IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Meet the PFP's New Farm Management Team!

INTRODUCING LEON VEHABA, FARM MANAGER AND JESICA CLARK, ASSISTANT FARM MANAGER

(photo above of Leon and his wife, Tracy Lerman)

Leon Vehaba came to the PFP from the Student Farm at the Agricultural Sustainability Institute of the University of California at Davis. Leon grew up in Brewster, NY, and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and a
Jesica Clark (photo by Dion Ogust) writes: *When the opportunity to apply for the Assistant Farm Manager position at Poughkeepsie Farm Project arose, I jumped at the chance. I had worked at PFP as an intern in the 2004 and 2005 seasons and since then I have moved on to other farming ventures in the Hudson Valley.*

*In returning to Poughkeepsie, I bring with me the experience of managing a similar education and CSA based farm, Phillies Bridge Farm Project, for three seasons as well as the perspective of being the President of their Board of Directors for the past two years. I have also been running my own start-up urban farm in my current home in Kingston for the last couple of years, which has taught me the confidence to take on new challenges and increased my sense for running a successful business.*

*But, as always, time changes everything, and in the coming years my family and I are looking to transition back to Dutchess County, a place I hold dear to my heart even now, after six years of living across the river. The coincidence of PFP going through its own transition has given me the opportunity to use my skills as a farmer in a useful way while also guiding my move over the Hudson. I am thrilled to be working with Leon Vehaba, who has already taken on the task of getting us prepared for the season, despite being three time zones away, and I believe we will make a great team for the year.*

**More about Leon**

His road to farming began when he worked as a waiter at the Blue Hill Restaurant at the Stone Barnes Center. While at Stone Barnes, he realized that a career in agriculture would allow him to combine many of his passions, including environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

This realization led him to California where he apprenticed for a year and a half at the University of California Santa Cruz Apprenticeship in Ecological Horticulture. Following that, he managed a small, diversified organic farm outside of Santa Cruz, where he put into practice the skills he learned while apprenticing at UC Santa Cruz. For the last two years, he’s worked at the University of California Davis Student Farm as the Field
Coordinator. He has taught tractor training, coordinated field research, and developed his knowledge of agriculture mechanics.

Leon is excited to move back to New York with his wife, Tracy, to be the Farm Manager at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. Farming has been a passion of his for a number of years, and he relishes the opportunity to instill that passion in others. Food hobbies are also a big part of Leon's life outside of work. He is an avid home brewer, fermenter, cook, and loves taking on new food-related projects. This past winter he made hoshigaki, Japanese dried, massaged persimmons. He is looking forward to meeting all of you and becoming a part of the PFP family.

News from Susan Grove

Susan Grove warms up at an off season stop by the PFP's hoop house.

As I prepare to leave my position with the Poughkeepsie Farm Project as of the end of March, I want you, friends and supporters of the PFP, to know that it has been my honor to serve as the PFP’s first Executive Director for more than five years. In my time at the PFP, our progress has relied on a wonderful community of members and supporters and the extraordinary efforts of staff, apprentices, interns and volunteers. Thank you for the role you have played in building a just and sustainable food system.

Through our collective efforts, the CSA and training of future farmers has remained a consistent community asset, while educational efforts on the farm, in schools and in community gardens expanded greatly to reach more than 1,000 youth and hundreds of adults each year. We have consistently made 25% of the produce harvested on our farm available to our low-income neighbors. The PFP took the lead on Poughkeepsie Plenty to conduct significant research on the sobering extent of food insecurity in the City and to mobilize the community to imagine, plan and begin to enact alternatives to secure food justice. These efforts to advance our mission have been strengthened by increased financial sustainability, expanded staff, and a wider network of partners and supporters.

The PFP’s Board of Directors has begun a search for a new Executive Director to lead the PFP as it starts a new chapter. More information is available here.
My immediate plans include continuing to coordinate the Poughkeepsie Community Food Coalition – an outgrowth of Poughkeepsie Plenty, with a mission to ensure the right for all to access sufficient and nutritious food – and engage with other community efforts while I take a sabbatical to explore some interests that have arisen during my time at the PFP.

Even as I transition away to explore new venues to advance food justice as a component of vibrant communities in Poughkeepsie and beyond, I look forward to staying in touch with the PFP community and finding ways to partner with the PFP in the coming years.

With my best regards,
In health and harvest,
Susan Grove

**PFP Receives Community Service Award**

At their recent volunteer recognition event, the PFP was recognized by Dutchess Outreach for many pounds of fresh produce that are donated each year and received the Community Service Award with a plaque that reads:

*For dedicated service to the poor and hungry, Dutchess Outreach (Food - Clothing - Caring) Honors the Poughkeepsie Farm Project In Recognition of your Continuing Support of Dutchess Outreach*

These donations are made possible by the funders and individual donors who support the PFP's Food Share program. In 2012, food donated by the PFP was prepared as meals served to individuals at the Lunch Box, which serves 260 people daily, and distributed to people visiting the food pantry, which serves more than 180 people each week. On a recent evaluation of the 2012 season, staff of Dutchess Outreach expressed appreciation at how the partnership with the PFP allows them to provide more people with healthier options and to distribute fresh vegetables to people who have no or limited access to purchasing them.

Consider supporting this work with a [financial donation to the PFP](#) or a [contribution of food to the Dutchess Outreach food pantry](#), which is currently experiencing a food shortage.

**GROWING OUR COMMUNITY**

**Local Gardeners Start Planning in January**
“Mary, Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow?” On the rainy Wednesday evening of January 30th, Mary Nisley (not contrary, of course), Master Gardener from the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County, guided members of the community through a wonderfully informative vegetable garden tutorial at the Adriance Memorial Library. The program was a collaboration of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, the Fallkill Partnership Gardens, and Adriance Memorial Library.

From gardening basics to dimensional planning, Mary shared her vegetable growing wisdom with both gardening novices and seasoned veterans. Mary especially focused on maximizing productivity through variety selection, spacing, and succession planting. With more than twenty-five people packed into one room of the beautifully renovated library, participants learned first-hand how to make the most of a small space. Everyone came with questions and some even shared tips of their own; the room absolutely buzzed with passion and eager anticipation for the growing season ahead.

Gardeners learned some basics, like how to read and understand a seed packet, and when seeds should be planted. Mary also covered useful gardening logistics including how to choose the best garden site, how to size garden beds, and the strategies of crop rotation, interplanting, and succession planting. Mary reminded participants of the science behind vegetable gardening: “Do you know the pH level of your soil?” Mary explained how to test the acidity/alkalinity of soil and what that means for your garden. She also stressed the importance of reviewing the categories of plant families (did you know corn is a grass?!) as it is important to combine vegetable families when planning crop rotation.

All attendees took home several packets of seeds to get a jump start of the growing season.

This workshop on garden planning is part of an initiative called Growing City Seeds. The three-year project is supported by an environmental justice grant from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and seeks to establish gardens as centers of learning and to promote gardening including community and school gardening and to provide support to community members who want to improve their gardening skills. Throughout the year, we are holding a series of skill shares and workshops about growing, preparing, and preserving food. Our next workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, May 8th at 7:00pm at the Adriance Memorial Library; the title is Best Practices for Caring for Your Garden Plants. Another goal of Growing City Seeds is to make more space available for residents to grow their own food. To that end, we are
working with the Fall Kill Partnership Gardens and seeking people who are interested in working with others to create a productive urban garden.

If you would like to learn more about organic gardening and the beauty of harvesting your own bounty, Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardeners are offering two courses this spring: Vegetable Gardening for Beginners: Learn It and Grow It and Vegetable Gardening A-to-Z: Take your gardening to the next level. More information about the courses can be found [here](#).

Mary Nisley has been planting vegetables since 1975. She expresses her goal and philosophy as “to provide all of my family’s vegetables, to grow what we eat and eat what we grow.” In addition to her home garden, she maintains a plot within the Vassar Farm community gardens. Visit Mary’s extensive [blog](#).

**Seeking Applicants to the Sponsored Share Program**

The price of a PFP CSA share of farm produce reflects the costs of growing quality, sustainable food. This price is prohibitively high for some members of the community who desire to support sustainable agriculture and to secure nutrient-rich fresh produce for their families. Like all shareholders, sponsored shareholders receive a generous quantity of fresh, local food weekly throughout the growing season and become a part of the PFP community, which supports learning experiences about food security, sustainable agriculture and using fresh produce to prepare healthy meals.

We are committed to ensuring access to our CSA for low-income neighbors. Sponsored shareholders pay an amount they can afford toward the cost of the share. We raise funds to help off-set the full cost of a share for those who cannot otherwise afford to participate in the CSA. We are also able to accept food stamps. Qualifying individuals or families are those that receive some form of public assistance and/or earn less than 200% of the federal poverty line. If you would like to receive support, know someone who might, or if you would like to help sponsor a share, please let us know.

More information and applications are available on our website in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

**GET INVOLVED**

**Seeking Technology Volunteer**

*Do you enjoy helping people troubleshoot their computer problems and use technology to be more efficient?*

Last year, we received a donation that is allowing the PFP to make much-needed upgrades to our information technology. We have purchased a few new laptops and have plans to purchase a couple more items of equipment. We're a very mobile staff (including farmers!) and have plans for using a resource like Jungle Disk or Google
Drive to store, stare and back up our files. We need help setting this up, including creating the proper network for our computers and printer. We also need someone to call on to point us in the right direction when we run into a computer related snag we can’t easily untangle ourselves.

We’re looking for one or more technology volunteers that can help us with our current set up needs and that we can call on from time to time when we need some assistance troubleshooting. If you’d be interested in volunteering, or would just like to learn more about this volunteer opportunity, please contact Susan Grove.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Dr. Vandana Shiva, International Sustainable Agriculture Activist, to Lecture at Vassar on March 6th**

Global figure and world-renowned author, feminist, philosopher of science, and environmental scholar-activist, Dr. Vandana Shiva, will be coming to the U.S. from India, and she is scheduled to give a public lecture at Vassar on Wednesday, March 6th in the Villard Room at 5 pm.

Dr. Shiva's lecture will focus on grassroots struggles for environmental resources—with particular attention to how these struggles have affected farmers and women. She plans to address how the ecological, economic, social and political costs of unsustainable agriculture are systematically externalized and made invisible, and how commercialized chemical agriculture and monoculture not only work against the biodiversity of plants and soils, but have also increased food insecurity, deepened social inequality, and eroded democracy. Many of her examples will be from India not only because India is Dr. Shiva’s land of birth and where she is most active, but also because India often functions as a poster child for progress and the potential successes of economic globalization.

**Dr. Vandana Shiva’s Bio**

Dr. Vandana Shiva’s passion for ecological sustainability began in the 1970’s with the Chipko Movement, when women in the region of the Himalayas protected forests by hugging trees. Chipko also became the ground for seeing the links between the earth and the provisioning of food, water, and energy for the poor, as well as the links between women and ecology. This led Shiva to develop a philosophy of ecofeminism and organize the movement “Diverse Women for Diversity,” which she views as one expression of combining women’s rights, nature’s rights, and the rights of the Third World, enacting her vision of the interconnections between cultural and biological diversity. Shiva’s contributions to women and the environment have been globally recognized. Forbes magazine named her as one of the top ten feminists of the world in 2010, and The Guardian (U.K.) included her in their list of the 100 most influential feminists in 2011. On March 8, 2011 (International Women’s Day) she was the recipient
of a State Award from Uttarakhand, India. Currently, she is the director and founder of the Research Foundation on Science, Technology, and Ecology and serves on the board of directors of the International Forum on Globalization.

After earning a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Western Ontario in Canada, Shiva shifted her focus to interdisciplinary work and founded the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE), a public interest research organization focusing on critical ecological issues of our times, such as the privatization of natural resources (e.g., water), and understanding soil and insect biodiversity from practical, scientific, and political perspectives. In 1987, Shiva founded Navdanya to increase understanding about the relationship between democracy, intellectual property, and food security, and also to promote seed saving as an alternative to corporate patenting and genetically engineered seeds.

During and since that time, Dr. Shiva has become an internationally recognized environmental activist. In 1993, Shiva won the Right to Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize), the Global 500 award of the United Nations Environment Program, and the United Nations Earth Day International Award. She addressed the World Trade Organization Summit in Seattle in 1999, and the World Economic Forum in Melbourne in 2000. With 23 published books, hundreds of articles, and nearly 20 distinguished awards to her name, Dr. Shiva has brought an unprecedented number of issues into the public sphere through her work as an activist, scholar, and engaging social leader. She has been an active participant and served as an environmental advisor to a number governments and international bodies, including the International Forum on Globalization, the Women's Environment & Development Organization, and the Third World Network. Dr. Shiva chairs the Commission on the Future of Food established by the Region of Tuscany in Italy, and is a member of the Scientific Committee that advises President Zapatero of Spain. She was also a member of the 1991 World Congress on Women and Environment.


**A few links:**

- [Interview with Bill Moyers](#)
- [On Ecofeminism and Earth Democracy](#)
- [The New Food Wars: Globalization, GMOs and Biofuels](#)

**CANCELLED:** Screening and Discussion of FRESH at the
Crafted Kup on March 7th
3/5/13: Please note that this event has been CANCELLED.

The documentary FRESH celebrates the farmers, thinkers and business people across America who are re-inventing our food system. Each has witnessed the rapid transformation of our agriculture into an industrial model, and confronted the consequences: food contamination, environmental pollution, depletion of natural resources, and morbid obesity. Forging healthier, sustainable alternatives, they offer a practical vision for a future of our food and our planet.

Among several main characters, FRESH features urban farmer and activist, Will Allen, the recipient of MacArthur’s 2008 Genius Award; sustainable farmer and entrepreneur, Joel Salatin, made famous by Michael Pollan's book, The Omnivore's Dilemma; and supermarket owner, David Ball, challenging our Wal-Mart dominated economy.

The screening is co-sponsored by Dutchess Peace and the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. It will be shown at The Crafted Kup, 44 Raymond Avenue, on Thursday, March 7 at 7 p.m., followed by audience discussion.

CRREO Hosts Conference on Mid-Hudson Agriculture at SUNY New Paltz on March 1st

Mid-Hudson Agriculture: Growing our Economy and our Communities

March 1, 2013: SUNY New Paltz Student Union Multi-Purpose Room. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Topics to be discussed include:

1. Agriculture: Where Will the Hudson Valley Be in Ten Years?
2. Regional Agriculture and Our Schools
3. Reaching the Regional Market
4. Success Stories: Farm Food for Strengthened Families and Communities (including the work of the PFP)
5. Our Brand for 25,000,000 Customers in the Tri-State area

To register, or learn more.

FEATURED VEGETABLE AND RECIPES

Chives
Chives are grown for their leaves, which are used for culinary purposes as a flavoring herb, and provide a somewhat milder flavour than those of other Onion Family (Allium) plants.

Chives have a wide variety of culinary uses in many cuisines. Chives are one of the "tarragon, chervil and/or parsley. The flowers may also be used to garnish dishes. Chives can also be dry-frozen without much impairment to the taste, giving home growers the opportunity to store large quantities harvested from their own gardens. Chives are useful to plant in the garden to keep the plants free from pests. Chives are also rich in C, calcium and iron.

(The above content is adapted from Wikipedia)

Image Attribution

**Spicy Stir Fried Cabbage**

**Summary**

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Source: Adapted from The New York Times
**Description**
Healthy and Flavorful!

**Ingredients**
- 4 clv garlic (Minced)
- 2 t ginger (Minced)
- 1/2 t red pepper flakes
- 2 t soy sauce
- 2 T rice wine or dry sherry
- 2 T peanut or canola oil
- 1 carrot (Shredded)
- 2 T chives
- salt to taste
- 1 cabbage (small - Quartered, Cored, and Shredded)

**Instructions**
Heat a wok or skillet over high heat. Add the oil. Add the garlic, ginger and pepper flakes. Stir-fry for a few seconds, then add the cabbage and carrots. Stir-fry for a few minutes, until the cabbage begins to wilt, then add the salt, sherry/wine, and soy sauce. Cover and cook for a minute until just wilted. Uncover and stir-fry for another minute then stir in the chives or cilantro and remove from heat. Serve with rice or noodles.

**Cream of Onion Soup**

**Summary**

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**Source**
http://www.canyonranch.com/community_connection/recipes/index.cfm?mode=r...

**Description**
The melange of onions in this warming soup give it its robust taste

**Ingredients**
- 1 head of garlic (peeled and separated into cloves)
2 t unsalted butter
3 c onions (Vidalia)
1 1/2 c mauli onions
1 c leeks (chopped)
1 1/4 c scallions (chopped)
1/4 c white wine
5 c chicken stock
1 c chives (chopped)
2/3 c nonfat sour cream
1 t salt
1/2 t black pepper

Instructions
Preparation: Preheat oven to 350°. Spread garlic cloves on a sheet pan lightly coated with olive oil and bake until very soft, about 10 minutes. Set aside. Melt butter in a 4-quart saucepan. Slowly cook onions until caramelized and golden brown, about 30 to 40 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. Add leeks and scallions. Cook an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Add garlic and deglaze with white wine. Add stock and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from heat. Add chives. Let cool slightly. Transfer to blender container and puree while adding sour cream, salt and pepper.

Notes
Each serving contains approximately:

- 90 calories
- 17 gm. carbohydrate
- 1 gm. fat
- 2 mg. cholesterol
- 4 gm. protein
- 398 mg. sodium
- 2 gm. fiber