

Friends of TWCF MINUTES

February 11, 2020.

Silvano's Apartment at TWCF

Attending: Donna, Tatum, Toby, Barb, Silvano

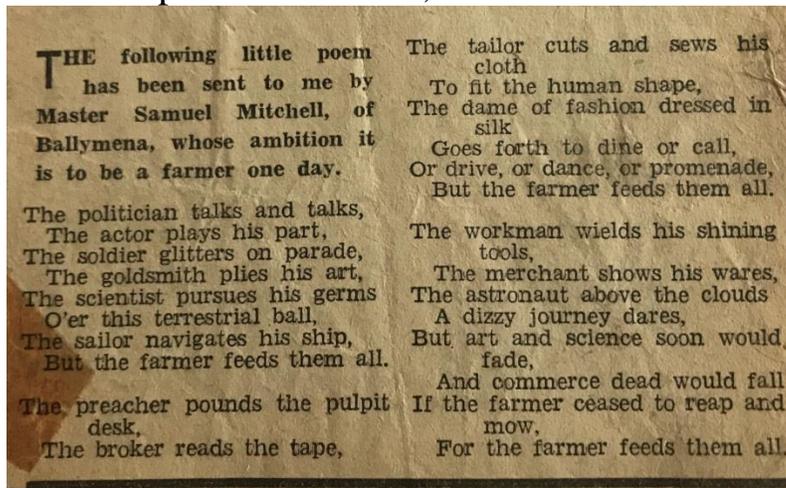
Action items are highlighted in yellow.

10:30am Opening:

Riley lit the Candle

Silvano read two poems:

The Indispensable Farmer, and Mother Teresa's *Anyway*



People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered;

Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;

Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;

Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;

Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

The Indispensable Farmer should be hanging in our farm store....

Silvano presented his report:

- He will be going to Italy week after next, for one week, to visit his father who is in poor health. He hasn't been to Italy for 25 years. He's going with Rosie who organized the trip. Alayna will be gone next week.
- The farm is now on 100% wind energy (Credo) and Silvano has a poster to hang in the farm store.
- There is a new notice on the milk fridge reminding everyone that 'raw milk is not pasteurized' and will contain the potentially dangerous organisms that pasteurization removes.
- Dane and Maija milk the cows every Thursday and Fri, which enables Silvano to sleep until 6:30 rather than 4:30. They are paid a pittance for this and sometimes don't show up. When they do show up, everything runs smoothly – they are a valuable asset – so we should pay them enough that they show up every time!
(When Dane resigned didn't want any pay at all, he only wanted milk, eggs, and BD preps. Silvano and Benjamin recommended he receive full pay in recognition of his time with the farm, but the BOD decided on ½ pay. Starting in March, Dane and Maija will milk once a week (Sunday) in return for milk, eggs, and BD preps.)
- Both Dane and Jacob would be valuable stand-ins when either Silvano or Elad need time off. During haying season, the herdsman needs help more than 1 time per week! **Silvano recommends we keep the adverts alive until we find additional apprentices.** Elad especially will need more than one! We need younger farmers!
- Alayna had some free time this week so Silvano asked her to start making potting soil.
- Silvano had originally asked that his compensation include rent. The apartment used to generate \$1200/month in rent. Before Dane hooked up with Maija they were each going to pay \$400 and share the apartment. Now, Silvano pays \$500/mo and TWCF absorbs the rest.
- Health insurance for Silvano would cost \$9000/year! He cannot afford that! **We must get the members to pass a fair budget!**
- On the good side, Silvano helped unload one of the café's deliveries and noticed that some of their ingredients – rice and flour – are now organic. He had a short conversation with Sandy who did not want to spend an extra \$4000 on butter. He again suggested they provide two totally organic options for each meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner) for those who want it. That would show them what their customers truly want. **We need to continue to pressure the cafe to change.** I just checked their menu and the only organic ingredient listed is chicken.

When I asked Silvano to describe his day he says he gets up at 4:30 and starts work at 5:15. He gets no snow days or sick days. Milking the cows is the easiest part of his day. The hard part is feeding, bedding, cleaning and collecting manure. And haying! When Silvano gets back from Italy, Barb will ask Alayna to document the day with photos to share with the members.

We asked when the new apprentice, Trey, would be starting and Silvano thought it was the end of March. Tatum asked whether anyone had asked Trey what was the best way to communicate with him (he seemed to prefer communicating with Alayna over Silvano or Elad) so Donna will broach the subject with him. Once Trey starts, we need to create a profile for him on the farm website.

Barb asked Silvano why he left Italy, since all the glyphosate-free grain sold by Healthy Traditions comes from there, and he explained that 20 years ago the EU banned one pesticide that's still in use in the US, as well as glyphosate. He also said that in Europe, a manufacturer has to prove their product is safe, whereas in the US they have to prove it's not safe.

The new egg signs in the farm store were made by Silvano! They have not tested the new grain for pesticide residue so Toby will dowse it. (She told me everything tested 'green' except for one grain and some eggs that tested blue/green!) One reason the farm left "Bob" is that he retired and passed his business on to someone else, and we do not know what the new owner's philosophy is regarding pesticide use. Bob *did* use some pesticides, small amounts in some areas. Certified organic also allows over 100 chemicals but, it's our only option. Of the two farms available, the one in Vermont was deemed unacceptable based on their reputation with other local farmers so we went with the one in Maine.

Tatum presented her idea for using the money we earned from selling t-shirts: she'd like to build a picnic table under the oak tree by the apprentice house for farm members to use. If it's build into the hill, with a short side and a tall side, children can easily sit on the short side. She'd like it to be handmade with a live edge. Silvano said it would be easy to build. Tatum will source the wood, starting with the place where Silvano got the wood for the loafing shed roof. The new table will represent UBUNTU – we are human because of other humans. The bench will encourage interaction, especially on those days when the café is closed.

Silvano thought we could organize pizza days/nights on those days the café is closed....

Regarding t-shirts for the pledge meeting, Tatum says there isn't time to pull an order together. We will shoot to have order forms available for the pledge meeting, and will include a 'coloring sheet' of Rosie's cow design.

Tatum asked Silvano whether he wanted Bee Hotels in his fields and he thought they were a good idea (he said he only builds single family houses, to which Tatum responded that we would build a Bee Village of single family homes!) At this point a large delivery truck pulled up and Silvano had to leave. We need to insure he understands that WE will build the houses, not him. We just need permission from the farmers to place them around the pastures and fields. Tatum will compose a letter asking for permission.

Our next topic was our acronym, FOTFA. We have found that in practice, it's too hard to say, "Friends" so we are reverting to FOTFA.

Barb presented a synopsis of her conversation with Brian and we discussed those parts of the proposed budget she was confused by. We still don't understand why the payment to ECF was increased by \$6000 this year. Barb will get clarification at the next board meeting. Everyone agrees we must educate our members on the need to raise the pledge amount *at least \$40, preferably more.* Toby shared that she will be refinancing her house and using part of the savings to increase her pledge with is already more than the average. This is a GREAT example of the changes people can make to enable them to give the farm more! Donna reminded us that we need to encourage people to remember the farm in their will.

We all agree we need a way to contact members without getting approval from the board. Barb will broach the subject at the next board meeting.

Toby shared that she will be resigning from the ECF. We hope they'll find another woman to replace her. Neither Barb nor Tatum is interested.

Before we closed, we decided we would plan a small party for Dane to thank him for the years he gave to the farm. Donna will talk to the apprentices about holding a potluck in the apprentice house, and whether there is anything they know of that Dane and Maija could use in their new yurt.

Barb read “Let Go of the Banana” by Deborah Adele

I am fascinated by an ancient process of capturing monkeys in India.In this process, small cages with narrow bars are made and a banana is placed inside the cage. The monkeys come along, reach in between the bars, and grab the banana. Then the monkeys begin the impossible task of trying to pull the banana through the bars. And here is the amazing thing – at the moment when the monkeys' catchers come along, the monkeys are totally free. There is nothing keeping them from running off to safety as they hear danger approach. All they have to do is to let go of the banana. Instead, they refuse to release the banana and are easily taken into captivity.”

~The Yamas and Niyamas by Deborah Adele

Eliza blew out the candle.

The meeting ended at 12:00 but we hung around to share vanilla pudding brought by Tatum.

Next meeting March 10, 2020