

Roots & Sprouts

News and Ideas from the Belmont Farmers' Market

summer 2010

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org



*Opening June 10th -
rain or shine!*

**Thursday afternoons
1:30 to 7:00 pm
until October 28th
Belmont Center parking lot**



In this issue . . .

**A Market Thursday — hour by hour
Interview with the Pasta Man
Where does the leftover food go?
Recipe for gnocchi and bitter greens
Keep in touch online**

*The Belmont Farmers' Market is a member
of the Belmont Center Business Association.*

*Vendors and volunteers working at the market put in a long, hot afternoon of work on Thursdays. But, in fact, the necessary preparation and break-down time will add many more hours to their day, and will often include harvesting, baking, and logistical preparation that starts Wednesday or even earlier in the week. **Roots & Sprouts** spoke to two of this summer's volunteer market managers, Paul Santos and Anne Stuart, Farm School director Patrick Connors, and Goodies' owner Susan Callahan to get a glimpse into just a few of the activities going on behind the scenes, reported below.*

A Market Day Timeline

To make it all happen, Belmont Farmers' Market vendors and volunteers rise early and turn in late on market Thursdays

6 a.m. Before he goes to work, volunteer Tom Dorsey sets up signs at street corners in Belmont Center announcing the market's location and hours. Meanwhile, Goodies' Susan Callahan starts the coffee, takes a shower, and drives from her Belmont home to her commercial kitchen in Arlington.

7 a.m. Susan switches on overhead fans at the kitchen, takes inventory, and heads to the basement for ingredients to make her delicious signature cookies. Volunteer Heli Tomford sets up more signs directing shoppers to the market. At the Farm School, tender produce such as the arugula is harvested. (Most of the other veggies were harvested, washed, packaged, and stored in coolers the day before.)

9 a.m. Susan reports: "Mixers mixing, ovens baking, cookies crankin'!" Meanwhile, the Farm School truck begins its journey from Athol, MA to Belmont, making CSA drop-offs on the way in Cambridge and Watertown. A staff farmer (this summer, either Nate Frigard, Stella Rabinowitz, or Kim Bryant) accompanies a student farmer in the truck. The few hours in the truck serve as "office hours," a rare window of time during the busy summer when teacher and student can chat.

11 a.m. Susan's cookies are cooling. She still has two more varieties to bake...makes note to self: "Buy more baking sheets!"

12 p.m. The day's market manager arrives. Belmont Farmers' Market (BFM) is quite unusual among the nation's farmers' markets in being entirely volunteer-run. It typically has four or five managers per season, plus a few substitutes on hand. Often, two market managers will split the afternoon, as husband-and-wife Paul Santos and Anne Stuart do. The manager makes sure volunteers are lined up to set up the blue tent and BFM table, unpack the bin of supplies, set up the trash and recycling bins, and annotate the announcement board with the day's schedule of performers and other happenings.

1 p.m. Vendors start to arrive. Volunteers, often some of BFM's many teen volunteers, help vendors unload particularly bulky items, such as the potted plants sold by Steve Hancock of NorthStar Farm.

1:30 p.m. Bell rings to announce market's start! Volunteers take head counts at the top of each hour to keep track of market attendance, get change and/or cold drinks for vendors, and sell BFM totes and T-shirts. The market manager fields questions and comments, helps guest vendors ease into the routine, and helps market performers, often students from Belmont's own Powers Music School, set up.

3 p.m. Have you bought your Fiore di Nonno mozzarella yet? Popular goods start to sell

(continued on page 4)

A New Career in Farmers' Markets

A change in focus after 25 years has opened up an unexpected second career for the Pasta Man

When Vic Tirrito, of Fior D'Italia Pasta & Cheese, talks about his involvement in the Belmont Farmers' Market, his enthusiasm spills over into his every word. Aptly described by his website as the Pasta Man (*thepastaman.com*), Vic sells a variety of pastas, raviolis, mozzarella, and sauces, as well as prepared foods made at his location in Manchester Center, Vermont.

Vic comes to the food business naturally. Vic's family owned a farm specializing in artichokes, grapes, and olives in Italy before immigrating to the United States. In Boston, his grandparents continued to work in the food business, and he grew up in a household where everything was homemade and nothing was ever wasted. Vic attended college to study accounting but, after two years, transferred to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. He and his wife then moved to Vermont, where he still lives, and he started a business selling pasta and related products to restaurants and the food industry. However, three years ago, after working 25 years in the business, he tried selling exclusively at farmers' markets and, as he recalls, "A whole new world opened up."

Vic describes his previous involvement with the food industry as strictly business, with no personality. In contrast, farmers' markets provide a reciprocal exchange: within the different market towns, he has developed relationships with customers, local restaurants,

and store owners. His network now also includes farmers and purveyors from whom he directly buys produce such as squash, pumpkins, and plum tomatoes. He finds that the products he is using are fresher and the people are fantastic.

"Since starting at Belmont Farmer's Market last season, it has turned out to be the best market of all and a wonderful thing!" he says. Vic has found feedback from the public to be overwhelming and, he adds, "it means a lot more than revenues." He is on a first-name basis with his customers, and they email him recipes and food preparation ideas and pre-order his products.

Vic likes to keep his footprint small, encompassing markets in New England and using as many local producers as possible. He now works every day except Sundays at 16 different markets, and he has had to turn down additional market offers. To ease the commute, he now spends two nights a week in the Boston area, where he has set up freezers for his prepared goods in different locations.

Vic's two grown children live in the Boston area, where he and his wife are hoping to relocate next year. They are also planning a trip back to Italy. While there he hopes to see his family's original farm, surely an amazing source of inspiration.

— Denise Umans

Performers Needed!

The Belmont Farmers' Market needs performers for Thursdays starting June 10 through October between 1:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Solos, duets, trios, quartets, artists (sketches, portraits, caricatures)—anything you can put together we'd love to feature. Perform for a half hour and each performer will receive a \$10 gift certificate to the market.

Chairs are provided. Please bring stands and clothespins for anchoring music.



For questions, or to volunteer, please contact Jocelyn Milton at jocemilton@gmail.com or 617-484-1228.



www.belmontfarmersmarket.org

Belmont Farmers' Market Committee

Jennifer Angel
John Beaty
Tom Dorsey
Kim Foster
Janice Frishkopf
Dee Ippen
Suzanne Johannet
Laurie Levy
Evanthia Malliris
Susan Marsh
Cate McGrail
Jocelyn Milton
Becky Prior
Mary Ries
Paul Santos
Hal Shubin
Vicky Slavin
Anne Stuart
Joan Teebagy
Heli Tomford

Volunteers

Ann Celi	Amy Cooper Rodriguez
Liliane Chaglassian	Holly Teller
Lorenzo Cosmo-Tourreilles	Bill Tomford
Paolo Cosmo-Tourreilles	Heather Tuttle
Judy Cotton	Taline Voskeritchian
Catherine Curro	Rowan Wolf
Sandra Curro	Jasper Wolf
Stephanie Daniels	Leslie Wolf
Debbie Dobbins	Ed Yee
Liz Gourley	Marilyn Yee
Arvy Mackevicius	Pam Young

Contact us at

belmontfarmersmarket@gmail.com

Volume 5, Issue 2

Roots & Sprouts is a publication of the Belmont Farmers' Market Committee
PO Box 387
Belmont, MA 02478

Editors: Laurie Levy and Jennifer Angel
Designer: Dee Ippen
Logo designer: Trey Klein
Printer: Belmont Printing Co.

Printed on recycled paper

2010 Vendors

- **Bee-Cause Apiaries** local honey
- **Coutts Specialty Foods** jams, jellies, applesauce, relishes
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** vegetables, fruits, and plants
- **The Farm School** organic vegetables, fruits, flowers, eggs, grass-fed meat
- **Fior d'Italia** pasta in many different shapes and flavors
- **Fiore di Nonno Cheese** handcrafted fresh mozzarella
- **Firenze** artisan gelato and sorbetto
- **Goodies** award-winning, better-than-homemade cookies
- **Hmong Farms at Flats Mentor Farm** fresh produce featuring Asian vegetables
- **Hutchins Farm** certified organic plants, vegetables, herbs, small fruit, and apples
- **In Good Taste** Pam's black bean salsa
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, honey, and plants
- **Lawton's Family Farm** fresh cheeses and veal
- **Leslie Wolf Baking** baked goods from a Belmont kitchen
- **Mamadou Bakery** handcrafted breads
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers
- **NorthStar Farm** perennial plants, fresh organic eggs and produce
- **Samira's Homemade** Middle Eastern dips & salads, freshly made and delicious
- **Sassy River Sauces** savory sauces without the fat
- **Sassy Sauces** sweet dessert sauces
- **Sergi Farms** Belmont's only remaining working farm
- **Siraco** sharper knives since 1953
- **Stillman's at the Turkey Farm** grass-fed meat and freshly-cut flowers
- **Underwood Greenhouses** potted plants grown in Belmont



Food for Thought

Residents share their passion for fresh food, farmers' markets, and good living

Do you ever wonder what happens to the food that isn't sold by the end of the day at the Belmont Farmers' Market? You'll be happy to know that it doesn't end up in the trash, or even a compost heap. Non-perishable items, such as frozen meat, eggs, honey, and plants, are often packed up and returned to their farms, ready for the next day's market in another town. But unsold produce and baked goods are usually destined for another venue.

At closing time for many markets in the area, Belmont included, volunteers from the non-profit, Food for Free, arrive to collect anything

the vendors want to donate. Their mission is to "rescue" fresh fruits and vegetables before they go to waste and then deliver them to 75 shelters and food pantries in the area, serving over 20,000 people each month. According to executive director David Leslie, in 2009 over 80,000 pounds of food were collected, stored overnight in the organization's coolers, and delivered the next day. "Weather plays a part in the quantity and quality of any year's produce harvest, so it's difficult to predict what the 2010 season will provide," he said. "Whatever is donated, however, will be appreciated and provide good nutrition for the recipients."

The Belmont Food Pantry (BFP) is another organization that can accept food donations from the farmers' market. The BFP is a non-profit, volunteer organization that has provided food staples since 1992 to Belmont residents needing a "safety net"; any Belmont resident is eligible for assistance. Located at 450 Concord Avenue (the former electric light

building next to the police station), the BFP distributes food the first and third Saturday and the second Tuesday of each month.

Patty Mihelich, BFP volunteer director, stated that on occasion someone has gathered fresh produce from the market and delivered it to the food pantry on the Saturday morning for distribution to the over 40 residents who arrive (Tuesday distributions provide for another 20). "If anyone is willing to gather produce and bakery donations from the

The day after market day: where does it all go?

market and then deliver them to the pantry on Saturday morning, I, of course, would welcome that," she said. "Just let me know that the donations will be arriving so I can plan for them." The Belmont Farmers' Market will also be collecting non-perishables (boxed or canned goods) for the Belmont Food Pantry on the third Thursday of the month during the market season.

So market day doesn't really end on Thursday evening, but extends beyond to the days and meals where the donated market produce and bakery items are used. If you'd like to help, there are multiple opportunities. Food for Free is looking for collectors, delivery drivers, and farm volunteers. (It operates Field of Greens in Lincoln.) To learn more, go to their website: www.foodforfree.org.

To aid the Belmont Food Pantry with food donations or as a volunteer for distribution or collection, start at their web page. Go to www.belmont-ma.gov, then search for "food pantry."

— Jan Cannon

(continued from page 1)

out. Steve Hancock's dog, Monty, begins to wilt under the sun and all the attention of the kids at the market; he retreats to the shade of the truck for the hour.

4 p.m. Susan reports: "Everyone is so nice. They love my Goodies! Wow, the day is flying by. I hope I get a chance to shop for myself!" Market volunteers often take a shift so vendors can do some shopping or take a bathroom break.

7 p.m. Bell rings to announce market's close. As it turns out, Susan did find a spare moment to shop for herself: "I am so glad I don't have to go to the grocery store for dinner ingredients. I'm beat!" Volunteers help sweep debris from the parking lot and carefully pack the BFM storage shed with the barricades, tent, table, chairs, supply boxes, banners, signs, etc. Paul Santos has written and illustrated a step-by-step manual for packing the shed so that everything fits! (He reports, however, that most volunteers just learn by doing.)

8 p.m. What was a bustling market place hours before becomes a sleepy little parking lot once again. Susan reports: "Dinner was fabulous. Can't wait until next week... I should have bought more!"

9:30 p.m. The Farm School vendors arrive home, unload the truck, tidy up, and crash into bed. Farm chores will recommence at 6:30 tomorrow morning.

— Jennifer Angel

Gnocchi and Bitter Greens

Vic Tirrito, owner of Fior D'Italia Pasta & Cheese, kindly provided this recipe that uses his own sweet potato gnocchi. Visit his stall at the market this summer for the key ingredient, and treat yourself to a variety of other wonderful pastas and sauces while you are there. You can read more about Vic on page 2.

- 1 ounce olive oil
- 2 ounces sweet butter
- 1 large shallot, peeled and sliced thin
- 1 bunch kale, broccoli rape, Swiss chard or spinach, steamed, squeezed, and rough-chopped
- 2 ounces white wine
- 1 12-ounce package Fior D'Italia sweet potato gnocchi
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste



Bring a 3-quart pot of water to a boil and salt it to taste. Add the gnocchi and stir to avoid sticking.

While the gnocchi are boiling, heat a skillet large enough to hold the gnocchi and other ingredients; add the oil and butter. Add the shallots to the hot skillet and cook till translucent. Add the greens and mix well. Deglaze with wine and season to taste with salt and pepper. Turn off heat until the gnocchi are ready. (When the gnocchi are all floating and slightly larger, they are done.)

Turn the skillet back on to medium. With a slotted spoon remove the gnocchi from the pot and add them to the greens, allowing a little of the cooking water to be added to the greens. Mix well and serve.

Keep in Touch Online . . .

Although the next issue of *Roots & Sprouts* won't be published until September, we'll still keep in touch with you all summer online.

- Our e-mail newsletter comes out weekly during the market season and occasionally during the rest of the year. Sign up at our website, and we'll deliver recipes, vendor profiles, and details about special activities.
- Facebook and Twitter let us share photos and send out informal information and engage in conversation with you. Find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter, and let us know what you're interested in.
- At www.belmontfarmersmarket.org you'll find everything, including archives of this newsletter, an online calendar of events and produce availability, details about all of our vendors, and listings of other local markets. The website also has a sign-up form for the weekly newsletter and links to Facebook and Twitter.

As with everything else at the Belmont Farmers' Market, this is all done by volunteers. If you'd like to help out, go to the website and click on the **Contact Us** link to send us a message.

— Hal Shubin and Becky Prior