

News

Summer 2009



AMADOR COUNTY FARMERS' MARKETS

The Amador Farmers' Market has opened its 2009 season in fabulous form with the Sunday market in Jackson offering great vendors, great music, and a fun social atmosphere. The market has a wonderful array of seasonal produce. The market also features fresh eggs, local honey and meats, and delicious baked goods. Those interested in starting or expanding their own gardens can find lots of beautiful, healthy plants for sale. The music for the Jackson markets will be provided by various artists. The Jackson market is open Sundays from 10 am to 1 pm in the Busi Municipal parking lot at Mel and Faye's Diner on Hwy 49. The Sutter Creek market opened on Saturday, June 13, it is from 8 am to 11 am in a new location, in the city's south parking lot on old Hwy 49, near Sutter Hill Road. Opening day in Sutter (see **MARKETS** on page 6)

FARMS OF AMADOR RESTRUCTURES

Farms of Amador began in 2002 with the goals of expanding demand for locally grown and processed foods and to enhance a more sustainable farming community. The Board of Directors has recently taken a renewed direction with the following goals and objectives:

Farms of Amador is a countywide marketing and education organization whose mission is to increase the sales of local agricultural products.

Objectives:

1. **Research creating new direct marketing opportunities.**
2. **Increase the \$ sales of Amador agricultural products.**
3. **Increase the membership of FOA.**
4. **Develop educational programs in Amador County Schools.**
5. **Increase publicity& advertising of Amador County agriculture and agricultural products.**

(see **RESTRUCTURING** on page 7)

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UC DAVIS DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF TABLE WINES

John Buechsenstein teaches sensory analysis through UC Davis extension. He shares a distinct descriptive language for wine with his students. Since the quality and characteristics of a wine are primarily available through aroma and bouquet, his course focuses on scents present in a wine, both positive and negative. Interestingly, white wines have a significantly smaller range of aromas, which make specific descriptions easier to derive.

Buechenstein allows students long periods to evaluate small flights of wine after a morning perusing aroma samples such as cherry, cassis, *bretanomyces* and oak. Time spent gradually reveals specific traits present in wine. Initially one might smell nothing. However, as wines open up certain aromas begin to emerge as recognizable. For instance, one flight of wines was so heavily oaked it was the only noticeable characteristic to students. The professor had not intended this and it was a thought provoking notion with regard to style.

Buechsenstein addresses winemaking practices, farming and harvest procedures, and how they create or effect flavors present in wine. A German Riesling with botrytis was a good example. At the finish of the two day course the significance of taking time for sensory analysis of wine is clear. It can tell the story of how a wine became what it is and provides greater insight into the enjoyment of wine.



RED WINE ZINFANDEL IN THE SIERRA FOOTHILLS

By Eric J. Costa

The golden poppy, the grizzly bear, a serpentinite boulder, and a gold nugget all fall under the category of those things chosen to represent California. Several groups have tried to add the Zinfandel grape to the list, but have so far been unsuccessful. Certainly if a state wine grape was to be recognized, the Zinfandel grape is as likely a choice as any. During the last twenty years or so, much has been written about the arrival of Zinfandel in California. Fortunately wine historian Charles Sullivan has put most of the old legends and myths concerning the grape out of their misery. Sullivan has firmly established that the Zinfandel grape came to California from New England, where it had been grown as a hot-house table grape since the 1830s.

Sullivan has already shown that during the 1850s, Zinfandel was introduced into the Sacramento area by several of the state's most prominent pioneer nurserymen. Sacramento's A. P. Smith, who operated his famous "Pomological Garden" on the American River is credited as being among the first to cultivate the grape in California. In fact, some of the earliest documentation of the grape in California, refers to Smith's "Zeinfindall" that was exhibited at the state fair in 1858. Beginning very early, Smith established strong ties to the foothill region. As early as 1856 Smith had opened a satellite nursery in Placerville, where an extensive collection of grapes were offered. Smith's influence extended to other portions of the foothills as well. In 1859, one G.M. Millar, a gardener who has gained experience working for Smith was cultivating grapes and fruit trees near Murphys in Calaveras County.

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**JOIN FOA TODAY
AND RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY
FARMS OF AMADOR T-SHIRT !
MEMBERSHIP FORM ON PAGE 4.**

(continued from page 2)

One of the earliest residents of the foothills known to have planted the Zinfandel grape is James Nickerson who lived at Doty's Ravine in Placer County (3 miles northeast of Lincoln). Nickerson was Placer County's leading pioneer vineyardist, and by 1857 had set out some 5,000 grape vines. In his grape collection, which included some 52 varieties, was the "Black Findal" (sic). In the fall of 1865 Nickerson began to sell some 40,000 rooted vine cutting that he had propagated himself. The Zinfandel grape probably among them. Also located in Placer County was George W. Applegate who operated a nursery at Lisbon (now Applegate) in the late 1850s. Both Nickerson and Applegate has acquired their Zinfandel cuttings from the pioneer Sacramento agriculturist Wilson G. Flint some time after 1855. Applegate was mainly interested in growing table grapes, and shortly there after gave up on Zinfandel. Nickerson continued to work with the variety, and in 1872 entered Zinfandel wine in a statewide competition.

In Amador County, the earliest person known to have cultivated Zinfandel is Dr. Samuel Page. He established the variety at Tunnel Hill south of Jackson prior to 1859. Page planted a large collection of grapes among which was a variety then known as the Black St



Peter's, having since been proven to be an early name for Zinfandel. Representing the northern mines was J. E. Marshall of Grass Valley, Nevada

County. When visited by a committee of traveling farmers in 1860, Marshall's small hillside garden was reported to contain fruit trees, and several varieties of grapes, including the "Black Zinfandel" In El Dorado County, the Zinfandel grape was exhibited for the first time at the agricultural fair in 1862. That year, Coloma vintner Martin Allhoff displayed 10 bunches of "Zinfandel Grapes," but no wine. A final early example of Zinfandel in the foothills is the V. A. Crow ranch in Tuolumne County, where in 1865 could be found "Tin Tindal" among some 25 other varieties.

Prior to about the mid 1860s, most of the Zinfandel in the Sierra foothills was grown in experimental plots along with dozens of other mostly long forgotten varieties. It was around this time however, that grape growers in the foothills were being recognized for their willingness to produce small experimental batches of wine from a wide variety of grapes. Most winemakers in California were still content to produce sweet, inferior

wines from the Mission grape. It was not until the 1880s that the Mission variety no longer accounted for the lion's share of the wines produced in California. In an effort to discover a superior wine grape, in 1865 Benjamin Bugbey of the Natoma Vineyard (near Folsom), produced some 19 wines from as many varieties of grapes. Of the group, Bugbey recommended the Black Zinfandel, Red Traminer, White Malaga and Verdelho for future cultivation. The Verdelho he felt made the best wine, while the Black Zinfandel produced the largest crop. Reportedly, the results of Bugbey's trials greatly stimulated the propagation of foreign (non Mission) grape varieties in the foothills. In fact, Bugbey himself sold some 200,000 grape cuttings during the planting season in the winter of 1867.

AMADOR OLIVE OIL HARVEST REPORT

The olive harvest at the Amador Olive Oil farm on Climax Road was not good this year. For example, Susan Bragstad harvested three and a half tons last year and this year she picked only a half a ton. This seemed to be true of the groves at the same 1,800-1,900 foot elevation, and there are many old groves at this elevation. Susan says that her 100 year old trees were filled with blossoms but they didn't develop into olives but luckily her young trees produced fruit. Unfortunately the young trees are small with a limited supply of olives. Word has it that the April freeze, then the hot May plus high winds combined to create terrible production conditions. The crop in the Ione area wasn't so badly affected probably due to a warmer April. Susan says that in farming it's either too hot, too cold, too dry or too wet. She'll have a limited supply of olive oil this year and will be hoping for a better harvest next year.





Farms of Amador

“Premium Agricultural Products”

**JOIN OR RENEW NOW
AND RECEIVE A COMPLIMENTARY
FARMS OF AMADOR T-SHIRT!**

Name _____

Company/ Farm Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Agricultural Products _____

Fee \$20 for Regular Membership (please make checks payable to Farms of Amador)

_____ I would like to make an additional tax-deductible contribution of \$_____ to further FOA's impact.

Please mail to 12200B Airport Road, Jackson, CA 95642

AMADOR CO-OP

The ball of the Amador Food and Fiber Co-op is rolling uphill at an ever-increasing speed. What you ask is a Food and Fiber Co-op? It will



be a place for local producers a.k.a. FOA members to sell their products. The Amador Co-op will concentrate on local products first. It will provide local residents and visitors with a place they can purchase local products 5, 6 or maybe even 7 days a week. It will further the FOA mission by "increasing the sales of local agricultural products" and do so in a way that would not require much

energy from the producers themselves. Aside from benefiting the members of FOA a local co-op will work towards uniting our county into a healthier more unified community.

Work on the Co-op is well underway as we have been meeting about it for several months now. Meetings are held bi-weekly and we are going to begin having at least every other meeting in the evening as a potluck. The next meeting will be held at Butte Mountain Farm at 6:30 p.m. on July 23. If you are interested in helping with any aspect of the project, including but not limited to investigation, planning and/or fund seeking please come and participate. An online network has also been set-up to facilitate easier communication outside of meetings. Please visit it at www.amadorco-op.ning.com. A local food and fiber cooperative for Amador Co. holds incredible promise for the economic viability of the farms, ranches and gardens, which comprise the Farms of Amador membership. Please join us in this exciting endeavor. Contact Sean Kriletich via email at skriletich@ucdavis.edu or call (209) 402-7801.

Farms of Amador Board Members for 2009

The following board members have been nominated for 2009. Other nominations are welcome from the FOA membership.

President: Susan Feist

Vice President: Ray Stacey

Secretary: Michelle Grondin

Treasurer: Susan Bragstad

Director: Robert Lockhart

Advisor: Sean Kriletich

Upcoming Events

8/30 Annual FOA & Amador Farmers' Market Farm Tour and Dinner

Master Gardeners are offering a FREE Series

7/18 Preserving Your Harvest

8/8 Winter Garden Planning and Planting

9/12 Native, Drought Tolerant & Fire Safe Plants; and Enhancing Your Landscape for Wildlife

9/26 Selecting, Planting & Care of Fruit Trees and Berries

10/17 Planning your Spring Garden

11/7 Care of Your Tools & Cleaning Up and Mulching

All classes are Saturdays 9am-Noon at the County Ag Bldg, 12200-B Airport Blvd Jackson (Sutter Hill) .

For more information or directions,

Please visit our website
<http://ceamador.ucdavis.edu>
or call 209-223-6838

MARKETS (continued from page 1)

Creek featured the music of Herb Boxhorn. The Pine Grove market is open Wednesdays from 3 pm to 6 pm in the Community Park on Hwy 88. The music for that market will be provided throughout the season by John Covert with Crystal Image. For more information about the farmers' market, go to www.amadorfarmersmarket.com, or call 209-419-2503.

FARMERS MARKETS 2009 SCHEDULE

Jackson

Sundays 10am-1pm

Busi Municipal parking lot at Mel and Faye's Diner on Hwy 49

Sutter Creek

Saturdays 8-11am

City's south parking lot on old Hwy 49, near Sutter Hill Road

Pine Grove

Wednesdays 3-6 pm

Community Park on Hwy 88

Plymouth

Thursdays in August

Plymouth Park, Main Street

For more information about the Amador County Farmers Market, please contact the Market Manager Michelle Grondin at (209)419-2503 or amadorcountyfarmersmarket@yahoo.com

APIS MELIFERA (HONEYBEE)

This year's late spring rains kept the wildflowers watered and the nectar flowing. As a result the local population of European honeybees has flourished during the spring and early summer. Many of our local beekeepers have extracted honey two or even three times this spring. There are also several dozen new beekeepers in our county as a result of increased interest and educational classes. An online network has been set up to answer questions and coordinate collective use of extraction equipment. If you are a local beekeeper or just interested in honeybees check it out at www.foothillapiculture.ning.com. Remember that in the U.S. honeybees are responsible for one out of every three bites of food we take but also that here in the foothills we still have large populations of native pollinating insects allowing us pollination without honeybees.



AMADOR COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

The amended Amador County General Plan is in its final stages and the upcoming public review of the Environmental Impact Report is the last comment period before the plan is approved.

The agricultural element of the plan is presently included briefly in the economic element of the General Plan. The Board of Directors of FOA strongly feels that agriculture in Amador County is important enough to warrant a greater part in the general plan. We would like to work with farmers and other agricultural groups to refine the general plan to this end. Please attend the Board of Supervisors meeting in the fall to have your views on agriculture heard. Meeting schedules and agendas are available on the County's web site at http://www.co.amador.ca.us/agenda_minutes/2009/bos.cfm

LOCAL CURRENCY?

by Sean Kriletich

Money is an agreement within a community to use something as a medium of exchange.

Throughout the history for complex economies local currencies have been used to bolster the economies they serve. Constitutionally we the people have the right to coin our own currency and free banking provides the economic prototype for such currencies. Local currencies are intended for trade in a limited area and are not backed by a national government.

We deserve to own what we labor to create.
--John Locke

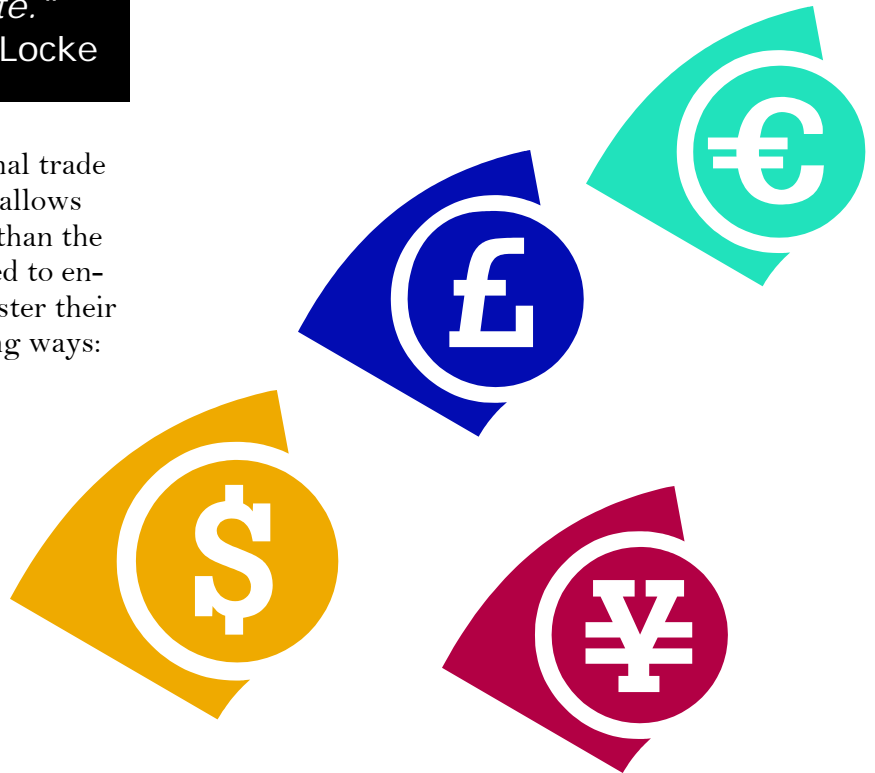
Local currency establishes an internal trade barrier as it cannot be used externally and allows the region to have a different interest rate than the nation's currency. Local currencies are used to enable economically depressed regions to bolster their economies and communities in the following ways:

1. Because local currencies tend to circulate more rapidly than national currencies therefore the same amount of currency results in more overall economic activity and creates a greater benefit. The higher velocity of the local currency is the result of a negative interest rate or demurrage, which encourages participants to spend the money more quickly.
2. Productive resources within the community are more fully utilized, including unemployed labor, which in turn boosts the rest of the local economy.
3. Local currency encourages the purchase of locally produced goods and services therefore the increased economic activity benefits the community in a more significant way instead of draining out to other parts of the world.

There are currently over 2500 local currencies functioning around the world. In the U.S. alone there are hundreds of local currencies including one nearby in Nevada City and Grass Valley

(<http://www.ncgvtrademarket.org/>). During the Great Depression the Austrian town of Wörgl used local currency to bolster its economy with a dramatic positive effect. Given the difficulty of making local agriculture economically viable and the overall economic times isn't it time to start thinking about and discussing the root of our economic system and possibly acting on solutions that will benefit our community?

For more information on local currency visit: <http://www.smallisbeautiful.org/>

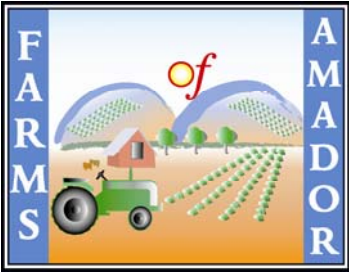


RESTRUCTURING

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One of the primary focuses of the FOA is to expand membership from the agricultural community in Amador County. Please consider joining this group to help increase the voice of agriculture in our county by completing the application on page 4 of this newsletter. We look forward to meeting your needs and working with you in 2009 and beyond.

FOA is creating a new format for the popular farm trails map in a simple brochure style that will be easier to update. Start or renew your membership today to be included.



12200 B Airport Rd.
Jackson, CA 95642

*Summer 2009
Newsletter*



Mark your calendar now for the
Farms of Amador/Amador Farmers' Market
Farm Tour and Dinner on August 30th.
Contact Susan Bragstad at 267-5506
to purchase your tickets.

**Join Farms of Amador today
to be included in our new
Amador Farm Trails Brochure!
See page 4 for membership form.**