



Ozaukee Living Local

Working collaboratively for a more resilient and sustainable future.

New Year, New Living Local

Did you notice a slight change to this month's Living Local newsletter? I'll give you a clue: the words "Port Washington" have been removed from the title and replaced by "Ozaukee."

There's a story here.

Back in September when Pat & Amy Wilborn of PortFish, Ltd. asked me to put together a newsletter to promote local food, we were also already part of a group of people brought together by Steve Sandlin of Afterglow Farms who were interested in bringing Transition to Port Washington. This group was just forming and not ready to start on this large of a project; however, we knew we wanted the newsletter to embody aspects of the Transition

Movement.

You may have noticed that "transition" has always been in the tagline of the newsletter—linked to the Transition Milwaukee website. Well, it is now linked to [Transition Ozaukee](http://TransitionOzaukee)—a grass roots movement working collaboratively for a more resilient and sustainable future.

Why the change?

One reason was the ability to go beyond just addressing local food and move to the broader topic of re-localizing our community. The other reason was the ability to involve our broader community in the project—particularly because several members of

the Transition group resided outside of Port Washington.

You may be wondering, "What is **Transition Ozaukee** about?" It's about building community, making connections, sharing knowledge and rebuilding and re-localizing our local economies. It's about embracing a cultural shift to live more sustainably and locally.

Why do we want to address these things? Because we can't wait for government to address climate change, peak oil and a volatile economy. Because we want a better way of living for ourselves and our children—and our children's children—now. Because we recognize that by building a

Continued on page 2

Storing Food for the Winter By Steve Sandlin

With a growing awareness of the importance and necessity of a strong and vibrant local food system, those of us who live in the north are faced with a unique challenge: where and how do we get access to fresh local vegetables during our long winter months?

Farmers in the early part of the last century were intimately familiar with this dilemma. When the current trend of shipping vegetables from warmer parts of the world was simply not an option, if one wanted radishes in the dead of winter, they had to come from local farmers who had the foresight to develop systems of season extension and root vegetable storage.

Farmers in communities such as the town of Lake, the part of Milwaukee which is now the General Mitchell Airport, grew vegetables in steam heated, wood and glass cold frames or used the heat from horse manure to generate enough warmth to grow vegetables during the long Wisconsin winters. In addition, large quantities of root crops and hard cabbage were stored in low tech root cellars.

Continued on Page 2

Volume 2, Issue 1

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February Events

- **2/2 Riveredge Fiber Guild;** Knit, crochet, spin or weave! 6-8pm; Free; www.riveredge.us
- **2/8; Share the Earth Environmental Film Series Presents: *Think Global, Act Rural*;** 7-9pm at the UWM Union Theatre
- **2/8 Making Bone Broth Soups from Scratch;** noon -2; \$25 Fee slowpokeslocalfood.com
- **2/18 Green Up Your Winter Blues Garden Seminar;** Various Garden Workshops from local experts; 8am-3pm at the Oz. Co. Courthouse; Register by 1/13 at portgardenclub.org or contact Tom Hudson at (262) 284-1948
- **2/18 Edible Gardening for Sustainability;** Seed Starting Basics with Gretchen Mead of the Victory Garden Initiative; Gretchen.mead@victorygardeninginitiative.org
- **2/23-1/25 MOSES Organic Farming Conference;** La Crosse, WI; www.mosesorganic.org
- **2/25 Port Washington IndoorFarmer's Market** 9am-1pm at First Congregational Church, 131 N. Webster St., Port Washington; Hosted by the FCC & PortFish, Ltd. Join local artisans for a presentation on **Recycling and Repurposing Jewelry** from 10:30-11:15
- **2/25 Tapping the Sugarbush;** Learn to identify a maple, tap it and collect sap! Riveredge.us or (262) 375-2715 to register

Ozaukee Living Local

Editor:
Mary Boyle

Phone:
262-573-6678

E-mail:
transitionozaukee@gmail.com.

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New Year, New Living Local *(continued from pg. 1)*

stronger, more sustainable local community we'll be able to weather the storms—both literal and of the economic variety— all the better.

The Transition Movement started in the UK by a man named Rob Hopkins. Mr. Hopkins is not a scientist, nor is he in economics. In fact, when he began on his journey, he was an artist, and a trip to the Hunza Valley in northern Pakistan in 1990 was the inspiration for his movement and, later, his book: *The Transition Handbook—From oil dependency to local resilience*.

It was in the Hunza Valley that Hopkins discovered a community that was completely sustainable—that is, everything the community needed to live, from food to housing to clothing, was sourced locally and in such a way so as their resources were never depleted.

Although they most certainly did not live up to Western standards of living, Hopkins could see that everyone was healthy and happy—they had plenty of good food to eat, comfortable housing and, perhaps most interestingly, plenty of time to spend engaging with their families and their community. It was, as Hopkins described it, "...quite simply the most beautiful, tranquil, happy and abundant place I have ever visited, before or since."

Hopkins realized that if the community, at that time, had been cut off from the rest of the global society, it would have managed fine—indefinitely. It had resilience.

It was this resilience; this sustainability, Hopkins realized, that was missing from our Western communities—undermining our cultural identities, our sense of community and our economic and social stability. With further examination, he realized what caused our loss of resilience: cheap fuel.

Our Western Culture, Hopkins realized, was built on cheap fuel. Our "global" economy—even our society—exists in its current form entirely because of cheap fuel. This knowledge, of course, begs the question: what will happen when fuel is no longer cheap?

Rising fuel prices alone could cause the collapse of our world as we know it, but Hopkins knew that panic was not the answer—he had seen the solution years ago in the Hunza Valley. The new question was this: could we somehow *transition* back to being sustainable, resilient communities?

Hopkins thinks we can. Not only that, he thinks we'll be better off without cheap fuel.

At Transition Ozaukee, we do, too.

Storing Food for the Winter *(Continued from pg. 1)*

From these small farms vegetables were delivered, in the dead of winter, to the surrounding communities and kitchen tables. Some seventy years later, we can take a lesson from the past and, armed with as many years of developed technology, winter vegetables can and should be grown, once again, by local farmers supplying local communities.

While not complicated, the technology of poly covered hoop houses, high tech floating row covers, heated greenhouses and vegetable storage, requires an investment and risk on the part of the farmer. When vegetables shipped from warmer regions are so cheap and reliably available what incentive does the farmer have?

The answer, of course, is the voice of the consumer. We live in a time of transition; a time when developing local resilience is of the utmost importance. Let your local framers know that you will support their initiative to develop winter vegetable infrastructure. Let them know that you want and are willing to support their efforts and minimize their risk by buying vegetables, in the dead of winter, from local community farmers. Better yet, if you have the means, consider investing locally by helping farmers develop winter growing infrastructure.

Remember, a radish, by any other name, grown locally in the dead of winter, is a mighty precious thing.

