



## Addressing the hunger for ...

AUUF members & friends have demonstrated strong interest in getting fresher, healthier and more local food for their families. Judging from attendance at local farmers markets, demand for fresher, healthier and more local is generally strong in the Auburn-Opelika area. Indeed, it seems to me that the area could support many more local farmers, CSAs, possibly even daily farmers markets.

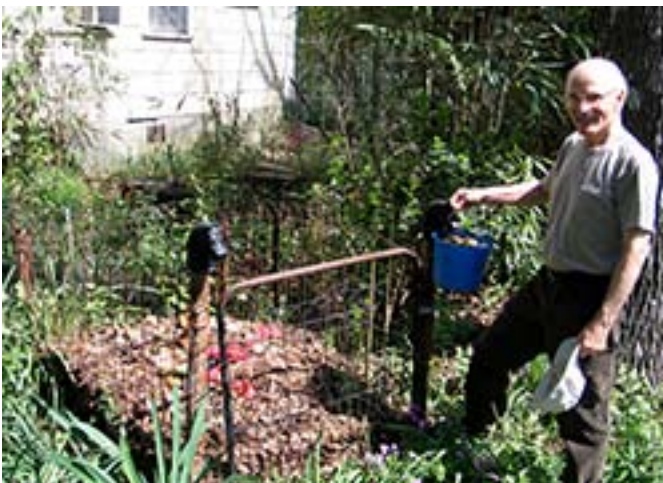
On the other hand, we know that hunger is a daily reality for too many of our neighbors.

The daily economic news, seemingly daily reports of more rapid onset of global harming, and continuing confirmation that world energy supplies are approaching crisis – all suggest that all of us are likely soon to be taking even greater interest in availability of local food.

What to do? I suggest we members and friends of AUUF consider taking the lead in formation of a local Food Policy Council. Since the formation of the first one in Knoxville in 1982, at least 50 local or statewide FPCs have been formed around the US. Some are volunteer citizen groups and some have gained governmental status. Many have made remarkable progress in improving their communities' access to food, alleviating hunger and improving the nutritional status of children, and promoting local sustainable farming.

The basic goal of a Food Policy Council is to lead a community to adopt access to food as a priority comparable to providing water, sanitation services, streets and roads and other basic services meeting human needs. FPCs typically bring together stakeholders from different sectors of the community – churches, government agencies, business, education, and non-profits as well as concerned citizens – to examine how the food

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## *The Green Raven*

“It’s the economy, stupid!” was Clinton’s advice to himself (and his hench-people) in the 1990s. I guess it is still the important advice in Washington, and Obama seems to agree -- perhaps America does, too.

Better we should worry about the ecology.

Americans are not yet serious about the precipitous approach of climate change. Our own “UU World” magazine is dilly-dallying around the edges of the problem. Sure, change your light bulbs (has anyone found the new multi-bulb LEDs that are supposed to light more than a spot?). Yes, recycle, reuse, repair, reduce.

But how many have put in solar power? Or threatened to sue their homeowner’s association to overthrow silly rules about dark roofs and attached solar panels? Are you boycotting your grocery store until they ‘fess up to buying their veggies from California? Or Chile? I’m not either. We haven’t yet awakened.

Yet, if the snow pack disappears from California’s Sierras (it is), if the glaciers melt in the Andes or the Himalayas (they are), if failure of the rains turns Alabama into Arizona, the world’s fresh water will be desperately short. People need water, and so do crops. It is extravagant, next to impossible to desalinate sea water. (Of course, the sun does it all the time, but much of the fresh water rain falls on the oceans.) Oil production from major oil fields is already in decline. Coal burning will make climate change even worse. Turn Earth into a Venus-type planet and we are literally toast.

Well, what can we do? We can put much more pressure on Sessions, Shelby and Rogers to put us on solar power. If they don’t do it, we’ll have to get rid of them as we got rid of Bush. We can push the Alabama legislature to require our utilities (Alabama Power and all the electric co-ops) to emulate the rest of the country, convert to

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***Ken Walters (and Terry Rodriquez) don’t take leafy yard waste out to the street for pickup or toss kitchen scraps into the garbage (or the insinkerator, that’s even worse). Oh, no! Except for leaves they let mulch their no-lawn yard, they recycle all that valuable vegetable matter in their back yard compost bin. It isn’t smelly, it’s simple and cheap to construct, and it isn’t hard work. And the finished compost they get out of the bin provides humus and plant nutrients that help keep their yard plantings and potted plants healthy – saving Ken & Terry money they would otherwise have to spend on purchased fertilizer and potting soil.***

(o o) **The Green Raven**

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clean power, push conservation, and buy our surplus clean power. Even in 1950 New York state had a low rate for electric use at night. A large water tank and a time clock would save you money and provide the utility company with extra peak power (day and evening). You can put on a solar water heater (which would be easier with utility help).

Now that retirement savings have followed the Ponzi schemes into never-never land, I am glad for every nickel I put into solar hardware. There is not yet enough training in solar design or installation at Auburn or at Southern Union. You can bug them to get moving. Try to find someone to install a geothermal heat pump; discover salesmen so uninformed they will offer just a one year warranty on a \$14,000 investment, although 5 years warranty is available on the air to air type heat pump. Our businesses need some prodding.

Let's make this country a place where fewer of our people have to slave away in cities and more of us live on farms! Let's repopulate our villages – clusters of diversity with fields around them, instead of the endless strips of houses like our suburbs, where no one walks at all because there is nothing to walk to.

– Chip Busch

**Jim's Wonderful Low-Carbon Breakfast**

Way tasty, organically grown, no packaging (you bring your own container to the store), minimally processed, no cooking required – sound good? It's oatmeal. That is, rolled oats, available in bulk at our local Dayspring store.

"No cooking?" That's right, no cooking needed. Rolled oats have been steamed and are ready to eat, with a crunchy, nutty (actually, oaty) flavor.

Add milk? Yes, Wright Dairy milk when I can get it, otherwise either supermarket organic skim or soy milk.

Is that all? Well, I think it needs fruit, ideally our own or local, and fresh, esp. blueberries or figs, but home frozen or home canned when fresh are not available).

No sugar? Absolutely not needed (the fruit does it).

Special sauce – when you are feeling especially deserving – a dollop or two of organic vanilla yogurt! Oooo, la la! So good!

Judy sez: "Add 1 T freshly ground flax seed (for the Omega-3s), and, for true nuttiness, chopped pecans (local, of course)."

## Around the Hodgederosa

– Green gardening tips by Tom Hodges

Spring is here! So it's time to get planting in the South. My goal of cutting shade trees has finally been realized, thanks to our resident AUUF landscapers, Simply Telese. We now have much more sunlight hitting our garden space. Now I am looking forward to the Rain Barrel Workshop being held at the Arboretum on April 4, so I can learn more about collecting water for the garden.

Our potatoes have been planted already and we are preparing our vegetable and flower beds to receive the rest of the spring and summer crop seeds soon. We wait until the first week in April to plant seeds such as beans, corn, cucumbers, okra, squash and other hot weather plants directly in the garden.

Tomatoes, peppers, eggplant – heat lovers all – and herbs we start from seed indoors, then transplant into the garden about the same time. We start a good bit of our seed stock under fluorescent grow lights. The seed package instructions say you can use a sunny window sill for starting your seedlings but I don't recommend this practice. The seedlings grow spindly this way because there is simply not enough sunlight to encourage vigorous growth.

Herbs can stand a little more shade than vegetables, by the way. (In order to help keep herb plants from getting too thirsty and drying out, plant them where more light from the east hits them rather than western sunlight.) The fall plantings of garlic and onions should be ready by mid-June; the leeks were harvested in mid-February and were delicious!

Before transplanting, we cultivate the area where the plants will grow and add a handful or two of finished compost to the holes before setting the plants out. If using containers, don't dig up dirt in the yard; use a soil mixture that is intended for containers. For our scrumptious tomatoes, we also add some crushed egg shells for the extra calcium boost that wards off potential diseases and pests. Calcium also helps tomatoes set fruit better.

As we plant the vegetable garden, we also begin our flower beds. We tend to raise more perennial plants than annuals, but the marigolds and some herbs around the vegetable garden deter pests.

Time to go play in the dirt! I would love to hear from other gardeners about their adventures, so call or write me anytime. Until next month, remember: if I can do it, anyone can! Happy gardening!

### Will there be an environmental movie in April?

**YES! at 7:00 PM on the last Wednesday of April (the 29th), and of course will be FREE (including organic cookies)! We just don't yet quite know exactly what film will be shown. Look for an announcement on the auuf.net calendar, by the auuf.net e-list, and the Sunday order of service announcements. In the meantime, may we suggest for your online environmental viewing pleasure:**

**The Story of Stuff – <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>  
EarthTalk Today – <http://www.earthtalktoday.tv/index.html>**

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system is operating and to develop recommendations for improving it. Gaining official governmental status of course improves the clout of a Food Policy Council, and may give it authority and means to implement improvements. But even as “mere” citizens’ advisory groups, FPCs often have been able to help bring about significant changes in their communities.

## Good Food Policy Council Examples?

Greater Birmingham Community Food Partners (not all FPCs use the term in their name) is a project of Magic City Harvest, the Jefferson County food bank. Their mission statement: *The GBCFP works to promote access for all community residents to a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.*

GBCFP is only a couple of years old but has recruited a large number of partner organizations, conducted a “community food assessment” graphically demonstrating lack of access to healthy food in the mostly minority, low-income East Lake area, and gotten the attention of civic leaders – the president of the city council attended a Food Summit they held last year and was inspired to offer to have the city pay for water meter installation at community gardens. Learn more at: [www.gbcbf.org](http://www.gbcbf.org).

The Athens (GA) Area Food Policy Council is a fairly new FPC which arose as a result of a series of town meetings held by the county commission. While not officially government sanctioned, the group has participation by government officials, including the mayor of Athens. The Council is currently doing what they call community food “micro-studies” to gather data they can use in grant applications.

The Dane County Food Council (Madison WI) was formed by the county commission in 2005 to:

*Support development of infrastructure and marketing opportunities for local foods;*

*Initiate local purchasing in county food service facilities;*

*Support development of a Central Agriculture and Food Facility and Public Market; and*

*Establish a countywide network of farmers markets.*

The Berkeley (CA) Food Policy Council in 2001 got the city government to pass a revolutionary food policy resolution declaring that the city would:

*Purchase fresh food from nearby and regional farms, gardens and food processors as a first priority;*

*Purchase prepared or processed foods from nearby, small businesses that procure ingredients from regional organic farmers and food processors;*

*Support cooperatives, bartering, buying clubs, local currencies and other non-traditional payment mechanisms*

*for purchasing regionally and sustainably grown food; Promote ecologically sound food cultivation in public and private spaces throughout Berkeley.*

The Berkeley FPC mission statement: *To build a local food system based on sustainable regional agriculture that fosters the local economy and assures all people of Berkeley have access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food from non-emergency sources.*

Note that the Berkeley mission includes at least trying to do away with the need for a Food Bank. While we have it on good authority that the poor will always be with us, perhaps that’s not an idea to get too comfortable with.

## How To Get Started?

The first thing a start-up Food Policy Council typically does is assess the local situation – how much food is or could be produced locally, availability of fresh and organic or sustainably grown food in stores or at farmers markets, how much and what kind of foods different sectors of the population actually have access to. Etc. This is commonly called a community food assessment (CFA). Groups often start with a “windshield tour” of neighborhoods and surrounding areas to see where different types of food stores are and how many farms and how much farmland are within a convenient distance. Along with some initial statistical research on the internet and a few phone calls to knowledgeable sources.

I think a relatively small AUUF task force could make enough of a start on a CFA to be able to produce a report that would get the attention of others, including civic, religious and governmental leader types, along with the kinds of organizations likely to enlist in the kind of coalition that makes for an effective Council.

## Is There Help Available?

The national Community Food Security Coalition has an extensive training and technical assistance program. To see what they offer for FPC development, go to: <http://www.foodsecurity.org/FPC/>. The Southern Sustainable Ag Working Group also offers extensive relevant materials on community food systems, including CFAs: <http://www.ssawg.org/cfs-resources.html>. Community food project grants are available from USDA, and there is potential to recruit university graduate students to help conduct community food assessment work.

Need I mention that helping start a Food Policy Council would be an appropriate AUUF response to the national UUA challenge (study/action issue) on “Ethical Eating?” Or that in the process we could be satisfying the environmental justice requirement for certification as a Green Sanctuary?

I will be available to discuss the idea during “2nd hour” following the March 28 Sunday service. Or call or email me to talk about it.

– Jim Allen 334.499.2380, [vineyfig@knology.net](mailto:vineyfig@knology.net)