



EVENT



Ned & Dwight Lawton

Tour Ethic Cider with owner Ned Lawton

We have been invited to tour **Ethic Cider's Apple Bottom Farm**. Ned Lawton, owner of the orchard, will lead us on a tour and tasting, as well as a discussion about the future of apples in Sonoma County. This will be fun and instructive!!

Wednesday morning, October 25, 2023

10 am to noon.

8490 Occidental Road in Sebastopol, CA.

NOTE: Limited to 25 adults.

To sign up: Email Pamela Letourneau at

pajlet5@gmail.com

Parking: There are approximately 12 parking spaces with some overflow available. We suggest you carpool and park at Andy's Produce (in the far part of the lot, not near the produce). Andy's has given permission for 6 cars.

VOLUNTEER



Volunteer Opportunities!

The SFRR Board could 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.

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

We look forward to hearing from you!

REVIEW

The 50th Gravenstein Apple Fair was a knockout!



Photos from 2022 and 2023 Fairs

Started by Sonoma County Farm Advisor John Smith in 1973, the Fair in recent

years has entertained about 14,000 attendees with great music, local arts and crafts, farm animals, cider, farm-inspired food and more.

How did this affect our participation?

In 2022 the SFRR Community Apple Press (CAP) pressed 2,000 pounds of apples and handed out 5,000 samples of Gravenstein juice to a very eager audience. This year, we pressed about 2,500 pounds and handed out 4,300 samples *the first day*, with a total of about 7,000 samples handed out.

"This tastes like apples!"

Most enthusiastic of all, of course, were the many children who lined up to help press the juice and looked up in wonder exclaiming "This tastes like apples!"

Mother Nature provided perfect weather – sunny but not hot

And Dutton Farms provided all our organic pre-washed apples. Our cool Spring weather so delayed apple ripening this year that we were uncertain whether we could get so many apples by the opening of the Fair. But the Duttons came through for us.

They say many hands make light work, and this year 32 generous and enthusiastic SFRR volunteers made all this happen.

by Rick Mead

APPLE PRESS

**Free Community Apple Press is Open
Gravensteins are Here**



Things are very juicy these weekends at the free Community Apple Press as fresh-pressed apple juice runs down the press pan and into collection pails like a waterfall. Volunteers and patrons keep a sharp eye on the level of juice in the pail, one person snatching the pail away to the pouring station as another person follows with an empty one.

Quick! Don't let the juice fall to the ground! It's a dance worth watching, adults and kids alike get caught up in the flow of apples being tossed into the hopper to be coarsely ground before dropping to the barrel below. Barrels follow each other in a rhythmic dance; under the cutter and over to the hand-turned press. Then the two-step as barrels are removed and slid over again, only to be repeated over and over for several hours as hundreds of gallons of juice are pressed, passed, and poured into carboys, jars, bottles, and buckets, carted to cars and finally home for a lot of apple juice and cider joy.

As if this wasn't enough, overhead is a canopy of Sorbus tree branches, softly shading the floor below where the two-step shifts to the Dosey-Doe as apples are unloaded from cars, washed, pressed, poured and carted away, passing yet another load apples being swept into the apple press dance.

Have I gone over the top describing the experience

at the Community Apple Press?

Certainly not – just ask anyone who has been there. And better yet, you are invited! Bring your apples and join the fun – or just stop by to catch the action and have a taste of juice.

By Carole Flaherty



Sign up for a **20-minute appointment** [HERE](#).
Please **join our team**: volunteers are needed.

We invite you to sign up for a
morning or afternoon shift [HERE](#).

We're looking forward to seeing you at the

Sebastopol Community Apple Press

Luther Burbank Gold Ridge Experiment Farm

Sebastopol

August to October 21st

9am to 3pm

Saturdays and Sundays

Support Our Apple Press School Program: The Paula Downing Memorial Fund



We offer schools the opportunity to bring children to the press so they can experience the apple dance and all the magic that is present at the Farm. The Farm has paths along which there are plants, trees, bugs, fruit, flowers, and more for children to look at and to touch. Luther Burbank was a premier plant

breeder, a story in itself. Each child is personally involved in all the facets of making apple juice and is gifted a bottle of juice to take home and share with their family.

The School Visit Program was the baby of our recently passed Paula Downing. We miss her a lot and intend to keep this program alive and well in her memory. The program had to be cut back this year due to the lack of available funds for grants from the City of Sebastopol.

In the past, thanks to the grant money, Paula and her volunteers hosted 11 schools in one season. We are committed to matching this number in the future. Meanwhile, donations will be gratefully accepted and put directly into this program.

Please visit www.slowfoodrr.org for more information about the program, to leave donations, to sign up your class for a visit to the farm, and to learn about the amazing life of Paula Downing.

By Carole Flaherty

[Donate to the Paula Downing Memorial Fund](#)

HERITAGE TURKEYS

**The Heritage Turkey Project
is in full swing!**



This is our 18th year with Slow Food Russian River as our generous co-sponsor.

Heritage Turkeys had almost disappeared in this country due to the commercial popularity of the industrially raised, Broad Breasted White turkeys developed about 75 years ago. These turkeys were selectively bred for fast, efficient growth and low cost. The commercial broad-breasted white not only lacks the flavor and succulence of their predecessors, but they also cannot mate naturally and are vulnerable to disease.

By 1990 Heritage Turkey was nearly driven to extinction. Earnest conservation efforts began to preserve the beauty, genetic diversity, and superior flavor of the heritage turkey. Conservation organizations that focus on livestock have promoted the breeding and sale of heritage turkeys to preserve these old breeds for the enjoyment of future generations.

This year we have 11 youth across Sonoma County growing heritage turkeys for exhibition, breeding and to offer for sale for Thanksgiving.

We started hatching poult (the name for baby turkeys) in April and our 4-H and FFA youth have been raising their young turkeys since the birds were just a few days old.

We've spent the last few weeks going to all the project members' properties to wing-band their turkeys. This little metal clip stays on the bird throughout its life with identifying information so that when the turkey is sold, we are able to tell each customer the variety of heritage turkey they are purchasing, and the name of the young farmer who raised it.

Our heritage turkeys are raised on locally milled organic feed.

To learn more about our project and to reserve your heritage turkey for Thanksgiving please go to: [our website](#)

For more information about the preservation of Heritage Turkeys, visit: [The Livestock Conservancy](#)

By Catherine Thode

W I N E

Wine Industry Update



Picking Pinot Noir grapes in the Russian River Valley.

This year's grape harvest is just now getting underway a good three weeks behind schedule. Late ripening varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache are particularly at risk as they might not be ready to pick before the season gets disrupted by October rains or fires or both.

The unusually late harvest is compounding an already complicated outlook for

wine grapes right now as the industry is currently experiencing an oversupply, indicating a contraction. Thousands of tons of grapes across the county will most likely go unsold and unpicked. Yields, particularly in Sonoma County, are slightly below average, though the impact of lower yields will be hard to gauge when so many grapes will not be picked at all.

In the past these contractions have proven nothing more than course corrections, and the outlook for the area remains strong. We wish you all a safe and bountiful harvest.

By Paul Sequeira

IN MEMORY

Remembering Paula Downing



Left two photos by Karen Preuss

As many of you know by now, our dear friend and leader Paula Downing died a few weeks ago. She died the way she lived - on her own terms, at home, with her family by her side.

Up until the last 3 days of her life she was working to prepare us all to take over her priorities and wishes for the work we will need to do to continue in her stead. She was passionate about life and about so many things, and she poured her soul and energy into our community, supporting the biodiversity and the beautiful apple orchards around us and supporting the stalwart apple farmers who work to make a living growing and promoting apples in the face of the constant encroachment of vineyards and development.

Paula had endless friends and co-workers. I was lucky enough to be one of them. We were together as leaders and partners in Slow Food River for nearly 20 years. She put her heart into everything she believed in - and she led us along with her to do the right thing. She was a vegetarian but she worked to help sell heritage turkeys and promote humane treatment for all animals. Her generosity was legendary. She was a passionately caring grandmother and devoted tons of time to caring for her grandchildren until they were ready for school.

In her nonexistent spare time, she worked to support school gardens in low-income communities. She was a peace activist and an environmentalist. She was an active partner to small farmers and helped them personally to bring their orchards into successful production. Justice and fairness to all were her driving personal forces.

One of Paula's favorite projects was to bring school kids to the Slow Food Community Apple Press, at our expense, to press local apples that we provide, and to learn about healthy food, especially fresh Gravenstein apple juice, and take some home to share with their families.

We are encouraging you all to donate to the Paula Downing Schools at the Community Apple Press fund to help us bring classes from local and low-income schools to our Press.

By Paula Shatkin

[Donate to the Paula Downing Memorial Fund](#)

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!



NOTES

We are sending this newsletter to an expansive and somewhat out-of-date list of Slow Food supporters. If you prefer NOT to receive this newsletter, please check the box below and we will remove your name from our mailing list.

Thank you!

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