

# Share

The weekly newsletter of Stone's Throw CSA  
October 30, 2008 <http://stonesthrowcsa.wordpress.com/>

About Stone's Throw:

## Worcester County Food Bank

*Engaging, educating, and leading Worcester County in creating a hunger-free community*

Most Stone's Throw members joined the CSA to secure a steady supply of fresh, healthful vegetables grown with organic methods on local farms. One member realized she could maximize the CSA experience, by extending outreach to the hungry of central Massachusetts. She and other members donated, in five months, close to 1,000 pounds of fresh, nutritious vegetables to the coffers of the Worcester County Food Bank. Thanking fellow CSA shareholders at the Harvest Dinner, Food Bank Executive Director Jean McMurray said, "It all goes to people to eat, providing someone's next meal." She reminded members that hunger occurs year-round, and stated the Food Bank strives the whole year through to provide their service agencies with quality fresh foods, as well as canned and prepared items.

Another Food Bank partner, the Pioneer Valley Growers Association, provides some produce year-round; still, the agency must always make sure there are adequate food sources available to meet the need. "The season of giving reminds people that others, less fortunate than they, suffer from hunger," said Jean. "In reality, this is true during the holidays and throughout the year."

**You can help fight hunger here in Worcester County. Log on to [www.foodbank.org](http://www.foodbank.org) to discover easy ways you can make a big difference.**



*Mary Sieminski, mother of farmer Katherine Anderson, generously donated a full share to the Worcester County Food Bank, and suggested the CSA offer any unclaimed shares to the agency. Thank you, Mary, for your gracious gift to the Food Bank!*

## Farm Update

At the end of her first season of production farming at **Sweet Birch Farm**, Katherine Anderson confided she and partner Judy loved growing for the CSA. "Admittedly, there were a few nights I wondered if the new fields would produce *anything*," she recalled with a smile, "but the CSA multi-farm model gave us a chance to 'get our feet wet' [in production farming] with lower risk." Partnering with Stone's Throw allowed her to increase garden space more than she otherwise would have; and, to focus on the growing schedule by setting other projects aside.

Asked about her preparations for winter, she mused, "Well..., after the summer's excessive rain alternating with periods of drought, I wonder what's coming?" The off-season garden is best served by having continual snow cover for protection -- a condition that New England farms haven't seen for a few years. To prepare for the potentially harsh winter weather Katherine will apply mulch or grow cover crops to hold the topsoil together, and then turn it in the spring to fortify the loam. The over-wintering process will continue Katherine's connection to the Stone's Throw community and foster her commitment to growing healthy, delicious vegetables. Your final shares include the last of the Sweet Birch Swiss chard.

**Jade Hill Farmstead's** participation in Stone's Throw's maiden season was less than expected, mostly due to weather conditions and lack of help. Four crops were grown for the CSA, one of which overperformed; one was right on target, another's yield was considerably below expectations, and the fourth was a total crop failure. Jane LaForce will spend the 2009 growing season working to recondition her gardens and improve fences, with an eye toward coming back strong in 2010. She will remain active on the Steering Committee and, hopefully, provide support to the other farmers. Jane looks forward to winter planning, home improvement, and resting. "Thanks to all the volunteers and my sister farmers who made this such a fulfilling experience."

I am very pleased overall with the first year of Stone's Throw CSA," said Martha Cole of **Silvermine Farm**. "I really enjoyed meeting the shareholders and wish that I had been able to spend time with everyone, I hope I crossed paths at least with each shareholder at some point during the summer."

Martha has wanted to participate in a CSA for the past few years and found it fit her farming style well. To maintain flexibility in crop choices and planting schedules, she plans to still sell at local farmer's markets as well as grow for Stone's Throw.

"The weather this year was as challenging as each year is, too little rain at some points, too much rain at others. It all adds up to the uneven production of crops that is perfectly normal in New England," she said. Diversity and flexibility are hallmarks of all farming and this is true for growing for a CSA as much as for production.

"Only by planting more than the 20 crops that I committed to for the CSA, was I able to meet my goals of distribution," she explained. "If I had relied only on those that I originally planted for Stone's Throw the shares would not have been as full as they were, and it was important to me to meet that commitment."

Martha is hoping for a good snow cover this winter since it helps hold down row covers and mulches, protects cover crops from damage due to freezing and thawing and helps to add nitrogen to the soil. She sends her apologies to those of you who commute to work or school. Nevertheless, she is looking forward to playing around in her large greenhouse this winter, learning about winter production of greens and earlier spring production of field and greenhouse produce.



## Member Survey

Thanks to those who filled out the 2008 member survey. We appreciate your feedback. If you didn't get a survey last week, there will be extra copies at pickup this week. The survey is also available for download on the blog: <http://stonestrowcsa.wordpress.com/2008/10/28/member-survey/>

## From the Steering Committee:

### Final pickup!

It's hard to believe that our first season is over this week. The Stone's Throw CSA steering committee would like to thank all of our members for joining us in our first year. We enjoyed meeting members at pickup and at our spring and fall events, and we greatly appreciate the many work hours that you put in to help make this season a success. We hope to see you again next year!

### 2009 Shares

Current CSA members will have priority in signing up for next year, and we will ask for your deposits before the end of the year. Please look for an email soon with more details on signing up for next year. And keep an eye on the blog for updates throughout out the year.

### Steering Committee Openings

We are looking for people who may be interested in joining the Stone's Throw CSA steering committee. The role of the committee is to help support the farmers as well as to help guide the development of the CSA program. The committee, including farmers, CSA members and others, meets during the off season to plan for the following year.

If you think you might be interested, let us know on the member survey or a sign-up sheet will be available at pickup. We will hold a meeting after the CSA season for those interested to find out more about how it all works.

## Recipes

### Potato and Leek Gratin With Cumin

By MARTHA ROSE SHULMAN

This is a main dish gratin that makes a nice vegetarian meal when it's served with either a salad or green vegetable. The cumin contributes a Mediterranean flavor to the dish.

- 1 garlic clove, cut in half
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound leeks, white and light green parts only, cut in half lengthwise, sliced and rinsed of sand
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, lightly toasted and crushed in a mortar and pestle or a spice mill
- 2 pounds russet potatoes or Yukon golds, peeled if using russets, scrubbed if using Yukon golds, and sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 3 ounces Gruyère cheese, grated (3/4 cup, tightly packed)
- 2 1/3 cups low-fat milk

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Rub the inside of a 2-quart gratin or baking dish with the cut side of the garlic clove. Brush lightly with olive oil.
2. Heat the remaining olive oil in a wide, heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat and add the leeks. Cook, stirring often, until tender, for about 5 minutes. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt and freshly ground pepper to taste and stir in the crushed cumin seeds. Stir together for half a minute and remove from the heat.
3. Place the potatoes in a large bowl and season generously with salt and pepper. Add the leeks mixture and half the cheese, and toss together. Arrange in the baking dish in an even layer. Pour in the milk. Place the baking dish on a baking sheet and place in the oven.
4. Bake the gratin for 45 minutes, checking after 30 minutes and pressing the potatoes down into the milk with the back of a spoon. At 45 minutes, remove the dish from the oven and again press the potatoes down into the liquid. Sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top and

bake for another 30 to 45 minutes, or until nicely browned. Remove from the heat and allow to sit for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

### Warm Potato Salad With Goat Cheese

By MARTHA ROSE SHULMAN

You can use Yukon golds, fingerlings or red bliss potatoes for this warm, creamy salad. The goat cheese melts into the dressing when you toss it with the hot potatoes.

For the dressing:

- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 small or medium garlic clove, minced or pureed
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, or for a low-fat dressing use 1/4 cup low-fat yogurt or buttermilk and 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the salad:

- 1 1/2 pounds Yukon gold, fingerling or red bliss potatoes
  - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
  - 2 to 4 tablespoons finely chopped red onion (to taste), rinsed with cold water and drained
  - 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
  - 2 ounces soft goat cheese
  - 2 to 3 sage leaves, cut in thin slivers (optional)
1. Make the dressing. Whisk together the lemon juice, vinegar, mustard, salt, pepper, and garlic. Whisk in the olive oil or the yogurt and olive oil. Taste and adjust seasonings, Set aside.
  2. Scrub the potatoes and cut into 3/4-inch dice if large. If using fingerlings cut in 3/4 inch slices. Steam above 1 inch of boiling water until tender but not mushy, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from the heat and toss while hot in a bowl with salt and pepper to taste, the onions, parsley, goat cheese, and the dressing. Sprinkle the sage over the top and serve.