By Marge Pitts

We hear the word frequently nowadays: “The earth is experiencing the most violent storms, ever... the warm-est temperatures... swiftest glacial meltdown... fastest rate of extinctions... highest energy prices... most expensive war... vilest political leadership... the most ominous mess of global developments, ever...”

If such things are all we can expect in the future, then “ever” probably won’t last very long. Maybe there won’t even be an “ever,” at least not one with healthy human societies in it. Some people relish the thought of the end of history, believing themselves to be somehow chosen to escape the suffering. Others find the thought that the Creator would abort this experiment just as humanity begins to wake up to our essential role in it to be, well, out of character for a Creator.

Fortunately, there is an alternative to a bleak vision of “ever.” Look no further than Troy Gardens. Local, sustainable food production, from both farming and gardening. A learning community where people of all ages and backgrounds can share knowledge, inspiration, fun and support among all who come to it. Participatory democracy that really works over the long haul. An embracing and open attitude toward diversity. Kindness and sharing, both of resources and responsibilities. A land ethic that values wildlife and natural ecosystems within our cities as well as in the wilderness. The willingness to roll up our sleeves and pitch in to make it happen and keep it going.

If there is to be an “ever” that we can live with, it will by default have to look something like Troy Gardens.

In this issue we will consider the changes that are inevitably coming to the world as we know it. (See page 5.)

We’ll also take a look at how FTG’s learning community is beginning to perform some of our work offsite, increasing our impact in the community (See page 4).

The time has come for the Friends of Troy Gardens to become stable and financially secure enough to address the challenges, both ordinary and profound, that face us. We need support, especially from individuals and businesses in our Northside community. We need people and yes, money, to continue the work we have started. To facilitate this, we have launched a new website, www.friendsoftroygardens.org, where people can become members, buy related products, and donate to the organization online.

If we want a solution to the aforementioned challenges, as ugly as they are utterly true, we need to support it with our hearts, our hands, and our money. For now, and for ever.
You’re Invited!

Friends of Troy Gardens Year-End Celebration!

Monday, Dec. 10, 6pm—9pm
Lakeview Lutheran Church,
4001 Mandrake Rd.
(Mandrake Rd. at Northport Dr.)

FTG Annual Business Meeting—6-6:30pm
Potluck Buffet—bring a dish to pass & include a note describing what it is
Silent Auction—call 243-8988 to donate items!
The evening’s entertainment will feature:
  2007 slide show with program highlights
  Music & reading from new CD “Troy Gardens Journal”
  Special awards ceremony
  DOOR PRIZES!

MACLT Annual Meeting

DATE: Thursday, December 13, 5pm to 7pm
PLACE: Marigold Kitchen, 118 S. Pinckney

In addition to enjoying food, fellowship and fundraising, we will proudly

● Honor individuals who have greatly contributed to MACLT in the past year
● Announce an award that MACLT has received for Troy Gardens homes
● Make public the final architectural plans for the Community Center at Troy Gardens
● See you there!

Share the Love—And Your Photos, Essays & Poems!

Troy Gardens is more than a geographic place—it’s also a personal space of great meaning in the hearts and minds of the individuals who use it. Friends of Troy Gardens produces several newsletters and informational pieces throughout the year. We’re looking for photos, essays and poems submitted by anyone who has a relationship with this beautiful land, and the revolutionary urban experiment it represents.

Email words and pictures to Marge Pitts at the address below, or send them to FTG, 3601 Memorial Dr., Suite 4, Madison, WI 53704. Your thoughts and talents matter so much more when you share them.

Photo by John Beck

Troy Gardens is where; these pages are how.
This year Friends of Troy Gardens partnered with our neighbors at Vera Court to make our summer fundraiser a broad Northside festival, benefiting both organizations.

Music, food, kids’ games, cooking & craft demonstrations and a raffle enticed people out of the air conditioning and into the breezy sunshine of a splendid summer day.

Several local businesses sponsored the event, and festival goers helped the bottom line by lining up for sandwiches, eggrolls and vegetable ratatouille from the “Troy Cafe” food stand. Ale Asylum, a Northside brewery, donated two kegs of delicious beer, which was much relished by many of the grown-ups.

Savor the memories this winter—and we’ll see you all next summer!

Take a slope, add a hose and a plastic sheet: SLIPPY SLIDE!

Photo by Jill Schneider

Many Thanks to Our Northside Savor the Summer Festival Sponsors!

CUNA MUTUAL GROUP
MADISON GAS & ELECTRIC
Northside TownCenter
Hooper Corporation
St. Mary’s Hospital
Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisc.
Great Dane Pub & Brewing Company
Willy Street Co-op
Webcrafters
M & I Bank
Northeast Family Medical Center
Just Coffee
Harmony Veterinary Services
Olds Seeds
Aliant Energy
Wisconsin Printing
Ziegler Design Associates
Goodland Tree Works
Princeton Club
Essen Haus German Restaurant
Ruby Marie Hotel
Taste of Asia Restaurant
Ale Asylum Brewery
Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream

“Troy Gardens Journal” CD Coming Soon!

Troy Gardens inspires us all. If we are writers, the gardens make us write. If we’re musicians, the gardens bring us new songs. The upcoming CD, A Troy Gardens Journal, will contain spoken excerpts from Marge Pitts’s collection of essays by the same name, enhanced by six original songs written and performed by Maury Smith, who is also producing the project.

The CD’s 12 tracks document the passage of the seasons at Troy, and cast a glance back to our organization’s origins. They also offer us a slice of hope: In these times when “the big garden” looks rather bleak, we celebrate the solace found in relationships, in community, and in our “little gardens” at Troy.

The CD will be available soon on our new e-commerce website, www.friendsoftroygardens.org. Proceeds from this project will help support the work of the Friends of Troy Gardens.

Hannah Lavold organized fun & games for the little ones.

Photo by Marge Pitts

“Troy Gardens Journal” CD
Music By Maury Smith

By Marge Pitts
Page 3
TROY GARDENS LEARNING COMMUNITY

In 12 hours of work, eight adjudicated youth built an excellent path through a small forest adjacent to Troy Gardens.

The youth were enrolled in the SPRITE program—Support, Perseverance, Respect, Initiative, Teamwork and Education—a short term, high impact, adventure-based education program designed to teach delinquent youth the skills necessary for successful reintegration into their home communities.

Troy’s Education Program Director, Nathan Larson, successfully pursued a grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board for a three-year project to create a Community Forest & Outdoor Classroom, on state-owned land just west of the cinder lane that marks the western boundary of Troy Gardens.

Here, where huge tamarack trees loom over an understory of maple saplings alongside a small marsh, Troy Gardens will teach a place-based, year round forest education curriculum.

Under the tamaracks, a small area will be cleared and fallen logs dragged into a circle to provide seating for students and teachers—and you might not be able to tell which is which.

In this learning community, Troy’s Farm & Field teens will collaborate with staff, interns, and college students both undergraduate and graduate, to create a vibrant curriculum, teaching and learning from each other.

This delightful path was designed by Zeigler Design Associates, the landscape architecture company that designed the natural areas at Troy Gardens. In fact, Ziegler Design Associates received a 2007 Merit Award for Troy Gardens, from the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The trail loops through the forest and marsh, with quirky amenities like a dead tree, full of life as dead trees are, leaning across the path; and a huge decaying maple log with a “window” chain-sawed into its side to allow exploration of the wonders within.

Local dog-walkers and nature lovers have already discovered this new jewel in the crown of natural trails that make the Troy Gardens neighborhood one of the most beautiful and livable places in the world.

The “added value” of an outdoor classroom and the learning community that will use it will protect this gorgeous little woods from ever being “developed” out of existence. A very good outcome for all of us!

WE SALUTE OUR SUPPORTERS

Alliant Energy Foundation
American Girl’s Fund for Children
Bradshaw Knight Foundation
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Community Action Coalition
Dane County Youth Commission
David S. Bourne Foundation
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Joan Collins through Madison Community Foundation
John C. Bock Foundation
Madison Community Foundation
Starbucks Foundation
The Capital Times Kids’ Fund
Willy Street Co-op
Wisconsin Environmental Education Board
Wisconsin State Journal Youth Services

We have TWO websites! Get to know us at www.troygardens.org.
The Friends of Troy Gardens is happy to welcome Bob Gragson to the helm as Executive Director. Bob comes from Mendocino County, California, where most recently he was Executive Director of the Solar Living Institute.

Bob’s lifelong familiarity with the oil industry evolved into an awareness of oil depletion, the inevitable downside of immense economies relying on a non-renewable resource for most of their energy. Bob sees it coming, more clearly than most of us. “Oil depletion will have dramatic effects on the way we live,” Bob says. “And one of the biggest changes will be how we get our food.”

That’s what has drawn him to relocate here. With its thriving Community Supported Agriculture farms, strong public interest in community gardens and farmers’ markets, and the focus of numerous departments within the University of Wisconsin, Dane County is becoming a leader in this new (actually, ancient) model of agriculture. “The food security movement is very strong in this area,” Bob observes, “and I just want to be a part of it.”

By Bob Gragson

“Peak oil,” once only a term used by petroleum geologists, refers to the time when our world reaches its maximum rate of oil extraction. Then, for geologic reasons, the amount of oil available to us will decline. Many agree this will happen during the next two or three decades; others (like this writer) believe it is happening now. The consequences may be severe since we are so dependent on oil for transportation, agriculture, plastics, and chemicals. A long adjustment process will be required.

When first hearing of this, most people assume it is an isolated problem with a simple solution. Nothing could be further from the truth. For 150 years, oil has influenced our infrastructure, transportation, manufacturing, and food production. World population exploded because of this inexpensive energy. Oil’s effects are far-reaching.

Oil is not the only important depleting resource. Natural gas has peaked in North America and coal will peak in 10-20 years. Because fossil fuels supply much of the world’s energy, peaks in these fuels ensure our energy supply will contract regardless of development of other energy sources.

In his new book, *Peak Everything*, Richard Heinberg discusses how the amount of our available energy has shaped the illusion that our resources are infinite. (*Peak Everything* is available from our new Internet store at [www.friendsoftroygardens.org](http://www.friendsoftroygardens.org)). He describes how we will see peaks in other areas: uranium, copper, zinc, platinum, silver, gold, grain, fresh water availability, arable land for food, population, and more. As he clearly shows, we are over consuming our supply of resources and approaching overall societal contraction.

As the availability of energy resources peaks, our consumption levels, economic growth, mobility, technological change, and political stability will be affected. All are related to energy availability and finite resources. Once we accept these resources becoming less available, it is easier to understand this century will involve contraction and simplification.

The suggestion that we are near the peak of population and consumption levels for all of human history isn’t easy to understand or accept, says Heinberg. Most people are in denial when confronted with this. However, a decline in these levels could result in more stable societies focusing on village life, extended families, and local production for local consumption. Our survival task for the decades ahead must be transitioning away from use of fossil fuels as peacefully, fairly, and wisely as possible.

Without oil (for transportation and agriculture), natural gas (for heating, chemicals, and fertilizers), and coal (for power generation), the global economy will suffer. While these fuels won’t disappear instantly, we can avoid global economic meltdown by reducing our reliance on these resources before depletion and scarcity.

We must make fossil-fuel use reduction our primary goal. This means finding more local ways to feed ourselves. Local community gardening and community supported agriculture programs (CSAs) like those operated by Friends of Troy Gardens are part of the solution.

The 21st century will involve huge adjustments for everyone. New strategies will have to be developed in agriculture, transportation, public health, and resource management. The education that Friends of Troy Gardens provides is critical to this transition.
George Tyson won first prize in Troy Gardens 2006 Harvest Festival Pie-Baking Contest, with an apple-rhubarb pie sweetened with xylitol, a sweetener derived from birch trees with 60% fewer calories than sugar. In fact, George does many things well, often using his unconventional wisdom that grew from his happy childhood spent on a farm. George recalls, “I learned so much from nature: how to read the seasons and from the habits of animals.” Now, he says, “We have to go back and retreat and see what we missed. Nature has been speaking to us, but we haven’t been listening.” George was featured in an article written by John Bell in the August, 07 issue of Digging In, the newsletter of Troy Community Gardens, past issues of which can be seen on our website by clicking the Community Gardens tab. George has much more to say than one article could convey, so we asked him to speak for himself as a Troy Gardens Neighbor.

By George Tyson

My wife and I have had Troy Community Gardens Plot 23 - D for the last two years. That 1/100th of an acre has given me a chance to experiment. My past experience was on the family homestead in Dodge county from 1945 to 1970 as a fourth generation farmer, the first being William Tyson in 1848.

My goal at Troy Gardens was to measure how many pounds of raw vegetables I could harvest on this 400 square foot plot. Most importantly, no pesticides are used in my plot. Today, our two freezers are packed to the top with highly nutritious, vitamin-rich, safe, organic, garden-ripened and kitchen-ready packages.

Each year I make a mixture of 1 cup flaxseed oil (or used fryer oil), 1 cup hydrogen peroxide (20% solution which I purchase from Sally’s Beauty Supply store), and 2 cups water. I apply this to the soil in early spring; once the plants come up I add blood meal to the mixture and spray it on the plants twice during the growing season. This both fertilizes the soil and reduces disease bacteria among the plants. Ten dollars buys a year’s supply.

I believe in starting each day with an 8 oz. glass of juice, with all of the pulp in it. We make a blend of at least 50% tomatoes, some berry juice from grapes (both concord and wild) as well as elderberry, also any other berries (all organic). We add some apple, rhubarb or pear, then we pulp and freeze it to use during the eight months of November to June. We supply 60% of our meals with food and drink we have prepared from scratch, from raw fruits and vegetables.

Nature is the answer to most of our real needs, first for our bodies and minds, but also for the fuels for our cars and trucks. Through experimentation I was able to secure three patents. The latest was in January of 1998, which has led to a what is called the Tyson Process, to convert agricultural and forestry cellulose, including all yard and organic city wastes, as well as food, plant and farm residues into either fuel-grade ethanol or a white, powdery substance called Polyfi that can be used as a fiber additive to food or, with plastic resins, a component of building materials. Wisconsin is destined to receive five years of funding, to get such projects up and proven. These are closed-loop refineries that run on the very fuel they produce. They could be built in every city, to provide clean ethanol fuel from that city’s wastes and from rural farms close to the facility.

I wish to thank everyone associated with Troy Gardens for accepting my wife’s and my participation. We learn from everyone who works to make it successful. We loved to see the joyful children learning how to make apple cider with Jill and Kurt Schneider at the Harvest Festival, creating memories that they will carry with them for a lifetime. The children’s garden is such an excellent educational program ongoing daily all summer, teaching the simple magic of nature, as seeds turn to edible food and plants are a rare beauty. Hurrah for Nathan Larson’s (Troy Education Program Director) and his volunteers’ work with groups of all ages.

Now for a winter of safe toxin-free vegetable and fruit juice, salsa, com on the cob, onion and tomato soup.

Good health to all and thanks to everyone.
URBAN ROOTS:
TROY COMMUNITY FARM

By Claire Strader, Troy Farm Manager

This winter Troy Farm Assistant Jake Hoeksema and I will be working on a long-term plan for the farm, with three main goals. The first is to improve both the quality and quantity of our vegetables so that we may be able to feed more people one day. The second is to improve our training programs for interns, worker shares and high school youth so that participants learn valuable food production skills and contribute to increased productivity on the farm. And the third is to filter the first two goals through the lens of long-term sustainability so that we minimize outside inputs and maximize self-sufficiency. It’s a tall order, which is exactly why it’s a long-term plan.

Once we have all the ideas out on the table, we’ll analyze them for environmental sustainability. And finally we will organize all the information into a comprehensive chart and establish a timeline for changes. Exciting!

Every winter I work on improving our systems, adding new vegetables to the shares, and better educating our interns. Never before have I undertaken to examine and record the many variables that go into making these improvements. Both Jake and I like to have solid plans so that we are more likely to succeed with implementation, so this project is perfect for us. It will comprise the bulk of our winter work, when we’re not growing and selling more sprouts, ordering seeds, repairing equipment, designing new market signs, and all the other odds and ends that have piled up over the farming season. I think we might sleep a little later into the dark, cold mornings as well!

DIGGING IN:
TROY COMMUNITY GARDENS

Thanks to the hard work of several gardeners, led by Kurt Schneider, John Bell and Alex Metz, a three-part containment bin for compost, leaf mulch and dead plants was completed at Troy Community Gardens in September. Financial support for this project came from a Community Development Block Grant through the Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin.

Due to the high cost of contracting to haul away the previous weed pile where the bin was to be built, the volunteer team contacted the grounds crew at Mendota Mental Health Institute to see if they could help out. Mendota’s staff didn’t have the equipment to remove the enormous weed pile, but they generously donated their time and their Bobcat to move the pile off to the side so the bins could be constructed. With the week pile out of the way, it was full speed ahead setting the posts and then assembling the sides. Finishing touches of lattice work at the top of the bins and caps on the posts will have to wait until next year when we have more funds.

The Northside Planning Council & Northside News present
Fifth Annual
North Star Awards
A Community Celebration

To recognize those who make the Northside the great place it is, the Northside Planning Council invites you to join them in honoring this year’s North Star Award Winners

Friday, December 7, 6:00–7:30pm
Warner Park Community Recreation Center
1625 Northport Drive
Everyone is invited!
Looking for the perfect gift?

Visit the new e-commerce website for Troy Gardens products—including T-shirts, tote bags, greeting cards, and coming soon, *Troy Gardens Journal*, a cd of spoken word and music by and for friends of Troy Gardens.

WWW.FRIENDSOFTROYGARDENS.ORG

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Yes! I want to join the Friends of Troy Gardens

Your membership will help us to create a learning community at Troy Gardens, and to establish sustainable, participatory stewardship of this land and its resources for future generations.

Members receive the *Troy Gardens Gazette* as well as notices of events, volunteer opportunities and educational programs.

Please join us online at www.friendsoftroygardens.org, or send your tax-deductible membership gift with this form to:

Friends of Troy Gardens
3601 Memorial Dr.
Bldg. 14, Rm. 171
Madison, WI 53704

Name_________________________________
Address_______________________________
City______________State_________Zip_____ 
Phone________________________________
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Legacy Society.........$10,000.00
Heritage Society.........5,000.00
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Gardens Benefactor.......1,000.00
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Low income memberships available, call 240-0409

Memberships of $100 or more will receive a copy of Richards Heinberg’s book

*Peak Everything*