



**FALLS  
BROOK  
CENTRE**

[www.fallsbrookcentre.ca](http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca)

# Writing Home: Global News and Local Views

## In this issue...

**NEWS FROM  
THE FIELD!**

A word from our Director.....1

*Special Feature: News from our Interns in Latin America!*

Pushing Back for Sustainability.....2

Agua para todos?.....4

Habana Manana.....5

The Futbol Wars.....6

Sustainability for Small Players.....7

To What End? Opinion piece.....8

Knowledge for Survival.....9

Your Place: Reflection piece.....10

March Break in Honduras.....11

Asset Mapping in the Saint John River Valley.12

Enjoying Fresh Late Season Vegetables.....12

## Heading into winter again...

Here we are getting ready for winter, watching the natural world go into dormancy, changing our tires for winter treads, finishing up with the harvest, making sure our insulation is all around the house, putting tools away and preparing for a long period of cold weather. Looking forward to snowshoeing and skiing, enjoying the outdoor crispness.

I try to explain this to our colleagues overseas as the sun beats down at 43°C in the shade. Try to explain how different it is for us here in Canada. I am just back from helping in Guantanamo, Cuba, where because of bad land management practices, sugar cane mono-cropping and too much chemical inputs (herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers) going into the land, the soils are too salty to grow crops and the land is too bare of shade for things to grow. A tropical landscape needs trees. Trees create shade; they are a buffer against hurricane winds, they keep the air cooler and most importantly they enable crops to be planted within them. The challenges of too much heat, the challenges of the cold. Each of us in our different geographical location are coping with the elements; living close to the land gives one an awareness of how much we need to prepare, how close we are to the elements. The pleasure and the challenge of rural living.

While economic markets far away demand to be fed and kept afloat, here we know that it is fresh water, a warm house, a basement full of winter produce, a barrel or two of potatoes and good neighbours that give us the security from which to grow.

**THE COUNTY BRIDGE**  
Issue no. 34

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Falls Brook Centre is working to demonstrate and communicate traditional skills and wisdom, combined with appropriate technology, to make the abstract concept of sustainable development a living reality of sustainable communities.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Jean Arnold  
Mark Fleming  
Terence Hamilton  
Katie Peterson  
Shannon Herbert  
Najat Abdou-McFarland  
Dana Kittilsen  
Sophie-Michelle Cyr  
Jenny DeMarco

**EDITING AND LAYOUT**

Alison Shurvell

**DIRECTOR**

Jean Arnold

FALLS BROOK CENTRE  
125 South Knowlesville Rd  
Knowlesville, NB E7L 1B1  
Tel: (506) 375-4310  
Fax: (506) 375-4221  
Email:  
ja@fallsbrookcentre.ca

This newsletter was printed on  
100% post-consumer  
recycled paper.

How lucky we are.

How lucky we are as an organization to be able to give our young people the chance to live in another part of the world to see how other people live, to share some Canadianness with others, to understand a deeper purpose for living, to make connections and learn to go forth with their lives forever changed by their experience in other countries with other people.

Yeah for November, the transition month, shifting realities, the change process.  
JEAN ARNOLD

## Pushing Back for Sustainability

By Mark Fleming  
*Intern, Grupo Fenix, Nicaragua*

Nicaragua is difficult to explain in a nutshell. It has layer upon layer of history and culture and after only one month here I am still only on the surface. I know enough to know that I don't know very much. But here I go anyway.

Nicaragua is considered one of the poorest nations in the western hemisphere. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the majority of the people in the town in which I live, and by most accounts, is the most important sector. People work hard and there is not a lot of excess of material things. In one of the nearby cities a person with money can find most anything they could desire. However the folks I know mostly visit the city to buy food.

I am working at a place called "El Centro Solar" in the municipality of Totogalpa. It is a centre devoted to the use and promotion of solar solutions to the challenges of rural development in a financially poor region. The centre is based around a group of women who refer to themselves as *Las Mujeres Solares* (The Solar Women) of Totogalpa. These women are in the process of organizing themselves into what they hope will eventually be a full scale local enterprise including a restaurant, among other things.

But all this is background information. Here begins what I really want to relate. There are times while traveling when I have been fortunate enough to have come to some sort of new understanding of my own culture, and therefore of my own life. A few weeks ago it happened again.

A film crew was coming from the university in the capital city to document the comings and goings of El Centro Solar for an international award it has recently received. There is a lot of interesting potential footage to be recorded. Construction by hand of small photovoltaic panels, the weekly meeting of *Las Mujeres Solares*, questions and answers about the upcoming award, and volunteers from Canada who don't speak so good.

But there was one interesting thing that the film crew missed. Waste. El Centro

(Continued on page 3)

Solar has a waste problem. After a long stream of volunteers, and thousands of hours spent on various projects over the years, still there had been no solution to a fundamental issue. What do we do with stuff that we do not want? The film crew missed this little detail because the previous Friday at the end of the day there was a motivated effort to be rid of the problem.

Assured that the truck was coming at 5 o'clock, I dutifully wheeled my wheelbarrow full of soggy trash, one quarter of the total, to the end of the driveway by the *carretera* (highway). But then I learned that we needed to continue on down the line a little. When I finally came to the realization moments later that there was not going to be a truck at all, that this waste was destined for some other place, I was frustrated. We dumped our loads and afterwards, I attempted to express my dislike of the situation as constructively as I could in broken Spanish. I think what I said came out as something along the lines of, "I don't think this is a good thing for an organization to be doing!" I think I was probably frowning disapprovingly.

Very shortly thereafter, while pushing my empty wheelbarrow back to the centre with the others in silence, I regretted my words and my frown.

I realized that I was frustrated because I felt that despite my desire to the contrary, I had no choice but to dump garbage on the highway side. The garbage was there and needed to be removed. To hire a truck is inexpensive by Canadian standards, but there was no motivation to do so. There is a lot of space along the highway after all.

Nicaragua is not a country that has a large degree of infrastructure. There may be a recycling facility in the capital city, but nobody seems to know for certain.

My frustration about the situation is due to one thing. Where I come from, most people do not need to regularly deal with their waste from start to finish. Often Canadians have the luxury of walking to the end of their driveways, placing their refuse on the curb, and turning their backs while the problem disappears.

I am now feeling a bit sheepish and embarrassed about my own reaction because I can now recognize that waste disposal in Nicaragua is very similar to what it is in Canada. The Canadian system is more formalized. In both cases, we are simply hiding our waste so that we, or our guests, do not have to look at it.

Unfortunately, this seems to be a reality that is only getting worse. I feel, and I expect others feel similarly, that we are being pushed in a more and more wasteful direction. We Canadians don't make things any more because there often is no time. Because we do not make things we are forced to buy them. We expect that any commercial product will have some sort of packaging. And this packaging eventually ends up in the trash. This system applies to everything: food, water, clothing, building materials, toys...and the list continues. This list does not even begin to include those things which are themselves eventually destined for the garbage, but that is a topic for another time.

The interesting thing is that now I can see Nicaragua very differently. Yes, I see pieces of trash lying around more often than I do in Canada and it is not uncommon to see a person just throw a wrapper out the bus window. But they make more of their own things, they buy things that come from close to home, and there is generally less packaging on everything.

Nicaragua is developing, and with that is the trend towards *more*. More economic development, more stuff, and more waste. This is a powerful force pushing against "sustainable development". The question is: is there a way to push back?

I am starting with a compost bucket.

# ¿Agua para todos?

By Terence Hamilton

*Intern, Latin American and Caribbean Model Forest Network, Honduras*

This past summer, many of us were outraged at the decision of several government bodies to ban the sale of bottled water in all government buildings. National newspapers were flooded with letters to editors, both supporting and denouncing the decision. Some of these responses were logical and eloquent; others not so much. We all know that in the heat of debate, it is sometimes too easy to lose track of the bigger picture. As Canadians take up this important issue of bottle vs. tap, we must always be aware that there are many things we have come to take for granted with regards to this most essential element of life and health.

Over the past month I have been living and working in La Ceiba, Honduras, as part of the Falls Brook Centre's international internship program. Along with my fellow intern Melissa Dupuis, I have been involved in a land management project called Analog Forestry. One of the major focuses of our project here in Honduras is the restoration of degraded watersheds, and three of our five sites are located on or near major rivers supplying water to the city of La Ceiba, or one of its neighbouring communities. Our experience so far in this water-scarce country has opened our eyes to some stark realities of water justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century world.

The first thing to strike me about water here in this tropical climate is how much of it you need to drink! The average day in the field, hiking uphill through jungle and sun, requires a minimum of 2 to 3 litres per person. Because all of this water needs to be hiked in, my backpack is often two-thirds full with the essential liquid alone; not to mention food, hat, sunscreen, GPS, and any other equipment that our work may require.

Because our lives depend on the water we pack every morning, we were begrudgingly forced to purchase bottles of water to bring along on our first several field visits. *Aguazul*, the most readily available brand of water, is packaged and sold by Pepsi international. Their slogan – on the radio, television, and the back of every bus – proclaims “*Water for me. Water for you. Water for everyone.*” In a water-scarce country where up to half of the population has no reasonable access to clean and safe drinking water, the irony of this slogan cannot be overstated. One day the 10 year-old daughter of one of our coworkers saw Melissa packing her water, and innocently asked what “brand” of water people in Canada drink. It took Melissa several seconds to register the fact that for this young girl, the concept of turning on the tap and filling up a glass is impossible. Would she be happy to know that much of the bottled water sold in Canada is produced by the same corporations that are selling it here in Honduras.



Several days later I was hiking through the jungle with don Miguel, a 74 year-old peasant whose land we are working together to restore. As I struggled to keep the pace, the old man stopped and wiped his brow, before bending down to take a few sips from a cool mountain stream. I felt a surge of jealousy at his long-developed immunity to the natural bacteria. He must have sensed my frustration, laughing and slapping me on the back as I took a swig of my sun-warmed bottle of expensive liquid.

For the past several weeks we have been boiling our water in a 10-gallon pot, for half an hour every day, in order to avoid buying a plastic bottle every time we feel a pang of thirst. Sometime next year I will be back in Canada, filling a tall, cool glass of water straight out of the tap. But even then, there is one thing I will always be sure of: every drop of water I take in to keep me alive another day should be cause to stop, reflect, and be thankful.

# ¿Habana Mañana?

By Katie Peterson

*Intern, Instituto de Investigaciones Forestales, Cuba*

Havana, Cuba, is a city of extremes. Life bursts at the seams here: Cubanos inhabit every nook and cranny of Old Habana's crumbling colonial buildings. They spill out onto the streets on bicycles, onto crowded Soviet buses, or into "machina" taxis, massive 1950s-era American cars that run on a combination of Russian auto parts, Venezuelan oil and sheer willpower. Havanans live loudly and vibrantly despite the crippling trade embargo imposed by the United States for almost 50 years.



El Malecon and Old Habana

However, the effects of the economic crisis in Cuba are glaringly obvious; from the bustling but insufficient public transportation, to the archaic infrastructure, to the constant shortages of food and just about everything else. Cubans are quick to share stories of collective experience as well as of loved ones- however, in the same breath many will also speak of the sadness underlying the everyday scenes of passion, patience and survival.

In just a few weeks, the people of Havana have given me much to reflect on about my place in the world. I have an incredible amount of privilege here, and this is obvious to everyone, simply through the colour of my skin. As a "blanca", I am a walking symbol of a class with freedom and wealth, and have fast grown tired of the constant solicitations for everything from cab rides to marriage. I feel resistance to the assumption that I am a tourist, though tourism is the principle industry keeping Cuba afloat. Tourism, principally from North America, Latin America, and Europe, brings in much-needed cash not seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the beginning of the Special Period in 1989. However, not all Cubans are happy to have *extranjeros* in their midst. Despite the intervention of progressive taxation policies, this capitalist element has stratified Cuban society, and introduced anew divisions along lines of class and race.

The precarious economic situation experienced in Cuba has also given me cause to reflect on my "First World" ideas concerning environmental sustainability, particularly those of food production. Under the best of conditions, it is difficult enough in Cuba to find much else to eat besides white bread, chicken and pork. However, since hurricanes Ike and Gustav swept their way across Pinar del Rio and the eastern provinces, leaving decimated vegetation in their wake, there is hardly a vegetable to be found, since the vast majority of vegetables accessible to the average Cuban are grown organically right here on the island. During my first two weeks in Havana, my stomach as well as my "occasional vegetarian" sensibilities struggled to adapt to the diet, which, I admit, I supplement with "pan integral" (whole grain bread) that is cheap for me, but well out of the reach of my professional co-workers at the Forestry Institute. I have eaten lettuce and tomatoes -most certainly flown in- only once, on a trendy restaurant patio complete with live Latin music, all for the enjoyment only of *extranjeros* and wealthy Cubanos.

After only one month in Havana, the song of this noisy, polluted, charismatic and culturally-rich city and its inhabitants has permeated to my core. Despite the obvious international threats and pressures, I am optimistic about the future of this city, for Cubans are a strong, innovative and cohesive people. At the very least, mañana is a welcome challenge for me, as every day is an adventure and a lesson from which my eyes grow a little wider, and I hope, a little wiser.

# La Guerra de Fútbol

By Terence Hamilton

*Intern, Latin American and Caribbean Model Forest Network, Honduras*

This story requires somewhat of a historical backgrounder as a pretext, so in the interest of clarity I am going to begin in 1969. During the 20th century, the tiny Central American republic of El Salvador went through a rapid transformation towards export-orientated agriculture, and the traditional peasant classes were repeatedly forced off of scarce lowland valleys and forced up into the mountains, where the land is less fertile. The effect of this demographic pressure on the land caused hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans to immigrate to neighbouring Honduras, where there was (and is) a smaller population, a temperate climate, and cheaper and more available land. It was in this context that the two countries met to play a world cup qualifying match in Honduras. The game had to be abandoned halfway because of riots that broke out in the stands. Within hours, the Salvadoran military had crossed into Honduras, beginning a 100-hour conflict that would come to be known as ‘the soccer war’ (la Guerra de fútbol).

Soon after our arrival here, we became perplexed by the tendency of taxi drivers, coworkers, and people on the street to smile and say “ah, October 11th!” upon learning that we were from Canada. Finally we broke down and asked someone: “What happens on the 11th of October?” The answer was so simple, yet one I never would have expected: a world cup qualifying match between Canada and Honduras!

And so, this past Saturday I am at my apartment enjoying my cup of coffee when my good friend Devon from Pennsylvania comes in and looks at me with a mischievous grin: “So, are we going to do this, or what?” I was unsure at first, but Devon explained things to me clearly: “There is no way I am going to miss 50,000 drunken Hondurans chanting Ole! and lighting off homemade fireworks”. I said he had a good point, and we quickly left to catch a bus to the city of San Pedro Sula, about 3 hours west.

San Pedro Sula is Honduras’ second largest city and major industrial centre, and does not have a reputation as being a very hospitable place to visit. In fact, after flying into the city in September, I had decided I would try my best to avoid returning there if at all possible. Alas, this is where our lonely Canadian soccer stars were scheduled to play, and if Devon and I weren’t going to support them, who was? We arrived about two hours before the game was set to begin, hopped straight into a taxi and sped off towards the stadium. Just as the massive dome loomed in the distance, traffic grew to a halt as the streets were flooded with people decked head-to-toe in the national colours of blue and white. Everywhere horns were blaring, reggaeton music was blasting, and various soccer chants drifted through the crowd. A young man came running past with a handful of tickets, and our taxi driver whistled him down out the window. I bought us each passage to the ‘Sol’ section – that is, the closest and loudest – for 200 lempiras (approx. CAN\$ 9) each. We abandoned the taxi, which wasn’t moving any faster than we could walk, and headed towards the stadium. Halfway there we stopped to buy two jerseys of the Honduran national team, to serve as cunning disguises. Not that two skinny, blonde, 6’3 gringos wouldn’t stand out in a sea of Honduran football fans, but you can never be too safe, right?

Entering the stadium we were hit by a wall of delicious aromas; it seemed every food vendor in the city had set up camp just inside the gates. We each grabbed a baleada (a local specialty; refried beans, cheese, egg, and fresh cream in a warm tortilla) and weaved our way through the impromptu marketplace. We could hear the stadium from over a mile away, but climbing up the stairs it became deafening: 40,000 people cheering like mad into the steamy tropical night, over an hour and a half before kick-off is scheduled. As the Hondurans came onto the field to warm-up, the crowd erupted as if they had just beaten France in the world cup final. These people are, as they say, *fútbol loco!*

After the first half, we squeezed our way down to the fourth row from the field. Through the razor-wire fence we could see the faces of the police officers hidden behind their riot shields. Then, five minutes in, the unthinkable happens: Canada scores, tying the game at 1-1. Suddenly we realized that our illusion of safety was based entirely on the assumption that Canada sucks at soccer, and that the Hondurans were of course going to win! A hush comes over the crowd for the first time. With only fifteen minutes to play, the star Honduran striker sprints across midfield and rifles a shot into the top right corner from over 40 feet out. The entire stadium was on its feet, jumping up and down as if as one, and fireworks start shooting off only 5 feet to our right! Nobody stopped jumping up and down for the rest of the game, and Honduras added another goal before the final whistle to win 3-1.

As the entire crowd poured out of the stadium to celebrate their victory, people started noticing us for the first time. "Ay, Canadá!" they shouted, pretending to wipe tears from their face and slapping us on the back, laughing. We were sure glad that Canada sucks at soccer. Two hours later we were safe in a hostel, covered in a thick glaze of sweat and spilled beer, exhausted but happy. I was asleep before I hit the pillow; off to dream of the day Honduras and Canada will finally meet in Olympic ice hockey!

## Sustainability for Small Players: Dominican Republic and the Global Economic Crisis

By Jenny DeMarco

*Project Coordinator, Latin American and Caribbean Model Forest Network, Dominican Republic*

Every morning, my little TV, which has only sound and no picture, announces the news of economic melt-down, world recession, and global crisis. From Canada to Iceland, from Japan to Australia, the world's economic powerhouses are waking up from a period of unrestrained gluttony and rampant consumerism. But what does this mean for smaller southern countries who are so chronically dependant on the state of outside economies?

I am currently working on a Falls Brook Centre Analog Forestry project in the Dominican Republic. As I look around at farmers who have no electricity in their houses, the rising price of fresh fruit and vegetables in the local market, and the open wounds of Canadian gold mines on the surrounding mountain tops, I wonder what the future will hold for countries such as the Dominican Republic, whose economies are tied to the whims of the global economy, for better or worse.

I have been working with the community of Zambrana for two months so far. The main economic activities which currently exist in this rural area are cattle herding, industrial agriculture, or the Barrick Gold mine. These options are not enough to stop the vast majority of youth from migrating to the capital city in search of opportunities. Many households are made up of only elderly parents, as the younger generation migrates away from rural communities dreaming of a better life; a life with electricity, tap water, and a chance to earn an income for their family.

With more and more people migrating to the city, food security is a real concern in this island country. As the ongoing demand for more natural resources is eating up clean water, natural forests, and mineral deposits; it is obvious that a sustainable alternative is critical. Finding a way for people to live, and earn a living, while benefiting the natural environment, is crucial. With that goal in mind, I am working with Falls Brook Centre, and a local organization, ENDA-Dominicana, in an effort to understand how local people can earn an income from

forest products, which are grown and harvested in a sustainable manner.

As the current economic turmoil shows, the world is reaching a turning point, where new alternatives are needed. Self-sufficiency, in terms of resources, food, and adaptability will be essential for the resilience of nations, and for the survival of ecosystems upon which they depend.

Working on the Analog Forestry project here in the Dominican Republic has taught me to see our lifestyles and environments differently. I am looking at plants as medicines, soils as providers, fruit as sustenance, and ecosystems as habitats. We must observe how the forest works, and use nature as a model upon which to base our own systems.

Hopefully, as the world wakes up from the naiveté we have been in for so long, we will start looking around us for positive models and solutions of a better way of doing things. Hopefully, here in the Dominican Republic, we will be able to help youth find opportunities within their communities, help farmers restore their land, and prove that there really are alternatives for a more sustainable economy.



## To What End?

An opinion article by Shannon Herbert  
*Agriculture Coordinator*

Before rail lines and highways cut through the land we used rivers and streams to map our province and country. Today, however, the travel maps that are available to us are of highways and roads. We've become worshippers of asphalt and steel, and to what end? Is it modern innovation or is it simple ignorance that causes us to take our water resources for granted?

It is true that the amount of water on the Earth is static, meaning we have the same amount of water on Earth today as we did four and half billion years ago. The difference is that today we have an increasing population which translates into more demand for food, water and shelter.

With this increase in demand we are putting more pressure on the natural resources to support our technical advances and our population growth. The demand for more food is pressuring worldwide agriculture to produce greater amounts of food, cheaply. This means larger industrial farm factories, more forest lands being cleared for growing crops for animals and humans. The decrease of forests leads to droughts which mean irrigation methods need to be practiced. Water resources are being exhausted at an alarming rate; Mother Nature's ability to filter water to restore clean drinking water to our wells continues to be pushed beyond her capacity to perform.

We need positive action and we need it now. We need to make conscious, daily efforts to change the way we use and abuse clean drinking water, and we need to stop the abuse of our watersheds. The answer is not complicated; we, as Canadians, are ranked second in the world for water consumption and we average 340 litres per person per day. This is an alarming and ridiculous amount of fresh water consumption; we could easily reduce this amount by 50% without sacrificing our quality of living. In New Brunswick 60% of the population relies on safe ground water for drinking (approx 430 000 people). We know that there are chemicals and other pollutants running into our rivers and streams every time it rains (how much did it rain in your backyard this

year?) yet each and every time we turn on the faucet to take a drink we *expect* it to be clean, clear and safe. When local communities are given a boil advisory the town's people are inconvenienced and angry, but what are we doing to prevent future water contamination? Are we making any changes to the way we over-use the clean drinking water that is available? Are we changing environmentally destructive methods of farming and forestry practices? Are we improving our habits when we enjoy recreational visits to our rivers and streams?

Did you know that every eight seconds, a young child dies from lack of water or a waterborne disease? This is equal to a 747 jetliner full of kids crashing every hour. We New Brunswickers are incredibly fortunate to be able to trust the water that flows from our taps and trust that the fish we catch in our rivers are edible; however, if we do not change our course of action as communities and as individuals the time will come when we will no longer be able to assume the fish is safe to eat or the water safe to drink, provided that are fish to catch and water left to question.

Think of this as a reality check: the next time you turn on your tap to have a drink remember that there are over a billion people in the world without access to clean drinking water. The next time that you travel to the river to fish please think twice about driving your 4-wheeler through the stream, and remember to take your garbage with you when you leave; the river banks are not your personal dumping ground. If you must use public walking trails and the forest floor as your toilet please bury your deposit and cover with soil to aid in speedy decomposition. (*Make your deposits far enough away from streams to reduce risk of contamination*) Water is our most precious resource, life sustaining and seemingly ubiquitous but remember only 3% of our planet's water is fresh and suitable for drinking. Canada is home to 20% of this clean drinking water, which is a pretty big responsibility Canadians have in protecting this water supply. Let's all do our part to make choices to protect our drinking water for future generations.

## Knowledge for Survival: The importance of transmitting traditional knowledge

By Najat Abdou-McFarland  
*School Programs Coordinator*

I define traditional knowledge as encompassing ancestral life ways and heritage that remain the bedrock of human survival through out history. The details of these skills and ways are modified and changed from generation to generation, but their essential survival quality remains. It is worth looking at the unique evolution of traditional knowledge and the unique situation of traditional knowledge in the world today. Two special women, who are also staff at Falls Brook Centre, took a bit of time out of their busy day to explain to me the dynamics of traditional knowledge. These two women possess an immense amount of traditional knowledge related to canning and preserving which they share with Falls Brook Centre apprentices and staff.

Elaine Dodd and Shaun Shaw both work in the garden and kitchen department of Falls Brook Centre. Shaun grew up on an air force base. As she chose to stay at home with her children, she taught herself canning and preserving techniques. Elaine on the other hand, learned canning and preserving techniques from her mother. How each of these women learned their traditional knowledge illustrates the numerous ways it can be transmitted; through a parent or other family member, through books, through a community member, a community centre workshop or even self-taught, as in the case of Shaun.

Traditional knowledge changes from generation to generation according to the technological changes that have taken place from one generation to the next. In each generation, one can see how some practices were main-

tained and other practices were discarded. For example Elaine mentioned the greater control, convenience and safety that were brought with the introduction of electric stoves and gas stoves to replace the less precise wood cook stoves. Many people who canned and preserved chose to use electric stoves over wood cook stoves. But sometimes technology can be consciously rejected. For example, Shaun mentioned how she chose to continue the practice of boiling green apples for their pectin over buying brand name artificial pectin. Both women view passing on the knowledge around canning and preserving that they have accumulated through out the years as tremendously important aspect of family relations.

In this article, I propose we need to bring this essential knowledge forwards. Here at Falls Brook Centre, the harvesting we do from the Community Shared Agricultural plot is canned and preserved for the winter. As such, Falls Brook Centre reinvigorates this piece of traditional knowledge by teaching canning techniques and processes to new apprentices and staff members.

I wondered what the women's thoughts were on how to make the transmission of this amazing traditional knowledge a public event instead of a private event occurring within the family. Shaun described a community green and yellow bean harvesting event in the summer at the community centre, where all members of the community would come out to participate in canning beans. Elaine further added that such a community event, where both the women and the children would come out, would immerse the children in these sorts of traditional practices. Indeed creating such a culture of traditional practices and knowledge will facilitate the adoption of this traditional knowledge in daily practices.

The modernizing forces of society have undermined the practices of canning and preserving. From mass produced canned goods to other preserved goods produced through mechanized assembly line practices, these unique skills are in danger of being lost. One of the reasons why this loss is occurring is that we currently have few ways to value these skills in our economy. Our pre-packaged and over processed consumer culture has placed convenience as paramount. Through this loss of traditional knowledge we are in danger of not only losing the knowledge associated with these skills, but also the self-sufficiency embedded within them.

One of the main points I would like to emphasize with this article is how important it is to honor and respect this traditional knowledge. This knowledge creates a bond between the younger and the older generation. This knowledge is life history. This knowledge is family history. A system for honoring and teaching this knowledge would give it public respect and acknowledgement. Have you honored a living tradition today?

## Reflection Piece: *Your Place*

By Dana Kittilsen  
*Intern, Cuba Solar, Cuba*

Everyone has a place, their place. I'm not talking about a home, at least not the building (we all know there are too many homeless). The home I'm talking about is more in the sense of where you can do the most good. Let's call it where you belong; because everyone belongs somewhere. We don't necessarily know where our place is; either because we haven't found it yet or we've never thought about it. Of course it isn't even a question for some people. They know where they come from and either that's where they are going to stay or they know where they are going.

It maybe necessary to travel to understand where your place is in this endlessly diverse world. I recommend some traveling for everyone; there are so many lessons to learn. I myself have been many places in search of my place. I've been in high and low places, far and near. And what I've found is that of all the places I've been in the wide world, where I belong is where I began: The Maritimes are my home. They are the place where I can do the most good. I might not have thought that when I was signing up for my degree in International De-

velopment (a big part of my motivation was simply to travel). But this degree has taught me many things, chief among them that the "Developed World" is not so. "Developed" countries like Canada are in need of a lot of work, especially in the face of the global situations, which sees more and more jobs lost to large multi-national corporations, cogs in the global economy which operates in the name of cheap production and excessive consumption. These companies, and this global economy take away our capacity to support ourselves with our own traditional skills and makes us dependent on factories of all sorts, the means of production and a vast (and extremely wasteful) system of distribution.

While I hope there is always room for international trade I desperately wish that people take back what belongs to them, the capacity of their locale, their community to support itself. Live where you belong. Imagine and create the relationships and networks that will allow us to rediscover and develop the amazing skills and impressive knowledge that once made us men and women of character. Lets make our homes expressions of ourselves and our place. Not assembled pieces from Sweden. In short, lets make our homes.

## **Spend March Break 2009 in Honduras!**

*Be a part of a delegation of active, engaged global citizens.  
Learn about sustainable livelihoods and a vibrant, welcoming culture.  
Lend a hand and learn about yourself.*

Falls Brook Centre is still accepting applications for our 6th Global Learning Exchange, this year to the Caribbean coast and western highlands of Honduras. This program will take place from February 26 to March 8 2009, and is a perfect opportunity for high school students and recent grads to explore the realities of humanitarian work and of life in Latin America.

The ten days we spend in country will offer extensive learning opportunities: from Central American culture and history to the Spanish language, from sustainable community forestry models to visiting an internationally-recognized biosphere reserve. We will have several opportunities to spend time with Honduran children and youth, sharing Canadian and Honduran cultural traditions and lending a hand as we go!

Remember, this trip will NOT be your average vacation; participants will get their hands dirty and help out on local community development projects that are contributing to the well-being of local Hondurans and their environment. A total of about 5 days will be spent working on two community projects in two different communities. Possible work projects include: tree-planting and biodiversity restoration on degraded land; building bathrooms in a children's group home; building structures such as fencing, digging wells, or other infrastructure help on community forest projects.

The rest of our time will be spent visiting some of the amazing and diverse cultural and ecological heritage sites that Honduras has to offer. We will visit the ancient Mayan ruins at Copan, an internationally significant protected wetland site, the Lancetilla botanical gardens, and Lago de Yojoa, a lake that has been settled by indigenous civilizations for centuries.

The cost of the trip is \$2500.00 per person, which includes airfare from Portland, ME to Honduras, all food and accommodations, in-country travel, and visas. Applications must be received, at latest, by December 19 2008.

**Interested in seeing a part of your world that you've never even imagined?  
Sign up today for the experience of a lifetime!**

**For more information, contact Alison at (506) 375-4310 or email [alison@fallsbrookcentre.ca](mailto:alison@fallsbrookcentre.ca)**

# UPPER ST. JOHN RIVER VALLEY INITIATIVE

[www.fallsbrookcentre.ca/community/futureplanning.html](http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca/community/futureplanning.html)

Falls Brook Centre has been facilitating community Asset Mapping Workshops in different towns and villages this past year. These workshops will give the community members a chance to get together to discuss and plan the future of their community.

*This approach can be used and adapted to address particular needs of a community or organization.*

Asset mapping has been recognized as an inclusive participatory process that becomes a great tool for town and village councils to get advice from the citizens and a variety of stakeholders to elaborate a strategic plan for the town, village or organization. In Burtt's Corner, it has been used to address the lack of emergency preparedness of the community to react to health emergencies (pandemic) or natural disaster. Other workshop goals have included asset mapping as a networking tool for Local Service Districts to communicate and be included in the decision making processes of towns and villages. It can be used to assess the possibilities for a community to distinguish itself from others by describing the steps to becoming a hub in a particular field; for example, developing an energy efficiency strategy. Asset Mapping can be used to create a tourism strategy for a region or a town or simply to explore the interest from the community members to create or revive a strategic plan for their region, town or village. Finally, it can be used to consult community members for land use, expansion or improvement projects. Discover your community's greatest features!

**If you would like to have an Asset Mapping Workshop in your area, please contact Sophie-Michèle Cyr at:**  
**Falls Brook Centre**  
125 South Knowlesville Road,  
Knowlesville, E7L 1B1  
Tel.: 506-375-4310  
Fax: 506-375-4221  
[sm@fallsbrookcentre.ca](mailto:sm@fallsbrookcentre.ca)

## ***Enjoying Late Season Fresh Vegetables from Your Backyard***

By Shannon Herbert



That's right folks! Even in Carleton County you can enjoy fresh vegetables from your own backyard into the late fall and winter months. Grow vegetables that ripen in a frost and can be harvested in snow. Think brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, carrots, leeks, parsnips and turnips: the chill of a frost and the blanket of a light snow will actually improve the flavour of these old favourites. With the more harsh winters we can experience in Carleton County, best results will come from a little planning ahead. Prepare the bed, count the days, and plant varieties that withstand colder temperatures. At harvest time, storing your winter crops couldn't be easier: leave them in the ground.

*This method of "local eating" does require a little preparation before the ground freezes:*

Insulate your plants using organic mulch such as straw or leaves; a depth of 30cm (12 inches) is suggested for our harsh winters and you can add a bit more protection by using a row cover. Then return again and again to harvest your bounty during the winter months.

Another method is to dig a trench approximately 60 cm (two feet) deep and line generously with straw then layer root vegetables alternately with layers of straw. Cover the trench with plywood or other material to shed rain and use straw bales on top of the lid to protect storage from freezing temperatures. Don't forget to mark your stored crops with long stakes so that you can find your food after the snow falls.

