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POTOMAC VEGETABLE FARMS  
www.potomacvegetablefarms.com  
(703) 759-2119 ... Vienna  
(540) 882-3885 ... Purcellville

# Deer Are Fast, but Golf Carts Don't Get Tired

by Hana Newcomb

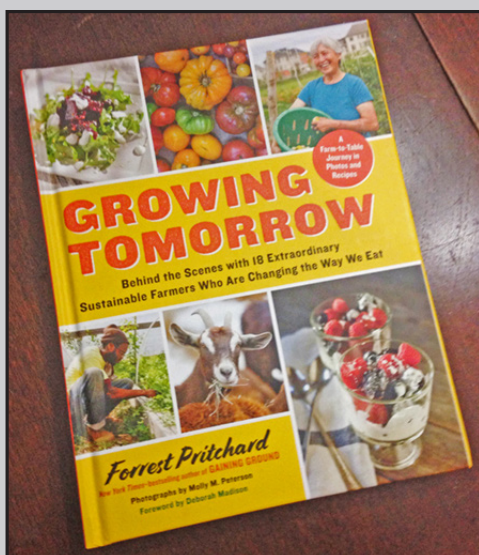
There were deer tracks in the cilantro, all over the bed. The bean plants on the western end of the patch closest to the trees were chomped and the deer had sunk deep into the mud, leaving cloven hoof holes. Ellen reported seeing three full-sized deer inside the fence recently.

We have a super duper deer fence, installed by professionals. Seven feet tall, woven wire, eleven foot posts sunk about fifteen feet apart. It is a solid

barrier, all the way to the ground. Except when the deer just walk through an open gate, which happens all too often.

I woke up on Friday morning at dawn and thought, "I am going to find those deer and get them out." We were sleeping in our unheated cabin on the Loudoun farm and it was just cold enough that it seemed prudent to get up and get going. I got on my golf cart and went in search of those three deer.

They were very easy to find,  
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## You are Invited!

Book Signing Party at the Farm. "Growing Tomorrow: Behind the Scenes with 18 Extraordinary Sustainable Farmers Who Are Changing the Way We Eat" by Forrest Pritchard.

Hana Newcomb is one of the farmers featured in this just-released book of photographs, recipes and stories. Meet our friend Forrest, the bestselling author and local farmer, on Sunday, November 15, 2015 at the Vienna stand in the afternoon.



# “VEN-FARM-O-GRAM”

by Hannah Smith

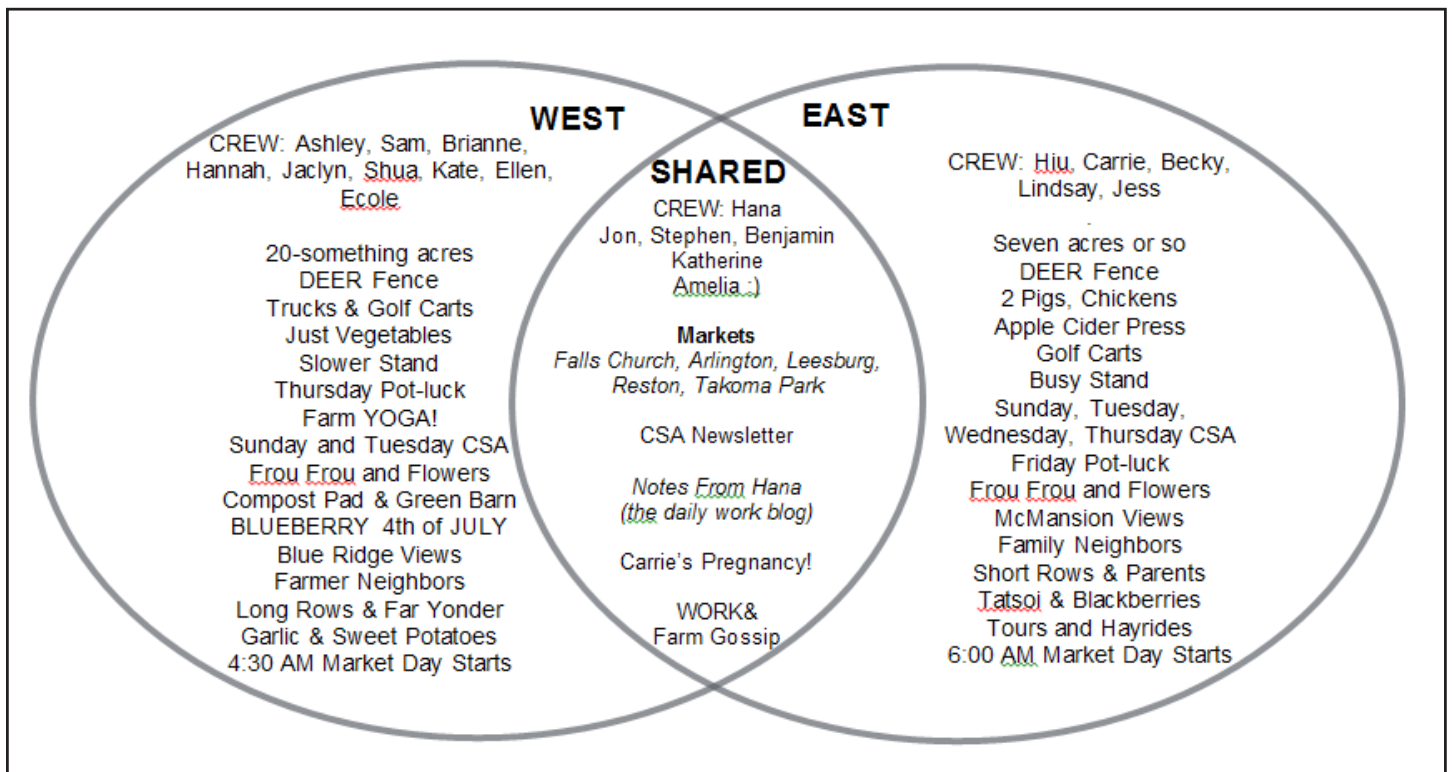
Some people who don't work for Potomac Vegetable Farms are unaware that the name is plural for a reason. The “s” in Farms is in reference to its East (Vienna) and West (Loudoun County) location – and also to the first farm from years ago in Southern Maryland. This can be confusing to stand customers. Market customers are often surprised when they are told of the farm land in Vienna. We should all thank PVF's owners for holding out against development. Everyone that works for PVF knows about both locations. We know this because vegetables, vehicles, and people get brought to and sent from each location every week. 98% of my time this season has been spent out in Loudoun County, coming closer to the DC metro area only to load trucks to take to Falls Church, Reston, and Arlington Markets. The Vienna location for me is very similar to a Moose (I'm from New

England) often talked about but seldom seen. In a recent week, because of the terrible weather, I came in from the rain, rain, rain to spend some time in Vienna. Luckily I arrived on a Friday, the day of PVF East's weekly potluck lunch. PVF West holds theirs on Thursdays. This rare opportunity to sit down at a different table with different faces gave me the idea to compare and contrast PVF'S two farms in the hope that it will give us all a greater understanding of how they fit together.

The people who have been here for longer than I have (more than 3 months) and are a bit more in charge of things than I would probably have a much more comprehensive diagram than this. It would probably include more names. I also could have missed some shared things, and PVF East definitely has unique features I don't know about. As a newcomer I CAN say that in the Summer/Fall of 2015 the two farms are working together. With all of the

challenges that come inherently with farming and the ones that are unique to a dual farm I think that we are working well.

Inevitably there will be long days when weekends are near. On those days it feels good to know that there is another team of people that is working on picking for our markets. If pests are “present” it is reassuring to know that not all of our cabbage got munched on by moths. When weather is difficult we know that a crop devastated in the East could be perfectly happy in the West, or vice versa. Two farms allows us to bring more food to market, grow vegetables in their favorite locations, have crews with specialized talents, offer more CSA pick up locations, and serve a wider community. Two farms also allows me, someone new to farming, to see different ways to manage resources, time, space, plants, etc. Let's not forget to mention it has allowed me to attend two pot-lucks!



# Farewell, Farms, I'm Off to Florida

by Jess Royce

As I prepare to leave this farm, I find that I have a tangle of emotions. I feel sad because the end of the season for me is coming soon and I will be off to Central Florida (I'm officially a snow bird) to work on a small local, organic farm. I will miss everyone who I have met this year, even those who I didn't see often because of different farm locations or short visits (Loudoun crew, Peio, our international travelers and family, even other local farm workers). I couldn't have asked for better managers and coworkers.

There is a lot of joy/happiness, perhaps an overwhelming amount of this, for the people I've had the opportunity to work with, the job that I do makes me so happy, and the customers are amazing. So many people are regulars at the stand in Vienna and the market in Arlington. I've had the opportunity to talk to so many of our CSA members at length and customers who've been coming for 40 years! Also I got to mix my current career of veterinary technician (small animal) with the farm by helping tend to, or bonding whichever you prefer, with the pigs we hosted. Abbie and Georgia got some serious love from me in the form of extra buckets of old bread, veggies, back



Jess cracks garlic for planting on one of her last days at work – but she hopes to come back to see this garlic in its next life in 2016.

scratches and attention. I hope these two little new babes we got will warm up to me before I leave!

I have never in my life felt so accomplished in setting a goal and doing it. Farming wasn't something I grew up with and so many people are taken aback when I tell them that's what I do. I understand though, in all honesty I don't think I properly used any farm tools until this year. I managed to go 31 years without actually using a hand hoe but this season I learned how to use that and MANY others. I've learned that blisters

can be horrible (wear gloves!) but will become calluses. I feel proud when I look at my hands and the muscles that have developed on my fairly lanky frame. These are hands that have dirt under their nails, calluses on my index fingers from the way I weed and pick. These are arms and shoulders that can lift heavy crates of sweet potatoes, ponies with 20 lb of tomatoes, and pull up reemay while lugging wire around my neck. These are legs that can squat and lift properly so my back doesn't get thrown out. My body has changed quite a bit

since March. But so has my mind. The sun on my face is amazing but even on mornings when the sky is grey with clouds and the dew and mist linger, I am happy. I am happy to know that what I'm doing is something I truly believe in. I love knowing that we are providing this service for everyone. I love knowing I have such a passion for what I'm doing. They say "if you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life." I believe that 100%

All in all my time with PVF has been one of adventures, of conquering my own fears and hurdles (bugs of all kinds, working outside intensively during those summer months, meeting new people, doing something I'd never done) One that I was fortunate enough to be surrounded by amazing, talented, hard working and creative individuals who are there to help you learn, grow and are accepting. I don't think there is much more a person could ask for.

One year ago I sent out a bunch of resumes and like I said many newsletters ago... I told them I'd get back to them. And I am so happy I did. I am honored to be a part of such a amazing group of farmers, workers, volunteers, and CSA members. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

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wandering around in the foggy morning light. And they were extremely skittish, considering we had not met in recent weeks. They bounded straight toward me and past me, headed for the thick woods. They went much faster than I could follow, but I bounced along behind them.

I got off my cart and walked into the woods. The woods are on a steep slope and they probably cover less than a half an acre – there is a fence on one side and open fields on all the other sides. I walked very quietly through the underbrush and looked hard. Found them. They couldn't believe it. Reluctantly they left their hiding place and ran out of the woods. Again, they were moving much faster than I could move, so I lost them.

I decided to search for them very methodically. I started on the westernmost end of the farm and crawled under all the bushes. No deer. Went to the next little wooded area and walked through it quietly. No deer. Huh. Went to the next tree line, one that was planted as a wind break, and drove very slowly along the edge, peering through the branches. Found them. I said, very softly, "I found you." They freaked out and ran out into the open. I chased them along the fence.

These three deer are known to me. It is a mother and two fawns who have been haunting our fence, mostly from the outside, for months. I have chased them out of the fence twice before when the babies were much smaller.

Anyway, I lost them again, and now we were down to just two panicky deer running along the fence because one

of the youngsters had gone another direction. I went and opened every gate in the fence and decided to give it a rest.

When the workers came to the barn for our morning meeting, I saw the three deer reunited, bounding across a field way out to the west. I said, "get on your golf carts, we are going to get those deer out!" We had talked before about herding deer and not getting too close and how to keep them from killing themselves by flinging themselves against the fence. Everyone could see I was dead serious about this and we spread out on our golf carts.

It took a few false starts and we lost them a few times, but they were getting tired of running the whole three-quarter mile length of the farm, and they were tired of panicking. I circled back to round them up twice, and each time they went the wrong way. Finally I was close enough to cut them off at the pass, so to speak, and I yelled with all my voice at them as they tried to get past me. I drove like a crazy person across the bumpy wild part of the farm, herding them toward one of the gates, yelling to everyone to stay to the left, stay to the left!

No one had ever heard me yell before – I was like a rodeo rider who had lost her mind, zigzagging and bouncing behind the deer on my little golf cart (with Hannah hanging on for her life beside me). They scooted through the open gate and escaped the crazy lady. I did a triumphant victory zoom with fists in the air, amusing the workers greatly.

The day's work list had included "get those three deer out of the fence." Check!



### Small World

I was in San Diego last week for a meeting of the Board of Governors of Honoring Nations, a program that each year identifies the best examples of Native American governance. Our meeting was being held in conjunction with the National Congress of American Indians, where we would announce the winners at a morning symposium.

I was getting coffee at the hotel when I thought I recognized the woman behind me. It was Michelle Castagne. She's been working the PVF stand on Route 7 every Saturday since the summer began. In her 9 to 5 job during the week she works for the National Indian Health Board, and was attending the convention to help with the Board's presentations to the Congress.

— Michael Lipsky