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**LAST CHANCE TO RSVP**



Featuring talks by:  
**Duskie Estes &  
Golden State Cider**



Please join us!

# Fall Community Get-Together

Wed. Nov. 8, 2023

5-7 pm

Golden State Cider  
Taproom



Wednesday, November 8, 2023

5 - 7 pm

Happy Hour prices during the entire event

\$10 donation to benefit programs of Slow Food Russian River



Golden State Cider Taproom, at The Barlow  
180 Morris Street, Suite 150, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Come and meet the Board of SFRR, and other members.

Click this link to RSVP: [Info@SlowFoodRR.org](mailto:Info@SlowFoodRR.org)



## CATHERINE'S TURKEY TALK



## Turkey time is especially busy this year!

Not only have turkey orders been streaming in, but we're also taking orders for

- Pumpkin and Pecan Pies from Dominique Cortara
- Produce Boxes from the good folks at Tierra Vegetables

You can reserve and pick up in Santa Rosa on turkey customer pick-up days.

## Fewer turkeys. Predators!

We have fewer turkeys this year partly due to 4 long-time turkey project members graduating and going off to college at the end of last season. So we came into this year with fewer growers. We did welcome a few new families.

Unfortunately, what we have had more of this year is predator attacks. It's always a fine balance between allowing ample room for turkeys to run, jump, fly, and other such turkey cavorting activities, and keeping them safe from predators. Bobcats are the number one predator for turkeys in our area. Even a one-night visit from a solitary bobcat can be devastating. Two of our veteran families this year suffered such attacks.

## Extra vigilant

So, in the final weeks before Thanksgiving, our young turkey growers are being extra vigilant keeping their flocks safe and well-fed. At this time, we have precious few turkeys left available for sale...good for our young turkey growers, but not so good for you if you haven't ordered yours yet!

Please go to our website: [Heritage Turkey Project](#)

Fresh baked Pumpkin and Bourbon Pecan pies from Dominique's Sweets and CSA boxes of fresh local produce from Tierra Vegetables are available to enhance your holiday meal! Order below and we'll have them waiting to pick up along with your turkey on November 21 and 22. Get the best of Sonoma County to make your Thanksgiving celebration extra special this year! For more information about ordering pies or produce boxes:

[Thanksgiving Pies and Produce](#)

**EVENT REPORT BY PAM**







## Ethic Cider tour

On October 25, a beautiful fall day, Ethic Cider's owner Ned Lawton led a tour of his 5.5-acre orchard and cidery.

Ned and his renowned cidemaker, Dwight Harrington, welcomed us. He began with a reflection on all that had come before on that land – from the Miwok Native Americans to farmers who planted mostly apples and pears.

In the orchard, we saw newer plantings full of fruit, and older trees farther away still thriving through grafting. Dwight gave us an in-depth example of grafting.

Ned believes exceptional cider starts in the orchard. Ethic Ciders utilizes regenerative agriculture practices. They implement ecological farming techniques like dry farming, cover cropping, compost applications, and livestock integration.

Dwight takes these apples and creates a distinctive cider that has a fresh fruit complexity, balance, and a true taste of place.

After our orchard tour, we returned to the cidery. We tasted at least four ciders, a pommeau, and apple brandy. Ethic Cider has won top ratings from national and international competitions.

"Gather round the table, connect across the globe, and celebrate land and community."

Ned and Dwight encourage you to visit.  
Click this link to go to the website: [Ethic Cider](#)

*By Pam Letourneau*



## WINE UPDATE WITH PAUL



Pinot Noir grapes / Testing with a refractometer

### **This year's grape harvest is just now drawing to a close...**

...though grapes will most likely continue to trickle in over the next week or so.

Due to a continued pattern of cool overcast weather, sugars have been slow to develop, and wineries have been forced to rely on ripeness factors other than sugars (such as acids, flavors, skins and seeds) to make their picking decisions. If grapes are picked phenologically ripe but with lower sugars, the resulting wine could have good flavors but less body than the winemakers would prefer



due to lower alcohol.

For many, this vintage variation is normal and even celebrated, but some producers who value consistency over vintage expression will want to correct this “problem.” Adding sugar to the grapes in order to raise alcohol levels in the finished wine, a process known as “chaptalization”, is officially illegal in California.

However, adding rectified concentrated grape must (essentially sterilized grape syrup) is an easy and legal workaround. As is often the case, changing one thing often leads to other “corrections,” since altering one aspect of wine balance may throw other aspects out of whack.

Of course, winery practices are driven by demand, so as consumers we can encourage vintage variation and site expression by embracing a variety of expressions rather than demanding wines that taste the same year after year. “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. This is the divine mystery supreme” (Mahatma Gandhi).

Let us be the change by accepting change. Happy Harvest.

*By Paul Sequeira*

**APPLE PRESS KIDS BY ZENO**





## School children love the Apple Press

Sebastopol Community Apple Press hosted school groups this apple season, a project started by already legendary Slow Food leader Paula Downing, who passed away August 7.

We're welcoming five school groups, TK-3, 160 children. The project pays for bus travel where needed, provides apples to press, and gives the children a pint of their juice to take home.

All this is paid for by the [Paula Downing Memorial Fund](#) and from past contributions from the City of Sebastopol and Apple Press users. Most of the apples are donated.

The children find immense joy in working the press, tasting the juice, and comparing different varieties of apples on aroma, appearance, flavor, texture, and taste. All their senses are put on alert and, we hope, they develop a lifelong love for our Sonoma County apple culture.



We are already thinking about expanding the program next year. To learn more contact us at [SFRR School Visits](#)

*By Zeno Swijtink*

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## Are you an educator with a knack for educational resources?

We are developing more teaching material about apples along the lines of the [Slow Food School Garden Curriculum](#) and our Strawberry Passport from the [2017 Children Strawberry Feasts Forever](#).

We can be reached at: [sfrrschoolvisits@gmail.com](mailto:sfrrschoolvisits@gmail.com)

## CAROLE'S APPLE BITES



### A banner year at the Apple Press

We celebrated another banner year at the Community Apple Press at the Luther Burbank Experiment Farm in Sebastopol. We gave the Apple Press and all our equipment a good scrubbing and put it all to bed in our shed until next August. It was a warm fall day, the kind we often have just before we move into November with a colder kind of fall weather and, hopefully, days of rain.

This year brought us more patrons than ever, due to a bumper crop of juicy Gravensteins and a huge crop of fall apples that hung from the trees like bunches of grapes.

### Celebrating our wonderful volunteers

While we had no lack of patrons or apples, we had to call on our volunteers to work above and beyond. They responded to the challenge with hard work and big smiles. This is the time when we celebrate our volunteers.



Many volunteers attended the end-of-season Appreciation Party.

We will be sending out the facts and figures of the 2023 season soon, but now I want to let our team leaders speak about their experiences at the press.

### **Team Leader Report excerpts:**

- It was such fun to be "back in the saddle" as team leader on Sunday afternoon at the CAP. I was blessed with four (yes four!) excellent volunteers ...the shift rolled along like a well-oiled machine.
- Great morning at the press, a very relaxed pace. As usual, I met lots of really nice local people of all ages.
- Then another lady came with an unscheduled friend. Both had 100 pounds each. It all got juiced. And so the day went zero to sixty and back. A birthday girl from Danville showed up with her family. Birthday songs were sung, apples juiced and fun was had by all – it's a family tradition for them.
- I usually groan a bit before setting out to do my shift. Wouldn't I rather go back to bed with the Sunday papers? But today as I turned into our



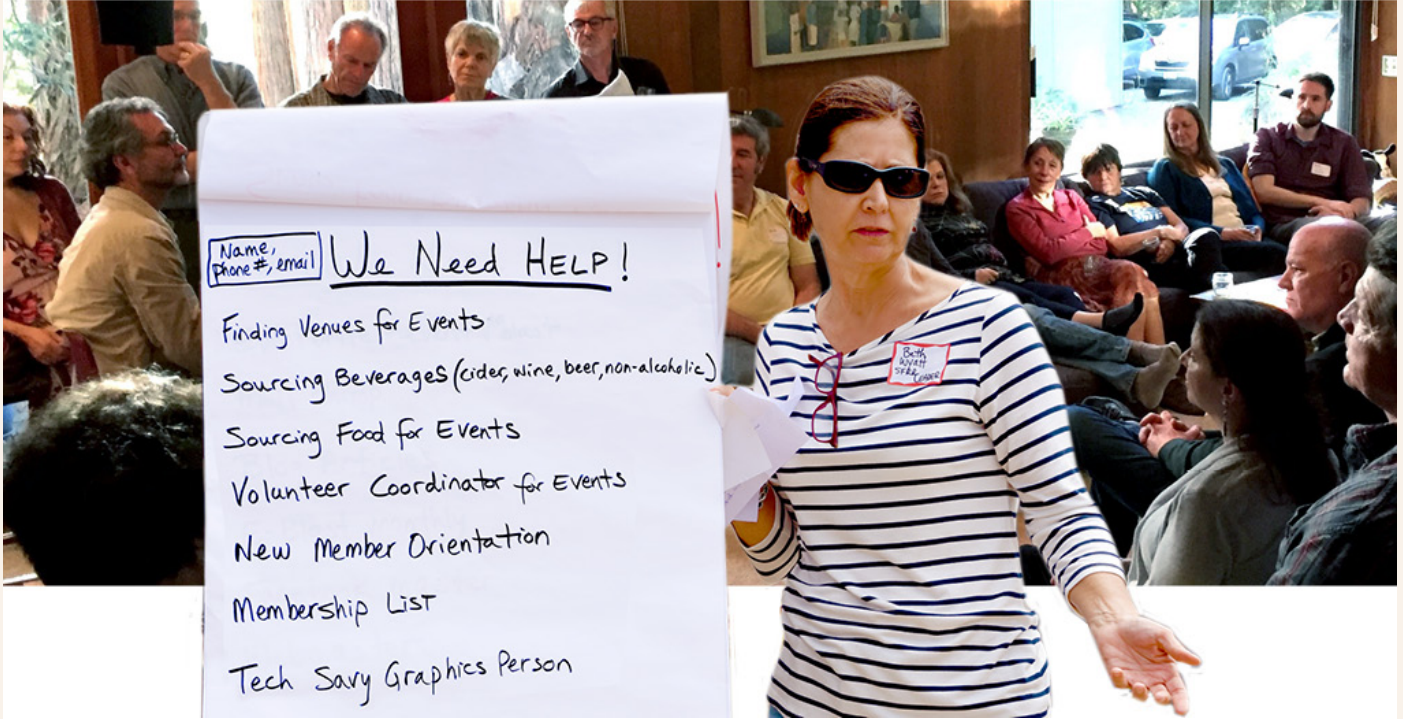
little parking lot at LBC I wished I had a movie camera... people were walking to their cars carrying their bottles and jugs of juice, and others were walking from their cars to the Press lugging their boxes of apples. What a lovely sight.

- We had lots of new people and several adorable little kids. One toddler had his own little basket on wheels with apples in it, and he joyfully got to put his apples into the press himself. I took pictures. Fun was had by all
- I've been pleased to see how quickly our patrons have complied with our relatively new policy of expecting them to bring their own containers. Everybody did. And it's heartening to see all the creative reuse going on.
- We were all glad to see each other and knew that we would be running a smooth operation. All of us brought some of our own apples too, and managed to go home with juice of our own.
- OK, it's raining pretty good this morning, expect some no-shows, right? Nope. Hit the ground running, everybody arrived on time with plenty of fruit. Our second patron had a well-practiced team of four. We stood back while they ran 17 gallons out of the press.
- All the patrons were repeat customers who brought experienced helpers. A few spoke of the press as a family tradition. So it made sense to say, "See ya next year" as they departed.
- I never said it would be this much fun!
- The morning crew was amazing. The energy level was mind-blowing, as you will see when I tell you how many gallons of apples were pressed. All patrons were happy and grateful. No bees. The totals were pretty amazing and to be honest, nobody brought only 100 pounds of apples. As you all know, the Gravensteins are in for their short season. And the apples are juicier than usual, maybe because of the rainy winter. We pressed over 150 gallons of juice.
- It must have been Dad and Daughter Day because we had lots of dads show up assisted by their daughters who were great workers. The girls even helped find the nut, bolt, and washer that came off the four-wheeled cart.

I want to let all of you volunteers know how much appreciated all of your help has been. I hear over and over, from many sources, what a gift to us all the Apple Press is, and I have to agree.

*By Carole Flaherty*

VOLUNTEER



This list is from 2018. Our newly-revitalized Chapter has many of the same needs.

## Volunteer opportunities!

The SFRR Board can use some help with our

- Communications and Social Media (newsletter, emails, etc.)
- Event Planning (visits to farms? tours of wineries? cheese education? learning about soils?).

If you would like to support either of these activities, we would love to hear from you! Please email [info@slowfoodrr.org](mailto:info@slowfoodrr.org).

## PAULA'S PICKS



## Where to find West County's homegrown and homemade

*By Paula Shatkin*

In the next few months, we will explore the country roads of West County, and talk to farmers who offer small, curated farm stands, and make fabulous bread, and amazing cheeses with milk from local cows, sheep, and goats. Come along with me as I start with 2 of my favorite farm stands, Cathy's Corner and Worker Bee. We will meet the farmers, learn about their practices, and listen to them tell me why they love what they do.





## Cathy's Corner

8063 Blackney Road, Sebastopol  
Generally open: June through mid-fall

"I have met some wonderful people doing this," said Cathy as her 97-year-old Sicilian neighbor wandered over to check out the tomatoes. Cathy tells me that she grows everything from seed, and she shows me her huge collection of heritage seeds. She shops far and wide and grows tomatoes and squash and green beans I had never heard of. She works at succession planting so that while I am out of zucchini, she still picks the daily. She talks about old farmers she has known and says that's what small farming is all about. Lots of passion here!

Cathy and her husband Doug Conover, long-time members of Slow Food Russian River, travel every June to Esparto, California, to Polestar Farms, to purchase 100 pounds of rare organic Blenheim Apricots. Cathy then makes delicious jam, cans it, and sells it at the farm stand. The apricots must be not too ripe, and not under-ripe, to meet her standards.





## Chiatril de Laguna Farm

4993 Occidental Road

The farm stand is open: Saturdays from 10-2, July - October

Owner and Farmer Wendy Krupnik is a well-known environmentalist, seed saver, educator, volunteer at the Gravenstein Apple Fair, and community builder. She also pruned my fruit trees for years and remains my go-to apple lover when I have questions and problems with my fruit.

She lived on the farm as a renter until the Italian couple, Dino and Thelma Grossi sold it to her. They were egg farmers and chicken ranchers who did things the old-fashioned way, and Wendy learned from them.

The Farm is 5 acres of annual vegetables and includes a rain garden with native plants and hedgerows for beauty and biodiversity. She moves goats around the farm to control poison oak and blackberries.

All Wendy's veggies are started from seed. She has 23 fruit trees on the farm and I got to eat some amazing Kadota figs while I visited. She grows strawberries, melons, peppers, eggplant, cukes, summer squash, winter

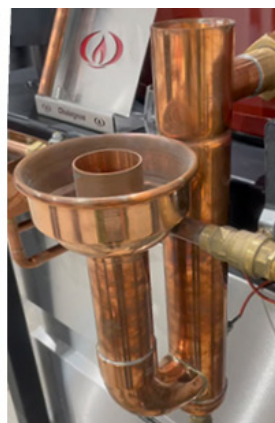


squash, pumpkins, potatoes Kale, corn, and cut flowers.

This farm stand is open from July–October and ripe produce is posted each week on her Facebook page and she can be reached by email too. Get to know your neighbors and your farmer!



## TASTING WITH RICK



## Ambix Spirits

Our tour started with hornets – Golden Hornets – an intensely flavored crab apple that supports the balance of sweet, sharp, and bitter flavors that form a

sophisticated distilled spirit. As we toured the orchard with co-owner Zoe Osborne, we tasted samples of Roxbury Russets and others of the 200 kinds of apples that fill the Ambix property.

In 2019, when Zoe and her husband, David Klein bought their eight acres near the corner of Occidental Road and High School Road in Sebastopol, they inherited an untended orchard from the 1970s and acres of blackberry bushes. In July of this year, Ambix finally opened after years of soil preparation using sustainable agricultural practices and replanting just over four acres. Unlike local cider makers, Ambix is first and foremost a distillery, producing four spirits from an enormous European still that looks like an alchemist's fantasy. Not all the apples they use are from their own property, but all are locally sourced.

Zoe's professional background is in chemistry, so on the farm, she has specialized in analyzing and developing the soil and she often leads the farm tour. David's professional background is in physics, and he concentrates on analyzing the temperatures and workings of the still and leading the tastings. The Ambix tasting room is perfect for an intimate and in-depth discussion of their Old World distilling processes and sampling of spirits – from “Cider Royal” (a riff on Pommeau, mixing brandy with cider and juice to create a dessert wine) to Pommeau and two brandies. All are wonderful!

Tastings are limited to six people on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, with reservations made online at [ambixspirits.com](http://ambixspirits.com). So plan ahead, grab some friends, and go!

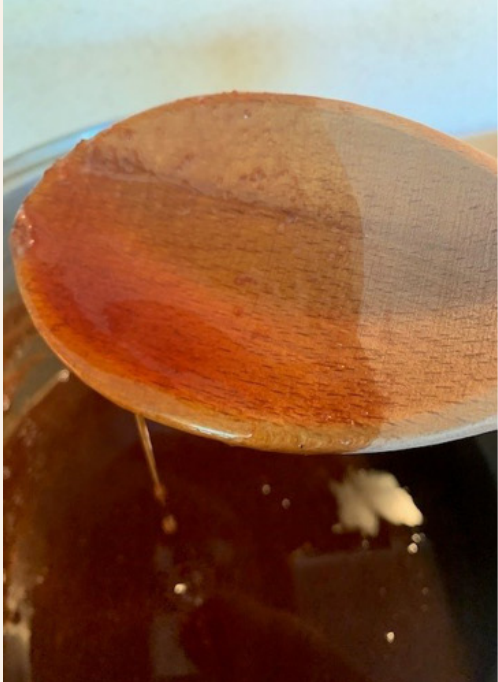
For more see the *Press Democrat* article from September 23, at [Sebastopol's Ambix Spirits built on passion for invention](#)

*By Rick Mead*

**APPLE RECIPE**







## Apple Syrup

**Got Juice?!** Fall, when many freezers are bursting with newly pressed apple juice, is the perfect time to make this delicious, convenient, and long-lasting confection. Use it as you would maple or any other syrup – on pancakes, in desserts, or even in yeast breads.

**Ingredient:** Apple juice

**Quantity to expect:** 1 gallon of juice makes 1 pint of syrup, an 8:1 ratio

**How to make the syrup:** Evaporate juice by heating it either in a pot on the stove, a crock pot, or a pan in the oven. Leave the lid off so the water can evaporate. This isn't a quick process, so I cook mine in a big pot on the stove on a day when I'll be home. The juice can be left on a good simmer with only an occasional stir, it will not burn.

**How to know when it's ready:** This is the tricky part. Before you start, estimate how far down in your pot your syrup will be (the 8:1 ratio) so you have some idea of when to start watching it closely. When the syrup starts to coat a clean wooden spoon, you're close. Chill a saucer in the freezer. Test the thickness of the syrup by putting a dollop of it on the cold saucer and drawing your finger through it.

If the syrup does not fill in where you dragged your finger through, it's ready! I recommend testing **early** and **often**. If you get it a little too thick you can add more juice – but it can easily pass the point of no return. If that happens, you'll have one big, dense apple Sugar Daddy in the bottom of your pot!

If you need to leave it overnight and finish in the morning, just cover it. Apple syrup does not need to be refrigerated; it does not grow mold or ferment. Just bottle it and enjoy!

*By Carole Flaherty*

## SUGGESTIONS



### What do you suggest for SFRR?

- What are your ideas about future SFRR events?
- About topics for this newsletter?
- Farms we should look into for possible tours?
- New food-related businesses we might support?
- Ecological challenges we should research and report on?
- People making a difference in Sonoma County agriculture and food?

Your ideas matter, so please let us know!

Our contact information is [Info@SlowFoodRR.org](mailto:Info@SlowFoodRR.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## COMMENTS?





**We appreciate your comments and feedback on the Newsletter.**

This November issue has longer articles and more photos.

Notice that we are featuring regular columns.

What are your thoughts?

Email to: [Info@SlowFoodRR.org](mailto:Info@SlowFoodRR.org)

## OUR BOARD



### **Shari Figi**

Shari focuses her time on the endangered Gravenstein apple, protecting our pollinators and promoting local farms that incorporate organic practices.

### **Carole Flaherty**

A retired horticulturalist now farming a certified organic orchard of over 200 apple, pear and stone fruit trees, Carol has volunteered, along with her husband Pat, at the Free Community Apple Press for 5 years. She is also Assistant Bio-Manager for the Rare Fruit Growers Redwood Empire Chapter.



### **Peggy Myers Knopp**



Peggy is a retired CPA. She and her husband, Ray, have volunteered at the Community Apple Press. Peggy was so impressed by the purpose, the people and the energy that she has offered her accounting skills as our new treasurer.

## Rick Mead

Rick has been committed to SFRR for a decade and is a wonderful, welcoming volunteer at the Community Apple Press. He increased his participation last year by organizing our booth at the Farm Trails Gravenstein Apple Fair, where a team of volunteers distributed over 5,000 samples of fresh-pressed Gravenstein apple juice. He's already working on our booth for this year which will be bigger.



## Jim Reichardt

Jim has been part of a local farming community for decades. He is a past leader of SFRR and helped build our chapter. He is passionate about the Slow Food movement, both domestic and international and is committed to supporting small family farms and preserving



heritage breeds. “Know your farmers and where your food comes from!”



## Paul Sequeira

Thank you for allowing me to rejoin the board of Slow Food Russian River. I feel fortunate to dwell in this beautiful and bountiful place with such a passionate and engaged community. I live in Sebastopol with my family and work as a vineyard manager. I am hoping to find a way to bridge the gap between the wine industry and the environmental movement just as Slow Food has done in Italy. I believe that food is a fundamental part of community and culture.



## Paula Shatkin

Paula was a founder and has been a leader of SFRR for over 20 years. She is currently the coordinator of the Gravenstein Apple project with a special interest in helping our burgeoning hard cider makers procure and use local apples. She is returning

to this team to help revitalize our connections with people who grow and make food in our community and contribute to the biodiversity of our lands.



## Catherine Thode

Catherine is our Turkey Family leader. She has been part of SFRR since 2006, the first year we co-sponsored the Heritage Turkey Project. She brings her wonderful blend of interest in preserving heritage breeds, working with kids, and educating the public about genetic diversity. We will be selling Heritage turkeys again this year!



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