

**Orin Martin's Remarks at the Farm & Garden's 40th Anniversary Reception  
Friday, July 27, 2007  
*University House, UC Santa Cruz***

I have scripted my remarks. They pay me to be professionally talkative, so I am. But in reality, I've never been comfortable talking in front of even small groups, let alone one this size.

So—a little history, a Reader's Digest version . . .

Ann Lindsey and Martha Brown have asked me to say a few words about our history. Out of respect, out of admiration, when they ask, you show up on time and give it your best effort, which I might add, parenthetically, might be the only two rules you need in an action-oriented smooth-functioning organization.

History can be thought of as a series of narratives: one big event after another. War followed by peace, lamentably by another war, human triumph and catastrophe, great heroes and villains in sequence. And this is often an adequate description.

But history is also the narratives of grace, serendipity and even luck. A recounting of those blessed and inexplicable moments when someone did something for someone else, changed a life, bestowed a gift, gave something beyond what was required by circumstance.

It is more the latter than the former set of narratives that applies tonight.

The historical continuum here can be thought of as going from Alan Chadwick, in starched white tennis clothes, with a spade, fork and wheelbarrow, double digging on a steep, foreboding, barren hillside, envisioning a garden, the garden, gardens that transformed an individual, people, a community, a culture. And at the other end of the continuum, present day farm manager, Jim Leap, on a tractor pulling a spader, double digging on a field scale. Incidentally, you may meet a finer row cropper than Jim but I can't imagine where or when.

Some notables from the early years:

Founding Chancellor Dean McHenry, owing to his Lompoc farm boy roots, had a vision for what could be included within the rubric of the new UCSC campus, saw the value and potential of the Farm and Garden. And then backed it up with the Chancellor's discretionary funds and student activity fees.

Among the early faculty whose vision helped enlist Chadwick and start first the garden and then the farm were Page Smith and Paul Lee. And here's hoping that Paul's definitive biography of Alan gets to the publisher soon.

Permission and vision are all well and good, but it was founding Vice Chancellor of business and finance Hal Hyde (also a founding trustee of Cabrillo College) who, in a nuts and bolts way, figured out how to hire, house and pay Alan. He, as well as Paul Lee, are with us tonight. We all owe them both a debt of gratitude.

In the 70's and early 80's the Environmental Studies Board mentored, guided and found funds for the Farm and Garden. Many a Board meeting was held on the chalet porch or farm center deck. We knew we were in the presence of greatness when problem solving with the likes of: Ken Norris, Ray Dassman, Stanley Cain, Dick Cooley, Peter Scott (Physics — solar shower), Jim Pepper and Jerry Bowden, who later served as president of the Friends' Board. Throughout our history the Friends of the Farm and Garden have been benefactors. Three Board presidents stand out in my memory: Jerry Walters (head of campus housing) imparted calmness and equanimity, often in stormy times, and two women, who in another time and generation might have held elective office, headed university departments or successful companies — Louise Cain and Phyllis Norris.

Somewhere in all of this there should be a shout out to Camp Joy Jim Nelson and Beth Benjamin who worked with Alan in the early years and went on to found Camp Joy, a kinder, gentler farm and garden—a more supple entity.

The farm has only had three managers, kinda' like left fielders for the Boston Red Sox—they're real good and most make the Hall of Fame. The first was Steve Kaffka, who had the chutzpah and composite skills to take over when Chadwick left. Steve started the farm, formalized the apprentice program, advanced the rationale that convinced Carl Tjerandssen, the Academic Dean of UCSC Extension, to take on the program. Steve subsequently went on to Cornell, Hoenheim University in Germany and eventually to become a U.C. Ag Extension agent.

If Steve birthed the farm, it was Jim Nelson (Big Jim, not Camp Jim) who raised it through diapers, adolescence, those difficult teen years to adulthood. Jim developed the cropping system, adjusted the pH, raised the organic matter content of the soil, brought animal husbandry to the farm, established the orchard and taught every technical class required to the apprentices. In addition he'd come dragging into the farm center at lunch, sit down at the piano and launch into extended jazzy/bluesy pieces somewhere between Keith Jarrett — Cöln concert and Earl 'Fatha' Hines. A man of prodigious skills. Jim was often referred to in the vernacular as the 'Big Dog,' his crew as the field dogs and the expression went "If you can't run with the Big Dog, stay on the porch."

The apprenticeship coordinator position is a relentless job. On a daily basis items from minutiae to the big picture require decisions. The job is a lot like the drummer in a rock 'n roll band. There are more glamorous roles—the

lead singer, lead guitarist, but if you don't have a drummer back there knockin' down the beat, you don't have a song.

The first apprenticeship coordinator was Dennis Tamura. Dennis actually held that job plus the farm garden manager's position, while living on site as resident proctor to the apprentices simultaneously. Dennis worked with Alan at Covello for a number of years and with us for 6–7 years. At Covello he was known as the "blazing spade" for his digging skills. But what he was then and is now as proprietor of Blue Heron Farms is what I call an exquisite technician. I've only known a few (mostly on a garden scale): Albie Miles, John Farrell, Mike Irving, Aaron DeLong. Models of efficiency, much like Jacques Cousteau at 60 staying down with his world class divers (half his age), he with one tank, they with two. Although he never taught a class, Dennis taught us much: 1) How to conduct oneself in the world with integrity; 2) How to produce crops in a quality way

Lyn Garling followed Dennis as Apprentice Coordinator. She brought energy, verve, and intelligence. An entomologist by trade, she elevated the classroom component of the program to university level, partly by her own teaching, partly by bringing professionals and academics to teach.

I've been asked not to speak about the present day staff, so I won't, but if I did (and a more dedicated, talented, hard-working group would be hard to find), a soil science principle comes to mind—C.E.C.: cation exchange capacity, the potential of a soil to hold and exchange nutrients for plant growth (a high number is good).

Potential is all well and good but another soil science precept—base saturation—measures what percentage of the exchange sites are filled with cations or nutrients now. The present staff—high C.E.C., base saturation 100%.

I'm speaking of notables but in reality the most notable would be anyone who has been, is now, or will be an apprentice. They should be fêted and seated at the head of the table, for, as you will see this weekend, they have changed the face of horticulture and agriculture.

And finally there is a subset of that group, people we call second-year apprentices, that deserve special commendations and encomiums. The model is akin to graduate school teaching assistants. Their job description harkens back to a slogan from the California Conservation Corps under Governor Jerry Brown:

Hard work  
Low pay  
Long hours  
Poor living conditions  
The toughest job you'll ever love.

In listening to them, in working with them, in seeing them dispatch their duties, you get the sense that all they want, all most of us really want is, as Marge Piercy outlines in this poem—to be of use.

*To Be of Use*

by Marge Piercy

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes almost out of sight.  
They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half submerged balls.

I love the people who harness themselves,  
an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,  
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest and work in a row and pass  
the bags along,  
who stand in the line and haul in their places,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.  
Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums  
but you know they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.