Reflections on

RESILIENCE

in uncertain times.

Issue 42

Resilience

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We welcome your letters, comments, questions, and compliments.

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The Quivira Coalition publishes resilience annually as a benefit of its membership program — becoming a member is one of the best ways to support our work. Additional copies available for $5 shipped in the U.S. with additional shipping to international addresses.

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the relaunch of *Resilience*. It's been five years since our last issue appeared, in August of 2015, commemorating the life and work of our good friend and riparian restoration-guru, Bill Zeedyk. In the intervening years, much has changed here at Quivira, and much has remained the same: we've expanded our New Agrarian Program and our Education and Outreach efforts, launched the Carbon Ranch Initiative, revitalized our Tribal Initiative, established the REGENERATE conference, and doubled down on the ideals of the Radical Center, supporting resilient working landscapes across the West.

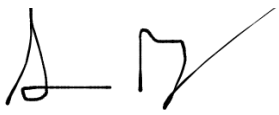
In his editor's letter from Issue 40, subtitled "Beyond Resilience," Quivira cofounder Courtney White observed that "the definition of 'normal' is changing. Hotter and drier conditions, for example, are becoming the 'new normal' in the Southwest and are projected to increase over time. If resilience means bounce back, the question becomes: bounce back to what?"

These days, it seems "normal" has shifted yet again. Returning to Courtney's words in the midst of a global pandemic, after a delayed monsoon season, more ravaging fires, and years of worsening drought, the question presents itself with a new gravity. This gravity is only compounded by the ongoing battles for racial and political justice taking place across the country with renewed fervor. As I write this, producers the world over are struggling to bring their food to market. In the United States, we've seen a surge in hunger, and the recent enrollment of more than six million new people for food stamps. As we begin to reckon with the status quo that permitted these circumstances — systemic racism, ineffective economies, broken supply chains — many are likewise asking: a bounceback or a new bounce forward?

For the writers assembled herein — ranchers, farmers, gardeners, stewards of varying stripes — the pandemic and its widening ripples have been a source of grief, reflection, determination, and renewal. "No one necessarily wants to be resilient; it's a condition that often arises when there is no other option but to persist," cautions Carmen Taylor. "In the moments of uncertainty and darkness," writes Sarah King, "resilience has meant letting go of what was supposed to be." And for Leeanna Torres, "the undercurrent of our resiliencia also lies in that subtle unspoken of our traditional lives, the deep querencia of our daily living."

We're thrilled to convene this cohort of thoughtful voices, each with its own perspective on the present moment and some potential solutions.

Happy reading,



Sean McCoy

Reflections on RESILIENCE *in uncertain times.*

It's been a year for roll up your sleeves, put your mask on, identify the issue, and adapt. Sol Ranch owner/operator and new New Agrarian mentor Emily Cornell and apprentice Dylan Jones tackle the small stuff like water lines while staying level headed about the big stuff like drought, overbooked processors, and surviving a pandemic.

Photo by Minesh Bacrania

CONTRIBUTORS

We asked contributors to this issue of *Resilience* to offer a short biographical statement and a short expression of their land ethic. They have generously contributed their words, stories, poems, drawings, and photographs for the love of this publication, organization, and community. We're extremely grateful to them for making this magazine.

Jessi Adcock was born and raised in Ripley, West Virginia, and returned to the Mountain State last year after spending several years learning and working on farms and ranches around the U.S. She currently works as education coordinator at Refresh Appalachia and as a livestock marketing program verification inspector.

Nature has answers for everything; if we listen to her closely enough, she'll tell us what we need to know.

Alexis Bonogofsky is the Northern Plains coordinator for Quivira's New Agrarian Program. She lives and works on the farm she grew up on near Billings, Montana.

"What I stand for is what I stand on." — Wendell Berry.

Benjamin Clark is originally from south-eastern Massachusetts. He began growing vegetables in a community garden plot at the start of his twenties and has since worked his way from diversified vegetable production, orcharding, mixed livestock and dairy farming, to large-scale organic grain production in north-central Montana. He currently works for Vilicus Farms near Havre, Montana.

Land stewardship starts with never letting your bananas go brown.

Tony Daranyi, when not playing in the snow or forecasting avalanche conditions and weather for the Telluride Ski Company, spends his time on Indian Ridge farm in Norwood, Colorado, which he co-owns with his wife Barclay. Together with a cast of thousands (including Quivira NAP apprentices), they practice regenerative agriculture to improve soil conditions and the general ecosystem, enhancing biodiverse habitats and augmenting water resources through holistic management and animal husbandry.

We strive to understand nature's processes without prejudice: through close observation, patience, and mindful interaction, we seek to improve our habitats, increase the farm's bio-diversity, and enhance our water resources — treating the farm as one large living organism. All our activities and observations are continually graced with immense amounts of gratitude.

Tarryn Dixon lives in Durango, Colorado, where she works for the James Ranch. She has returned as an employee this year after two seasons as a NAP apprentice.

I strive to be a steward of the land by healing the soil while creating food for my community. The land, in turn, provides the healing benefits of beauty and adventure I find here in Southwest Colorado.

Abigail R. Dockter is a writer and archaeologist in Tucson, Arizona. Her writing appears in Terrain.org and several regional Edible magazines.

Be a good organism and try not to take up too much space.

Tafari Fynn, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, is a spirited young woman studying biology at New York University Shanghai. She is inspired by environmental sciences and hopes to contribute to the redesign of federal agricultural policies. Tafari also enjoys producing music and art, as well as making her younger sister Ruby laugh.

I believe inhabiting a space or land involves cultural exchange and understanding between its peoples and animals. All life should be respected and uplifted.

Joseph Gazing Wolf lives in Tempe, Arizona, and is a doctoral student at Arizona State University. He studies the social/cultural, economic, governmental, and ecological variables that affect the social-ecological resilience and sustainable livelihoods of Indigenous agricultural communities across the world.

In the Indigenous mind there is no such thing as a land ethic, there is only one ethic: we are the land, we are only one of many daughter tribes on the land, and all other tribes — animals and plants — have equal rights and responsibilities to the land.

Hannah Gosnell is a Professor of Geography in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University, and a novice gardener. She lives in Corvallis with her husband, two teenage daughters, and her dog Rosie, with whom she enjoys trail running in the local forest.

Humans should act as Earth stewards, sustaining and supporting natural processes and demonstrating gratitude for opportunities to coproduce food and fiber with the nonhuman creatures they depend upon.

Ariel Greenwood manages large herds of livestock as co-owner of Grass Nomads, LLC, on ranches in New Mexico and Montana. She serves on the board of Holistic Management International and Contra Viento Journal.

Re-integration.

Sarah King lives and works on the King's Anvil Ranch, southwest of Tucson, Arizona. She is also the executive director of the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance, a collaborative conservation nonprofit founded by ranchers in the Altar Valley.

People should work toward common ground for the betterment of the landscape.

Sean McCoy grew up in Arizona and has worked on ranches across the Southwest. In addition to this publication, he edits *Contra Viento*, a journal of art and literature from rangelands.

Live below your feet.

Chrissy McFarren is an owner/manager of Badger Creek Ranch, a working cattle ranch in south-central Colorado that takes guests May through October. Besides spending many hours in the saddle, Chrissy also oversees the care of livestock and, with her husband, runs the direct-market meat business. They sell grass-finished beef, lamb, pastured pork, chicken, turkey, and eggs.

I live my life in close relationship with the land and nature. My hope is that my dedication and love of the land honor the next generation and the spirits of the land that came before me.

LaKisha Odom is a native of Mobile, Alabama, and currently resides in Washington, DC. She is a scientific program director for the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, where she manages the Soil Health Challenge area.

People and Land are in community in the truest sense; you cannot ensure the benefit of any one part of that community without supporting the protection, stability, acknowledgement, and respect of all parts that compose the whole.

Tobin Polk is co-founder of SEY, a contemporary micro roaster in pursuit of delivering a selection of the most dynamic, complex, and beautiful coffees available on the market by developing, supporting, and progressing relationships throughout the supply chain. SEY is committed to holistically improving the well-being of its growers, team, and customers through unyielding dedication to quality, transparency, and sustainability. When he is not traveling the world sourcing coffee or seeking adventure, Tobin resides in Brooklyn, New York with his cat Charlie.

Unless we commit to a truly symbiotic relationship with our planet, we will ultimately cause the extinction of all the natural beauty we so lovingly consume.

Leah Potter-Weight loves to farm, feed people, and collaborate for justice. She lives in Chimayo, New Mexico, and serves as coordinator of the Quivira Coalition's Education and Outreach Program.

Every being (human and nonhuman) is a child of Mother Earth, and it is our responsibility to respect and take care of Mother Earth and each other.

Jill Rice lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she works part time for the Quivira Coalition as Southwest coordinator of the New Agrarian Program. Jill also co-runs the culinary garden at Arroyo Vino restaurant with her husband.

I try to understand the land as a whole system of which we are just one part. I work toward living in reciprocity and balance with the land.

Olivia Romo is a farmer, poet, and water rights activist from Taos, New Mexico. She is a bilingual poet whose language is immersed in the regional Manito dialect and culture of Northern New Mexico. She intentionally focuses her activism and poetry to educate and mobilize New Mexicans around the risks and uncertainties of their natural resources. She continues her journey in reclaiming her language, seeds, and stories of resilience.

Resilience is our ability to grow our own food with the water from our acequias, the lands of our families, and the seeds of our ancestors. Our self-determination depends on retaining our ancestral lands and water under the stewardship that we inherited from our parents and grandparents, which makes us a free people.

Kirksey Smith is fourteen years old and attends high school in San Jon, New Mexico. She wants to be a physical therapist for the Veterans Administration and also be engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Not only is the land the center of my life, but every single person's life. As an agriculturist I use the land to farm and ranch. Farming and ranching alone provide the necessities of life: food, clothing, and shelter. I want to help preserve the land and show future generations the greatness of it; teach them about the past and that throughout everything the land must be sustained so that all of humanity can be sustained.

Eva Stricker is director of the Quivira Coalition's Carbon Ranch Initiative and a research ecologist studying plant-microbe interaction effects on biogeochemical cycles in drylands. Eva grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and has studied drylands from southern New Mexico north to eastern Washington.

My personal land ethic is appreciating the life that can live with incredible variability in resources, and a drive to understand how changes in both the direction and variability of temperature and rainfall will affect the biodiversity and function of ecosystems.

Carmen Taylor is a writer, horsewoman, and feminist. She has worked on farms and ranches in New Mexico since 2017, involved in small, diverse vegetable production, as well as animal husbandry. Carmen received her BA from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Masters in Creative Writing from the Institute for American Indian Arts. She now lives on a small farm in Chimayó, New Mexico.

My land ethic is community driven. I believe the health of human and nonhuman worlds depends upon understanding our interdependence, and I hope to see a future where land-based knowledge is more valued, equitable, and accessible.

Willa Thorpe is the mother of three boys, an aspiring writer, and a native New Mexican. She divides her time between her family ranch in Newkirk, New Mexico, and Santa Fe.

I try to regard the land as I would someone I deeply love. I love it fiercely, try not to control it or mold it to my benefit alone, listen to its stories, and advocate for its future. It is ever evolving to incorporate the expansion and inclusion of new ideas and lessons learned.

Leeanna T. Torres is a native daughter of the American Southwest, with deep Indo-Hispanic roots in New Mexico. She has worked as an environmental professional throughout the West since 2001, and currently lives within the farming valley of Central New Mexico, along the Middle Rio Grande.

Strive to live in, and speak from, that sense of place that is inherent in the great Southwest, the intrinsic relationship between people and place — el sagrado — the sacred.

Gavin Van Horn lives in the Chicagoland area and is creative director and executive editor at the Center for Humans and Nature. He is the author of The Way of Coyote: Shared Journeys in the Urban Wilds, and his writing is tangled up in the ongoing conversation between humans, our nonhuman kin, and the animate landscape.

My personal land ethic is simply put: becoming a better conversation partner — in body, mind, and spirit — with a living landscape.

This issue of *Resilience* is dedicated to the memory of Linda Kay James, whose tenacity, style, love of family, commitment to community, appreciation of good food, and attentiveness to intergenerational land stewardship helped to inspire and educate us all.
Kay, we'll miss you!

Nicole Masters and apprentices act out soil biology at the 2018 REGENERATE Conference.

GRATITUDE AND REFLECTION

What Quivira and the radical center mean to me

Story by Hannah Gosnell, photos from the Quivira collection

Having recently joined the Quivira Coalition's Board of Directors, now seems like a good time to share my thoughts with our membership on why this is such an important organization. Not only does Quivira protect and restore the western landscapes I love, but it promotes peace and understanding among a diversity of people with different views about how humans should relate to the environment, the role of government in natural resource management, strategies for resolving historical injustice, and what is needed to help rural communities and economies prosper.

As a social scientist who studies collaborative conservation and the human dimensions of rangeland management, I can honestly say that the ideas I've encountered, the people I've met, and the positive energy I've felt at the annual Quivira conferences I've attended over the past 15 years have had a bigger influence on my research trajectory than anything else. This is because the concept of the radical center — a cornerstone of the Quivira mission — really speaks to me and excites me. Like many of you, I'm drawn to the challenge of identifying and explaining those spaces where the perceived binaries of conservation and production, jobs and the environment, impact and regeneration, all disappear; where it becomes wonderfully obvious to everyone that what's good for the earth also happens to be good for human economies and human psyches. My work documents how the personal transformations and identity shifts that often take place for those working in the radical center play out, both on the land and in communities. Like all of you, I care deeply about western landscapes and their stewards, but I also see a lot of challenges that need to be addressed. Quivira reunions help me envision a way forward by exposing me to new thinking and potential solutions. So I keep coming back, for research ideas, for inspiration, and for camaraderie.

I remember the first Quivira conference I attended, in 2005 — "Half Public, Half Private, One West" — with beautiful artwork by Maryanne McGraw depicting a broken fence line on the cover of the program. (I bought one of her prints that year, and it still hangs on the wall in my office, reminding me daily of that vision.) The speakers, while always impressive, were especially incredible that year: Allan Nation as keynote, Doc and Connie Hatfield on keeping the family in family ranching, Eric Freyfogle on property rights, Gary Nabhan

on cattle breeds adapted to desert living, and Dick Richardson on holistic decision-making. Courtney White unveiled the cornerstones of "The New Ranch," Dan Kemmis discussed the need for a Western Congress, Todd Graham detailed how to manage the Madison Valley cooperatively as one big landscape, and Fred Provenza somehow linked cattle behavior with Buddhism. Adding to the intellectual stimulation was the cognitive dissonance I felt in the presence of such an eclectic mix of footwear — I had never seen so many Dansko clogs and cowboy boots in the same room! I remember feeling so enthralled that my head would explode. I felt like I had discovered something extraordinary, and I wanted to be part of it and figure out how to help it along.

At the time of that year's conference, I was preparing to do fieldwork for my ranchland ownership dynamics research in Greater Yellowstone and Southeast Arizona. Before I left, I had the opportunity to engage two of the most innovative ranchers I've encountered — Dennis Moroney and Todd Graham — in a brainstorming session over margaritas. We talked about what to include in our interview guide, and they provided invaluable advice (and good fun). Later they provided second homes at their ranches in Arizona and Montana while my colleague and I conducted our fieldwork, showering us with hospitality, thoughtful insights, and more practical advice. A few years after, at another annual Quivira conference, I got all kinds of great leads for research I was planning on beaver-rancher-livestock interactions. Again and again, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity and openness of the ranchers I meet through Quivira, by their willingness to engage with me in the coproduction of knowledge.

There are a number of reasons why I think Quivira deserves recognition as an incredibly positive force in the West. First, for creating a safe and welcoming space where someone like me — an academic who grew up in an East Coast suburb about as far away from a ranch as you can get — can feel comfortable exchanging (often half-baked) ideas with people who, on the exterior, seem very different from myself. Reflecting the Quivira spirit perfectly, past conference speaker Rebecca Burgess reminds us that "it doesn't matter where you come from, it's where you're going." This non-judgmental attitude is so important. Quivira was born out of a willingness to be vulnerable, to lay down swords and talk about feelings and dreams. What I've found in my research is that this is often what creates the space for innovative solutions to emerge.

Conference bookstore at an early Quivira Annual Meeting.

Second, Quivira has been so important for fostering diversity. I mostly go to conferences that are exclusively comprised of academics or range people or environmentalists; rarely is there a blend like you find at Quivira. As soil scientist Christine Jones emphasized in her 2015 conference presentation, species composition is really important. "If you're interested in the health and functionality of a system, you can't grow all corn all the time." The same goes for ideas. Last fall, at REGENERATE 2019, I got to hear from a Black female attorney working on issues of land tenure, a Hopi PhD legal researcher, and a Latina advocate for food security on a plenary panel focused on racial equity in agriculture. What I learned from them is now informing a current grant proposal. At another recent conference, I found myself sitting between a Navajo tribal member and a Zen Buddhist chaplain from Santa Fe, the latter of whom practices horticultural therapy with children and prisoners to support their natural capacity for resilience. In just 10 minutes of casual conversation, I felt like my understanding of the links between social and ecological resilience had risen to a whole new level, and I could see my research trajectory shifting accordingly.

Third, Quivira creates a forum where theories about transformation, resilience, and sustainability are brought down to earth. Academics are reading and writing about resilience-thinking a lot these days, but it can often feel pretty obscure. At Quivira, I'm able to connect faces and names to the abstract theories I read about, like when I hear Dennis Moroney talk about "right-brained ranching" as a way to adapt to climate change and other disturbances; or Bill Zeedyk talk about rehydrating a watershed using low-tech rock structures; or Bill McDonald talk about the Malpai Borderlands Group working with the Maasai

from Kenya to blend traditional ecological knowledge with local ecological knowledge and scientific ecological knowledge in order to devise new pastoral strategies for using livestock to restore landscapes. In other years, I've listened to Patricia Richardson talk about how cultivating biologically active soils and befriending dung beetles will improve your bottom line, and had Jillian Hishaw open my eyes to the extreme inequality in land ownership that leaves Black farmers especially vulnerable to changes in markets and climate. These are all great examples of resilience thinking and why it matters.

Finally, what I appreciate most about Quivira is how it models an *integral* approach to problem solving, coming at social-ecological problems and solutions from all sides of the human experience. Like many organizations, Quivira helps us understand the *exteriors* — the roles of institutions and markets and food systems and human behavior and specific ranch management practices. But Quivira also helps us understand the role of *interiors* — the underpinnings of our culture and our individual psyches — in both creating problems and generating solutions, through stories of conflict and trust, from bridge-building groups such as Blackfoot Challenge, or through insights from Peter Forbes on the connection between ecological restoration and community restoration. Quivira shows us how regenerating soil is good for the soul, how relationships are important for whole communities.

Quivira does all of these amazing things by highlighting achievements and cultivating enthusiasm and inspiration. Quivira recognizes that people act from places of *aspiration* rather than *desperation*, and helps us see the links between love and understanding and ethics and action — all of which, of course, goes back to Aldo Leopold, who could be Quivira's mascot with his vision of working landscapes that simultaneously enhance biodiversity and human well-being. And, as a bonus, much of that inspiration is delivered through the humanities — art, music, and poetry — which is just brilliant and so refreshing, because it activates a different part of the brain in the search for solutions. People come away from these conferences energized and open-minded; they leave inspired to contribute to a larger cause. That alone is worth celebrating.

Sunny Dooley opens the 2018 Regenerate Conference with a story and innvocation.

So thank you, Quivira. I'm likewise inspired to build on all this goodness, both as a board member and in my own future research, by identifying better ways to support and scale up resilient and regenerative agricultural systems. Our goal is to make these innovative ideas no longer radical, but the new normal. For that to happen, we need to figure out what makes farmers and ranchers WANT to transition. What is the right combination of incentives, inspiration, outreach, education, support, and training? What kinds of laws and policies and institutions and governance mechanisms need to be in place to support such large-scale change? I look forward to working with you all to figure this out.

I am excited about the future. There is so much momentum, positive energy, and importantly, so many young people — not only the young farmers and ranchers of the New Agrarian Program but also the next generation of Radical Center Researchers who I hope to mentor at Oregon State University. Looking ahead, I'd like to help build this aspect of the radical center, young scholars mingling with young ranchers and farmers and conservationists and civil servants, all working together to identify the most pressing problems, devise the right research questions, and co-create useful knowledge. The next generation will inherit the issues we're grappling with today, and it's our job to help integrate them so they can take over this good work together.

SHELTERING IN PLACE

Together on earth.

Poem by Olivia Romo, photo by Carmen Taylor

Abiquiu Lake filled by the Rio Chama and feeding irrigation ditches in the Española Valley

With the surrender of the world we return to our fields.
Witness the sunset give its sermon to the crops.
Gaze — not into the eyes of your companions or the events of the world — but, finally, into yourself.

Purpose is now open for interpretation and, maybe, we are ready to listen to the teachings of the natural world.

We have finally learned that we are unmarried to our work and fathomed by the value of a dollar when the doors to all the stores are closed.

"Si tiene una tienda, atiéndala o véndala."

The farmer is a devout companion to the silence and confined to his shovel.
Withdrawn from the chaos and protected from hunger — there is no anxiety when you retreat to the land.
Pacify all illness by washing your hands, with dirt.
We learn from the earth how to answer the most urgent question of time: can we thrive in isolation?
Are we homebound?
Yes!
Our bodies are bound to the earth and our neighbor, it is our only hope to survive.

You cannot break bread without breaking away from your urban facade.
Re-open the ditch and irrigate your wheat!
It's time to thresh — away your commitments to capital, idols, and a history of greed.
Emancipate your spirit from any fear, because from dirt you emerged and unto dirt you shall return.

Cease from travel and commit your body to creation.
Cultivate hope from the seeds of your ancestors germinating in fallow soil.
Forage for medicine and fast for now.
Touch only those to whom you commit your life —
nurturing your home, your children and your spouse.
Reclaim your *querencia*, because place —
is the most powerful protection.
Let the mountains embrace you, and if you are lost pray to the chamiso or get a palm reading
from the horned toad, he will point you the way!

Refrain —
like the chorus who was forced to leave the chapel and harmonize with the rain!
Crescendo over the valley with the sheep.
Cut a circle — your horses are the true guardians of those cows and this beautiful range.
Gather with the aspens and congregate with the birds.
Dance with the smoke from your palo santo, cedar and sweet grass.

The corn teaches us that sometimes we cannot withstand illness, infestation, and drought —
but our seeds will always remember their survival songs.
They will adapt and overcome any stress with their genetic memory.
Praise the emerging generation as they enrich a new world.

Too many are displaced, and we are finally suffering the consequences of those inequalities.
So share the food from your garden, heavy fruit trees, and especially from your heart — everyone is in need!

Refrain — of filling your life with drink, flesh, and riches — now is your time to cleanse and align.
Learn from the serenity of our acequias flowing over the land graciously without any
recognition or praise.
Humble your cravings.
Harvest your vegetables and deliver a basket of appreciation to your friend.

Sweat in harmony with the calling of the earth.
Sweat in solitude, the lodge is the womb.
Stand with your shovel *y tapar la cara* knowing that millions of eyes are watching and mouths are needing to be fed. Stick by your shovels!
Have faith in your seeds!
Remember that true resilience is succumbing to the constant duties of the earth —
not just in times of need.

REFLECTIONS IN A PANDEMIC

Story by Willa Thorpe, photos by Kirksey Smith

Only now have I begun to realize how little of me my house contains. Watching the container of ketchup drain, I contemplate which among my things are homemade, which will last my lifetime, and which will be trash tomorrow. If I went to town but once a year, would the ketchup be the first thing to run out? Or would I savor it knowing it was finite?

My husband and I measure wealth in skills acquired. Once ashamed of my generalist tendencies, the older I grow, the more comfort I feel with our skills. When we are homebound on the ranch, I take pleasure in the simplicity of choices. When we don't have ketchup, we don't make hot dogs for the kids. What we cannot make, or do not want to make, we do without. When we do go to town it feels celebratory, a chance to wear sandals.

The closest town to us, Tucumcari, is about 45 miles due east on I-40. Its once bustling life along Route 66 is now remembered one weekend each May. "Route 66 Days" commemorates the town's heritage as more than a gas station pit stop for cross-country travelers. If you drove the main drag, you could gather a diversity of ketchup packets from fast food chains. By far the most profitable businesses are the feed store and the one sit-down diner with a three-foot salad bar. If your curiosity pulled you further into town, you would find very few thriving businesses beyond what is essential. There are more available buildings and store fronts than operating stores, more homes than people that need them. The emptiness has been boarded up, leaving behind the skeleton of a more prosperous time.

In March of this year, the U.S. realized the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic. The governor of New Mexico decided to close all "nonessential businesses." And suddenly, the national cityscape shifted. After sending home countless workers and boarding up miles of strip malls, the average U.S. city began to look a lot like our town in the country. We all got a firsthand feel of rural America: of what it's like to walk out your door every day and see life unoccupied, to wonder which one of our favorite places will make it. We sat by, watching our consumer culture vaporize. As if a sign appeared that read: "Welcome to rural America, where this has been happening for decades."

Over the last few months I have felt a myriad of emotions about the current situation. I've felt an equal amount of guilt and relief. My family not only has 25 square miles of rangeland in which to roam, but we also seem to thrive in isolation. Whether it's due to years of practice or a personality trait, I have always been more comfortable in a sparse environment. We have found that friends and family members, not cut out for our lifestyle, are suddenly envious. The pandemic asked everyone to isolate. For us that meant not hosting our usual branding, where we get to do more than just doctor calves; annual events on the ranch are the times we rekindle relationships, show off new skills, and swap stories of the past year. Helping your neighbor is as much about survival as it is a way of life. The pandemic has inserted wariness into what once was a lifeline.

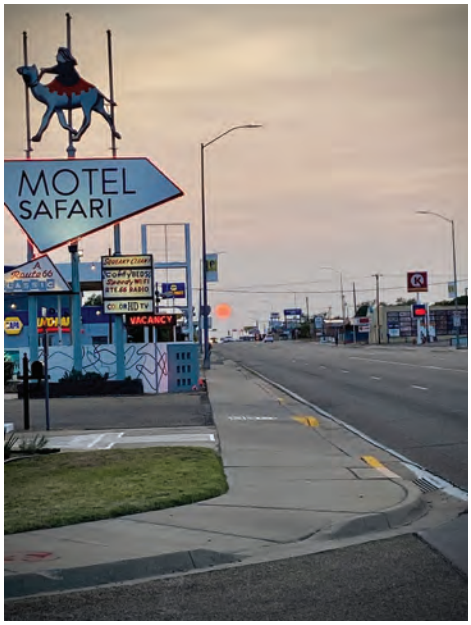
After sending home countless workers and boarding up miles of strip malls, the average U.S. city began to look a lot like our town in the country. We all got a firsthand feel of rural America: of what it's like to walk out your door every day and see life unoccupied, to wonder which one of our favorite places will "make it."

I have watched the pandemic rip through cities and states and further diminish the vibrancy of our nation. I have pored over countless articles, trying to stay up to date on the unfathomable number of lives lost, the heroic acts of all essential workers, and those suffering economic fallout. I feel an incredible amount of privilege to say that my daily life, the life of my family, the life of my town, has largely and luckily gone unaffected by COVID-19. (I suppose I might change my mind when it's time to sell our calves.)

I would like to say that COVID-19 is the only thing keeping me up at night. But what equally haunts me is the constant question: "Will we get any rain?" We're heading into our third year of sub-average rainfall. After last year's destocking, we thought we would be in the clear, that 2020 would be a year of relief. What truly scares me are headlines like "Mega Drought," "Rapid Species Extinction," and "Warmest Year on Record" — headlines going largely unread due to the current crisis. We were all caught off guard by COVID-19, and it has turned the world upside down, but what about climate change? We have been and are now continually warned about the devastation our changing climate will have on humanity and the natural world. Yet, alarmingly, we seem to be as ill-prepared and unwilling to listen as ever. COVID-19 can slow down the supply of ketchup, but climate change could take it away.

Our homes are filled with the work of many hands and materials from many landscapes around the world. This pandemic has highlighted how finite the lives of our loved ones truly are. And the next one? Will it highlight how finite humanity and the planet are as we know them? My hope is that the silver lining to the pandemic will be that we have learned something. That we will listen to the experts. That we will protect the most vulnerable. That we will take actions to secure a different future.

By now you are probably thinking I should learn to make my own ketchup. And I could. But I actually think the point is I am not supposed to. I am supposed to live a life understanding things are limited. To not take more than my share and to make sure there are enough resources left over to regenerate. I should also learn to reciprocate and be thankful for people who do things I cannot or do not want to do. Resilience is only achievable by acknowledging reliance. We need to treat all hands and lands with the tenderness of our own homes.



Photos are in and around Tucumcari, New Mexico, for a 4H photography project by Kirksey Smith.



Garlic harvest at Annie's Herb Farm.

AN EXTRAORDINARY SEASON

Thoughts on growing in the pandemic.

Story and photos by Carmen Taylor

This spring, when the pandemic shifted my universe into the blurry parallel of a previous life, I was struck by how little the seasons cared. The natural world persisted in its slow turnover from frosty nights to thawing ground, from bare, ghosted tree limbs to succulent leaf buds. In the farming community of northern New Mexico, we had little choice but to keep pace with this turning over, even as societal life ground to a halt. My partner planted potatoes and onions like any other year and we covered future promises of a bodacious summer garden with soil in seed trays. The plants, if nothing else, assured our future, as their seed heads sprouted small, delicate greens. In my privilege to rest closer to the rhythms of early spring, it became clear that this season would be extraordinary, would change not only my personal relationships but also the relationships we have to one another as societal beings. Unlike the constant transition toward summer, however, I couldn't tell which changes would stick.

Early in the pandemic, one of my closest friends, Annie Krahl, started what she called "The Crisis Collective." In an effort to bring farmers together and create a different way of distributing their crops, Annie organized a CSA designed to cut out middlemen. She gathered producers within thirty miles of Española to contribute a product to the weekly share that she would then deliver to Santa Fe.

I was surprised to see a cluster of farmers hanging in the shade. They had dropped off their eggs, arugula, and radishes, but lingered for conversation, one that meandered with no particular thread except, perhaps, the desire to be in proximity to one another, to take a deep sip of company after weeks of quarantine.

One afternoon, when I went to Annie's farm to help her pack the produce bags, I was surprised to see a cluster of farmers hanging in the shade. They had dropped off their eggs, arugula, and radishes, but lingered for conversation, one that meandered with no particular thread except, perhaps, the desire to be in proximity to one another, to take a deep sip of company after weeks of quarantine. We talked about failed tomato starts, struggling relationships, ice cream cravings, the lines of cars in Sonic's drive-thru.

When Annie and I finally shooed away the last farmer, wanting to catch up alone, I was struck by the amount of time Annie volunteered in order to make the collective work. She wasn't paying herself anything, ensuring that farmers could charge full price and the CSA bags would remain affordable for customers. I should add here that she was also pregnant, her belly threatening to grow big enough to keep her from bending over to harvest her greens. When I asked Annie, Why did you start this? she offered answers about being of service, of getting food to the people, of stepping up in hard times. I knew that her intentions were genuine, but I also couldn't help but wonder where else her superhuman energy came from, her seemingly tireless dedication on days when I felt that I could barely keep myself together. So I also asked her, How do you think being pregnant has shaped the decisions you're making? As she answered, it occurred to me that while I had the space to fall apart, Annie didn't have a choice.

"I want my baby to grow up in a beautiful, cooperative world," Annie admitted, almost pleading with me to agree that this was a realistic request. Her hard work wasn't just for the farmers, it was for the future, a visceral future for her, one she carried around as she bunched

carrots, wrote out receipts, checked in with another farmer about his living situation, hustled boxes of vegetables to town in her pickup, rested her hand on her stomach. And that's just it, no one necessarily wants to be resilient; it's a condition that often arises when there is no other option but to persist.

As the lock-down in New Mexico eased in mid-May, Annie's CSA subscriptions diminished, she entered her third trimester, and she decided to stop the program. At first, the farmers' collective had seemed like a simple, mutually beneficial way for Annie to serve her customers and support fellow farmers, many of whom were excited and eager to join her. Yet, as concerns over the crisis began to wane, Annie felt that the individual interests of the farmers started to undermine the cooperative spirit of the CSA. Some participants preferred to return to their individual endeavors, now that those options had opened — starting their own CSAs or selling more of their product at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market. At its height, 12 or 13 farmers were participating; by the time Annie stopped the service, that number had dwindled to three or four. What so recently felt like a window into a more cooperative future among farmers had turned into a conversation about the barriers to operating as a better-united force of small producers.

"I was disappointed in some community members and farmers. I didn't do things perfectly either, but when the crisis had faded, that resilient, community-oriented action disappeared," Annie reflected to me over a recent phone call. We both mused about what changes would remain beyond the pandemic, both of us a little tired, a little skeptical.

I write this in July. Summer is churning on — the potato plants knee-high, the onion field sacrificed to weeds, and garlic harvest in full swing. New Mexico has halted its next phase of reopening amidst concerns over growing cases of COVID-19. This week's temperatures will climb up toward 100 degrees and the summer monsoons have yet to arrive. It seems we must now face a second wave of the pandemic in addition to drought. As the rainless days persist, a dry anxiety has been accompanying me to bed. Yet, in talking with my partner, the vegetable farmer Brett Ellison, I've also found some hope and wisdom, characteristically encased in a good seed metaphor.

"Community involvement can be similar to the growth of a herd, or the growth of a seed stock," he said. "Once the community decides that they want to have some type of food sovereignty, they're going to put their energy and economics toward that in order to make it successful. It's going to blossom; it's going to multiply."

Will it take another wave of the virus, coupled with drought, to see more community engagement and long-term change in support of more resilient food systems? There's seemingly no answer to how our society, how our food tending and distributing, will change, only that it must. Remembering winter on these hazy summer days reminds me, again, how the seasons are always in transition. If only we could follow suit. For now, I'm buoyed by the view outside my window as the leaves of the sweet corn grow fuller each moon cycle, by the knowledge of the many generations who came before me, and of the original inhabitants of this land, who coaxed gardens out of this desert and survived.

Annie harvesting radishes.

Harvested garlic.

THE BORROWED GARDEN

Story and photos by Abigail R. Dockter

This spring, I did not have a garden. My work often takes me out of town, and the only plants that tolerate my absence are three small agaves in pots on the back porch and one adorably ugly Dorstenia in the front window. As the impacts of COVID-19 ballooned across the U.S. this past spring (especially in Arizona, where I live) and as hoarding impulses ran amok and food supply and distribution systems were disrupted, I rebooted my Community Supported Agriculture share. Down the street, my local Middle Eastern market did a roaring trade at three in the afternoon, the parking lot packed with new clientele.

I was not a first-time CSA customer, but I had just managed to talk another friend, Sally, into splitting the cost and the bounty. Community Supported Agriculture is a subscription model in which customers buy into local farms and are repaid in produce — vegetables, in my case, although CSAs also exist for meat, milk, honey, and other products. The Tucson CSA benefits from a year-round growing season and a dense urban area of potential customers. But with farming, you always take what you get, and Sally was skeptical at first. She worried about the cost, the limitations of eating only what is harvested locally each week, and whether she might end up with too much food or too little. I'm a worrier too, but also, lately, a CSA evangelist. During the pandemic, it has changed my life.

Aside from inventing infinite variations on the peanut butter tortilla, I have never been an inspired or talented cook. But the CSA reversed the standard culinary logic in a way that made sense to me: Instead of choosing recipes and then getting ingredients, I was given ingredients and went in search of recipes. I polled my friends and relatives — "What the heck do you do with collard greens?" — and trawled the internet for advice about rutabagas. I developed new instincts for cooking and combining foods, a creative intuition I'd never exercised before. I understood for the first time how those instincts are slightly different for different people, depending on the culinary traditions you draw from and the ways you've departed from what your family fed you as a child.

Sally turned out to love the CSA as much as I did, though her experience was greatly influenced by the circumstances of the pandemic. "I hardly ever go to the grocery store!" she told me, delighted, five weeks in. The nutritious greens of spring — beet tops, curly kale, amaranth, and purple cabbage — fortified us. Tucson's CSA is running at capacity with a full waitlist this year, just as the heritage seed provider Native Seed/SEARCH asked their customers to limit the number of seed packets they buy at one time, making sure there are enough for the Native American communities the organization serves. This spring, new gardens sprang up. Seeds sold out; chickens sold out. Suddenly, the roads our food took to get to us seemed long, with too many opportunities for something to go wrong along the way.

Outside, the heat grew in intensity. The radio was terrifying, and social media felt absurdly loud in the quiet rooms where we suddenly spent all our time, alone, trying not to contemplate our own vulnerabilities or those of the people we love. I nursed my disappointments over how I thought my life this year would go. *Resilience*, the bounceback, the weathering of crisis, is on a growing list of words I believe in

wholeheartedly but also treat with suspicion. Resilience is a quality that people develop of necessity rather than by choice — it shines when something bad has happened to you. And especially with regards to COVID-19, an ounce of prevention may be worth a pound of resilience.

But the need for resilience can also bode well, like local food producers and seed companies reeling from the sudden spike in interest in heritage seeds and sustainable meat. How to respond to the latest wild fluctuation in our food system is up for discussion, but the best-case scenario would see more people involved in small-scale, sustainable agriculture, both on the production side and as reliable customers. When the Idaho organic beef operation Alderspring Ranch was overwhelmed with orders, Caryl Elzinga wrote in a Facebook post, "Frankly, this country needs more Alderspring Ranches rather than bigger Alderspring Ranches. Even more, this country needs a smaller-scale decentralized processing system because shutting down one of our giant processing plants, even for a few days, echoes through the entire supply chain. … People are starting to see that and thinking about their food sources in ways they never have." From Elzinga's perspective, for a rancher concerned with long-term soil health on land where they plan to graze cattle well into the future, producing a lot more beef to meet this sudden demand is not being resilient — it's unsustainable. But if other producers can respond to the swelling appreciation for places like Alderspring, then the entire food system becomes more capable of necessary change.

In many ways, this perfect storm of the pandemic and the utter ineptitude of our institutions feels familiar to me, expected. But right now cynicism is not my interest, because what I want to know is how we live through this moment. I want to know where the action is and what models we can follow to weather this crisis and the ones to come. I find there are people with answers, that the groundwork is already in place. The Tucson Food Share, for instance, is an entirely volunteer-run operation that stepped up immediately this year to ensure everyone had the resources they needed. Community gardens like Las Milpitas, which provides fresh food for the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (as well as to individuals and families), and La Siembra, a project of the Flowers and Bullets art collective that grows food on the ten acres of a disused elementary school in Midtown, are further examples of local organizations responding to the specific needs and opportunities around them. These options are far more affordable than a CSA share, but for me, for the moment, the CSA model is the one that makes most sense, and I am glad it was here when I needed it. I want to make sure all these options continue to be here when we need them—because inevitably, we will need them again.

But the CSA reversed the standard culinary logic in a way that made sense to me: Instead of choosing recipes and then getting ingredients, I was given ingredients and went in search of recipes.

The CSA occasionally includes local desert foods and Native American crops, such as amaranth greens and nopales (prickly pear cactus pads). These are the foods that have been growing here in relation with humans for thousands of years, plants well-adapted to harvesting and people well-adapted to the needs of particular plants. Many of these foods are not grocery store fare, but once introduced, I looked forward to getting them. I chewed the fresh, crisp amaranth stems down like a rabbit as I cooked the leaves. I filled squash blossoms with cornmeal and baked them per the sipongviki recipe in *Hopi Cookery*. Those sturdy agaves on my porch could be eaten if I cut off their spines and roasted the hearts, but right now I prefer watching them grow. They're the only vegetation that really enjoys this kind of heat.

The evening of picking up the CSA has become the highlight of my week: meeting Sally on her porch, chatting as she divvies up vegetables, washes and rinses them, and pours the water on her orange tree. Last week, I opened the bottle of wine another friend had given me months before. I remarked on these small economies of giving and taking, and how they go unmeasured, ungrossed. To have a glass of wine six feet apart as the sun sets behind the dry hills is the bulk of my social interaction these days, and I know the vegetables are not the only thing keeping us healthy.

I still depend on other people's gardens. But as scary as that dependence can feel, there are ways to turn it into connection, that taste I've been craving. I buy a share and I share it. One week at a time, we take the heat.

Bounty and creative combinations from Tucson CSA.

GOLONDRINAS

Reflections of resiliencia in the Rio Grande Valle

Story by Leeanna T. Torres, photos by Alexis Bonogofsky

They use more mud than sticks. They use the earth — la tierra — to make their nesting place. And I watch their copper underbellies, flashing wildly as they fly in and out, back and forth, busy and intent on constructing their nest in the notch of my front porch, their urgent comings and goings becoming part of my morning ceremony, a pair of golondrinas preparing for spring.

❃

Here in Nuevo México, there is a certain devotion to San Antonio, to San Isidro, and to La Madre Querida, water that is present in rain, acequia, and río. I think about the origins of our devotions, how they shape us, define us, ground us.

I have seen Papa weep over the dozen of his cattle that perished one summer when the Public Electric Company field-site worker accidentally closed the gate behind him, leaving Papa's cattle trapped on the other side of the terreno, without access to the water in the stock tank. His cows died of thirst, and he drove up to his rancho to find their bloated carcasses in the sun.

Conversely, there are songs, tunes, melodies, shades of daylight that remind me of Nina, my great-aunt — that woman so often singing or whistling with a contagious joy, even as she cleaned other women's houses. Dusting their curio cabinets, washing their curtains and windows, ironing their husbands' jeans and dress pants. All her life, Nina worked, and she worked hard, but always her joy was contagious. Wildly contagious. Even now, gone for so many years, I remember her singing along with Las Hermanas Huerta, the scratchy record playing in the background. Nina, stirring beans on the stove, singing con such corazón that I wanted to be her.

La resiliencia de mi familia originates in land, water, family, and food. Originates in ceremony, ordinary, and everything in between. Land and water, tierra y agua. Famila. Rezos. Cielo and sky. But the undercurrent of our resiliencia also lies in that subtle unspoken of our traditional lives, the deep querencia of our daily living.

❃

The pair of golondrinas finish their nest in the crux above our front porch. Made of mud and string, it is a structure for survival. The golondrina couple will lay their eggs in this nest, then settle in until their young are born and grow to fly away.

For years, my Mama used to let the golondrinas make their spring and summer nests in the hiding places of her front porch, until it got too messy, the birds' mud and poop too much to clean. These days she takes her broomstick and breaks down the first signs of their efforts under her portal. Mama is getting older, getting tired. For years Mama has cooked every breakfast and dinner, cleaned out the woodstove in winter, done the laundry and ironed the jeans. While my father gets all the glory, the active life of a farmer and rancher, Mama has always remained in the shadows. But what does Mama have to show for all these years? Where are the fruits of her labor and love? She will not admit her weariness. She smiles and sits in her silence. And she chases off the golondrinas trying to make a nest on her front portal, shooing them away with a broomstick and afternoon "quítate!"

❀

A few days before his last breath, Tío Eppy begged his brother (my father), to take him aya camino, saying he needed to see the corrals, the cattle, the fields. So with the help of his two sons and youngest brother, Tío Eppy was helped up from the bed and taken out across the road to the place of his querencia. Flanked by the old work shed (crowded with tools and tractor parts), Tío Eppy looked out into the alfalfa fields given to him by his own father. And then, reaching down, slow and wracked with pain throughout his body, Tío Eppy grabbed a fistful of dirt in both hands. His two fists trembled, shook with an unspoken and unnamed urgency, and he gripped the tierra between palms and fingers, nails and fingertips, his hands tense and tight on the very earth itself. Was he preparing to leave? Was he speaking back to the land in an unnamed desperation? Was he afraid, and thus clinging to that which he knew most intimately, the earth itself? Or was it much more? And am I allowed to even mention a moment so intimate? Am I allowed to question or ask?

La resiliencia de mi familia originates in land, water, family, and food. Originates in ceremony, ordinary, and everything in between. Land and water, tierra y agua. Famila. Rezos. Cielo and sky. But the undercurrent of our resiliencia also lies in that subtle unspoken of our traditional lives, the deep querencia of our daily living.

Tío Eppy knew he was dying — we all knew he was dying — yet all he wanted to do was grip dirt. His hands held the tierra, and the four men stood there in silence for a long time, the shade of the alamo cradling both the living and soon-to-be dead.

Resiliencia en este valle is more than just strength, is more than just endurance.

❀

Even before the sun rises up and over the Manzano mountains, las golondrinas are awake and away from the nest. They position themselves on the adobe wall adjacent the house, keeping a close eye as I walk out to water the flowers and trees. They watch me and then fly away.

❀

Brother borrows my four-wheeler so he can finish irrigating his fields this afternoon and into tonight. "Mine is broken," he admits when he calls to see if he can borrow it. And as he drives away, the afternoon light resting easy on his dark, dark skin, I think about the cigarettes I never see him smoke. Instead, I only smell the smoke on him, subtle but often, and I wonder at this hidden addiction he keeps for himself. When he irrigates in summer, it throws off his entire routine — eating and sleeping patterns — and he can spiral into a depressive chasm that is both calmed and caused by his life as a farmer and rancher. Do I dare say that he struggles to stay afloat in his own mind during these times? Such are the things we do not mention, do not let others see. Others in the community, the neighbors and primos, all they see is his figure in the distance, trailing along the borders of his field, a strong body, an image often lost in the haze of smoke and distance.

❀

Swallows are common throughout the continent of North America, with seven different types, including the barn swallow, bank swallow, cliff swallow, and tree swallow. The barn swallow (hirundo rustica) is the most widespread species of swallow in the world, a distinctive passerine bird with blue upperparts and a long, deeply forked tail. It is found in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

The preferred habitat of the barn swallow is open country with low vegetation: pasture, meadows, and farmland, preferably with nearby water. The presence of accessible open structures like barns, stables, or culverts to provide nesting sites, and exposed locations such as wires, roof ridges, or bare branches for perching, are also important in the bird's selection of its breeding range.

Both sexes defend the nest, but the male is particularly aggressive and territorial. Once established, pairs stay together to breed for life.

❀

Mama makes radish enchiladas on Tuesday afternoon. Walking into the kitchen, the familiar smell of freshly made tortillas greets me, along with red chile in a slow simmer. The television hums in the background, Mama watching her usual daily episode of Judge Judy.

"What's the case about today?" I ask. "Eee, there's a lady that's after her landlord porque he tried kicking her out of the apartment!" replies Mama, her apron spattered with specks of white flour and smelling of fresh-cut onion.

"Can you grate some queso? That's the only thing I don't have cut up to put the enchiladas together," Mama instructs, and I move through her kitchen, knowing since childhood where every kitchen tool and plate belongs.

"Why did Abuelita make radish enchiladas?" I ask Mama, expecting her to explain it as some kind of Indigenous or cultural tradition.

"Sabes qué? I think she did it only because they were so poor … they

didn't have money for carnita, so Abuelita had to use the food she could grow in her own back yard ..."

At Mama's answer, I realize that I too often overlook the pobreza experienced by my ancestors. On my Mama's side, they were just plain poor, no other way to explain it. "I always remember my Abuelita having the biggest most beautiful garden ..." explains Mama, and I lean into this thought as Mama begins arranging a tortilla with chopped cebolla, radishes, and cheese, her working hands remembering with fondness the good times with her Abuelita (a woman I was unable to meet). The reality of their poverty lingers in the kitchen, between Mama and I, and we are quiet as we work, because silence too has a basis in our resistencia, this pobreza, and the struggle to not only endure, but to strive for more. Both my mother and father were the first and only of their siblings to earn bachelor's and master's degrees. Yet Mama still makes radish enchiladas, out of sentiment, remembrance, and brilliant taste.

One myth goes like this: swallows stole fire from the sun, delivering light to the earth below. Then in anger and vengeance, God threw a lightning bolt of fire to punish the birds, burning their chests the color of light, scorching their tails.

❃

The Spanish word for barn swallow in this region is golondrina. Of all the birds of the valle, golondrinas tend to be my favorite. But why?

Is it the bold tapering of their tails that moves me? Their small and wild stature among the larger birds like paisanos, gavilanes and grullas? Is it their simplicity, their abundance in numbers in spring?

For the first time in my life, I own my own house, have my own front porch, and I watch them come, watch them build between my front door and walkway out to the postal box.

❃

There is a hum of loneliness that often accompanies the end of a summer day; I walk the acequia trail adjacent the house, the terrenos, and think about the life my son will live. My first son. My only son. Named after Saint James, the patron saint of fishermen. I used to work on the rivers of the West, seeking innovative ways to ensure the continued existence of native southwestern fish and their habitats. I floated on the bellies of rivers known by their Spanish titles — the San Juan, Río Lucero, el Río Grande. In this work, I searched for meaning outside of my father's farm and ranch, seeking until life gave me a son, and I named him after the patron saint of fishermen.

❃

Between miscarriages one and two, I stood beneath a magnolia tree in downtown Fort Worth, so far from home, in a landscape of both land and soul that was unfamiliar to me. The baby was gone. A gathering of birds hid within the thick green of the magnolia, and I looked up, trying to find the source of their wild song. It was difficult to see them. Easier to hear. And I, daughter of the American Southwest, removed and living and working in a strange city, heard the sound of dozens of birds, repeating in song both the resiliencia and querencia I thought had left me.

Years later, my son's talisman also became his nickname. And today, when calling out to him with fondness or for attention, I say "Oye, Bird, let's go..."

❃

San Isidro's feast day is the fifteenth of May; and while the old-school sembradores of New Mexico bless their fields with formal ceremony and celebration, Papa whispers his prayer to himself, skipping the ceremony as he hurries to get all the chores done, roaring across the dirt road on his carrito, a Honda Ranger UTV, equipped with a hardtop but no windshield or sidewalls. The open air is his rezo, the prayer to his saints, San Isidro and San Antonio, praying always on his behalf, this hard-headed farmer who eats too many Hershey's bars despite having diabetes.

But it was Papa who taught me Papa Teo's prayer, and now this prayer has become my favorite of all. It begins like this, "Santisimo sacramento, Hijo del Eterno Padre, alúmbrame mis entendimentos..."

Illuminate my own understanding, begs the start of the prayer. I think of all the rezos I've said my whole life, both memorized and desperate, both recited and participatory. During Lent, during the Christmas posadas, all those rezos, all those prayers — what do they add up to? And what of the weight of our own devoción?

And I sit in the back row at Romero Funeral Home, intending to say for the length of Mr. T.'s funeral rosary. Friends and community members move in and out, hugs and "lo siento mucho," giving their pésame to the familia. And I think, what if for this rosary I do not kneel? Would this be just in poor taste, or would it be pure and utter disrespect? Or, more so, what would this inaction of mine — choosing not to kneel during the velorio — say about my own devotion? Would Dios Himself love me less?

❃

One myth goes like this: swallows stole fire from the sun, delivering light to the earth below. Then, in anger and vengeance, God threw a lightning bolt of fire to punish the birds, burning their chests the color of light, scorching their tails.

Another myth goes like this: golondrinas stole the fear from a girl's heart. They flew up and away, leaving her empty from the darkness that once held her.

❃

Just before Holy Week this year, Tía Emilia taught me how to make torta. Mama didn't know how to make it, and Nana died before I could learn from her how to make it. So I asked Tía Emilia. "Of course!" she agreed, instructing me not to bring anything, she already had everything we would need.

As we worked in the kitchen — the kitchen once belonging to my great-Nana, Ramoncita, Tía Emilia (with her hard-of-hearing and shuffling across the kitchen) explained to me each of the small

details — from using cold water to making sure the eggs are "room temperature." The puela we used for the chile was small but strong, and the cast iron we used to fry the huevo was heavy and thick. A simple traditional food, made for and eaten primarily during la cuaresma (Lent), Tía Emilia showed me how to make torta. Outside her window, in the budding pear trees planted by the Baca lineage of familia before us, spring birds chirped their closing songs of the day, afternoon slipping into early evening, the bosque full of cottonwoods in Adelino visible in the distance through the kitchen window.

❃

Hirundo rustica, the most widespread species of swallow in the world.

❃

La resiliencia de mi familia originates in the land, la tierra. También, also, la resiliencia en este valle is more than just strength, is more than just endurance. It is as well those things unspoken, unseen, so subtle that we may deny they even exist. Our doubts, our struggles, our unwillingness to lean into the weaknesses as much as la tradición itself.

"Si Dios quiere" (if the Lord wills/wants), I often remember Nana replying to many of the questions she was asked during conversations with her sister, her children, her vecinos and friends. These dichos or refranes that I grew up with were not only about language, but about intention, attitude, tone. There is much lost in translation, and I think more about my Nana's heartfelt intention when she recited them, rather than just the words and language themselves.

Fueled by the light, we are the lonely landscapes and diverse people of New Mexico.

Whether Pueblo, Hispanic, or Anglo, our belonging here has been set forth by a complex and even bloody history.

❃

At the first appearance of new life in the nest, I call both my husband and son over to the front porch to see the birds. Mama bird feeds the three hungry mouths gaping out from the top of the mud nest. She nourishes her babies. We watch from down below, and the male bird watches us from his post above on the adjacent adobe wall.

So begins the new, and there is a littering of mud and debris on the floor of my porch. Las golondrinas are now five instead of two. And perhaps it is not one thing — not food, nor family, nor place — that grounds me, but rather the sum of the whole that grounds us all.

I am grounded by comida, cultura, y tierra — these are the things that center me. Nana's quelites served during Lent, Tía Bell's chile con papitas and a fresh tortilla con mantequilla, Abuelita's radish enchiladas born from pobreza and love. "Alúmbrame mis entendimentos" beg the words of my Papa Teo's favorite prayer, "illuminate my own understanding." And the golondrinas, their forked tails and rust-butter chests — they remind me of what it is to be human, of what it is to be loved, of what it is to belong.

Over and Under Supply

What will the lessons be?

by Jill Rice

My husband and I manage a small culinary garden for a local restaurant in Santa Fe, growing their summer produce on the small plot of land adjacent to their building. At the time of this writing, we are in the early stages of prepping beds for planting, putting the first hardy seeds in the ground, and starting seed trays indoors. As the days lengthen and temperatures rise, we anxiously await our onion seeds, which are currently delayed because of the large number of orders Johnny's Seeds is processing this year. Shortages on grocery shelves have led to widespread anxiety about food security, and concerned shoppers are looking to grow more of their own food to regain some sense of control.

Meanwhile, I open my computer to start my workday for Quivira. I begin the morning catching up on the news and sipping from my cup of coffee. The first article I read reports on the massive amount of food waste caused by the pandemic. As I await my onion seeds, onion farmers elsewhere are forced to plough under millions of pounds of harvest-ready crops due to the loss of buyers caused by closures to schools, businesses, and restaurants. The irony is not lost on me. As distribution centers slow down, processing and packing facilities shutter, and buyers stay home under lockdown, farmers and ranchers are struggling to get food to consumers. Amidst panic-buying and the surge in home gardens, an almost incomprehensible amount of perfectly good food is destroyed in the field. The lines that connect the dots of our food supply chain are snapping one by one.

As a small-scale grower and an employee at the Quivira Coalition, I spend a lot of time thinking about these issues in our food system and the loss of connection the general public has experienced with the land where food comes from. We are constantly reading articles and listening to stories about children who no longer know that carrots grow in the ground and are not created in a factory or that meat was once a living animal before being packaged in cellophane and shelved under fluorescent lighting. As many people in the U.S. experience shortages in grocery stores for the first time in their lives, they are starting to ask, *Why?* Millions of Americans are suddenly thinking about food in ways they never have before.

Because when invisible lines break, they are rendered visible.

As I sit with my coffee in hand, with spring garlic growing just outside my window, with a photo of heaps of buried onions on the screen in front of me, I am left asking the question, *What are the lessons we will learn from this as individuals, as communities, and as a nation?*

Surrounded by a community of dedicated producers and land stewards, I hope we at Quivira can ensure that the right lessons are learned when stores and businesses reopen. I hope we can accurately convey this story and shed light on why our supply chain has broken down so quickly, so that this challenging time can serve as an opportunity to restructure our food system to withstand further shocks and provide healthy, affordable produce to all Americans. I hope we can be drivers of resilience.

TEST RUN

Resiliency in the time of a pandemic

by Tony Daranyi

In recent months, I've found myself returning to a quote from *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer: "We're not in control. What we are in control of is our relationship to the earth."

If you haven't read this book yet, please do yourself a favor and do so. It is so rich, so wise, so powerful. Written by an Indigenous elder, it reaffirms humanity's place in the natural world, an especially important reaffirmation for those of us struggling to strengthen our relationships with the earth in our machine-dominated society. The book is so timely, given the current COVID-19 pandemic that has us all on edge, not to mention the constant reminders, all around us, that we live in a time of great human-caused climate change.

The pandemic has us locked down here at Indian Ridge Farm, in southwestern Colorado. As I write this, we're sheltering in place. It's been this way since mid-March. Our county health officials are worried about a surge in cases. Their concern is that, if there's a big local outbreak, it could overwhelm our minimal health care resources. We don't have an ICU anywhere nearby to care for patients, with the nearest one 65 miles away.

But pandemic or not, the farm is a grand place to be during a lockdown. Essentially, it means we're continuing to grow food. Amazing food. Nutrient-dense food. As farmers, this is what we would be doing right now regardless. And we're trying to do good things for the earth: composting, building soil, tending to the garden, practicing regenerative agriculture, raising livestock humanely, and using renewable energy. Most importantly, we're taking care of ourselves and each other. We feel secure. We have food stored, we have a 15,000-gallon rain catchment cistern and rely on the sun for our power. The farm work hasn't really changed, in spite of global challenges. We're excited about the task at hand, but we'd be lying if we didn't tell you we also have our anxieties.

This pandemic has me thinking, and drawing an analogy to, of all things, plants. Plants and trees are very susceptible to drought, insect infestations, and invasive weeds. This susceptibility is exposed by the smallest imbalance in an ecosystem or farm organism. It may be that the imbalance is created by a stressor: too many chemicals, not enough organic fertility, over-crowdedness, or no natural defenders to control or conquer an invasive species. Invasive insects and weeds, in particular, are naturally opportunistic. They will exploit whatever weakness they encounter and try to throw the broader ecosystem off balance — usually quite successfully! Eventually, after a painful process in which forests may be wiped out, or crops ruined, the ecosystem finds a new equilibrium. At least that's what nature has taught us. But that equilibrium may look very different from what existed previously, challenging us to adapt and evolve.

Is something of this sort occurring right now, with the coronavirus and its deadly global impact? Is this nature's way of telling us something's wrong? That our way of life on this planet is not sustainable and that a virus, for which we have no inherited immunity, is opportunistically changing the order of things? That's something worth pondering.

In barely five months since the outbreak, and with many of the world's nations inching toward reopening (following their own lockdown modes) to avoid further strain on hospitals, the evidence already abounds that, if left alone, nature will reveal its beautiful resiliency. Our extractive global economy has stalled, resulting in clear air in large cities, purified waters along coasts and rivers, and wildlife that are re-wilding areas formerly trampled by humans. A quiet tranquility exists in places where before there was noise and chaos. In these instances, the natural world appears vibrant, almost as if it's found a renewed balance by not having to constantly compete with our interference. Although many global citizens have no choice but to plug back into a vibrant capitalist economic system to eke out a living, others who can afford it are awaiting the outcome of this pandemic before venturing forth. This economic lockdown is giving the earth a chance to breathe, to rest.

As a result, a profound lesson is being taught to those wise enough to absorb it: nature is not separate from humans. We are nature, nature is us.

Once this pandemic passes, a new normal awaits us all. What might that new normal look like? Right now, it's hard to say. There are forces trying to pull us right back, hurriedly, to the way things were. But this moment offers the opportunity to prove that we have truly learned something new, that we must change our ways of relating to nature and to each other, or risk further destruction of our natural world. Time will tell if we take that lesson to heart.

How should we think about the resiliency of farms in the context of the pandemic?

Holistic Resource Management teaches us that a sustainable food system is built on a three-legged stool made up of the environment, the community, and the economy. For real, long-lasting resiliency to take hold, each leg of that stool must be strengthened. That's been our focus here at the farm for the past few years, and that continues to be our focus now.

I'll briefly describe some tenets of these legs, in the interest of sharing what we've learned with others.

For the environment, the focus for farms must be on conservation and restoration. The best practices in support of this focus can be found through *regenerative agriculture*, a method that blends the humane raising of livestock with organic produce production. But it's much more than that. A general definition for regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. This requires a *whole-farm* approach to our practices, whereby the farm is viewed as a living organism benefited by adhering to these principles.

The community leg of the three-legged stool includes, foremost, the actual farmers in the fields. In this regard, we're focused on health care. Currently, visitors are not allowed

onto the farm, except to pick up food. We require them to practice social-distancing measures and wear a face mask. We take good care when we're out in the community to protect ourselves from the virus. Our Quivira apprentices quarantined themselves here on the farm for 14 days before starting their work.

To be resilient — with or without a pandemic — we must eat nourishing foods, sleep well, live stress-free (right!), balance vocational and avocational pursuits, and exercise regularly. But we must also concern ourselves with the health of our customers, who are drawn to our food as medicine in hopes of keeping their immune systems strong. During these uncertain times, our customers are also increasingly seeking out local food sources to maximize their overall food security.

Of course, our extended communities must remain strong to provide us with the supporting services we need to thrive: feed stores, hardware stores, groceries, banks, post offices, laundromats, accountants, lawyers, government agencies, car repair, etc. This point ties right into the economic leg of the three-legged stool. Without these services, our jobs as farmers are made all the more challenging. The other side of that same coin is that many of these services wouldn't exist in rural America if it wasn't for demand from the agricultural sector. Moreover, for a farm to be resilient, it must also be profitable. Unfortunately, profit margins for small farms during a pandemic can be squeezed, as workers are more difficult to find, business plans pivot away from what was previously considered the "norm," and supply chain disruptions increase costs. Diverse farm enterprises are smart and, of course, seductive, but they won't be resilient unless they more than pay the bills.

There is no question that more challenges lie ahead. Drought, floods, severe storms, climate change, loss of biodiversity, our exploding human population. We can treat the pandemic as a global test-run of our preparedness in addressing these challenges. It's incumbent on us to chronicle this unprecedented pandemic episode by documenting our pertinent observations, our unique difficulties, and the powerful lessons we are all learning so that future generations can avoid our mistakes. That will be the true test of resiliency. Are we ready?

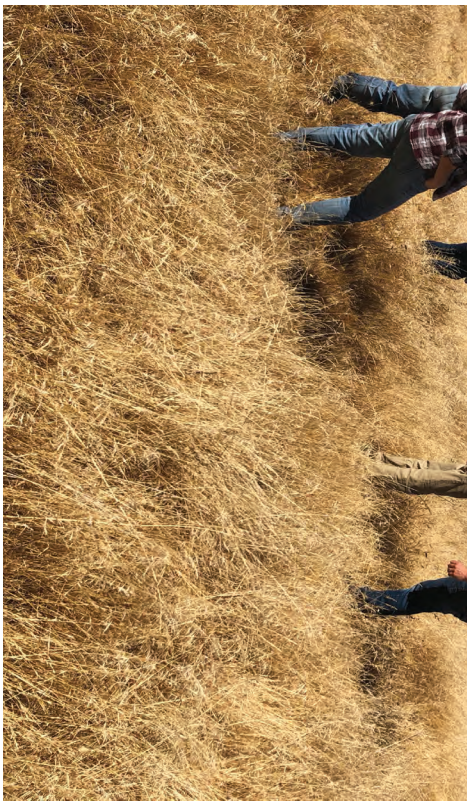
Dispatch from the James Ranch

by Tarryn Dixon

Dairy farming seasonally at the James Ranch in Durango, Colorado, has taught me more patience than any other part of my life. Working with animals, waiting three months for wheels of cheese to age before you can even taste what you've made, fixing fence after you snag it with a tractor fork — many aspects of this work take patience. Life in the age of COVID-19 has created a need for patience in all of us. Coping with hard decisions about social distancing with the people you love, feeling like the whole town has run out of toilet paper (just when you are on the last roll at home), and learning to navigate the new sense of fear for the future, all take patience. Many of my friends work in the hospitality industry; others are chefs and bartenders, bakers and hair stylists, ski resort and hotel employees. Many of them have found themselves out of work, joining the millions of other Americans filing for unemployment benefits.

Meanwhile, calving season has started up at the ranch, and I find myself feeling blessed to have a job. I am lucky to have found fulfilling work that I am consistently passionate about, but the last few months have been a real eye-opener. In a time when my friends are losing jobs, and many dairies are losing business due to school and restaurant closures, we are working away, getting into the swing of things for the season. Cows are calving, milk is flowing, and the pastures are growing. Our community is still sending business our way, and we plan to make more wheels of cheese this year than last. So, while my friends wait to see when — and if — they will have a job in the coming months, and while other dairies dump unsold milk down floor drains, I will be doing everything I can to show my gratefulness for a job. I will remind myself that I have been blessed in a very rough time. I will be patient waiting for cheese to age and for the world to return to normal for us all.

New Agrarian Apprenticeships in Colorado: left Indian Ridge poultry production; right James Ranch dairy production.



California NRCS Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable soil health tour at Stemple Creek Ranch.

COLLABORATIVE RESILIENCE

at the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research

Story and photos by LaKisha Odom

In September of 2016, I joined a new organization dedicated to fostering innovative partnerships to fund audacious agricultural research: The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research (FFAR). With a background in plant and soil science, years of research practice, and after previously holding positions at the EPA and USDA, I was excited to bring my experience to FFAR as the scientific program director of soil health. In this role, I have had the privilege of watching our organization grow and developing the Soil Health Challenge Area, a grant-making initiative that explores the linkages between soil health and farm productivity, economics, human health, and management practices. To date, FFAR has invested more than 30 million dollars in soil health research, with many more projects on the horizon.

As a scientific program director at FFAR, one of my main goals is to determine research gaps and other spaces where our organization should focus its investigative efforts. One of the areas that has become more prominent throughout our organization over the years is resilience.

Scientists predict a changing climate will be harmful to farmers, who will soon face higher temperatures and more dry dates each year, both of which negatively affect crop yields. Additional changes in climate are expected over the coming decades — instances of extreme precipitation, increases in greenhouse gases, weed growth, the spread of new pests and pathogens — making it essential that farmers and ranchers respond and adapt more effectively to these emerging challenges.

FFAR recognizes these impending difficulties, and has made it our mission to support innovative and collaborative science that provides every person access to affordable, nutritious food grown on thriving farms. As farmers and ranchers contend with the uncertainty and variability of our environment and food system, resilience and adaptive management strategies have become key components of our funding plan. FFAR recognizes that agricultural producers have always, throughout the course of time, been forced to adjust to new conditions, but the present moment requires us to offer even greater support.

In collaboration with our extensive network of partners, FFAR has already funded important new research that can help build more sustainable and climate-resilient farming-production practices. FFAR acknowledges and respects the commitment that farmers, ranchers, and others have also made on their own in developing their sustainable food systems. By supporting the study and dissemination of practical, site-specific research, we help enhance farmers' and ranchers' climate resilience and productivity.

FFAR's Current and Future Activities

Time and time again these past few months, as COVID-19 has run rife around the globe, I've found myself thinking about an old African proverb that I have slightly adjusted for our use at FFAR: "If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go FFAR … go together." In these uncertain times, when there are so many challenges that feel insurmountable, one of the things I am most proud of in my role at FFAR is the connection and collaboration that I foster between stakeholders and the projects we fund.

The following are just a small sample of the many FFAR projects that demonstrate these connections, as well as the increased potential that results from collaboration.

OpenTEAM

The Open Technology Ecosystem Agriculture Management (OpenTEAM) project is developing a farmer- and rancher-driven, interoperable platform to provide the best possible information exchange in support of soil health. The project currently has more than 20 members working together to share adaptive soil management advice (for example, which practices can help sequester carbon or promote proper aeration) with farms of all scales, in all types of geographies, using a variety of production systems. During The Packer's Global Organic Produce Expo in January of this year, Dr. Dorn Cox, the Director of our OpenTEAM project and a scientist and farmer, stated:

> *We really see agricultural science as a shared endeavor and agriculture as a shared human project. And so we're creating an environment where we're linking producers and researchers and the general public together to help understand this larger world.*

Our commitment to spreading useful information is just one of the foundational tenets of this project and further illustrates the need for collaboration to achieve resilience. Several of our other projects have demonstrated exactly this sort of connectivity, with team members working closely and sharing the information they've learned in their own funded research. The next project described benefits directly from the work funded in the OpenTEAM endeavor.

Loren Poncia of Stemple Creek Ranch talks about soil health.

Ecosystem Services Market Research Consortium

The Ecosystem Services Market Consortium's (ESMC) mission is to improve soil health systems through the creation of ecosystem service markets. Ecosystem services are all of the additional services, such as cleaner water and healthier soil, that provide benefits to everyone. In an ecosystem market, farmers and ranchers can be rewarded in cash or credit for their good land stewardship. Our funded ESMC research incentivizes farmers and ranchers to voluntarily adopt crop and livestock production systems that increase their soil carbon sequestration and retention, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, improve their water quality, conserve their water use, and benefit many other additional ecosystem service outcomes — thus earning them credits in a national ecosystem services market where other buyers purchase similar credits to offset their own environmental and supply chain impacts.

One of ESMC's foundational principles states that America's farmers and ranchers are crucial to finding solutions to address our nation's soil health, identifying management practices that allow agriculture to reduce negative effects of climate change, and meeting natural resource and ecosystem services challenges. The project director Debbie Reed has stated:

> *There is no subject about which I am more passionate than working with farmers and ranchers to properly steward our natural environment. I'm thrilled to lead the*

consortium, because I am joined by numerous like-minded organizations and individuals from across the country. We already have seen such a tremendous outpouring of support.

What makes this project so impactful is ESMC's commitment to joining like-minded organizations and individuals to make a difference.

Rangeland and Pastureland Soil Health Initiative

While still in its development stages, one final example of our collaboration is FFAR's the Rangeland and Pastureland Soil Health Initiative. Farmers and ranchers have had the opportunity to provide input from the earliest stages, along with the Sustainable Rangeland Roundtable, National Grazingland Coalition, USDA, National Cattleman's Beef Association, USDA Agricultural Research Service, USDA NRCS, University of Wyoming, University of Kentucky, and Point Blue — to name just a few. This project is developing a well-integrated, transdisciplinary, comprehensive research program that focuses on the restoration of soil health in rangelands and pasturelands. Two more quotes help color in their work; the first from Jeff Goodwin, Senior Rangeland and Pasture Consultant for the Noble Research Institute, and the second from Kristie Maczko with the Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable.

Grazing lands, more specifically rangeland and pasture, make up over 788 million acres in the United States. Understanding the ecologic and socioeconomic impacts of soil health-focused management on this resource, and further harnessing technology to quantify those impacts at scale, is critical to providing actionable producer decision-making tools that create positive returns to both the landscape and producer livelihoods.

❀

Addressing rangeland and pastureland soil-health management questions benefits from a usable science approach. With this in mind, FFAR, SRR, and Noble sought to engage producers with researchers to ensure that the program framework developed would capture information needs on the ground, responding to producers' questions and concerns around monitoring and measurement; ecological interactions among soils, plants, and animals; and ranch-level economic aspects.

These are only a few of many examples that demonstrate the fundamental value that FFAR supports most of all: connection and collaboration between on-the-ground producers and various researchers, citizens, and specialists. Together, we have so much more power to increase our reach and our impact.

It is becoming clearer to me these days, especially in light of the coronavirus pandemic, that communal effort increases the value of all individual projects by leveraging shared learning, relationships, and experiences. As director of the Soil Health Challenge area, I see firsthand how recent changes in our climate affect not only our food system but also our entire world. I've also witnessed exactly how much more effective our efforts can be when groups work together. Tackling challenges like reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving soil health, developing appropriate environmental and economic incentives, or making decisions easier for farmers and ranchers seems daunting when attempted alone. However, if we work together, then enormous change is possible. FFAR has not created this spirit of togetherness alone, but our sense of community is one that I am proud to say FFAR contributes to every day, through the projects we've funded and continue to fund.

Peace and Joy

A note from Badger Creek Ranch

Story and photo by Chrissy McFarren

Badger Creek Ranch is a working cattle operation that accepts guests every summer. In addition to our grassfed and grass-finished beef, we offer pastured pork, chicken, turkey, and eggs through direct-market sales to our local community. We also provide educational opportunities focused on land health and regenerative agriculture. Last but not least, we are mentors with Quivira's New Agrarian Program. Whew, yes, we are busy … even during this pandemic pause. Due to the nature of the work that we do, we have a strong community and a large public following through Facebook.

Now, more than ever, we are sharing photos and videos (like the one below) from the ranch to remind people that life still goes on, and can be positive, beautiful, peaceful, and fun. Last winter, we decided to add a few sheep to the ranch's livestock mix, because why not? We purchased five bred ewes that we expected to lamb around April first. Well, April came and went without any lambs … the waiting game had begun. I guess the sheep decided that Easter was a perfect time to lamb instead — what is more positive than that? Thanks mama ewes for providing perfectly timed lambs for our Facebook community!

THROUGH THE EYES

of the Stewards

by Leah Potter-Weight, photos from the Quivira collection

As the rhizobia need the legumes, and the legumes need the rhizobia, so do we all need each other. We are interdependent; no organism lives in a vacuum.

There are moments we feel this so clearly. Think of a time when you felt yourself connected to the web of life. Maybe you were on a walk in the woods or the desert. Maybe you were playing with your children or standing alone atop a mountain. Remember that feeling. Let that wave of awareness wash over you.

If you are a farmer, rancher, hunter, gatherer, or other kind of land steward, you might feel this interconnectedness more than most people because of your constant interaction with nature. Every day you involve yourself in the cyclical and interwoven relationships between seasons, weather, plants, livestock, pests, and pathogens. Every day you witness change, and every day you shape those changes, working for a sustainable and livable future.

This is a time for the whole world to see through the eyes of land stewards, to recognize our fundamental interconnectedness and the importance of our agricultural production. This is the time, because now more than ever we see how our actions impact one another. Young, healthy individuals are being asked to consider the health of people who are older and/or at risk. A broken policing system, upheld by our tax dollars, continues to threaten the lives of people of color across the country. And our expectations regarding food are shifting, prompting us to consider that our globalized system may not work when we need it most. In many ways, the COVID-19 crisis has forced this realization of interdependence on us all. As standard systems break down — hospitals overcrowded, grocery shelves emptied, agricultural products rotting, the basic choice to hug taken away — we realize how much we all rely on an interconnected society. We realize how much we need each other.

More specifically, we need land stewards, and they need us. This has always been true, but now it is truer than ever. As food grows scarce, more people have turned to their local stewards — farmers, ranchers, wild-harvesters — to access the sustenance they need. Or they've turned to their own land, backyards, and communal plots, to discover how they themselves can grow food. Land stewards are the source of all that sustains us, and in this time of crisis, more and more people recognize their vital importance for our existence.

While some farmers and ranchers have been able to quickly pivot, or continue to sell, into local markets, many others are struggling due to a breakdown in the food-supply system, both on the land (a diminishing workforce and inhumane conditions for farm workers, some of whom are forced to work in unsafe conditions without regard to COVID-19 regulations) and off the land (major slowdowns in processing, delivering, and marketing).

What can we do? How can we support our land stewards? And, especially, how can we support those who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color? How can we bridge our broken connections? I am also asking us all to consider these questions and join this important conversation. Now is a time for creativity and collective brainpower. It is a time to learn from our past mistakes and give of ourselves, when we can. It is a time to recognize the land steward within each of us and the power we have to influence change.

Also, it is a busy time, and a scary time, and there are many people to think about right now. So in the midst of all of this, make sure you take care of yourself, too. Find space and relaxation sometime in each day. Perhaps practice meditation, read a good book, or go on a walk. You need yourself, and the world needs you. So, as much as possible, stay healthy and find some gentleness.

And, if you have the time and energy, think about what we can all do to support our local land stewards. They need us, just as we need them.

At Sol Ranch soil baseline and compost application work for the Carbon Ranch Initiative; and a relaxing walk to the water.

EMBRACING THE HERE AND NOW

Finding the silver linings

Photo essay by Sarah King

Here at the King's Anvil, in the southern reaches of Arizona, our day-to-day lives have been less affected than the lives of many others — the benefit of living and working on a ranch. When COVID-19 arrived, we were already accustomed to having a little less social contact, making limited grocery runs, and cooking creatively. We are fortunate that the ranch work has continued relatively unchanged and that the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance — a collaborative conservation nonprofit comprised of local farms and ranches, of which we are a founding member — was already well established, with employees working remotely. Nonetheless, we still feel the pandemic's effects. We spent the spring, summer, and fall asking the same questions as the rest of the world: *How does this virus spread? How do we protect people? When will it go away?* We canceled the ranch's 125th anniversary party in April and like everyone else, we missed numerous other occasions where we would have gathered with family and friends. Although change was forced upon us unexpectedly, there were silver linings. We adapted the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance's meetings to the new virtual world, which brought the unexpected reward of being able to reach those partners, flung far and wide, that we do not interact with on a regular basis. We celebrated my husband's fortieth birthday with fewer people than we would have, but with no less cake, party blowers, and festivity. I took more photos of the spring wildflowers this year than usual, in an effort to celebrate the everyday. In the moments of uncertainty and darkness, resilience has meant letting go of what was supposed to be and embracing the small moments of joy.

This spring brought us a spectacular show, as flowers in a multitude of colors bloomed across the ranch.

Right: The majority of our routine on the ranch hasn't changed since the onset of the pandemic. Many days still end with us unsaddling in front of the tack room.

Left: These three photos were taken in early March, just before the state shutdowns. We had friends visiting from out of town, and the virus was making headlines. At that moment it had yet to have a direct impact on us, and we had little understanding of what the rest of the spring would bring.

Despite recent upheaval in the world, spring and summer included plenty of beautiful moments. Our kids have reached ages where they tag along more easily on long days on the ranch. Evelyn took over one of my husband's old horses this spring and did some of her first short solo rides. George was eager to join any time he could. Mixed in with the picturesque moments on the landscape were plenty of Zoom calls for the Altar Valley Conservation Alliance. This is the Alliance's 25th anniversary year, and it was great to see how past years invested in relationships allow conservation work to continue seamlessly via technology.

Summer in Arizona can be a trying time in the best of circumstances: heat and the waiting game for monsoons. This summer also saw Arizona go through a spike in COVID-19 cases in June and July. We received one good storm toward the end of July and another bit in August, but overall, the summer monsoons never arrived. The fall remained dry, and as December gets underway, we are still waiting on moisture.

Brooklyn residents wait outside Peaches to pick up food.

FOOD AND THE CITY

How a pandemic is birthing a more neighborly New York

Story by Tafari Fynn, photos by Tobin Polk

The city of New York resembles a type of organism, one that is dependent on its organelle-like structures to function. Growing up in Brooklyn for all my nineteen years, I have come to recognize the pillars that define this city: The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the varied governments and chambers of commerce, and the thousands of small businesses scattered throughout the five boroughs. While the phenomenon of New York City's diversity and independence is often portrayed as derived from some mythical power source, it would cease to exist without its many social and economic systems, both formal and informal. Cities of this stature have exhibited various responses to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Starting in March of this year, I've observed the ways that New York and its inhabitants have coped with the world-wide health crisis. As hardships around the globe have produced mass outrage and grief, I've challenged myself to examine the intersections between the current fight for social justice and the viral pandemic, to address how they shape the universal expression of resilience.

My own experience began last March, with a swift return home from my university's dormitory halls in the midst of national fear-shopping and stockpiling that emptied retail and bulk stores across the country. Supermarkets saw lines of shoppers that wrapped around city blocks; cleaning products became nearly impossible to find on shelves. This panic-based reaction shed light on our fragile access to resources in the city and the ways distribution of these necessities is informed by socioeconomic and racial circumstances. Widespread gentrification has inhibited access to quality produce and isolated resources in richer enclaves. In many neighborhoods that were once home primarily to residents of color, the influx of wealthy, white residents (and resultant overdevelopment) has destroyed old cultures and pushed out the people who sustained them. These cultures included implicit social guidelines and lifestyles, such as navigating through high-crime neighborhoods. It's frustrating for New York natives, such as myself, to witness their city government invest in communities only upon the arrival of privileged occupants.

Unequal food access can be used as a means of regulating the socio-demographics of particular populations, establishing invisible boundaries that divide a city based on race and class. This sort of racism — ingrained in the behavior of our institutions and fellow citizens — perpetuates poor diets and leads to health complications within Black and Brown communities. I've lived in Bedstuy for the past three years, a neighborhood comprised of Black working-class residents. The interdependent character of the neighborhood has secured the presence of small businesses, reinforcing a strong sense of community throughout the pandemic. Inner-cities in the United States all face issues of food

insecurity and dysfunctional food-assistance programs. The prevalence of food deserts in urban areas is often overlooked, especially in New York City. Its reliance on imported food products and lack of connectedness to food sourcing perpetuate a knowledge gap on the importance of food locality. Not only does locally sourced food conserve transportation resources, but it also equips communities with the agency and security of agricultural self-sufficiency. The South Bronx and Brooklyn are the two most notable food deserts in the city, providing mostly fast foods with little nutritional value. In June, as I explored my own neighborhood for the first time in weeks, following the peak of COVID-19 cases, I marveled at the sea of delis and bodegas packed with people seeking items for their meals. Attempting to access high-quality food in a food desert requires one to be able-bodied. I watched my elderly neighbors push carts piled high with shiny packaged goods from the closest affordable supermarket two miles away. It's easy to disregard the fact that New York City contains food deserts because of the prevalence of organic and specialty grocers. These stores, however, ultimately serve only the consumers who can afford them, leaving thousands still in need.

The solutions proposed for improving food accessibility caused by the pandemic (ordering groceries through delivery services, eating take-out, etc.) are framed as convenient, but in practice they are not sustainable and not affordable for all. Because of this, many small businesses in Bedstuy remained open through the worst spike of the pandemic. Owner of Greedi Kitchen, Latisha Daring, has continued to bring vegan comfort food to Bedstuy and the nearby neighborhood of Crown Heights. Her restaurant, along with Bedstuy Fish Fry, Café on Ralph, and Peaches are examples of iconic Black-owned establishments that have served the neighborhood well over the past few months. Latisha's triumph to remain open during this time, in which thousands of small businesses have become extremely vulnerable, demonstrates a special kind of environmental resilience: perseverance in the face of unimaginable place-based circumstances.

Similar acts of reliance can be found in chef Allison Arevalo's successful efforts to sell fresh pasta out of her home in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Thadeaus Umpster, Bedstuy activist and community organizer, had concerns about the lack of available fresh produce earlier this winter. He collected food donations and placed a fridge full of organic items in New York's first ever Free Fridge. Many Free Fridges have since popped up around Brooklyn and lower Manhattan as a means of supporting those who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic — adding extra support to an already barren food climate. These actions reflect how societal distress has transformed the mentality and habits of New Yorkers. To live in New York City is often to be individualistic; this period of uncertainty and confusion has sparked people to think more collectively.

The murder of George Floyd and the ensuing Black Lives Matter protests have further contributed to New York City's maturing identity. From fighting a virus to standing up to the violence and political clout of the largest police department in America, the city and its people embody the truest form of resilience, revealing their potential to sustain themselves during mass hysteria. Social media has helped spread awareness of the systematic oppression pervasive in all facets of American life. As disaster plasters newspaper headlines, I've been fortunate to witness the incredible adaptability of humans. This global chaos has produced many forms of solidarity and psychological resilience, all of which reflect our instincts to protect and prolong the lives of our fellow people.

The pandemic has commenced a new period in world history. How people relate to their environment and social/kin networks has taken on entirely new forms. Household dynamics, work-life balance, and access to resources have morphed to accommodate current health precautions and safety procedures. The consequences of the pandemic have established new social expectations about how the actions of individuals affect others: New Yorkers have become more neighborly and overall more aware of their surroundings. The concept of social distancing has become a new social courtesy, a simple act that displays a form of decency and respect. Though many still debate the value of wearing face masks, we are nonetheless adopting more conscientious practices within society. I believe that the ability to coexist with change defines resilience.

Typical bodega adaptive protection; free food fridge outside the Living Gallery in Bedstuy; newer grocery store on Malcolm X Blvd.

THE WISDOM OF STRUGGLE

by Joseph Gazing Wolf

All things share the same breath — the beast, the tree, the man — the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.

— Chief Seattle (Suquamish and Duwamish)

The Foundation of Resilience

As a life-long practitioner of Japanese martial arts, I learned early that struggle often reveals the true nature of things. I recall my first *gasshuku* (special training), during which we climbed a steep 6,000-foot mountain, kicking and punching all the way up, followed by two hours of *kumite* (fighting) at the peak, before running back down. For a week, we repeated this routine twice daily along with other exercises. My *sensei* explained that unless my body and mind were forced to face their limits, I would never find my breath, my spirit, my strength. "When you can no longer fight with your body, you'll find strength in your *kiai*," he would say. *Kiai* is the word for our harmonized life force, used most often to describe deep, forceful breathing done in unison with others. In this collective breath, our identity and our resilience are realized.

Traditional karate appealed to me because its teachings mirrored those of the Indigenous cultures in which I was raised. In fact, the connections between struggle, breath, spirit, strength, and wisdom can be found in the literatures and oral teachings of most ancient cultures. The words for *spirit* and *soul* in many ancient languages (for example, *prana* in Sanskrit, *ruah* in Hebrew, *pneuma* in Greek, *nephes* in Arabic) are also the words for breath. In Tewa tradition, the term *hah-oh* (to breathe in) is used to describe the process of learning tribal wisdom and identity. To understand the importance of breath for resilience, one only need consult the mountain of scientific literature addressing the long-term physical and mental health benefits of meditation and intensive physical exercise. Did you know that repeated, deep rhythmic breathing positively affects everything from your chances of getting heart disease to how fast a wound heals? The physical and spiritual are never separate: what affects the breath immediately affects the body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Be still and breathe deeply for a few seconds. Notice anything?

Now take a moment to reflect on why seeing George Floyd's murder finally inspired people across the world to rise up in opposition to systemic genocide. The theft of our breath has been ongoing in the Americas for more than 500 years. Why now? What was it about seeing George's life slowly snuffed out that touched you?

Self-Imposed Struggle vs. Oppression

Coming from a family of warriors, I once naïvely asked a Lakota elder whether our strength as a people came from all the suffering we had endured at the hands of the White man. "No, but all our weaknesses did," she said. She went on to explain that our resilience as a people came from our community's struggle to understand our shared experience with all living beings and to find a harmonious way of life on the rugged landscape that birthed us. Only when we faced the harsh conditions of survival as a community — when we struggled with deeper questions of existence and purpose — were we able to touch the Earth's breath, breathe in sync with it, and embody her strength. This wisdom in turn allowed for the land to remain resilient and fruitful for our people for thousands of years. Conversely, "all our weaknesses" as a community (drug abuse, violence, poor health, etc.), are the recent manifestations of the last five hundred years of genocidal oppression, slavery, environmental destruction, and constant political bullying and alienation that Native communities (and BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities) continue to experience at the hands of dogmatic White-supremacist systems. We've survived despite this oppressive reality because of the resilience we inherited from many prior generations. The Earth has survived hundreds of years of environmental destruction only because of the resilience she amassed over billions of years of self-discovery.

The experience of violence and oppression is never positive. Research shows that the old adage, *What doesn't kill me makes me stronger* (attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche), is like many western teachings, false. The effects of being bullied, spanking one's kids (*spare the rod, spoil the child*), workaholism, sleep deprivation (*I'll sleep when I'm dead*), malnutrition, or those from any other type of neglect or abuse, are always negative. I have often seen the wealthy and fortunate brag about their momentary bouts with "poverty" or "trauma"; this is White privilege at its finest. These are not things to be proud of or to wear as a badge of honor — an insulting posture to those who truly know chronic poverty and pain, including many in White communities as well. People may recover from traumatic experiences, from physical and mental violence, but those experiences never, in and of themselves, lead to strength or resilience. True resilience is built over time through concerted, self-imposed struggle — guided by wise and compassionate elders in the context of environmentally harmonious communities — that eventually leads to self-discovery.

Fragility vs. Holistic Resilience

The dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests for racial justice have revealed that U.S. institutions — built on stolen labor and the subjugation of the natural world — are inherently fragile. Our gross lack of collective resilience was apparent from the first wave of infections in March. Many citizens failed to stay home or wear masks, shelves were emptied of basic necessities, the economy tanked, tens of millions lost their jobs, small businesses closed shop, government aid came low and slow, billionaires got richer. Soon enough, our heinous police system began to rear its ugly head amid acts of opposition to its violence. The agricultural system — too heavily based on bottom-line profits, environmental domination, the centralized control of land and resources, and the dehumanization of field workers — failed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable communities. Indeed, the only true, demonstrable resilience we've seen in recent months has been among those who have risked their well-being to protest racial inequities, and those who have dedicated resources and time to providing for the needs of their communities, like the Navajo Nation, which has been especially impacted by the pandemic.

Fragility, coupled with the unrelenting belief in one's righteousness, leads to pretentiousness. Our pretentious government flaunts claims of "justice for all" and "all men are created equal." Yet as I write this,

the same government is stealing land from the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe through forcible "disestablishment" via an order of the Secretary of the Interior, while also prohibiting the Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge reservations from protecting their people against the pandemic via legal threats and the South Dakota governor's campaign of intimidation.

True resilience is holistic, requiring the persistent struggle of all entities — individual, communal, educational, cultural, agricultural, environmental, spiritual, economic, governmental, global — to answer questions such as those of identity, purpose, justice, and equity. It begins with listening to and acting upon the guidance of our loved ones and community members. Arielle Quintana, director of Education and Outreach at the Quivira Coalition, recently shared some good medicine she had received ("breathed in") from a Cochití Pueblo medicine man: "You are precious, too," she told me. Amanda Ruiz, a Lakota sister and a student at the Oglala Lakota College, saw in me what I was having trouble seeing for myself: "I know you have a strong spirit!" she exclaimed. Megan Doldron, a Black sister and a PhD candidate in cell biology, reminded me of the importance of community and the healing power of the feminine spirit: "I miss you and love you! Stay connected!" she said. And my Chicana sister, Ariana Gloria-Martinez, a graduate student in rangeland social ecosystem science, reiterated that message in the context of community struggle: "We go through so much and are continually fighting for what is right, and for our communities, and we don't have to do it alone when we have our community. *Somos todos juntos!* Resilience is thus an embodied awareness of our inner strength, our preciousness and that of all living beings, and our interconnectedness through collective identity and shared experience. Stated more eloquently by another sister, bell hooks, feminism — and any resilient system — is "a wise and loving politics."

> *It is rooted in the love of male and female being, refusing to privilege one over the other. The soul of feminist politics is the commitment to ending patriarchal domination of women and men, girls and boys. Love cannot exist in any relationship that is based on domination and coercion. Males cannot love themselves in patriarchal culture if their very self-definition relies on submission to patriarchal rules. When men embrace feminist thinking and practice, which emphasizes the value of mutual growth and self-actualization in all relationships, their emotional well-being will be enhanced. A genuine feminist politics always brings us from bondage to freedom, from lovelessness to loving.*

Resilient Food Systems

Building resilient agroecological systems that can survive and thrive in the midst of a pandemic requires us to experience the Earth's breath as our breath. Listen to the battle cry of the Lakota when they protest oil pipelines: "We are forces of nature defending itself!" When your breath is in sync with that of the ecosystem you manage (achieved after intensely and continuously struggling to understand it by every means), holistic diversity becomes a central prerogative at every level of the operation. People often speak of biodiversity only in terms of plant and animal species, which is obvious but shortsighted. A resilient operation pursues diversity in management perspectives, genders, races, cultures, ages, levels of experience, landscape features, and soil. I have seen operations that would have otherwise floundered had their diverse workers not opened alternative markets, rallied communities, and shared resources and traditional knowledge.

A fragile system exposes its vulnerable workers to danger and fails to protect them amid a pandemic and, therefore, comes to a grinding halt. Resilient operations ensure that the dignity, safety, and well-being of their workforces are nurtured first and foremost, that contingencies are in place in advance of a crisis. Workers who are paid a fair wage, receive health benefits for themselves and their dependents, and have adequate supplies and sanitation in the field, are personally invested in the success of the operation.

Landscape heterogeneity is another element of diversity in a resilient system. Are there plants of varying heights, different types of ground cover (rocks, litter, dung, dead wood), riparian areas, hills, and valleys? Are outputs designed around this heterogeneity while providing habitat for livestock and wildlife (for example, growing mushrooms in dead wood that also provides habitat for many animal species; planting trees to provide shade for livestock while also providing habitat for birds)? But we can go deeper. It is the very plant and animal life that we nurture as producers that has taught us how to grow them for our nourishment and how important they are to the environment. Producers that celebrate the knowledge given to them by the wisdom of plants and animals often seek that wisdom in extenuating circumstances. In one instance, a Navajo farmer I consulted for took time to observe how an invasive insect, the citrus psyllid, behaved and moved through the orchard, and in doing so, reduced the amount of insecticide he sprayed while working with local extension advisors to find a biological control agent that provided a more permanent solution.

A resilient operation also seeks diversity in its outputs and markets, which are appropriate to the land and its cultural heritage. These may include developing relationships with local markets for game hunting, agritourism, the contracting out of specialized skills (e.g., soil ripping), and the diversification of crop and herd species. Diversified outputs require diversified skill sets, a diverse work force, and consultation with diverse experts. This will force producers to address immigration policies that prevent their access to skilled and diverse labor. It will make them cognizant of the severe shortage in agricultural economists at government and extension offices, which could help them predict the profitability of management decisions as well as find the funds to cover the upfront costs of output diversification. Throughout this pandemic, the resilient ranching and farming operations with whom I work have remained steady in their diversified product outputs, which have then been distributed to strong, local, and diverse markets (including ethnic markets).

Alongside diversity in outputs, technological fluency is important for conservation and sustainable rural livelihoods. Technology contributes to the timely identification of problem areas, time savings for land managers, collaborative land management and partnerships with government agencies, and increased profitability, all while meeting conservation goals. It is also perceived as an effective means of communicating and broadening the impact of the wisdom of experienced elder ranchers. Examples include use of the internet to market products and increase one's customer base, use of remote sensing for the monitoring and maintenance of permits, and use of mobile apps to provide immediate communication between producers and extension personnel. This technology should be incorporated only insofar as it furthers the goals of conservation

and sustainable rural economies.

Resilient operations seek every avenue of conservation and restoration that is suitable for the land. Restoration of riparian areas increases forage production, increases water availability for herds, improves livestock condition, and reduces irrigation need by raising the water table. The NRCS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have numerous partnerships and opportunities available to ranchers and farmers that can help achieve these goals. Conservation easements are another common path of land stewardship which may be particularly helpful for struggling operations, since the producer receives payment upfront. And finally, let it not go unmentioned that if national and local policies were aligned with resilient agriculture, ranchers and farmers would be compensated for ecological goods and services that are not typically commodified (water retention, carbon sequestration, etc.).

Perhaps most importantly for resilience, producers must join coalitions and support their communities. I have never seen an operation survive in isolation without engaging in environmentally destructive management practices. Aligning policies toward a resilient agroecological system requires ranchers and farmers to form and support politically active networks (such as the National Grazing Lands Coalition and the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition). Consider for example how forming coalitions with neighboring producers and energy companies has allowed the Thunder Basin Grasslands Prairie Ecosystem Association to protect eight threatened species and control a variety of invasive species across 1.2 million acres, all while providing sustainable livelihoods for ranching families. Coalitions like the Quivira Coalition, Covenant Pathways, Northeast Farmers of Color, and many others across the globe have brilliantly incorporated social issues such as gender, race, socioeconomics, and access to land into the fabric of their programs. Their power lies in the collective breath of their communities. Because of the resilience of these coalitions, both producers and consumers involved have been able to remain strong throughout the pandemic, even if they have been knocked down by it.

Breathe and Rise Up!

During my first *gasshuku*, the thought of quitting entered my mind many times, especially when everything hurt and I fell to the ground from sheer exhaustion. I felt weak, I felt worthless, and I felt disconnected from those around me, whom I saw as stronger and more capable — my pain wasn't just physical. "Even if you collapse, *kiai*, find strength in the *kiai* of your fellow *karateka* (community) and *shomen* (previous masters/ancestors)," my *sensei* counseled. Perhaps I was being pretentious in understanding my struggle and those of the members of my community. Judging ourselves and others based on a partial snapshot in time dehumanizes all involved because it ignores our personal and collective historical struggles and blinds us to the immense strength and wisdom we can gain from the struggles of our elders and ancestors, those who have walked these paths before. Without humbling myself and testing myself in the way of my elders and ancestors, I would fail to fulfill my natural role within the interdependent chain linking me to all living beings: my breath would never be in sync with theirs, and their collective strength and wisdom would be lost on me. Four days into the *gasshuku*, my body had settled in the strength of my breath and the harmonious life force of my fellow *karateka*, and the struggle became joyous rather than painful. This is wisdom! — and interdependent, community-based self-knowledge, gained through struggle, is the seat of wisdom, the harbinger of resilience.

Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.
— Nelson Mandela

WEST VIRGINIA STRONG

A resilient food system in the face of COVID-19

Story and photos by Jessi Adcock

Coal. Opioids. Poor. Forgotten. The words that first come to mind when you think of West Virginia are rarely complimentary. For decades, our economy has been based on outside companies extracting our natural resources: timber, coal, and now, natural gas. The land is often left unusable without the benefit of expensive, equipment-intensive restoration. The money is good for a while, but as the resource dries up, so do the jobs. This vicious cycle has repeated itself for generations.

But that's not what I'm writing about. Today, something amazing is happening in these mountains. Quietly, diligently, certain individuals and organizations have been working to rebuild the Appalachian economy from the ground up. They're retraining miners and other workers who've been laid off as coal companies shutter their operations. They're working with folks coming out of recovery programs, providing education and employment when many others are hesitant to do so. And they're offering living wages to do this work, making it possible to stay in the state and still have a good quality of life.

Coalfield Development is one such organization. Coalfield was started in 2010 to address housing issues in Wayne, West Virginia. Since then, it has pioneered a holistic workforce development program and grown into a family of social enterprises that includes agriculture and artisan trades, real estate development, and construction. These social enterprises have created 190 new jobs, helped place 95 workforce development alumni in full-time careers, and brought $16 million in investments to the region. I work for the agriculture-focused enterprise of Coalfield, which is called Refresh Appalachia.

Appalachia has a rich history of farming. The people here have been growing and preserving food for generations; we've had to, as these mountains can be hard to traverse even today. Let me give an example for those who aren't familiar with the region. A few weeks ago, I looked up the address of a new cattle operation that's looking to hire. As the crow flies, they're only 10 miles from my house. The fastest drivable route requires 45 minutes to get there, and you can only go that way if the creeks aren't up from the rain. If the creeks are up, it's an hour and ten minutes. And I live in the foothills.

Co-ops, food hubs, and educational farms have existed across West Virginia for years, but the state's rugged topography has made the formation of a centralized system of local food production, aggregation, and distribution particularly challenging. In 2018, a group of farmers, organizations, businesses, and nonprofits formalized this growing network to create the Turnrow: Appalachian Farm Collective, West Virginia's first and only multi-stakeholder food hub. Refresh Appalachia, under the umbrella of Coalfield Development, is one of those partners.

Turnrow operates as an aggregator and distributor to both wholesale and retail markets, collecting food from individual farmers and dispersing it throughout the state. Through their partner organizations, they provide technical assistance and production planning to farmers, helping them access larger markets and increase income from their operations. Turnrow has been growing steadily since its inception, providing food to schools, institutions, and retail customers across southern West Virginia.

Feeding America estimates an additional 17.1 million people could become food insecure across the country as a result of the pandemic. Here in West Virginia, where one in six people already struggle with hunger, COVID created an even greater strain on local sources of emergency food.

And then COVID-19 hit.

With new uncertainty suddenly facing our national food system, demand for local food skyrocketed overnight. The number of people buying from Turnrow's online retail farmers' market increased by 400% in the month of March alone, as existing customers began doubling their normal orders. Turnrow added new distribution locations and opened a mini market in Alderson, West Virginia, which has no grocery store.

Elice loading a box after COVID.

At the same time, many West Virginians were laid off or furloughed due to the pandemic. Like elsewhere in the country, families were forced to choose between buying food and keeping the lights on. While middle-class folk spent additional money buying local, food banks started seeing ever-increasing demand as more families lost their meager savings.

School produce boxes.

Feeding America estimates an additional 17.1 million people could become food insecure across the country as a result of the pandemic. Here in West Virginia, where one in six people already struggle with hunger, COVID-19 created an even greater strain on local sources of emergency food. Not only did the demand increase, but food banks, schools, and other organizations had to figure out how to get food to families with as little contact as possible, as quickly as possible.

Annie Humes, Operations Manager and Farm to School Coordinator for the Turnrow Farm Collective, said that schools were given three days' notice to shift their food preparation from the cafeteria to boxed meals that could be picked up or dropped off to students in their district. Overnight, the demand for frozen cubed squash and chopped salad mix — Turnrow's main Farm to School

items — disappeared, replaced by the need for transportable foods that fit schools' limited budgets.

One school district in the southern coalfields needed 47,000 apples to supply their students and families for a week. After exploring options and connecting with partners through Cooperative Extension — a function of the land grant act that provides agricultural and consumer health information through West Virginia University — Annie was able to source 3,000 apples from a historic family orchard in the northern panhandle. Since then, Turnrow has brought over 200,000 pieces of fruit from the northern panhandle to Wyoming, Wayne, and Monroe counties in the southern coalfields, putting local fruit into the hands of students and expanding the market for that producer, while also strengthening the farm-to-school network.

Schools have been serving as channels for emergency food access for years. Before COVID-19, Turnrow had a good relationship with the Mountaineer Food Bank, one of two food banks in the state. Each week the food bank would order fresh local produce to help supply youth backpack programs in their service area. When the schools shut down, those programs closed too, but the students' need for food remained pressing. Over the last six weeks, the food bank has purchased 600 prepackaged boxes of fresh produce and delivered them to Lewis, Barbour, and Upshur Counties, who then distributed them to families in need. This project is on hold now that the school year is over, but it is planned to resume in August.

Beth Ryan is the Food Access Coordinator for Sprouting Farms, a founding member of the Turnrow collective. In the pre-COVID-19 days, part of Beth's work involved planning for pop-up markets at childcare centers. Kids and their parents could shop together using vouchers provided by the organization KEYS 4 Healthy Kids. These markets offer the opportunity for kids and their parents to access and learn about fresh, local produce. The pandemic put the start date of these markets on hold, but they're now about to launch in newly conceived fashion. Instead of being able to shop, kids will get to pick up a prepackaged box filled with fresh, local produce. At the same time, Beth and our other partners developed new relationships with hospitals, clinics, and doctor's offices to get produce boxes to adults and families without children in daycare centers.

AmeriCorps members at Turnrow's other partner organizations have been working on food access projects across the southern part of the state as well. Elice Hunley, Refresh Appalachia's AmeriCorps member, has been developing the Fairfield Community Garden in Huntington, one of West Virginia's few urban centers. The initial plan for the garden was to reach production capacity and sell into the Turnrow Farm Collective, but as food insecurity among the community increased with COVID-19, the purpose of the garden shifted. Now, community members are growing food to feed themselves and their families, showing their kids that they can provide for themselves too, even in the city.

This is just a snapshot of the work being done here in the mountains. I encourage all to check out the Coalfield Development Corporation, the Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective, and the Central Appalachian Network, to offer support or learn more.

While working on this piece, I asked friends on social media what came to mind when they thought of the state. The words at the beginning of this story may be accurate depictions of West Virginia, but they don't paint the whole picture. To fill in the gaps, I'd add: *Beautiful. Resourceful. Resilient.*

Fairlfield community garden.

RESPONSIBILITY AND FOOD

by Benjamin Clark

One thing became abundantly clear to me over the past few months as COVID-19 tore through the U.S. and around the world: no one is alone in this. I don't mean that in the positive sense — *We're all in this together!* — but instead as a disavowal of the mythic and long-cherished ideal of rugged individualism embodied in our superhero stories and classic western dramas. It's the belief that those best equipped to handle adversity are the ones who have wilderness skills, raise their own food, can assemble a gun, change a tire, trap game, work with leather or what have you. This style of individualism might be resourceful, but it isn't resilient.

Nothing about this pandemic happened to a lone individual. Yes, many individuals have been forced to fight the virus within their own bodies, but the effects of those many individual fights has impacted society as a whole. Communities around the globe have been rocked to their foundations as workers were forced to stay at home. Both global and local economies were shocked and stressed to the breaking point. In particular, the food system has been stretched beyond its capacity to safely produce, transport, and deliver the nourishment that we all rely upon. Sure, certain farms have done well during the pandemic; some have had more success than ever as people turned to local food, but others have gone bankrupt. Food production does not stop at the property line of an individual farm and cannot be measured by any individual success or failure; it is a complex system composed of a variety of interdependent actors. As farmers and ranchers, we can all strive for resilient operations, but that effort is insufficient if we don't begin looking at the food production system as a whole — to better understand both its shortcomings and those of our attitudes within it.

Feeding America estimates an additional 17.1 million people could become food insecure across the country as a result of the pandemic. Here in West Virginia, where one in six people already struggle with hunger, COVID created an even greater strain on local sources of emergency food.

The obvious shortcoming is that a majority of society relies on only a fraction of its population to shoulder the burden of food production. This tiny fraction of individuals has been further disadvantaged in this task by the market forces in which food exists, markets that require ever greater production with ever smaller investments. I use the word investment instead of payment for a reason: the value that we are willing to exchange for our food is an investment in the existence of food in the future.

Nearly all food issues are rooted in our modern mentality of abundance. We expect food to be on the grocery shelves, and plenty of it, at any time of the year, no matter where we are. And yet a large portion of America can't name a single farmer among their acquaintances. The average American does their best to ignore food and food production because facing those realities brings responsibilities that many either aren't willing to shoulder or feel that they can't. We must learn to hold ourselves accountable to our farmers and ranchers, those individuals who work harder, longer, and for less than almost anyone else. We must learn to hold ourselves accountable to our meat packers and grocery workers, our shipping and trucking industry, and our restaurant employees. And we must learn to hold ourselves accountable to the thousands of immigrant and migrant workers who are willing to do the work that nearly all Americans deemed unfit for themselves decades ago, namely farm labor.

To most people today food is something that you pay for, not something that you grow. A century ago nearly half of the average family income was spent on procuring food; today that has shrunk to less than a tenth of our incomes. This savings has a lot to do with greater efficiencies, technology, and productivity, but the side effect of these benefits has been a shift in our attitude towards food and agriculture. The family garden has been replaced by the family food budget; our food is now an economical concern instead of an ecological one. Changing this attitude towards our food system is how we can begin to take back our responsibility for it.

Covid-19 has revealed the cracks in the foundations of our supply system, and this growing awareness necessitates action. Instead of simply buying food, you could learn how that food was grown, and how to grow it yourself, too. Volunteer at a farm or farmers market, if possible, and ask farmers questions. Erase the ignorance and mystery of our food system by learning from those engaged with it. When you buy food, put your dollars into the hands of producers nearest to you. Buying from local farmers and smaller grocers, and eating seasonally, puts you back in charge of your regional ecosystem. Contact your nearest food bank or shelter and learn about the lives of those who are most food insecure, and then find ways to support those systems.

These actions won't revolutionize our economy and food supply overnight, but they will put you back into the picture. And that may be what is missing most from our food system — you, your care, and your action. Unfortunately, many people live in situations where these suggestions are impossible. Large percentages of our population live in inner-city food deserts or impoverished rural communities, where they don't have local grocers, farmers markets, or even basic access to healthful food. People with little power over their circumstances can begin taking power back by learning about the system that has made their existence so vulnerable. Resilience is increased by improving the circumstances around you, and the first circumstance you can change is your mindset, your attitudes towards food, and your understanding of how those attitudes came about.

I believe our attitudes towards food and farming fall short because they are based on ideas of individual gain, not collective welfare. While eaters purchase food based on price instead of nutrition and value, farmers produce mostly what the market and subsidy system dictate in order to remain in business. This blind individualism is damaging to both farmers and eaters, and even more damaging to the land and water on which we all depend. To create a resilient and healthy food system we must embrace the full context of land, labor, processing and distribution, consumption, and waste. This is not the task of an individual. Our management responses must be to the whole living system, and they must come from all of us collectively. We can no longer simply wait for the next Farm Bill to determine our agricultural future.

Changing our attitudes toward food, understanding it as ecology instead of economy, demands an equal change in attitude toward food system workers, who are not simply laborers. Firemen, policemen, teachers, doctors, nurses, and those in similar occupations qualify as public service workers. We must include farmers, ranchers, farm laborers, meat packers, grocery workers, and all other members of the production and distribution network in this designation, as well, and award them the same respect and advantages. Student loan forgiveness, opportunities for affordable healthcare, and access to mental health professionals should be basic benefits for working in the food system. To build resilience, we need to protect the rights and promote the livelihoods of those involved in the raising and serving of food.

Our numbers also have to change. With less than 1 percent of the population working full-time in production agriculture, there is no possibility for resilience. We need pathways for more people to work in agriculture, and we need to begin valuing appropriately their contribution to the health and stability of our landscapes. The Quivira Coalition's New Agrarian Program serves as a great example of this new model. My training through the NAP program, as well as several other apprenticeships I completed, formed the foundational skills that enable me to work full-time in agriculture.

But very few of these programs exist, and often they offer only very modest compensation. Our exploitation of producers from the top of the industrial food system unfortunately gets passed down to the lowest rung on the ladder — the interns and apprentices whose passion for agriculture isn't yet matched by their skillsets. Affordable and accessible farmer training must become a national priority, in addition to formal training in related fields, such as meat processing, butchery, and culinary arts. Perhaps when more Americans know farmers, we will readily value their labor, the land they protect, and the food they produce, which is essential to our lives.

Living in Montana during the pandemic has been a surprising lesson. In such a vast state with such a small population, we were already socially distanced, and many thought we would weather the pandemic without difficulty. But because such a large percentage of Montanans are intricately involved in production agriculture, our state continues to be significantly impacted. Instability in both cattle and grain commodities played out as prices surged and then contracted erratically, and while relatively fewer cases of COVID-19 have afflicted individuals, the economic effect of the virus has left many operations reeling.

In fact, Montana offers a perfect example of why we need to substitute the ideal of collectivism for the ideal of individual ruggedness. Montana farmers and ranchers are a tough bunch, but that means very little to a global pandemic and economic system which care not a hoot about how *tough* a farmer or rancher may be. And that's the crux of it — *your* ability to steward *your* land, *your* water filtration, *your* biodiversity, *your* bushels per acre, and *your* own personal resourcefulness mean nothing within the context of our fragile food system. A system plagued by corporate greed, with a workforce largely undervalued by society, competing in international markets outside the influence of any single operation isn't a food system where a *rugged individual* has any competitive advantage. This is my takeaway from COVID-19. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and while we farmers and ranchers may do an incredible job at strengthening our link, it requires a much broader and coordinated effort to strengthen the totality of our food system.

I've begun to care more about the quality of the lives of grocery workers, overnight truck drivers, immigrant meat packers, and everyone else on the periphery of my food network. I believe that our society's focus on individualism is misguided and that the first step in moving from fragility to resilience is shifting our narrative of individualism to that of collectivism. My work does not exist in a vacuum, and no man is an island, or for that matter, no farm is an island. A highly diverse series of interconnected occupations manifests the farm-to-plate experience that every American relies on every day. For this reason, it is my responsibility to care and advocate for everyone in that network, not just farmers and ranchers but all the workers who help perpetuate the miracle of turning sunshine, soil, and water into nourishment for our children and loved ones.

I exist on one end of this spectrum, as a farmer and producer, and my understanding of how others can foster resilience is limited. While I have made some small suggestions for individuals, and voiced hopes for how our societal attitudes could shift, I still find it difficult to imagine how individual actions might escalate to societal change. That is not the task I am asking of my imagination anymore. Instead, I am working to imagine a conception of ourselves that includes our relationships to others, and how to care for that reimagined. Resilience might be as simple as taking responsibility for all of the lives that make mine possible. I'm trying to imagine what that looks like more and more each day.

HEALTHY SOIL, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Story by Eva Stricker, photos from the Quivira collection




Carbon Ranch Initiative work for various field trials. Left to right: Sol Ranch, Santa Ana Pueblo, Polk's Folly Farm, Weaver Ranch.

While there is no question that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated present divisions in our society, a multitude of shared values have also become more apparent in this crisis. We all miss spending time with our families and friends because loved ones are important to us. We all miss travel and exposure to new things because learning about the world is important to us. We all are alarmed by empty shelves at grocery stores because equitable access to healthy food is important to us. And while we can all feel overwhelmed by the volume of information regarding which activities are safe as we wait for a vaccine or treatment, scientific/technological innovation and a deeper understanding of this virus are also important to us. In the regenerative community, in which I am a relatively new participant, I have witnessed strong affirmation of the shared values of responsible management and the protection of people, soils, plants, and animals in our food system.

The reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions over the last few months points to the possibility of expanding on practical, common-sense solutions that can help us protect our human and soil health at this critical time, as we forge a path forward from the pandemic. We at Quivira Coalition's Carbon Ranch Initiative strive to champion these solutions and support agricultural producers who are managing for healthy soils that can absorb atmospheric carbon and store it as organic material in the soil.

This organic material helps build the essential soil structures that enable nutrient and water retention, and thus reduces risk of loss to leaching and erosion. The great thing about focusing on soil health is that it enables us to both revive degraded soils and enhance already productive soils. Just picture the healthy fruits, vegetables, and animals that will benefit from the careful management we undertake with the living components of the soil.

Healthy Soil Principles

Keep soil covered

Minimize soil disturbance

Maximize biodiversity

Maximize the presence of living roots

Integrate animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, and beneficial insects

We have the tools to increase the uptake of carbon dioxide from the air via plant photosynthesis and assist the microbes that transform it into organic matter stored deep in the soil. These tools are part of a suite of activities that together fall under the five healthy soil principles. By matching management to these principles, we can also minimize the release of excess carbon dioxide into the air by reducing external inputs (like inorganic fertilizers, which often take fossil fuels to produce and transport). Specific soil management practices may look different for each producer depending on their various limitations and opportunities, but understanding these healthy soil principles can lead to concrete steps that everyone, from backyard gardeners to multistate operations, can take.

Here in New Mexico and the Intermountain West, we have the opportunity to be leaders in showing how diverse groups of people can connect to shared values to enact change (at Quivira, we call this the *radical center*). We must use this global pandemic to build and support programs and approaches that increase resilience and capacity for food, soils, and communities going forward.

How dare you, Joy Harjo

Slash the blue horizon
with crimson mesas
yellow my hands with mesquite poems
stoke my dreams for what lies beyond this shot glass and miles of road

The grass has been questioning me, see
always questioning: Is this home?
insisting: Where are your feet, boy?

For so long, I've strung beads of a life on fishing twine
walked by cover of night
under a clouded moon

Played it smart as I could
mostly colored inside the lines
hedged my bets with paperwork

The grass whispers
sometimes I hear it
like tittering children down the hall, I am afraid

I have not known how to properly answer
overthought blueprints, manipulated vision boards
filled journals as though they were ledgers, grimoires, recipe books

The grass whispers
Where do you rest your head on stolen land?
Where do you begin to heal your colonized mind?

The grass breathes, sighs really,
I think it asks too much, it only wants my faith
not much at all, just what is worth a damn

The crow and the sandhill
chuparosa and saltamontes
the fence lizard pumping his head up and down —
they are all conspiring, calling me to ceremony in a frayed world

The grass whispers
there is weaving to be done,
there is weaving to be done

In brutal winters
when they are most needed,
good stories grow like question marks
lilting bean stems in cups

They rise, shaping themselves into a wordless: What if?
What if you and I listened to clouds and crows and mesas,
to stories wending their way through veins of earth,
never ending with a period, always flowing: What if?

The grass nods along:
go on then, before you lose your nerve
the horizon bends toward the mesa
there is weaving to be done

Poem by Gavin VanHorn, drawing by Ariel Greenwood

IN THE S*T

A reflection on writing and gardening

Story and photos by Alexis Bonogofsky

There is a thing that happens when you're a writer and something really bad is going on (like, for instance, a global pandemic). People ask you if you've been writing. My answer is no. I haven't written one word. I've been gardening and planting my fields and cleaning out chicken coops and tearing down walls in my house. Writing? Not so much.

It feels like if I am going to be a big-*W* writer during a big-*P* pandemic, I need to write about it, the pandemic, which is the reason I've written nothing for months.

But then I'm out planting potatoes with my niece Lila the other day.

In fact, I am out planting potatoes and she is wandering around wondering when I am going to be done so we can go play.

I am wondering when did it get so hot out and how did the soil get so compacted and why didn't I put straw around the border of the garden last fall to keep the goddamned grass from creeping in and where did that thistle come from?

What I am trying to tell you is that I am not an easy-going gardener and though there are people who say they enjoy it, they are liars, I'm certain of it.

Lila is attempting to lure me out of the garden with talk of turtles. She is telling me she saw turtles on a log in the slough. I know what log she's talking about and she knows how much I love turtles and watching them sun themselves and the sound they make as they slide into the water when they are startled and the sparkle of the sun on their shells if you are quiet and still enough to be present when they re-emerge after they have decided it is safe to do so.

I am attempting a no-till garden to improve my soil and supposedly make it so I'll wake up one day and love gardening, but all I want to do right now is start my orange Kubota tractor, put the disc on it, drive straight through the chain link fence, and plow the whole thing up. Is that something gardeners say? I'm not a big-G gardener so I'll say what I want.

Lila is feeling the potato seeds and asking me what the white nubs are on their skins. I tell her they are the potatoes' eyes and she looks at me startled and almost throws one to the ground and I wonder if she thinks the potatoes can see like we can. I hope that she does.

I am feeling a light dusting of sheep and goat manure covering my body from hauling buckets up from the loafing shed to my garden in the skidsteer. When I fill the bucket up inevitably some of the dried and aged shit blows back in my face and sticks to my sunscreen and all one can do at that point is just let it happen because my dad took the door off the skidsteer when he bought it because it just gets in the way he said.

Lila tells me I have dirt on my face.

I tell her it's manure.

Lila asks me what manure is.

I ask her to look at it and give me her best guess. She leans down and sees the little goat and sheep pebbles, scrunches up her nose and says *ewwwww* until she runs out of *w*'s and then runs out of the garden with my dogs bounding behind her.

I watch them run through the field and pay as much attention as possible because I need to remember this exact moment because there is nothing better than right now.

A little later she bounds back into the garden with the dogs panting behind her and starts helping me plant the potatoes. Pretty soon she is as dirty as I am and her face is streaked with manure and sunscreen and sweat.

When we are all done for the day we sit in lawn chairs on the basketball court and watch the sun go down over the river and she asks me if we are all going to be okay and I tell her what you tell kids, that of course we are all going to be okay, and she nods in that special way that Lila does when she is satisfied with my answer to her question. Then she asks what we should talk about.

I tell her we should talk about what we're grateful for and she tells me she is grateful that I make her get her hands dirty and that manure isn't so bad after all and she loves having a farm.

And my love for her spills out all over that basketball court and I forget about the pandemic and the heat and the weeds and the compacted soil and the falling down fences and all the work I have to do on the place and all the work we have to do in our world to teach our kids (though more often than not, our kids teach us) that humility and courage and humor and love are what will save us, not lies and anger and ego and hate.

Then she asked me what I am grateful for and, of course, we all know what I said.

Lila in her element at the ranch and in the field.

A FINAL NOTE

A reflection on the power of words and collective voice

Dear reader,

Publishing an issue of *Resilience* has been a long time coming. It is with great pleasure that I write on the brink of completing this edition. You may or may not know that I have a longstanding and deep passion for publishing, which was seeded with naive feminist cut-pasted-and-photocopied zines in high school, sprouted when I was editor of *Scribendi*, the University of New Mexico Honors program literary magazine, and came to full bloom during my time as editor of *Edible New Mexico*.

When I started as executive director of Quivira, I was excited to produce *Resilience*, as it offered a space to express my talents and give voice to our community. There are many things I love about publishing: contemplating a big question or idea to ask a group of respected and intelligent friends; the myriad ways they respond and how, intentionally or not, the stories, poems, and images they create speak to one another; the process of refining and clarifying voice in each submission; the finishing carpentry of structuring stories in layout, creating both space and focus on a page; combing text and design for inconsistencies and clarification to further focus the printed ideas; and, of course, and perhaps most important, the wonderful and rich conversations that grow from sharing the published work with 5000 good friends.

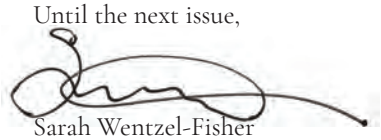
Resilience has been a project delayed, but this seemed like just the venture to reinstate in a challenging and complex year. What I hope we have illuminated and amplified in this issue, and will continue to do in future issues, are the stories and voices of our community in this strange and pivotal time. Publishing a poem, story, or image gives a person gravity and power. Some of the contributors to this issue are seasoned writers with reams of work in their archives; others are farmers, ranchers, young scientists, conservationists, or community activists for whom receiving this in the mail may be the first time they see themselves in print. I hope that for all our contributors, having their work published here is empowering. In his essay, "The Wisdom of Struggle," Joseph Gazing Wolf describes the importance of breath and breathing together, and says of organizations like Quivira:, "Their power lies in the collective breath of their communities." I hope this publication is a collective, resonant exhalation.

At REGENERATE 2020, chef and farmer Matthew Raiford talked about the importance of writing things down. He said that the notes his mother and grandmother took about weather, planting, ecological happenings, and other details still guide his farm today and contribute to its resilience. While not exactly the same as pencil to paper, publishing this magazine may function in a similar way, providing a tangible, eye-readable document of what we're experiencing, contemplating, feeling, and doing in 2020. In a world of voluminous and ephemeral digital media, a well-curated, printed publication can feel like a boulder in a stream to perch on, with the promise that it will be there the next time one needs to cross.

As I reflect on the importance of storytelling, of noting the significant details of a particular moment, of collective wisdom, and of amplifying often unheard voices, I think about the Invitation to the Radical Center, a foundational text drafted through collective voice to address a moment of "crisis and hope." Whether through reading our emails or by attending the REGENERATE conference, you may be aware that, as an organization, we are in the process of metamorphosis, catalyzed by yet another time of crisis and hope. Our staff is reflecting on how we perpetuate racism and identifying ways we can question and dismantle the systems that uphold inequality, particularly when they prevent food sovereignty and land stewardship. This is not a comfortable, neat, or easy undertaking, but Quivira is no stranger to messy conversations that lead to change. We've been discussing the Invitation to the Radical Center, recognizing that it was transformational for many people who have shifted their relationships to the land and each other as a result of its call. And at the same time, looking back after 18 years, we see through an antiracism lens that much of what is expressed there invites revision and reimagination. As we look to 2021, I invite you to reread the Invitation to the Radical Center, and to join us as we look to refine and reconceptualize this foundational text. Perhaps this will become the focus of our next issue.

Thank you for reading, all the way to the end, this issue of *Resilience*. For me, publishing this magazine brings joy, and reminds me how much I love and appreciate the community that supports and participates in Quivira's work. I see your compassion, brilliance, dedication, intelligence, and care, and I hope these qualities and others are reflected in these pages. And, that reading this brought you joy also.

Until the next issue,



Sarah Wentzel-Fisher

"What could we accomplish, and what would resilience mean if our systems worked with and for us, rather than against us?"

-Zach Ducheneaux, Intertribal Agriculture Council
2020 Regenerate Conference

Find these stories of *Resilience*, the Down to Earth podcast, technical guides for land health, recordings of conference plenaries, information about agrarian aprenticeship and much more at QuiviraCoalition.org.

Education, innovation, restoration – one acre at a time.

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