

# THE SAGE PAGE

Newsletter of the Boulder Community Alliance, a nonprofit serving Boulder, Utah

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Winter 2010

## Boz Bosworth To Lead BCF Wing

By Bobbie Cleave and Peg Smith

The beginning of the new decade also brings renewed energy to Boulder Community Foundation's conservation entity, ERBI (Escalante River Basin Initiatives).

With Tim Clarke's departure last year, many of his ambitious ERBI activities went on temporary "standby." This year, BCF was able to hire a new, **part-time** ERBI executive director, Gordon (Boz) Bosworth, who will carry on those efforts, along with some new projects. Like Tim before him, Boz will average approximately 20 hours a week.

Boz has a B.S. in environmental science, an M.S. in Education, nearly 30 years teaching high school biology, and 28 years working part-time (with wife Bobbie) as seasonal forest service rangers. Bobbie will be assisting Boz in much of his work.

Two new 2010 projects will occupy most of Boz's time: beaver reintroduction on Boulder Mountain and invasive weed removal in the Escalante River drainage.

**Beaver Reintroduction**-- BCF got involved three years ago by producing a video. Then in early January 2010, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources adopted a 10-year, statewide plan to reintroduce beaver into the upper reaches of the mountain streams, including a handful of designated streams in the Dixie and Fishlake National Forests. Boz will focus on two Boulder Mountain



Boz and Bobbie team up again on ERBI projects.

objectives this year: 1) assess the best places on the designated streams to release beaver, and 2) hire and train a couple local individuals willing to live-trap any beavers that migrate downstream creating issues for private landowners or permit holders. Problem beaver will then be relocated in accordance with the UDWR Management Plan.

Beaver have been shown to enhance and improve the health of watersheds and the retention of water on the mountain. This summer, three week-long training sessions sponsored by the Grand Canyon Trust, will teach local volunteers how to

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### Dates to Note:

- ◆ Feb 23 Book Club, 7 p.m., Library
- ◆ Feb 25-27 Diversified Ag Conf., Vernal, UT
- ◆ Mar 6 Hogsback Heritage Writing Project, Anasazi Museum Conf Room, 3 p.m. (Jerry Roundy, "How to Research a Topic")
- ◆ Mar 30 Book Club, 7 p.m., Library

## (cont'd from page 1) Boz Leads ERBI Activities

scientifically assess areas for prime beaver habitat on the designated streams.

**Woody Invasive Removal**--- In Spring 2009, a consortium of agencies and organizations was formed called Escalante River Watershed Partnership. The Partnership's mission is to communicate ideas and coordinate resources to maintain the health of the entire Escalante Watershed, starting with removal of Russian olive and other woody invasive plants, such as tamarisk, from public and private land. The aggressive nature of these introduced species has resulted in crowding out native plants, sucking up water from irrigation canals and streams, and making ditch cleanout and fence repair in these areas very difficult.

While most of the Partnership's work is directed at public lands, ERBI's role is to serve as liaison with Boulder and Escalante landowners, identifying individuals who want to clear Russian olive from areas of their land, and helping identify resources for those landowners. Boz will be contacting interested individuals and helping facilitate this process, while

providing ongoing feedback on the results of the effort.

For information on how to get involved, call Boz at 335-7440.

### Boulder Winter Baby Boom

**Dec 15, Cade Hawken (Becky and Breck Crystal)**

**Jan 7, Cora Brielle (Caroline and Ray Gardner)**

**Jan 13, Liliana Marie (Ana and Jeff Sanders)**

**Congratulations families!**

Town Hall's three silver poplars were cut down in early February. Although the dying trees' limbs were an increasing safety hazard, residents are saddened.

Barbara Gardner tells of climbing those trees as a schoolgirl. "None of the boys could go as high as I did," she claims.

Tom Jerome, Town Park committee chairperson, said that an arborist declared the sickly trees to be unsalvageable and increasingly hazardous to passers-by. He has received a donation pledge from a local landowner to replace the Town Hall trees as well as provide some additional trees for the town park.

Nevertheless, those trees have provided climbing branches and welcome shade for decades' worth of July 4th's and family reunions, and we'll miss them.



The *Sage Page* is published four times a year by Boulder Community Alliance (BCA), a subsidiary of Boulder Community Foundation, serving the greater Boulder area. Boulder Community Foundation is a non-profit corporation organized in the State of Utah; it is duly authorized by the IRS as a qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

BCA comprises groups and individuals who actively promote an array of community-oriented projects and initiatives. Our mission is 1) to initiate or partner on appropriate projects dealing with local and sustainable agriculture, the arts, preservation of local heritage, education and well-being, and responsible land stewardship; 2) to enhance communication among all community stakeholders; 3) to provide tangible resources and support through fundraising and grant-seeking.

Co-editors: Dianne Oberhansly and Peg Smith

Please email comments, questions, or article contributions and photos to:

diane@bouldercommunityalliance.org or peg@bouldercommunityalliance.org

## Redtail Farm Grows Exotic, Local, and Healthy

By Dianne Oberhansly

Jaspee de Vende. Lady Godiva. Jarradhale. Hopi Greasy Head. These are a few of the exotic sounding varieties of winter squash that Redtail Farm grew last season and has been offering to Boulderites, along with a long list of other produce and farm fresh eggs. Mary and Eric Feiler, owners/operators of Redtail Farm, aren't interested in "exotic," though, as much as they are in "local" and "healthy."



Keaton Feiler is particularly proud of these sweet, delicious melons.

The farm is named for the redtail hawks that seem to have been present at very pivotal moments in the Feilers' lives. One of those moments must have occurred about nine years ago--2001-- when Mary and Eric grew tired of living the city life and began searching for a place to relo-

cate. Mary, who has an M.S. degree in geology, had been teaching in a Flagstaff, AZ community college. Eric had finished a graduate degree in paleoecology/archeology at Northern Arizona University and was doing archeological work. They traveled to Boulder to visit friends and --long story short--they never left.

The Feilers had hopes of starting some kind of local business on the five acres they purchased in Lower Boulder. Since Eric had assisted in the startup of a small, native plant nursery, they decided to try one here, and in 2006 Redtail Farm was incorporated.

Over time, the focus of Redtail Farm evolved. As avid gardeners, the Feilers were growing more produce than they could use or store. With the introduction of the Boulder farmers' market, it just made sense for them to sell their extra produce. At the same time, the U.S. economy tightened, making

local food production all the more important. "Boulder used to be almost entirely self-sufficient," Mary says, "and that's a goal worth re-attaining."

While not certified organic, Redtail Farm produce is organically grown--no synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. Compost is produced with help from their chickens, and the soil is built up by rotating pasturing of the chickens with cover-cropping. The types of produce and variety of seeds grown are based on plants that do well here, Eric says. He and Mary are also lured by seed that sounds really interesting from catalogs. "The shot in the dark method," Eric calls it.

Mary and Eric's two sons, Keaton and Levi, also help operate Redtail Farm. "The boys love to plant and harvest, but weeding they don't like as much," Eric reveals. "But then again, who likes weeding?"

This past year Redtail Farm offered various vegetable produce and eggs from their doorstep and occasionally at the farmers' market. Whether it was the economy or the addition of more vendors at the market, the return on market sales was relatively small, the Feilers felt, considering the amount of preparation required. They also realized that they have grown as big as they can with just the family working the farm. "We are a bit overcommitted if we want to have time to enjoy the incredible place we live in as well as quality family time," Eric says.



Since vegetable produce is quite abundant in Boul-

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# Why We Can't Go To Sleep Counting Sheep

By Peg Smith

I was charmed from the first time I saw them. They were foraging along the Burr Trail, their little hooves mincing and clicking delicately down the chipseal. I thought they were goats. It took me a while to find out they were Jan Belnap's and Rujo's flock of American Blackbelly sheep. They were on the Burr Trail because they had escaped yet again from the Belnap field. And they were *not* particularly favored in their neighborhood because of their propensity to forage in other peoples' gardens.

When we found out Rujo was about to haul them all off to the auction, something must have snapped. Sergio and I moved quickly into the concept of rescuing a few of them, then leapt into buying the entire 48-sheep flock. Our neighbors---Terry Lee and Bob and Chyleen Mackey---aided and abetted this decision. It would have been an impossible dream were it not for their magnanimous loan of 20 acres of field-fenced pasture and use of a barn this winter. In addition, Brian Dick and Loch Wade loaned us two "guard" llamas.

Sergio grew up in the sheep country of southern Chile. I knew nothing of sheep. The day before we committed to the purchase, we did a cram course on American Blackbelly sheep. What we found out tipped our decision to go for it:

American Blackbellies are a registered breed, a cross between Barbados Blackbelly and Mouflon sheep. They're a hair breed, meaning hair, not wool. They grow a thicker "woollier" coat for winter, but it will shed off the way horses shed their winter coats.

In the realm of sheep husbandry, ABBs are considered relatively "easy keepers." They are better foragers than wool sheep and mainly require supplemental feed (mostly grass hay) only in winter. They are good mothers, have minimal delivery issues, and produce lots of milk. They don't require shearing. Their tails aren't docked (cut). They're more parasite-resistant than other breeds, although they do need to be wormed in this area. They don't require the usual vaccinations as ABBs are also resis-



tant to many of the typical sheep diseases and infections. (Some sources specifically caution against use of vaccines and antibiotics for fear of diluting the natural resistance of the breed.)

For better or worse, they are prodigious breeders, capable of producing three "litters" in 18 months. Yearling ewes typically give birth to a single lamb, while older ewes may bear two or sometimes three

(cont'd on next page)



American Blackbelly rams are also renowned for their magnificent horns. Our ram, Honcho, is a handsome example.

(Photo by Peg Smith)



Too cute for words. Sunning themselves during a rare January thaw day. (Photo by Sergio Femenias)

lambs. (Luckily for us, we've only had to deal with a few twin sets so far, and just one "bummer" lamb among them.)

The big claim to fame of hair sheep is their meat quality. Previously, I've not been a big fan of lamb meat from any animal older than 6-9 months. But that's wool sheep. We have butchered a few 2-year old wethers from this herd, and the meat is astoundingly tender and delicate---more of a blend of good

lamb meat and something else. Definitely gourmet-quality.

We also plan to take advantage of their foraging capabilities to experiment with targeted grazing. Several ag websites describe the successful use of sheep in controlling early cheat grass and other invasive weeds. (We can't wait to try them out on Russian thistle sprouts.) Many cattle ranchers rotate sheep and cattle to improve their pastures because of the animals' different grazing habits and preferences. Plus, sheep manure is pelletized, higher in nitrogen than that of cattle or horses, and their little hooves tend to tromple it in. I may start out in my own garden with a few of our sheep to do spring-cleaning. While they're at it they can chomp down the cheat grass that will be sprouting along our fence lines.

Currently, we have 46 adults: 25 ewes, 2 rams, and 19 wethers (castrated males), and 21 new lambs and counting.

Counting sheep! It doesn't always put you to sleep.

### Redtail Farm (cont'd from page 3)

der, Redtail Farm will focus in the future on items that are more unique. They are now exploring a partnership with Curtis and Diane Oberhansly to produce pastured chickens, turkeys, and pigs. "The idea," Eric says, "is to form a cooperative where members pre-purchase meat and poultry. With a small amount of infrastructure, we could produce and process some really high quality meat here in Boulder." He admits that a smoke house and tasty sausage and hams are in their fantasies.

Redtail Farm also owns a combine now. After consulting with a California non-profit dealing in heirloom, non-patented grains, the Feilers will plant one and a half acres of Sonora wheat, which is a soft, white variety that was historically grown in this region. They eventually hope to produce enough grain for themselves, their livestock, and, maybe in the future, for other Boulderites as well.

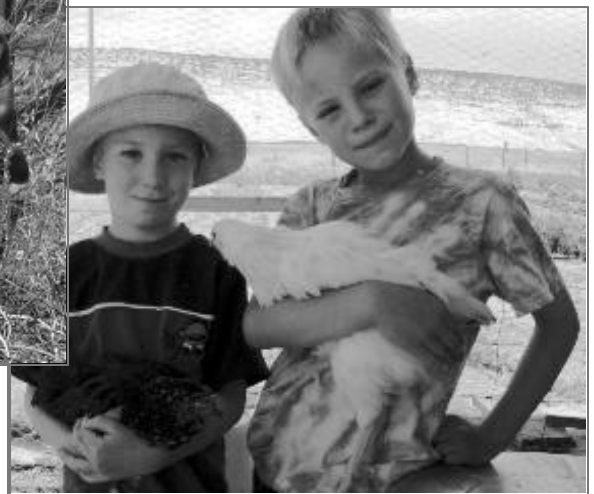
Plans for Redtail Farm's native plant nursery are currently on hold, although they still hold a nursery license and haven't given up on the idea. The Feilers feel that, at least for now, focusing

their energy on necessary items--like food--is more important than providing luxury items. Nevertheless, Eric points out that, "As the world turns, so do our goals."

If you are interested in purchasing eggs or produce, contact the Redtail Farm at 335-7393. Salad greens should be available by mid-March/early April.



Both Keaton and Levi like collecting the eggs and feeding the chickens.



# .. "I Could Be Looking at Skyscrapers

By Claire Johnson



Editor's note: Claire Johnson is a regular contributor to the *Sage Page*. When not writing her articles, she can be found in her **8th** grade class in Escalante, tending animals at her home in Deer Creek, or catching up with friends on Facebook. (Big apology to Claire for getting her grade level wrong in the previous issue!)

The Sage Page editors asked Claire if she could paint us a picture of riding the school bus from Boulder to school in Escalante



My day starts with our getting on the bus at 6:30 a.m. to go to Escalante. I am the first student on, so I take advantage of the heaters and curl up next to one as kids start to pile on. We head out of Boulder only having one more stop in Calf Creek until all 20 of us have boarded. Vard Coombs, our bus driver since 1976, avoids crazy tourists and curves the bus around the Hogsback every day with us. I-pods and phones light the bus up in the morning, and some kids read, but mostly we take advantage of the hour and a half of free time and do homework.

and Boulder because of the snowfall that night, only about six of us got on the bus. As we steered over the Hogsback, I looked up from my book and saw

rides. He said it was the time when they were widening the road on a bend, and a big rock was stuck in the middle of the road. It was passable, but still hard to see around the bend. When the bus was coming back from Escalante that evening, Sid Moosman was following behind him in his Camaro. When they got to the bend with the rock, Sid passed the bus and ran right into the rock! His car was pretty smashed but he was okay. He got out of the car and was pretty bummed out, but all of the girls on the bus got out and comforted him about his smashed Camaro.



One day in January when the power went off in both Escalante

that thick white fog had filled in both sides of the road so all you could see were the distant slickrock mountains. The fog thinned out until there were only small wisps left in the canyons. It was definitely the most beautiful bus ride I had ever been on.

I do get tired of the bus ride, but then I remind myself that I could be looking at skyscrapers instead of beautiful, snow-capped mountains, and then I feel lucky.



I asked Vard about one of his most memorable bus

Photos (top to bottom): Hogsback in fog; Sarah Gardner catching up on early morning homework; bus driver and photo-journalist at work.

(Photos by Claire Johnson)

# First Grid-Tied Solar System Installed in Lower Boulder

By Dave Elliott

Lisa Varga and Keith Watts have installed a new, ground-mounted Solar (Photovoltaic) System on their property in Lower Boulder. The system is connected to the electrical grid through the Garkane Energy Net Metering Program and provides 2,150 watts of electrical power to their home during daytime hours. All extra power not used is then sent through their special Garkane Electrical Meter, which then provides credits and can be used at night etc.

Each month the Garkane billing will indicate KW hours used and KW hours credited. Lisa and Keith's system is designed to offset electrical usage in their home by approximately 25 percent which includes an all-electric home heating system, electric hot water heater, cook top, laundry, and other. In addition, they will be able to take advantage of the Utah State 25 percent tax credit and the 30 percent federal tax credit for their new system, helping offset the initial expense.

As their installer, I think these Grid-Tied Systems are great because they're extremely simple with no moving parts or large battery banks requiring monthly maintenance. These systems can last 25 years or more with today's new technology.

Note: Dave Elliott, a Boulder landowner since 1998, hopes to be a part of providing alternative energy solutions to Boulder as well as the surrounding areas of Central Utah. He's happy to answer any questions regarding Solar or Wind alternative energy at [dave@edesignenergy.com](mailto:dave@edesignenergy.com), E-Design Alternative Energy



Lisa and Dave at inverter.

(Photo by Keith Watts)

*Keith and I couldn't be happier with our photo voltaic array. We designed and built our home as a passive solar, earth-sheltered, energy-efficient house using green, sustainable materials. We'd planned to add a grid-tied solar power, and the timing worked out perfectly. Along with reducing our Garkane bill, the federal and state tax incentives---generous ones--- help offset our installation costs. This is the perfect location for solar energy projects. We hope to add on to our array with a solar hot water system in the future.*

---Lisa Varga

## **This April 1, 2010, the U. S. census will begin. Here are a few facts about the census:**

- The first census took place in 1790 to determine the number of seats each state would have in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is still the means of determining our representation in Congress.
- Census data help determine allocation of federal funds for community services. Boulder has received federal grants based on census information.
- Facts gathered in the census help shape decisions for the next decade on public health, senior services, , transportation, education, and more.
- April 1 is Census Day. The 2010 Census is one of the shortest questionnaires in history, taking about 10 minutes to complete. All responses are strictly confidential, used for statistical purposes only.
- A small percentage of respondents will receive a more detailed socioeconomic survey.
- The form will be sent and returned by US mail except for some rural areas that will be surveyed in person.
- Households that don't return a mailed questionnaire will be contacted by a census taker after April.

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