

THE ISLAND AGRARIAN

NEWS FROM SAN JUAN ISLAND GRANGE #966

**GROWERS, MAKERS, AND KEEPERS WORKING TOGETHER
FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING**

Grange Potluck Returns!

Please bring your home-cooked dishes to the Grange Hall at 5:30pm on Wednesday, December 6 to share! We have not had a regular Grange Potluck since before covid, and we are eager to break bread together again.

The topic for the evening will be a proposal for the Grange and allied organizations to lease public land to host community gardens, market gardens, rotational grazing, tree crops and other enterprises in an integrated, regenerative system.

The Agricultural Support Committee will present the project and lead the discussion. There will be social time with fellow Grangers before and after the presentation. The regular Grange meeting will follow at 7pm.



Repair Economy Summit: *Building It Together*

Advancing a circular economy of the people, by the people, for the future

Join your repair-and-reuse peers for not one but TWO days of ideas and building the movement together.



When: Tuesday, December 5, 3pm — Wednesday, December 6, 6pm PST

Where: Online

Cost: FREE

Register: www.repaireconomywa.org/

Topics covered: policy, project showcases, community engagement, incentivizing repair, when efforts fail, funding, liability, using public libraries, volunteer and inventory management, network needs, what we can build together, and more!



San Juan Island Grange #966 is a grassroots, non-partisan advocacy group supporting a resilient community on San Juan Island.

The Grange serves San Juan Islanders with legislative programs and community activities, such as talent and craft contests, scholarships, and more. You don't have to be a farmer to belong, though many are. Our elected officers are volunteers, and our "work" is done through committees. The heart of our mission is fostering community well-being, and we enjoy gathering to celebrate this.

We are a 501(c)(8) organization, accepting donations towards our programs and to maintain Grange Hall, in downtown Friday Harbor.

Officers of San Juan Island Grange #966 may be found at sanjuangrange.org/officers.html

Our bylaws and resolutions may be found at sanjuangrange.org/structure.html

San Juan Island Grange #966
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No-Till Drillin'—Not Your Grandfathers Farming!

By Court Bell, Goose Hollow Farm

We had the opportunity to try out a new piece of equipment this fall—a no-till drill.



Bruce Gregory and Brook Brouwer inspecting the no-till drill

Using a no-till drill means you don't turn the soil over by plowing, disking, cultivating, or rototilling, or at most, you just do one shallow cultivator pass. Each time you turn over the soil, weed seeds spring to the surface. In addition, vital microbial colonies in the soil are disturbed, leading to lower fertility and poor incorporation of organic matter.

Goose Hollow Farm needed help! Every time we tilled and planted a new grain crop, we were inundated with weeds. Sometimes I thought we really needed to find markets for thistle, lambs quarters, and mustard!

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The Agrarian Book Review

By Roger Ellison

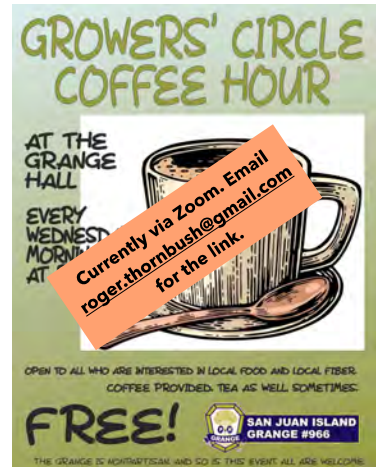
A Small Farm Future: Making the Case for a Society Built Around Local Economies, Self-Provisioning, Agricultural Diversity and a Shared Earth by Chris Smaje



A Small Farm Future is a rare book, offering analysis of the world’s current crises with thoughtful solutions for everyday people. It strikes all the right notes and has become a favorite book of mine. In a well-presented argument that is at times witty and always based on a thorough reading of history, Smaje tells us that the current global economic system cannot continue. Its base of support, the vast quantities of concentrated energy in the form of coal and oil that has driven it, are becoming increasingly costly. Costly in terms of money of course but also in destruction of communities and ecosystems. He makes a strong case for reordering our societies around local economies, small mixed farms, and artisan villages. Smaje does not call for a return to the land out of a sense of nostalgia. He believes that a new agrarian economy of self-provisioning farms is the only realistic way ahead. He addresses problems that might arise, for instance, how we protect the gains of a liberal society while creating a more family-centered and small community social sphere? What changes to land ownership or access will be needed to allow more people to grow food? How does a modern populace who have lost the skills of working the land make the transition?

These quandaries and many more are handled in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner that engages us in a conversation about our future.

I recommend this book to all Makers, Growers, and Keepers. You can order the book and read Chris Smaje’s blog at <https://chrissmaje.com/>.



Overheard at the Growers’ Circle...

At the Grower’s Circle meeting on October 25 we talked about all the rain that fell and started filling our tanks. Yay!

We talked about wildflowers, pollinators, seed bombing... Growers recommended [Northwest Meadows](#) [Scapes Native Seed](#).

Granger Jenny Harris was awarded a Pacific Horticulture Design Futurist Award! [Pacific Horticulture](#) | [And the Design Futurist Award goes to...](#)

Letter from the President

Help Wanted!

I need your help. I have tried to set up an email system with addresses like newsletter@sanjuangrange.org and membership@sanjuangrange.org but with no success. Any takers? Text me at 360-622-9796, and maybe we can meet over my laptop to figure this out.

And please help your Grange by serving on a committee. As you renew your membership in December using the renewal form at <https://sanjuangrange.org/membership.html>, check the boxes of the committees that interest you. In addition to serving as a committee member, please consider being a 2024 chairperson for one of the committees below.

The **Membership Committee** welcomes new members, assigns them mentors, finds them committee work, promotes associates to regular membership, and maintains a roster of members with their skills and interests. **This committee needs a chair for 2024.**

The **Legislative Committee** did good work in 2023 on the removal of the Snake River Dams, recommending changing titles from "Master, et al" to "President et al" in Washington Granges, and compiling comments from Grangers on the County Destination Management Plan. **This committee needs a chair for 2024.**

The **Building Committee** is responsible for improving and maintaining our beloved Grange Hall. **This committee needs a chair for 2024.**

Family Living Coordinator. This is traditionally a job for someone who wants to promote the household economy of food preservation, baking, and sewing, but it can be expanded to include an entire gamut of self-reliance, resilience, and mutual aid programs.

We also need a **Potluck Coordinator** or an **Event Planner** or both. You can also volunteer on the **Agricultural Support, Marketing, Scholarship, Cooperative Activities, or Program** committees.

Committee positions are filled by the President and Vice-President, so email roger.thornbush@gmail.com or jessa.madosky@gmail.com.

Roger Ellison, President 2023

No-Till Drillin' continued

Bruce Gregory, of the San Juan Islands Conservation District, had finished walking our fields and had completed writing our farm plan for the Voluntary Stewardship Program. He had talked about my weed problem and mentioned the advantages of no-till drilling. Bruce thought it would be a good fit for us. A week later I saw the Great Plains 606NT up at the barn at neighboring Ferry Boat Seeds, owned by Louisa and Brook Brouwer. Brook had just no-till drilled several of their plots with a cover crop mix, and the fields were a beautiful emerald green carpet. I was jealous and stopped in to see Brook and Louisa.



Ferry Boat Seeds farm with a green cover crop plot, planted in late September

Brooke showed me the drill and volunteered to help me. In the end, Brook used their tractor and did the actual drilling. It was mid-October and late for putting in a cover crop, but with 200 pounds of winter peas, 50 pounds of winter wheat, and 20 pounds of Daikon radish, we no-tilled the 4.4 acres of a former barley field and a section of fallow ground. An additional advantage of the drill is you can plant two or three different seed types at once in a custom blend.

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Bruce and Brook go over seed rates and specs for the three different cover crop plantings

No-Till Drillin' continued



Court and Brook plan the pass



Daikon radish seedlings three weeks after planting

No till drills are heavy! They have to be to punch seed down through stubble. The Great Plains 606NT weighs in at about 3600 pounds, and it takes a pretty large tractor, with rear hydraulics.

Are we happy with the result?

Absolutely! Goose Hollow Farm will be using the no-till drill for seeding grain in the spring. The drill is a good solution for fields down to as small as half an acre. And it is ideal for planting several adjacent fields

You don't have to be a farmer with large acreage to take advantage of this

service offered by the Conservation District. Don't let the lack of a large tractor stop you from contacting the Conservation District at (360) 378-6621. Your Conservation District is an incredible resource. Bruce Gregory was instrumental in getting the drill in 2017 and has worked with farmers all over the county to plant cover crops and improve pastures. The cost to use the drill is \$30 for a three-day planting session, plus \$250 towards a maintenance fee. You can't get a better deal than that!