

# VALLEY LAND ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

Our mission is to educate and build alliances to protect our uniquely productive California Central Valley Farmland

**HOLIDAY '21**

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**Where to find us**

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## The President's Message

Hello and happy holidays to our friends and families.

Our theme this season is RECIPROCITY. Wikipedia defines Reciprocity as “the practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit” and what better theme could we have! This is a season of new beginnings, reaching out to others, giving and receiving.

The picture shows the burning of almond prunings, a practice that will soon be replaced with chipping for mutual benefit, a dry canal which will be filled with managed water, and bees which traveled far to soon pollinate almond trees during their journey from tree to tree to get nectar to make honey. Multi beneficial practices working with our precious soil and water are the talk of the day.

With the change in the weather and the climate, and an imbalance of demand and supply for water, the State has encouraged regions to address practices that are multi beneficial. Millions of dollars have been allocated by the State to be used to address our need to work together for mutual benefits.

With your support, VLA will continue to reach out to educate to save farmland, protect our natural resources, which support practices that will provide mutual benefits for everyone.

We thank you and wish you a Happy Holiday Season and a prosperous, healthy New Year.

Jean Okuye



Almond prunings being burned.



# Reciprocal Hope



Our theme for this newsletter is reciprocity, and we wanted to make sure that when we put this newsletter out there in the world, we included what that word meant to us in regards to living in the central valley. What it means to live around agriculture, and to live in a world where we are confronted with myriad problems that have no easy solutions. The political climate in the United States may never have been so divided as it is now. The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) is still trading water futures, and as we worried in our Spring newsletter, those prices have only gone up since then. Last year, we highlighted the dangerous ecological implications of looking to resolve our water crisis with constructing more, rushed, dams. Its hard to think of immense problems without thinking of the pandemic of course: An event that even the VLA, as small as it is, must contend with when thinking about what events we can organize, or immediate action we can take.

We are all connected, and each of us contributes to a world that matters. A world that we move to a brighter future. Our spring newsletter dove into the issues surrounding water in California. It highlighted the work of a community to clean up their river bank and a push to help save the monarch butterflies in the aftermath of 2020's wildfires. In our Summer newsletter we showed the bright future that new minds want to usher in, with Clara Medina (the recipient of the Peter and Rochelle Koch Scholarship). She has worked and continues to work tirelessly to understand the environment of our world better. We talked about the importance of ecology, so that we might be better able to understand the land we live on and in. That we might better our use of it, our sustainment of it, and into doing so, look to a bright future where we manage our water sustainably. Where we are able to

preserve the farmland of the Valley that we have now—a treasure steadily disappearing.

The Valley Land Alliance stands for a future that works to preserve farmland. When I was thinking about the theme of reciprocity, it was hard for me to separate it from hope. In school we read *I and Thou* by Martin Buber, which is a philosophical work that seeks to explore and explain two distinct ways that an individual might interact with another person. For Buber, he explained an I-You (or I-Thou) interaction as one where two people can see and open themselves to each other's whole being; It is genuine, and you see the other person as a complex, rich, creature. Oftentimes though Buber thought people interacted in what he called an I-It dynamic. As it sounds, I-It does not see someone in all their complexity, and instead reduces them to and object. He writes that this "is the sublime melancholy of our lot that every You must become and It in our world... the You becomes an object among objects, possibly the noblest one and yet one of them, assigned its measure and boundary..." (Buber, Kaufman 68). We couldn't live a productive life if we didn't engage in a little I-It most of the time, but I find this idea poignant in a world where it is so easy to feel so small. It is easy to believe that our individual stories may not contribute to some of the larger problems the world faces, that we hear about all the time, every day. But I want to impress upon each person who reads this, the VLA, this newsletter, conservation and environmental movements we have shown you or fought for, would all be impossible if not for you.

This idea of seeing the other person genuinely always struck accord with me when I thought about everything people accomplish together. If I can indulge one more quote with you: "Relation is reciprocity. My You acts on me as I act on it. Our students teach us, our works form us... Inscrutably involved, we live in the currents of universal reciprocity." (Buber, Kaufman 67) This was the idea that I struggled to articulate when I thought of reciprocity and hope. That we are all living in this world together and what each of us does, who each of is effects everyone else. What keeps us going through all of the problems the world faces; the problems each of us choose to face is that we hope a better world and fight for that hope. None of us are alone, and in coldest winter the most important thing we exchange with each other in an act of reciprocity is hope. Everyone at the VLA continues to fight the hopes we all share of a brighter world. I wish you a winter where the cold does not find you, and the spring comes in due course.

Jake Magneson

(Martin Buber. Translated by  
Walter Kaufman, *I and Thou*, 1970)



Cows by a fence on Magneson Dairy.



# Trevor's Three Sisters Chili

## Ingredients:

- 2 (15 oz.) Pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tb T. Olive oil
- 1 Medium onion, chopped
- 1 Red bell pepper, chopped
- 1-2 Jalapeño chilies, seeded and chopped
- 1 Garlic clove, minced
- 1 tb Chili powder
- ¾ tb Kosher salt
- 1 tsp Ground cumin
- ½ tsp Smoked paprika
- 2 lb. Butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed, chopped into ½-in. pieces (I substitute yams)
- 1 cup Fresh corn (I use frozen, white petite)
- 15 oz. Can Diced tomatoes (use Rotel if don't have jalapeno)
- 1 cup Vegetable broth

## Instructions:

1. Mash ½ cup of the pinto beans then set aside with the remaining whole pinto beans.
2. Heat oil in a large dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, bell pepper, jalapenos, and garlic, and cook, stirring often (5 minutes). Stir in chili powder, salt, cumin, and paprika, and cook stirring constantly (1 min).
3. Increase heat to high; stir in butternut squash, corn, tomatoes, broth, whole beans, and reserved ½ cup mashed beans, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, stirring occa-



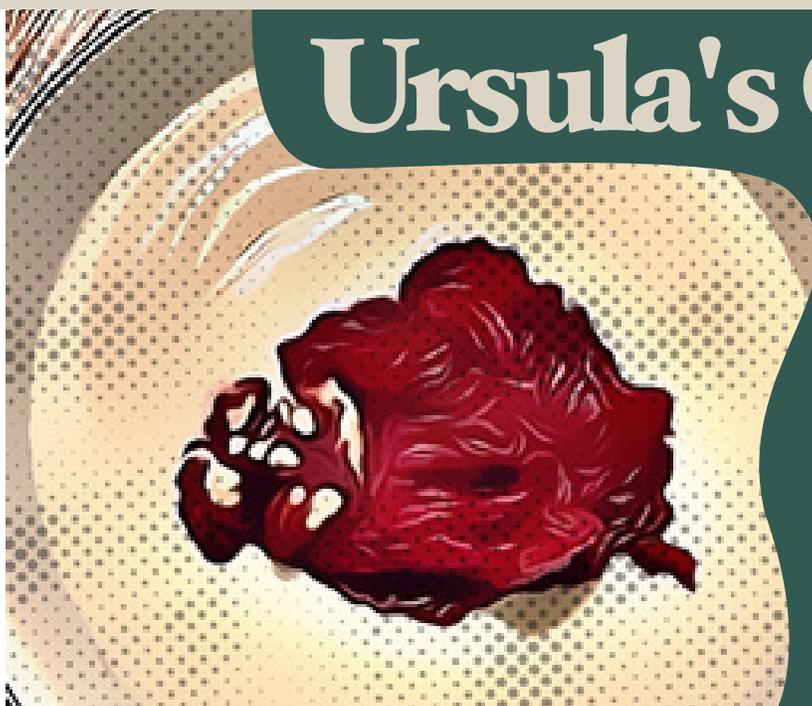
# Ursula's Cranberry Relish

## Ingredients:

- 1 bag Cranberries
- 1 Peeled orange
- 1 cup Sugar

## Instructions:

1. Mix all of the ingredients all together in a food processor.
- Have it with your turkey or as a tasty topping for toast!



# Thank you for your support!

WE WISH TO THANK ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SUPPORTED US WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIPS AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS ALLOW US TO EDUCATE PEOPLE AND POLICY-MAKERS IN OUR COMMUNITY. VLA IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT FROM THE JOHN & NANCY CASSIDY FAMILY FOUNDATION, AN ADVISED FUND OF SILICON VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

THANKS TO OUR BOARD AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS WHICH PUT IN MANY HOURS TO MAKE OUR WORLD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE.



Flower from board member Ursula Stock's garden.

## Sudoku

4	1				5	3	2	
	2		7		9			
	8							
				1				9
	3		9		2	4		
9		1					3	8
	9							
1		2	5	9				
	6	3	4		7		1	

If you have a photo or write-up you'd like to share, please send it to our email at [valleylandalliance209@gmail.com](mailto:valleylandalliance209@gmail.com)

*If you'd also like to be a donor fill out the form below. No gift is too large or too small.*

Valley Land Alliance  
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