



A Dream of Houses

Diana Luhn Bower

LCLT

LOPEZ COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

NEWSLETTER FALL 2016

A Dream in the Making



Sandy Bishop

In 1992, a group of us went to Burlington, VT, to learn about community land trusts. Ona Blue, Liz Scranton, Rod Morgan, Rhea and myself went to the national conference and learned of a farm that was being put into a community land trust with a life estate for the farmer. From that moment on, we have held the dream that we too could make farmland available to new farmers, without the current owners losing their homes.

Land is an essential element of farming. After a century of significant farmland loss throughout the San Juan Islands (USDA census records show a 27% loss from 2007 – 2012), access to affordable, productive farmland is one of the greatest challenges that our region's farmers face. With already so much of the basic farming infrastructure of these islands missing or in disarray, how can we garner the necessary infrastructure for our local food security?

Farmland owned in trust by non-profit institutions represent an important source of land for landless farmers. Whether there are two or 100 acres available, a community land trust, or an institution willing to make long-term leases available to a farmer can make an important contribution toward growing a region's farms, food and economy as existing farmers retire. Many farmers need to sell their land to fund their retirement. However, in such an upscale environment as ours, the farms are likely to be sold for use as estates rather than working farms. New farmers simply do not have the capital to purchase a farm in the San Juan Islands. LCLT can provide affordable access to land and infrastructure according to the following goals of Lopez Island Farm Trust (LIFT), a new program of LCLT:

- Strengthen our local food system, ecological diversity and access to local foods.
- Develop a comprehensive legal, ethical and economically viable land lease system.
- Provide affordable access to land and infrastructure for farmers.
- Implement sound business practices for regenerative income to support the farms and farmers.
- Develop farm programs for beginning farmers and others in search of life skills.
- Provide educational opportunities.



- Cultivate systems that encourage multi-generational living on the land and access to affordable housing for those working the land.
- Generate sources of local food and farm products by acquiring, leasing and managing new and historical farms and
- Retain and invigorate the working rural character of Lopez Island through ethical practices that build soil.

Lopez Community Land Trust (LCLT) will own the land and the improvements. LCLT will then lease the land and improvements to a private enterprise or farmer(s) using a model agricultural ground lease. LCLT reserves the right to operate intern programs, classes and events on the farm with the expressed cooperation and consent of a farm operator. All prospective farmers wishing to lease land under the LIFT program must do so according to the following principles of a regenerative system:

- **Sustainability:** the farms need to be able to feed the farmers who work on them as well as provide food for the larger community.
- **Self-sufficiency:** animals, plants, people and soil form an interdependent and self-sustaining web of life.
- **Economic viability:** sales of farm products, classes and other entrepreneurial activities provide for farm/farmer expenses including wages and maintenance of the farm.
- **Ecological responsibility:** resource consumption is minimized, energy efficiency is maximized.
- **Justice:** farm programs embody and disseminate understandings of social and environmental justice.
- **Climate resiliency:** models of farming take into consideration carbon sequestering and ecological diversity.



Rhea Miller

What Makes Rural?

A leader from one of the Salish Sea islands said to a group of us, “Our island has lost its rural character, but kudos to Lopez. You still have a sense of rural character.”

What makes a place rural? My Dad was a rural preacher in Iowa, and we’d go visit the people in his congregation who were mostly farmers. As long as they weren’t haying, the farmers would stop what they were doing, invite us in and inevitably share a meal. I had no idea then how much work went into that fried chicken with fresh-shelled peas, since I got my chicken de-feathered and my peas shelled from the grocery store. Nor did I understand what it meant to be home every morning and evening to milk the cows, but I did understand what it meant to be welcomed with hospitality and good food.

After a century of significant farmland loss throughout the San Juan Islands, the average age of a farmer in San Juan County is now 62. Most farmers have no plans for the next generation to farm their land. Who will farm? Who can afford a farm? Will we be able to stay rural?

I saw two articles on the same day saying cockroach milk is the future superfood and Soylent is the food for techies, advertised as affordable food, a meal replacement, a liquid or powder containing all you need in nourishment. Really, is this where we are headed?

How can we keep working farms on the island? Lopez Community Land Trust (LCLT) has formed Lopez Island Farm Trust (LIFT) specifically to keep farms actively farmed and working farmers housed rurally. Farmland in San Juan County is being preserved but not always actively farmed. Repeated haying/mowing of preserved land doesn’t increase soil health and fertility and offers little variety for our table. We’d like to invite a broader community response to help address succession farming.

Stonecrest Farm is currently owned by Cathy and Bob Clemens. They approached LCLT to purchase their historic farm. In 1884, Chris Jensen jumped off a ship from Norway and settled on 160 acres on Lopez Island. In 1902 the barn that still stands was built; and for 105 years Chris’s extended family, including Otto and Donna Kjargaard, farmed the land. Cathy and Bob purchased the farm in 1989, the same year LCLT was formed. The Clemens have reached their 80s, and farming is no longer possible. Like many farmers, their farms are their retirement funds, and they cannot afford to give the farm away. At the same time they’d like to see the larger community benefit from their decades of hard work. Cathy said over lunch one day, “You know we didn’t do a lot of other things. We always had one more project on the farm that we wanted to get done. It means a lot to us that all our hard work will be worthwhile and able to be passed on and shared with the Lopez community.”



Stonecrest Farm

Holding farmland in trust with the expressed goal of active farming is the primary purpose behind LCLT’s purchase of Stonecrest Farm. This is Lopez’s opportunity to invest in a thriving local food effort— an effort that includes continued fresh veggies, fruit, smoked and fresh meats, and value-added products but never cockroach milk! Lopezians love it when people say it can’t be done because each and every time Lopez goes out and does it—from affordable housing to the first in the country USDA approved mobile processing unit to one of the highest recovery rates of heart attack in the state.

So we too can make a significant impact for continued farming and nurture the ethic of rural hospitality. We have the power to build a beautiful future. The farm is being offered to the community at a \$300,000 discount. To date we have raised 42% of our goal of one million dollars, leaving just \$578,000 to be raised. We invite you to be a part of preserving the uniqueness of Lopez Island by contributing to the purchase of Stonecrest Farm. For further information on how you can help keep Lopez Island rural and purchase Stonecrest Farm, see: <http://www.lopezclt.org/historic-stonecrest-farm-a-lopez-legacy-for-2016/> or call 360.468.3723.



Bob and Cathy Clemens

2016 Intern Comments

Katie: I have been surprised by the depth of knowledge of people here. Community is much stronger. People make an intentional choice to live here.

The main thing I hadn't yet realized about sustainable agriculture upon starting the internship is that farmers have so many little things to do on the periphery to keep the farm running smoothly, such as solidifying infrastructure and storing and sourcing materials such as hay. It requires Whole Systems Thinking as there are many moving parts, as well as diligent planning and organization.

Farming is a constant exchange—giving and taking with nature. The joy comes from truly giving oneself to the work and immersing yourself in each task, being fully present and aware of the significance of each act. The rewards will be overflowing. There are certainly moments of frustration, and it's nearly impossible to sell produce for the price that it is worth. It's a never-ending learning process, which is what intrigues me the most.

Caitlin: I really enjoyed reading Capra's "Speaking Nature's Language" for its description of Whole Systems Theory approach. Farming is appealing to me because of the potential for a closed-loop system. I aspire to incorporate elements of farming into my life to create my own closed-loop system, though I am not sure what that looks like just yet. I resonate with the Whole Systems Theory's definition of the essence of life— it is a network of relationships that is important. The particulars of the individual is important only in that it contributes to the whole.

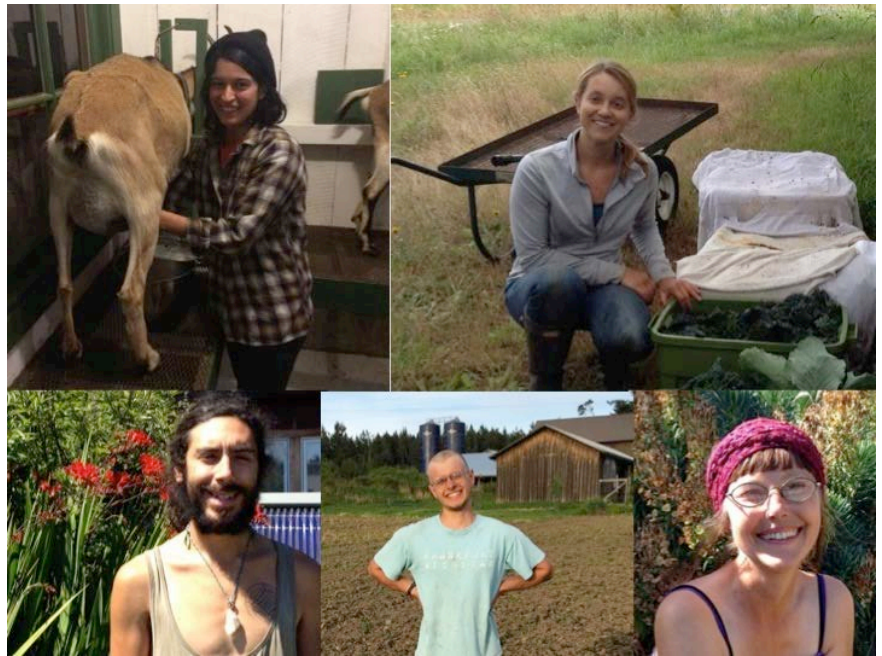
One of the biggest lessons I've learned in my short time on Lopez is how important love and compassion are. The two farmers I worked with put their hearts, minds, bodies and souls into their vision and that is the only way they have been able to be successful. I think Capra would love working with both of these farmers [Christine Langley and Andre Entermann]. Thank you so much for allowing me to participate in this experience. I will never forget it, and I hope to come back to Lopez soon!

Tyler: I am not the same person I was in April. I work on a farm. We grow food. Kathryn Thomas and Ken Akopiantz run the farm, and together they make really, really good food. I am an intern here, doing my best to help and learn about small-scale sustainable agriculture. I see the content of my work in a pleasant, simple, focused light: I love what I do. I love working outside. I love using my senses in my work. I love working in a team that also loves what they do. I love pigs and I love feeling dirt on my skin. These are simple pleasures that make my work enjoyable. Challenges give my work depth—challenges like communicating with people who have decades of experience while I have none and challenges like adopting a mindset of practicality (a "do what works best" attitude) rather than one of linearity (a "follow the instructions" attitude).

The people of Lopez exposed me in a very tangible manner to a new perspective on work and life. I have met people who have created and are creating meaningful lives for themselves. Farmers, and carpenters, and school board members, and activists—the people whom I have met on Lopez Island have impressed upon me the knowledge that I will be the one to create a meaningful reality for myself.

Cody: I was shocked by the small town thing—I walked into the store and people were talking about [two friends] having a baby and I was part of the conversation. Then there was the island-wide wedding. The hardest thing was communicating with people—no access to phone landline or cell phones or internet. I had to stick with a plan of what I had said directly to someone. People are busy raising kids or with their lives, so I have been a bit isolated. The best part has been seeing how wholesome the lifestyle is for so many people. I want to keep homesteading in some way, in some shape or form.

Ali: I have been surprised by how incredibly nice the people are. The best part has been gaining a little bit of insight into the community and folks working towards sustainability on the island. I hope to stay on Lopez.



Clockwise: Caitlin Singer, Katie Erwin, Ali Dyvig, Tyler Clapsaddle, Cody Jackson.

Your contributions of time, talent and dollars are what enable this work of unleashing the power of community to be accomplished. Please keep us moving forward! Thank you!

Gift & Sale of 42 Beverly Lane

This summer two wonderful retired teachers who have been coming to Lopez to camp on their two acres for 28 years said farewell to Lopez. Our office received a call from Lois Pettinger asking if she and her partner Dianne Erickson could come talk to us about the work of Lopez Community Land Trust. The office was particularly busy that morning, but we responded that we had time at 11 a.m. They said "great" and arrived a little over an hour later.

They sat down and asked us about our work. After about 10 minutes, they stated that they had a home in Ashland, OR, and no longer felt they could make the drive up the I-5 corridor to Lopez with their small RV. They further said that they had enough to be comfortable and wanted to give something meaningful back to the Lopez community. They gifted their 2-acre parcel of land to Lopez Community Land Trust to support our work. They had two stipulations to the gift: 1) that LCLT offer the land for sale to the neighbors first and 2) that we close on the property by August 15, which we did.

The land is zoned for a single home, is served by a community water system, has a new 3 bedroom septic and is further governed through some restrictive covenants for the Shoal Bay West short plat. On their final day on Lopez we drank coffee together on their property. They said that they hoped we



Dianne Erickson and Lois Pettinger

could get a great price for the land to support our efforts with Stonecrest Farm and other LCLT programs.

On August 24, 2016, the LCLT Board of Directors held a special meeting and unanimously voted to sell the land. A motion to sell the land was then approved by 2/3 of a quorum of a General Membership meeting.

Nick Gervasi—The Best

March 25, 1949—June 30, 2016

Nick Gervasi sauntered on to the LCLT construction site on Lopez Island in 1992 when we were building Morgantown. He was a skilled construction manager and knew both commercial and residential construction. He was keen on teaching those "who didn't know one end of a hammer from another." These traits made Nick both unusual and a highly prized employee. He was thoughtful, had a great sense of humor and had a following—both men and women, young and old sought him out for advice, skill learning and good company. On Morgantown, the three grandmothers (Helen, Pat and Amalia) adored Nick. He set them up shingling the homes. Since none of them could climb a ladder, he laid out the shingle course pattern on each house just to about shoulder height. When they could reach no further, they would move on to the next house. Nick did this seven times on seven houses and got a big kick out of the three grandmothers who diligently finished each house as high as they could reach. Coming from the professional world of construction sites this was a first for him, and he enjoyed every minute of it.

Nick went on to work with us on Coho (1994), Innisfree (2003), Common Ground (2009) and Salish Way (2014)—38 houses for 38 families. He had a great work ethic, was a master at scheduling and sequencing tasks and loved all things associated with the puzzle of site layout. One of his fortes was getting the ground ready so the buildings could go up without hassle. He taught many a young person how to use instruments and tools and was forever chuckling at just how



creative people could be in getting it all messed up. Eventually everything got built and Nick maintained his sense of humor.

After we heard Nick passed away, a group of us broke out in song, *Take me Out to the Ball Game*. We sang our hearts out and cried and laughed. We were sad to hear about Nick's passing but so happy that his last night was spent doing one of the things he loved most—watching a good game of baseball with a friend and seeing his team win.

It's hard to imagine Nick being gone from this world. He was always so present—full of knowledge and willing to share a chuckle. Here's to Nick...may he always remain in our hearts.

Dumpstering by a Member

[One of our members, who won last year's Best Presentation at the Harvest Dinner, sent us the following update after seeing our presentation of "Just Eat It" at the Annual Meeting. He lives in Vancouver, BC.]

"By the way, here are several weeks' worth of free produce below from just one store, and I can't even take a quarter of what they throw away! Of today's haul: 2 bunches of organic broccolini, Rainbow chard, basil, thyme, a pile of conventional greens and more fresh mushrooms with barely a dimple—more than I could possibly use unless I want to make garlic roasted mushroom/ onion soup for 25 people! I took about 10 pounds worth, but left 3 banana boxes full, and tomorrow, Tuesday, is their big cull day! We can't eat all that they are throwing out. I routinely have gotten Copper River sockeye salmon and in-season halibut trims—fresh caught their day of arrival for either free or \$1 /pound. The muscle flesh is not 2" away from the trims...those fillets go for \$30-\$35/pound, and they don't have as many nutrients and Omega3 oils as the growing trim parts of the fish!"

"Today I also paid \$2.73 for a package of 3 fresh halibut fillets.... nothing wrong with them at all (no smell or odor, no few day's slime or condensation, nothing...just like the produce) except maybe the staff had nothing to add to the 1 halibut tail bone trim they wanted to package as trim....so they bulked up a small package with 3 other deboned halibut fillets from near the back tail...as most people prefer to buy the thicker, middle section steak cut of fish for \$32/lb, and these deboned fillets near the tail may take 3-4 more days to sell, but with another whole halibut coming tomorrow, they are just going to have more of the same...more thin fillets from front and back and more trim. Any extras I have, I give to two single working moms with kids to help cut down on their food bills."

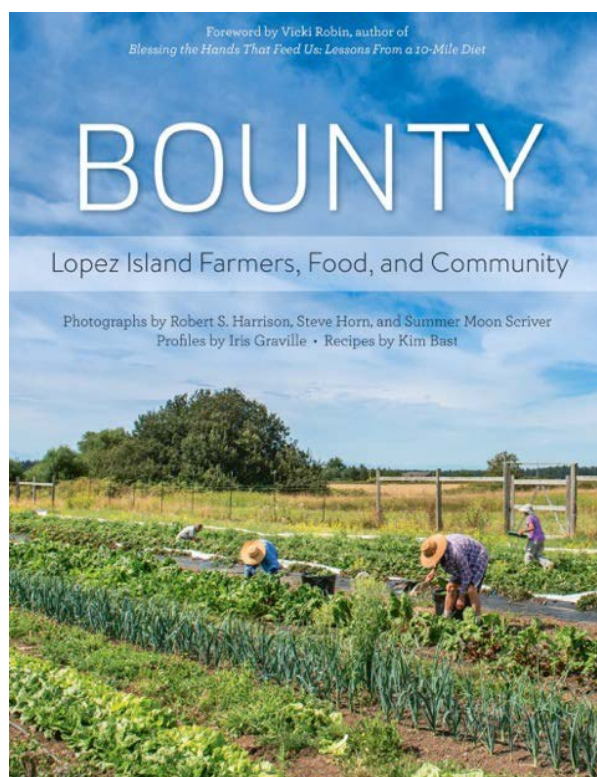
Cheers,
Harvey Chiang



Bounty Book Available at Harvest Dinner

by Iris Graville

Whidbey Island author Vicki Robin (*Blessing the Hands That Feed Us*) believes, "The end of a hoe is where hope begins." We agree, and we think you'll find plenty of hope in *BOUNTY: Lopez Island Farmers, Food, and Community*. This 124-page book combines photographs, profiles, and recipes for twenty-eight Lopez Island farms and farmers to present an intimate, behind-the-scenes view of what it takes to bring food from earth to table on Lopez Island. Scheduled for publication in October, *BOUNTY* is a community-funded project of LCLT and Lopez Locavores to help preserve the island's legacy of local food and farming. Project manager Sue Roundy guided a team of photographers (Robert S. Harrison, Steve Horn and Summer Moon Scriver), writer (Iris Graville), chef (Kim Bast), food stylist (Rachel Graville), book designer (Jane Jeszeck), and at least half a dozen (con't. p. 6)



BOUNTY BOOK: (con't.): volunteers to create a slide show, a photography exhibit, and now, the *BOUNTY* book. In the book's foreword, Vicki Robbin recounts how her own experiment to eat foods from within ten miles of home helped her bond with her community's farmers, forests and fields. Her efforts inspired our own challenge in 2013-14 to Lopez residents to eat locally and to recognize the bounty available here year round. Vicki writes that *BOUNTY*, "...now, in turn, feeds my hope and admiration." Additional advance praise comes from Ana Maria Spagna, author of *Potluck: Community on the Edge of Wilderness*: "These lively profiles show us the good people of Lopez Island building soil, fixing fences, tending herbs, baking bread, harvesting shellfish, staking vines, training apprentices, storing seeds, and staying up late reading by flashlight in the sheep barn, while the photos and recipes gorgeously display the fruits – and vegetables and meats and desserts – of all that labor. Like growing, preparing, and serving good food, this book is a work of beauty and generosity."

BOUNTY: Lopez Island Farmers, Food, and Community will be released at an event at Lopez Center for Community and the Arts on Friday, Oct. 21, 5-7 PM. For more information visit <https://lopezbounty.org>.



ANNOUNCING GRANTS RECEIVED: LCLT has been privileged to receive two generous grants this summer. The **Clif Bar Family Foundation** granted funds to LCLT for expanding use of the seed library. *Among the hundreds of proposals we have received, your organization stands out as one that will offer social and environmental change. We are confident that your work will continue to contribute to your communities.* The **Satterberg Foundation** <http://satterberg.org> granted funds to help us with the purchase of Stonecrest Farm. We are most grateful for this much needed support.

HARVEST DINNER—JOIN US!

BOUNTY BOOK RELEASE, SILENT AUCTION AND COMPELLING MOVIE SHORTS!

**SATURDAY OCTOBER 22, 2016, 5 P.M.
Lopez Center for Community and the Arts**

Doors open at **5:00 p.m.** **Silent Auction begins.**
Judging of dishes ends at 6:10. Dinner begins soon after.
Special Presentation not to be missed at 7:30!

Everyone is welcome! Please bring your own plates and cutlery and a potluck dish of local foods. Prizes are awarded to dishes for best presentation and best use of local foods.

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