

Learning at a Tinicum farm about planting seedlings

DelVal students start crop of sugar snap peas

Kathryn Finegan Clark

It's perfect timing – and a chance to get down and dirty in spring's awakening soil.

Delaware Valley University students flee their classroom on a gorgeous afternoon, sunshine pouring through a high, clear sky.

Accompanied by Professor Jacqueline Ricotta, who teaches a commercial vegetable production class, they climb out of a bus at Tinicum CSA to learn about community supported agriculture. Four of the students are veterans.

After touring the farm they plant a field of sugar snap pea seedlings fresh from the greenhouse, erect trellises and begin irrigating the soil. Most of all, they learn about "the challenge of getting production right" for a hundred or more CSA members who appear at the farm weekly expecting to fill bags with fresh vegetables.

Tinicum CSA is the brainchild of partners John Crooke and Stefan Streit, who are preparing for the CSA's third season. They're an interesting pair.

Crooke grew up in Buckingham on his parents' dairy farm, and served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Paraguay, where he worked in an agricultural extension program. He had previously co-managed the student farm at Cornell University while he was earning a degree in anthropology.

Streit, a Minnesotan, who majored in math at Creighton University, was an AmeriCorps volunteer for an environmental restoration non-profit in Seattle before he lived in a Zen monastery in the Catskills for three years.

The partners met as apprentices at Sisters Hill Farm near Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and decided to join hands in Bucks County.

Tinicum CSA leases 6 acres from Schneiderwind Farm and Nursery on the River Road just opposite the Frenchtown-Ulmerstown Bridge. Craig Schneiderwind manages his nursery and shares equipment with the CSA.

Crooke leads the DelVal tour, taking the students first to the greenhouse, where



A student watches as a tractor is used to prepare the soil for the transplant of seedlings.



Emily Harsha of Doylestown, a sophomore majoring in sustainable agriculture, starts to plant seedlings.



John Crooke discusses seedlings as he leads DelVal students on a tour of Tinicum CSA.

neat rows of seedlings poke tender leaves above the large trays.

"Efficiency" is his keyword as he points to large greenhouse benches covered with trays of seedlings. The benches are mounted on wheels for easy movement. "You just move a bench outside instead of carrying trays one at a time," Crooke explains.

He also notes the benches are built at a height that provides maximum comfort for the farmer. "This is systems thinking," he says. "This is one of the things we learned as apprentices."

The tour continues through the flat fields and Crooke and Streit discuss irrigation and soil, stressing that the produce is grown chemical free and sustainably, meaning they

use farming techniques that protect the environment and public health. The students gather close round the farm's intricate, detailed crop plan and learn that harvesting is scheduled for two days before CSA members are due to pick up their shares. Then Streit climbs on the tractor to finish preparing the soil before the students transplant seedlings.

The CSA grows 45 crops each season and provides shareholders a selection of vegetables, fruits and herbs from May through November. Members also may visit a flower patch and cut their own blooms.

Distribution is planned Tuesday evenings or Saturday mornings. Little produce is left over, according to Crooke, who says the crop plan is "pretty precise," but if there is, it's either sold to local restaurants or given to food pantries.

Springfield supervisors act to oppose pipeline

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the extent of its annual maintenance and authorized all costs to be "borne by agency other than the township."

Bucks County has already committed to paying for all engineering, design and construction costs.

The trail, which originates in Northampton County, would pass through Springfield and Richland townships en route to Quakertown.

Target shooting clinic slated for women

The Easton Fish and Game Association, together with the National Rifle Association, will host a Women on Target Instructional Shooting Clinic on May 23 at its facility, 2595 Redington Road East, Lower Saucon Township.

A morning session (8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) and an afternoon session (noon to 4:30 p.m.) are available. Female participants will have the opportunity to shoot

rifles, and handguns. No experience is necessary and equipment will be provided.

Women participating in the clinic will first participate in a one-hour training session to learn how to safely handle a firearm and how to safely store them at home. From there, they will proceed to the range for live fire training, one on one, with a qualified instructor. This is a

non-stress, friendly atmosphere for women.

The cost for the clinic is \$35 per participant.

Pre-registration by May 10 is required; the clinic is limited to 40 participants. For information or to register, call clinic Director Michael S. Klacik at 908-240-3645 or email mklacik68@gmail.com.

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Author speaks against death penalty

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their executions; she said she believes two of the men killed were innocent.

The first execution she witnessed was that of Patrick Sonnier, after she became his spiritual counselor in Louisiana. Prejan wrote "Dead Man Walking" based on that experience.

"It's the most surreal thing you'll ever see," Prejan said of watching a man be executed. Everything is scripted, with each guard knowing his role in the process, including strapping the prisoner down, she said.

"It's really hard to get your head around what you're watching," Prejan said, referring to viewing someone going from "totally alive to dead" so quickly.

Viewing Sonnier's execution, she said, made her physically ill after she left the room.

"I threw up," Prejan said. "I'd never watched a human being be killed."

Prejan's next book, "River of Fire," which she plans to send the summer writing in Montana, will be the prequel to "Dead Man Walking," she said. It's

about "the spiritual journey that awakened me to the gospel of justice."

"The Death of Innocents" is the story of Dobie Gillis Williams, an indigent black man with an IQ of 65, and Joseph Roger O'Dell.

Race is a huge factor in death sentences in the United States, Prejan said. "Eight of 10 executed or sent to death row, it's because they killed a white person," she said. "Black lives matter in the application of the death penalty too," Prejan added, referring to recent protests about black men killed by police in Ferguson, Mo., New York and Baltimore.

Prejan said more than 75 percent of executions have happened in 10 southern states that practiced slavery, where the penal code is "very sharp."

"It's the race of the victim that determines the death penalty," she said. "There's no outrage when a person of color is killed."

Prejan is opposed to the death penalty for reasons in addition to her objection to the morality of it for those who are guilty and the belief that innocent

people are being executed or are living on death row. Since 1973, a total of 152 people on death row in the United States have been exonerated.

The reasons include the expense of appeals and of housing prisoners on death row, as well as the way they are housed. They also include the negative effect on the mental health of guards and wardens who take part in the executions, she said.

Although most Americans still favor the death penalty, there have been shifts in public opinion, Prejan said, from 78 percent in favor in 1996 down to 56 percent a few months ago, according to Pew studies.

Prejan is trying to add to that change through her talks, her books, her website and her membership in the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

She also is trying to change the fact that a majority of Americans are still ambivalent about the death penalty. "For most people," she said, "it's not one of the moral issues that affects them personally."

jarthur@buckscountyherald.com

EPA updates Richland landfill cleanup process

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Asked about the effect on property values, she said she was aware of a study that concluded that "when a Superfund site is under control, property values increase." Asked about the effectiveness of the groundwater treatment method to be deployed, hydrogeologist Mark Leipert said that it had "a 15-year record" of proven success, "all

over EPA's ten regions."

The method, which features the injection of sodium permanganate, was also noted as "green" in contrast to other techniques such as "pump and treat."

The project also features the installation of a multi-layer, geotextile cap to prevent exposure to all landfill contaminants. Some tree removal will

required for its proper installation, and also to prevent them from falling on it later and compromising its effectiveness.

Love promised a planting scheme to include trees, shrubs, and plants that typically attract flowers and birds. The re-vegetation is to be the subject of another public meeting once all the contractors are on board.

JENNIFER SHEPHERD: THE COSMIC INFORMER

Week of Thursday, May 7 - Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Aries: (March 21 - April 19) Be patient with your loved ones as there could be a lot of stress in your home. Remember to laugh.
Taurus: (April 20 - May 20) Money matters should gradually start to improve. Seize an opportunity if it comes your way.
Gemini: (May 21 - June 20) Don't rush into anything. If you are presented with a contract or agreement, examine the terms carefully.
Cancer: (June 21 - July 22) You'll need to handle practical issues like paying bills, arranging childcare, or fixing your home. Just get it done.
Leo: (July 23 - Aug. 22) Your current

social group is dissolving as people outgrow each other. This is normal. You'll soon make some new friends.
Virgo: (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) You're going back and forth about two different options. Get some advice from an outside source to be fully informed.
Libra: (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22) Your creative energies are strong right now, but you could be a little manic. Ground yourself by getting outside more.
Scorpio: (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21) If something isn't working out, it could be time to let it go. Don't waste your energy on unproductive projects or relationships.
Sagittarius: (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) If you socialize a lot you'll meet someone who

can provide important information or a business lead. Get chatting.
Capricorn: (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) Technical matters or dealing with technology could preoccupy you. Don't be intimidated. You'll soon solve the problem.
Aquarius: (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) Reach out to a good friend and share your ideas with him or her. You'll enjoy a wonderful conversation that provides many insights.
Pisces: (Feb. 19 - March 20) You could be tempted to overdo it in a love relationship. If you just started dating someone, don't propose marriage just yet.
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