Costa Rica, rented the ex-homestead of Edmond Szekely in Orosi and spent a few months writing every day. But when it was finished we found no one would publish the book; it failed to fit any categories. Two years later Isabelle died. Her book still unpublished, it occurred to me one night that the internet might allow the book to be well read. And as long as I was at it, why not set her book into a circle of small diamonds surrounded by other public domain titles she loved. It also occurred to me that there were a lot of old important agriculture related books, and thus the Soil and Health library was born in an evening’s inspiration. Had she remained alive my attention would have remained on the relationship and never would have reached to making a website.

Like soil, knowledge exists in strata: devotional, intellectual and experiential. Devotional knowledge lays at the surface-level of understanding, what we learn from our hearts. Intellectual knowledge runs beneath;
Stress triggers eating disorders and phobias for every kind of life situation such as fear of illness, rejection, accidents, death, unfaithfulness, success, failure, being alone—the list is endless.

Virtually any form of exercise can decrease the production of stress hormones and counteract the body’s natural stress response. Lack of exercise creates all kinds of physical havoc in the body. The ancient art of Tai Chi and yoga are non-competitive exercises using gentle stretching and flowing movements to reduce stress and improve agility.

Research has shown that music has a profound healing effect on the body and psyche. Hospitals are beginning to use music therapy to help with pain management and to ward off depression and anxiety.

These and other tips in Stress Rx teach those feeling any level of stress how to release and overcome the accumulated effects which can be damaging to the body and mind. Stress Rx is now available at the Hippocrates Store and via mail order.
Life on Earth depends on it. So why are we squandering it?

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