



THE VALLEY COMMITTEE LAND TRUST NEWS

February, 1980

BOARD MEETING, JAN. 9, 1980

Present at this meeting, which was at Standing Stone Farm, was Pam Roberts, Betsy Corner, Timberly Otto, Maarten vandeKamp & James Propert. Absent was Andy Ferguson, Wally Nelson, Myrna Breitbart and Nancy Bair. (In her absence, Nancy Bair was given the task of putting out the newsletter.)

The Bake Sale netted \$38.00. More pick-up points and at least one weeks' notice would be advisable for the next time.

Mt. Toby Meeting was to be given a presentation by the Land Trust Jan. 27. Betsy Corner took responsibility.

The General Membership Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 3 at 7:30pm. It will be in the Cooperative Extension Meeting Room, 33 King St., Northampton. Prior to the business meeting, members of the VCLT will present a program on solar houses, underground houses, solar retrofit on existing houses and conservation will be discussed. This meeting will also be open to the public.

The Treasurer's Report was approximately \$200.00.

The Land Use Comm. will look at a piece of land and make a recommendation to the board.

The Lease Comm. and Land Use met to discuss ratios between different categories of land.

BOARD MEETING, FEB. 5, 1980

Since the newsletter goes to print before this meeting, the following are proposed agenda items:

- General meeting, March 3, 1980, 'Hamp
- Semi-annual meeting in April
- Committee Reports
- VCLT Brochure
- Mortgages for lessees
- Other

LESSEE MEETING, FEB. 1, 1980

Bob Baty, Ray Kutyllo, Timberly Otto, Betsy Corner and Randy Kehler met to discuss various items, among them how to best manage and use the woodlot. Ray and Timmie have asked for permission from the lessees to use part of the gravel pit for an ethanol still. Approval has been granted pending submission of specific plans and location. Several area farmers are interested in having ethanol to run their farm machinery and have pledged grain. If asked, the Conway School of Landscape Design will do a sketch problem of the gravel pit which will give expert information on drainage, grading, placement of building, etc.

MEMBERSHIP

Annual dues of \$5.00 were due in Oct. 1979. If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter and be an active VCLT member, please send \$5 to Steve Morgan, Box 213, Sunderland, Mass. 01375



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Howard Dairyman

LAND USE COMMITTEE REPORT

Active members are Ray Kutyllo, Betsy Corner, Carolyn Harper, Kim Rosen, Andy Ferguson and Tommy Thompson.

The Land Use Committee (LUC) has been working jointly with the Lease Committee in developing a system for classifying woodlands, open lands, streams, swamps, etc. for lease-fee valuations. We wish to value land for this purpose according to its productive value, rather than the speculative or development value commonly used by assessors.

The process is not yet complete. The proposal presently being considered for open land is to define four categories as follows:

- A. Prime bottom land
- B. Prime hill land/forage crop
- C. Tillable pasure land
- D. Permanent pasture

The relative values of these four would be taken from the average productive values listed under Chapter 61A, the Farm-land Assessment Act.

Woodlands are particularly interesting in terms of lease-fee valuations, since they already contain valuable materials at the time the land enters the Trust. This original value - standing cordwood and saw-timber- is not a product of the lessees' labor, and can be distinguished from future growth, the quality of which will depend largely on the management efforts of the lessees.

The working proposal for woodland lease fees is that the Land Trust charge a flat rate for all wooded acreage. Lessees on a given parcel are expected to manage the entire woodlot in common, as this is the most productive and responsible practice from a forestry point of view. The lease fee entitles lessees to cut their own household fuelwood. Any cutting of sawtimber or of fuelwood for sale would be compensated by paying the Land Trust a stumpage fee at the going rate. Whatever is cut must fit into the overall forest-management plan based on the advice of a professional forester and be agreed upon by the lessees of the parcel.

Our consulting forester, Tommy Thompson, is in the process of cruising the woods at Colrain I and Colrain II to begin the process of developing forest-management plans

LOAN FUND COMMITTEE REPORT

In the last newsletter a by-law to set up a Loan Fund Committee was proposed. This by-law was voted on and approved, with minor changes, as the Annual Meeting in October.

Since that time the Board has appointed three persons to the Committee: George Benello, Matthew Leighton and Pam Roberts. George is the bookkeeper for the Committee and Pam is the Board representative.

In the next month we will be coming up with some operating guidelines, a sample note of promise to loan money and a bank account to hold our current \$1700 in loans.

Because the Committee is mandated to have between 3-5 members, we are looking for two more persons, preferably with fund-raising or financial skills, or with community-related interests and contacts. Then we will be ready to receive no- and low-interest loans and promises to loan.

If anyone is interested in being on the Loan Fund Committee or in loaning money, please contact Pam at 625-2402.

LEASE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Lease Committee has been meeting steadily over the last several months in an attempt to arrive at reasonable and fair lease fees and leases. It's been a slow process with little precedent to guide us.

We discussed at length what we wanted the lease fee to do: allow people with no capitol money or high paying jobs to live on and use the land, prevent speculation on buildings, help buy additional land for the trust, encourage best use of the land, etc.

Steve Morgan hit on the idea of assigning varying numerical values to different pieces of land depending upon it's potential. Then multiplying the unit number of the land by the number of acres of that type of land. We are close to designating ratios between types of land which means we are close to determinig actual fees and beginning to collect them.

We are also working on leases for Ray and Timberly, Bob Baty and Betsy and Randy.

Pam Roberts will soon be working with the Loan Fund Committee and Steve Morgan will be on the Membership Committee. Nancy Bair, Ed Wierzbowski and Juanita Nelson remain.

THE GRAHAM CENTER SEED DIRECTORY

Spring will come! Before ordering seeds from Burpee (owned by General Foods) or Ferry-Morse (owned by Purex) consider supporting the few remaining small, family-operated businesses across the country. In the Graham Center Seed Directory many sources of old, traditional varieties of fruit, nut, herb, flower and vegetable seeds are listed. It also contains a seed-saving chart, and a wonderful essay on seeds and the crisis in American agriculture. The Graham Center is a demonstration farm and training center operated by the Rural Advancement Fund. Their address is: Frank Proter Graham Center, Route 3 Box 95, Wadesboro, N.C. 28170. The Directory costs \$1.00! Bountiful Gardens!

BULK PURCHASE ORDER

Anyone interested in going in on a Natural Organic Farmer's Assn. (NOFA) bulk purchase order for gardening or farming supplies, please contact Timberly or Ray at 624-8858 before Feb. 22.

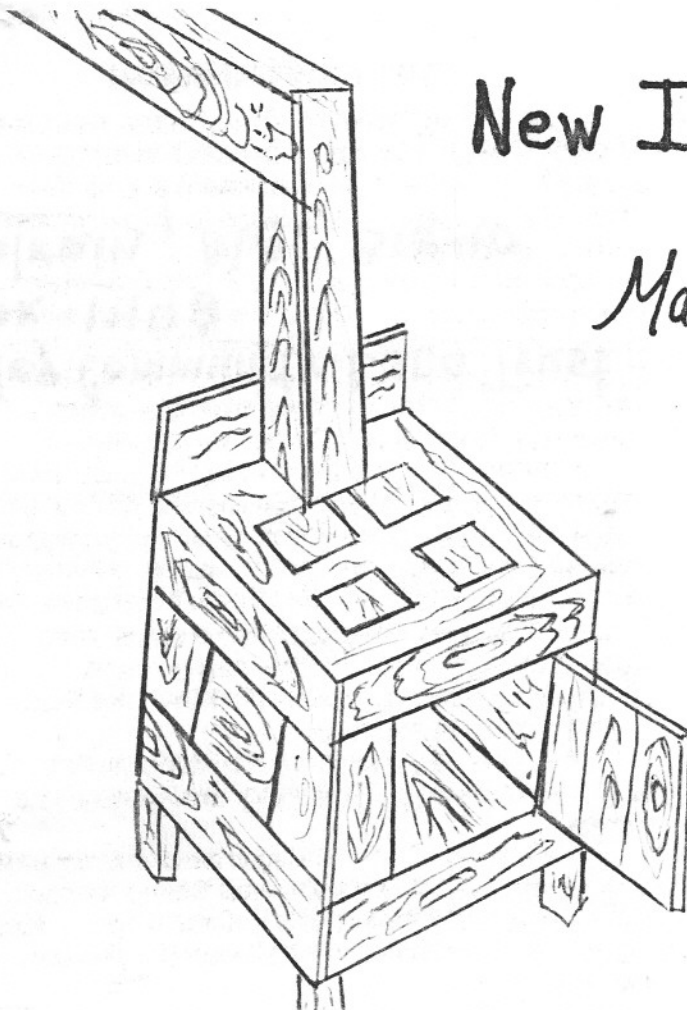
FARMERS MEETING ON ENERGY IN AGRICULTURE

This meeting will be held at the Greenfield Community College Lecture Hall, Thurs., Feb. 21 at 7:00pm. Farmers across the country are using conservation, solar energy, methane and alcohol to meet their own energy needs & to stabilize farm costs. Slide show, discussion and practical plans. Child care and refreshments provided.

VITALS

BORN - Lillian Parish Kehler to Randy Kehler and Betsy Corner on October 25, 1979 at 12:18pm.

MARRIED - Timberly Susan Otto and Raymond Kutyllo of Standing Stone Farm, Colrain on January 26, 1980.



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