

Organic Land Care *with*

Because we don't think about future generations, they will never forget us.
~Henrik Tikkanen

The diligent farmer plants trees, of which he himself will never see the fruit.
– Cicero



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Our Mission:

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices"

This newsletter is distributed free of charge to all SOUL members. Please feel free to share this publication.

SOUL

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It was wonderful, interesting and invigorating to attend Victoria's Seedy Saturday on February 21, 2009. There was food, plants, free Fair Trade coffee, vegetable seeds of every description and "green" businesses promoting everything from Bokashi buckets to Mason Bee setups. As well, the non-profit, educational and government sectors were there promoting their stances on climate, soil, social justice, food, water and other things that affect us today and are part of our current consciousness. Truly, it was a coming together of like minds.

What was also there was a feeling of hope that things are changing as exemplified by the participants and attendees that in a number of cases were one and the same. It also demonstrated that the "green" sector, are also businesses. This is an interesting juxtaposition to say that one can be "green" and, yet, make money on this greening. It appears that we are moving into a new realm of entrepreneurialism and how this fits into the ethics and politics of "organics." Perhaps this will be addressed in a future newsletter, but, suffice it to say, there is impetus for businesses to go "green" as the consumer now has the appetite for these products and services.

It was this connection between "business" and consumer that intrigued me. As was mentioned, one question stood out, and that is how a business maintains its ethics as it expands - especially significant for organic foods! Therefore, it is very timely that Gail Szostek - a SOUL member - kindly offered to review the book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. This book looks at the farming industry and what it must do "in the future to remain viably sustainable and ecological." In her review, she offers a glimpse into this book by talking about the eating practices of Americans, large industrial organic food production and then procuring food naturally. The question of "what to eat for dinner?" takes on significance as *The Omnivore's Dilemma* provides an interesting view on the politics of food.

I hope that you all enjoy this review as much as I did.

Take care,

David

Gail Szostek

As a member of SOUL and helping to organize a branch in Maple Ridge, Gail brings a wealth of education and experience to her role as educator, horticulturalist, environmentalist and owner of Green Space Consulting. She is a parent and partner who would like to encourage everyone to grow something to eat!

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals by Michael Pollan

Publisher: Penguin Books, 2006

I was first introduced to Michael Pollan's ideas last fall when I received a copy of his letter to the President-Elect that was printed in October 2008 The New York Times Magazine where Pollan writes a regular "Farmer in Chief" column. The article detailed innovative and progressive ideas of where the farming industry needs to go in the future in order to remain viably sustainable and ecological. His insistence on moving away from a "fossil fuel food economy" and into a "solar-food economy" peaked my interest enough to acquire his book The Omnivore's Dilemma.

This book is very much worth the read, and in this brief book review, I hope to tempt you with enough of the good eating, without ruining the dessert, so that you will all feel it a necessity to find your own copy to devour!

What I really enjoyed about this book is Pollan's laid back style of writing, that turns documentary type information into story-telling. It is heavy material turned into light reading, with a lot of valuable information that will definitely make you think again about how and where we produce and obtain our food.

Pollan explores the Fast Food Meal that Americans have come to not only know and love, but to unfortunately depend on, and therefore continue the cycle for its demand. The story flows from the artificial inputs of corn production to the unnatural feeding of corn and animal byproducts to cattle to ensure our low cost food is perpetuated in the cycle of the All-American Food Chain. Dabbled in amongst this story are little side-stories of the history of artificial fertilizers, the grand plan of over-production of corn, the wasting of the American landscapes, etc.

Pollan then explores the all natural organic meal created by an industrial scale farm that uses ecological principles and humane raising and killing of animals to produce high quality foods. This is the solar-food economy that Pollan favours so highly. Sprinkled in amongst this tale, are stories of largescale organic operations, that really aren't so ecological and have moved more towards the unsustainable big-industry models.

Lastly Pollan takes a look at the truly natural meal that is foraged out of the forest - the Hunter and Gatherer method of food cycling. From the killing of a wild boar to the foraging for wild mushrooms, Pollan explores the principles of what makes our world tick and how we are all interconnected to everything. We cannot expect to take our food source out of this context and still be able to keep our world intact.

A brilliantly written book, Michael Pollan had me hungering for more of the same! So next, it is on to his latest book In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto . If you want to find out more, check out the website www.michaelpollan.com

Submitted by Gail Szostek



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