

Stonyledge Farm

It is a beautiful sunny day in mid-March when Belinda Learned shows me around Stonyledge Farm, which she owns and operates with her husband Ed, and three of their four children. Snuggled up to the RI border in the Clark Falls section of North Stonington, Stonyledge is 203 beautiful acres that typify this part of Connecticut with its mix of dense forest and rolling farmland. Here, Ed Learned and the boys raise beef cows, and Belinda keeps four hives of honey bees, 125 laying hens, and in season, raises organic vegetables and fruit. Belinda sells the produce at markets and through a CSA in the summer; this February, she joined the 25 or so other vendors at Fiddleheads Saturday market.



Today, she has just arrived from her day job as a secretary at the Ledyard Board of Education. "When I get home, I change out of my work clothes, and put my work clothes on," she says with a grin. Belinda is lively and animated when she speaks and with her short blond hair and wide dimpled smile, she looks younger than her "thirty-something" years. Now, having donned her rubber barn boots and a pair of leather work gloves with the word "Mom" inked in on each wrist, we are ready to go.

We begin in the "mud-room" where a loud cacophony of peeping greets us. A stainless steel tub six feet long sits in the middle of the floor; two heat lamps clipped to the edge of the tub reveal 150 chicks, 6 days old. Just tiny puffs of tan



and yellow with spindly black legs, the chicks scramble in terror to the far edge of the tub as we approach. In four months or so these chicks will be laying eggs and adding to the already large egg operation Belinda manages. This

includes an extensive winter egg route in which 40 dozen eggs are delivered to customers throughout Stonington every week.

Leaving the chicks and the mud room we venture outside across the dirt driveway, to a large empty field, lying brown and fallow in the afternoon light. This is where the spring greens will soon be

growing and where this fall Belinda will try growing a winter crop of cold hardy greens, something many of her customers have been asking for. In addition to the summer farmer's markets where Belinda sells produce, and the vegetable stand her parents operate, two years ago Belinda started a CSA. The CSA currently serves 22 families during the growing season, but there is little to offer in the winter and so especially for her vegetarian members, "I thought I should give it a try."



Belinda has a youthful spirit but she also exemplifies good old-fashioned country wisdom. Her language is sprinkled with colorful phrases like "people don't realize a barn is really a building full of **mothers**," and she speaks passionately about organic land care and animal husbandry practices. She gestures to the chickens spread out along the edges of the field and says, "I mean look at them, digging and scratching in the dirt the way chickens are supposed to," and she then ties her hens' healthy lifestyle to the enormous brown eggs they lay. "Ask anyone in Stonington who has the best eggs," she adds proudly. Belinda certainly came upon her earth-friendly wisdom early on. Her parents, Dot and Dick Wingate, gardened and raised chickens on their property in Voluntown (Studio Farm), so she grew up, basically, on a farm.

After checking the beehives on the far side of the field we return to the other side where four white igloo-shaped structures stand in a row. In front of each igloo is a spindly-legged 2 month old calf. The igloos are actually "calf-houses" and are like a dog house but larger and made of

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Board of Directors:

President:	Richard Spindler-Virgin --- dickspin@comcast.net
Vice-President:	Ed DeMuzzio --- eed@gocci.com
Treasurer:	TBD
Secretary:	Ellen Anthony --- ellenanthony@gmail.com
Director:	Laura Natusch --- lnatusch@yahoo.com
Director:	Sheila Herbert --- sile.herbert@snet.net
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Director:	Nancy Potter --- lnlppotter@snet.net
Director:	Jim Stidfole --- jstidfole@earthlink.net
Director:	Bob Bunting --- bunting_robert_a@sbcglobal.net

Fiddleheads has an urgent need for a **volunteer to be our Publicity Coordinator.**

Likely tasks a person in this position might envision include:

- ** Seek and/or write articles in local publications, including business circulars, club & organization newsletters and bulletins, penny-savers, etc.
- ** Design and/or coordinate distribution of flyers, posters. (i.e. collaborate publicity with other local retail businesses, organizations and local events.)
- ** Coordinate appearances on public access TV and interviews on the radio, etc. We have many members and vendors willing to be interviewed.

We have continuing Wednesday and Saturday Markets.

We will have a Saturday pancake breakfast Mother's Day weekend.

We will participate in the New London Food Stroll.

All these events need to be publicized and are an opportunity for good Public Relations.

This is a critical time for spreading the good word!!

Please think about persons you may know who could fulfill the above role. It's a position that is community-minded, exciting and a great opportunity for networking with others!

If you can do this or know someone who can please contact

Laura Cordes, Fiddleheads Volunteer Coordinator : lauraandchloe@mac.com.

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plastic. They are blindingly white and face south and we shield our eyes from the glare. The three Holstein calves and one Jersey calf here will seed the new dairy business the family is starting. Unabashedly affectionate, Belinda coos and calls each calf by name.

Up the rutted driveway on a south facing slope is the fruit plot, home to 25 blueberry bushes, a raspberry patch, currants, and 19 rows of strawberries, each 100 feet long. Belinda laments the large boulders that peek through the clumps of winter-killed grass. She has already dug up quite a few, but there are still more she would like to remove. "I want it to be really nice for people when they come and pick berries." Her eyes light up when she talks about how much her CSA members enjoy the berry picking. "Oh, they



pop each one in their mouth looking like they'd found a gold nugget!

Belinda is more than delighted with Fiddleheads' Saturday market which she says allows farmers a winter venue, and allows her the opportunity to "feed my community, which is what a co-op is all about. On Saturdays, you will find her space to the left of the front door, where she sells an assortment of jellies, preserves, and "salad bowls" from her parents' farm: large peat bowls planted with young salad greens.

It is 6 pm now and the air is getting chilly. The farm tour is complete -- but there is still more work to do on the farm. If you would like more information about Stonyledge Farm or Studio Farm, please visit the booth on Saturday, or go to <http://www.studiofarmproducts.com/>.

Submitted by Laurie Gorham

Fiddleheads

NATURAL FOOD COOPERATIVE
www.fiddleheadsfood.coop • pob 1108 • new london, ct 06320

Another Pancake Breakfast!
Saturday, May 10th 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Mother's Day Weekend
Treat a Mother to Breakfast Out!
Adults \$5.00
Children \$3.00



Fiddleheads Volunteer Opportunities ABOUND!

Thanks to the dozens of FH volunteers that have been making the Saturday markets run so successfully! Our membership has grown to 770+ and we are averaging 500+ shoppers in the market each week.

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Here are some REALLY exciting OPPORTUNITIES where YOU can BECOME more INVOLVED...

WINTER/SPRING MARKETS

We have some market volunteers in place, BUT we need to make sure that we have VOLUNTEERS for the Spring. Please check your calendar and let us know if you can help greet and count customers, work at the membership & information table, or work the register in the mini-market RSVP to Laura laura.cordes@gmail.com.

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Have you picked up your membership card yet? You can do so on Saturdays at the market and also get your FH discount at the mini-store.

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In addition to the regular Saturday Market volunteers needed, we are participating in projects and community events that require many hands... Contact a Board Member to "Table" at these events.

Look for periodic e-blasts, check the web site, or attend a Board Meeting for late breaking opportunities.

WISH LIST: Card tables and chairs for coffee area at Farmers Markets.

BOARD ELECTIONS: Fiddleheads Board of Director elections will be coming up before we know it. Time to begin thinking about serving on the board. Watch for the official call which will be going out soon.

Newsletter Feedback

The Fiddleheads Newsletter team would like to hear from you about our latest issue. Did it contain useful information? Did you enjoy the recipes? Was there a particular article that caught your attention? What would you like to see in future issues of the newsletter? We would appreciate any comments you might have and suggestions for future editions - we want to make this newsletter something that you look forward to reading and can turn to for information. Please send your thoughts to

newsletter@fiddleheadsfood.coop.

Newsletter Credits:

Editor—Bob Bunting
[\(Fiddleheads.News@gmail.com\)](mailto:Fiddleheads.News@gmail.com)
 Submittal Deadline is the 1st of the month
 Planned Publication date is the 15th of the month
 Contact via email at
newsletter@fiddleheadsfood.coop

The Fiddleheads T-Shirt is coming soon!



Organic cotton
 Printed in New England
 Various Sizes & styles
 \$16 each
 Contact Ellen
ellenanthony@gmail.com

FH TOTE BAG MAKING:

Join in

with the art - stencil - sew - create crew.
 Every Sunday 1 – 4pm at Fiddleheads Food Co-op, 13 Broad St. in New London

All are welcome.

Bring art supplies, sewing machines, sewing skills, stenciling supplies etc.
 Contact Ellen ellenanthony@gmail.com

A Walk Down Jonny-Cake Lane

When I was growing up in Averill Park New York there was a small side road right in the town called Jonny-Cake Lane. I had no clue what a jonny-cake was. My mother told me it was another name for pancake, and the discussion ceased there. I did file the road name away mentally with my list of other unusual road names, try Blue Factory Road for example, or Lemon School Road, but anyway, I am digressing in that this is not an op-ed piece on oddly named byways. Around 1942 W. L. Watson wrote the definitive pamphlet on Indian Corn Meal and the Rhode Island jonny-cake. As it turns out, Mom was wrong. The jonny-cake is not a pancake; it is a corn meal cake that was made by Native people out of indigenous corn. It was neither named for nor invented by someone called jonny. The name was a colloquial variation on journey-cake, a hard-loaf bread baked to eat from on a journey. Native Americans called this cake nassump, which the early English Settlers then called samp. The English also added milk or butter to their adapted version.

So where did the corn come from? It certainly was not brought over on the Corporate Armada by Monsanto the Conqueror. The oldest samples of corn cobs were found in a cave in New Mexico and are about 60,000 years old. 3,000 years ago this native maize was cultivated by the Mayas and was passed on and up the continent to North America. The maize also became larger as it moved northward, very possibly from selective cultivation. The Pilgrims were helped to survive their first winter in the New World by the assistance of Squanto, a Patuxet Indian who showed them how to pound corn kernels into corn meal, mix it with water and cook the original journey-cake. In the spring he also showed them how to plant corn using herring for fertilizer.

Corn, like coffee and grapes, turns out to be varietal. Its flavor is affected by the soil and climate where it is grown. Take the Indian White Cap corn grown on coastal Eastern Connecticut, in Rhode Island, and into Massachusetts; grow it anywhere else, and it loses its flavor. The Davis Farm in Pawcatuck is one of a few farms along our coast to still grow the native White Cap corn. The land on which the Davis farm sits has been in the Stanton-Davis family since 1654 and the farmhouse has stood there since 1670. The drive to preserve this homestead is material for another article, but this corn was there before the homestead was built and is genetically the same corn grown by the Narragansett, Pequot, and other regional tribes.



Whit Davis grows the White Cap corn on the farm, dries the corn, separates the kernels from the cob through the use of an ingenious antique device which looks like an old time meat grinder but which spits the cob out when the kernels are separated. Whit then has the corn stone ground by a water powered mill in Rhode Island. He sells the corn meal, which



Fiddleheads proudly carries in our mini-store. Every year Whit trades some kernels with the few other farmers in the region who also grow this corn to keep the gene pool active. The corn cobs also have a distinct use, they are charred in smoking of old style bacon (such as the Vermont Bacon that Highland Thistle Farms carries in our Farmers Market). Only white corn cobs will do for this task, the red (cattle feed) corn cobs don't impart the same pleasant flavor. Whit showed me the natural "trademark" of White Cap corn, the diamond shaped kernels that sit between kernel rows on most ears. There are some color variations in this corn from pale to golden brown. Davis Farm Cornmeal is one corn product in which you won't find genetically induced "Roundup™" or other modifications . It is the real deal, the stuff from which jonny-cakes are made.

Submitted by Allen Longendyke

Web Site Overview

Our website is active — Check it out!

www.fiddleheadsfood.coop

Calendar of Events

For information on Fiddleheads Co-op events

www.fiddleheadsfood.coop/events.htm

Meeting Minutes

For Published Minutes of Fiddleheads Co-op meetings check out our website

www.fiddleheadsfood.coop/boardmeetings.htm

Need More Info?

For general information on Fiddleheads Co-op check out our website

www.fiddleheadsfood.coop/faq.htm

Fiddleheads Message Board

User id= member, password= 4445678

www.fiddleheadsfood.coop/messageboard.asp



**Local Events Listing **

Local Non-Profit type Events may be submitted to the newsletter editor (Fiddleheads.News@gmail.com - Subject: Local Events) for inclusion here.

Date/Time	Event	Sponsor	Info (Location, prices, etc.)
Gallery Hours— Thurs 11am to 3pm; Fri 11am to 6pm; Sat 11am to 6pm; Sunday Noon to 3pm	Various Events (see website)	HYGIENIC GALLERIES	More details on the Web at www.hygienic.org 79-83 Bank Street, New London Call: 443-8001
May 4, 3:00 p.m.	Andrew Howell Organ Concert	St. James Episcopal Church/ <i>Music at St. James</i>	Corner of Huntington and Federal St, New London Donation: \$10:00, \$7 Senior/Students, \$5 Children Call: 443-4989
May 9, 7:30 p.m.	Bill Staines in Concert	Friday Night Folk/ All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation	ASUUC's Unity Hall 19 Jay St, New London Refreshments, Free Childcare, Adults \$15, Seniors (65+) and Children (16 and under) \$8.00, Families \$40 max. Preferred seating for Advance Reservations Call: 447-9580, 443-2711 or 889-2110 or Email: FNfolk@gmail.com
May 10, 8 - 11 a.m.	Pancake Breakfast	Fiddleheads	Fiddleheads Store 13 Broad St, New London At the Farmers Market (see page 3)
May 10, 8-11 p.m.	Contra Dance— “The Pie Dances”	Mystic Contra Dance	Frohsinn Hall (German Club) RT 27 Mystic - across from Mystic Seaport. Strawberry-Rhubarb Pie Flavor of the month Call: 961-9321, 401/487-9713 Email: Ipaigeg@gmail.com
May 14, 5:30-8:30 PM	New London Spring Food Stroll 2008	New London Main Street	On the web at newlondonmainstreet.org Fiddleheads will be a part of this event!

Fiddleheads Annual Meeting!

WHEN: Saturday, May 31, 2008, 9 - 10 a.m.

WHERE: All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation,
Unity Hall, 19 Jay St. New London

WHAT:
* Election of new Directors.
* Information Update
* Reports

*More details will be sent (email or postal) to all Member-owner households.
Refreshments will be served.*