



Finding Common Ground

February 2025

Up Front

DAISY EVANS GUNN TR

Common Ground Ecovillage has a new address!

**5797 Daisy Evans Gunn Trail
Mebane, NC 27302**

We'll be installing a road sign and address plate in the next two weeks. You can use this address in your GPS navigating systems to find us. It's been a very lengthy process with the County to achieve this, and it feels very good to finally be "on the map" with our own community address!



A Compassionate Communication (NVC) 8-week course is coming to Common Ground! Compassionate Communication a.k.a. Non-violent Communication (NVC), **which has recently been accepted by our membership as part of our core Community Cultural Agreements**, is a communication skillset and compassionate consciousness that will support our shift from competitive power-over independent mindsets to cooperative interdependence, while also supporting our decision-making through Sociocracy.

It is no small thing to make this change in how

we respond to ourselves and each other because it is the opposite of the competitive culture we have been raised in. To aid us in moving into this way of being, the gift of **a very discounted 8-session course** tailored for our community is being offered by **Steve Torma**, who walks the talk at Earthaven and is one of the most effective and treasured NVC teachers in the state.

Search your email for the subject: "Invitation to NVC Course w/Steve Torma" for full details plus a link to the introductory video recorded at the January COG meeting.



Photo by Lucas

Doug and Rachel B hold up turmeric they harvested.

ALL ABOUT EVENTS

TOURS OF THE LAND

Are you a new Common Ground member or a curious person who is thinking of joining? We regularly hold tours of the Land preceding the Community on the Ground (COG) meeting which are usually **the fourth Saturday of the month (February 22) at 1:30 p.m. RSVP is required.** You can also schedule a tour at an alternate time. Contact Lisa and put "Request for Tour" in the subject line: Lberley@yahoo.com. Or text 919-619-2979.

RACIAL AWARENESS BOOK GROUP

Membership Circle

Every Monday, 7-8 p.m., Zoom

Contact Lisa to join with subject "Racial Awareness Book Group": Lberley@yahoo.com

This is a great time to join because we recently started reading a new book: *The Rage of Innocence — How America Criminalizes Black Youth*, by Kristin Henning. The book group is for CGEV members and the larger community. The format is reading aloud and breaking between paragraphs to share personal reflections, questions, and ideas. People attend as often as they can.

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION (NVC) 8-WEEK COURSE WITH STEVE TORMA

Governance & Communication

In-person and via Zoom
RSVP to renenberg.cge@gmail.com.

As you saw in the "Up Front" section, we can't recommend this highly enough!

The class dates and times are:

GET INVOLVED

- ◆ **All events are in Eastern Time** and open to everyone unless otherwise indicated. **You must RSVP** for details and last-minute changes.
- ◆ **COVID Policy:** For your safety and others', bring a mask in case it is needed. At CGEV, we protect those most vulnerable.
- ◆ **Accessibility:** At this stage in our development, terrain is unpaved and uneven, and restrooms are not wheelchair-accessible.
- ◆ **Google Calendar Link:** [CGEV Calendar](#)
- ◆ **To add or change an event**, email Ren at ren.enberg2@gmail.com



Winter comes to Persimmon Pond.

Photo by Hope

Feb. 15: 3-5 p.m., March 1: 3-5 p.m., March 8: 3-5 p.m., March 15: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., March 29: 10 a.m.-noon, April 5: 7-9 p.m., April 12: 7-9 p.m., and April 19: 10 a.m.-noon. Note the times are different depending on the week, allowing for greater attendance and may change if needed. Each 2-hour session will be recorded and distributed to students.

ALL members are welcome and strongly encouraged to partake. Currently, participation is not required, but very strongly recommended for all members. For a donation of \$10-25 per session

(\$80 to \$200 for eight sessions), you're getting the same training as his 101 and 201 classes combined, valued at \$350 with the added bonus that we are learning and practicing together as a community.

Financial aid is available if needed. Our priority is that all members have access to this critical learning opportunity. The class will be taught over Zoom, and people may gather at several individual homes to practice together, or you can Zoom in from wherever you are.



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MONTHLY HEART SHARE

HeartWeavers Subcircle

Friday, February 21, 7-9 p.m.,
Zoom

Organizers Ren Enberg and Quai Derr. RSVP Heart_Share@commonground.eco. This month's theme is TBD.

These gatherings have been a valuable way for CGEV members to get to know each other at a deeper level than our usual interactions at other meetings and events. We have a well-developed protocol for how each person participates so that you can do the important work of getting gradually more vulnerable without being judged.

All humans have a deep need for "being seen," valued, appreciated, cared about, and care for others. We invite you to get to know the "chosen family" that you are joining in an attentive, non-judgmental way. Watch for a detailed email invitation, or just RSVP now!

COMMUNITY ON THE GROUND

Governance & Comms Circle

Saturday, February 22, 3-5 p.m.,
Zoom and in-person at the Nest
in Mebane.

RSVP to Becky, subject "COG." These all-member meetings are reliably informative and connecting for all involved. If you want to be a part of this community on

any level, this meeting is for you. Stay for the potluck, too.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK

Membership Circle

Saturday, February 22, 5:30-7:30
p.m., following Community on
the Ground at The Nest.

No RSVP required. Contact Lisa for information.

Potlucks are our time to break bread together and socialize, play, and sometimes chew over the Community on the Ground meeting content. Please bring something to share. Vegetable dishes typically predominate, but all sorts of foods are welcome. Just bring a list of ingredients or jot them down when you come. Make it a habit to come to these events!

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Tuesdays, February 4 and 18,
4:30-6:30 p.m., hybrid.

Email Anthony for updates and link with subject P&D: weston@elon.edu. Observers welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

Policy meetings on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays, February 6 and 20, 12-2 p.m., on Zoom.

Task meetings, as needed, on alternate Thursdays. RSVP to Lisa with subject "Membership Circle": LBerley@yahoo.com. We welcome visitors and encourage Exploratory Members to join the circle and Visiting Members to help with tasks.

GENERAL CIRCLE

Sundays, February 9 & 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m., on Zoom.

RSVP to Hope with subject "GC" 2 days in advance: hopenatrix@fastmail.com. Come observe to

CIRCLE MEETINGS

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Subscribe to our [Common Ground calendar](#) or view it in your browser. Send calendar requests with a subject line of "Calendar Request" or "Calendar Update" to calendar@commonground.eco.

And share your voice in Our Community Forum: <https://discourse.commonground.eco/>

find out what's happening with all Circles at CGEV and how you can be involved.

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Tuesday, February 11, 7-8:30

p.m. Hybrid if some folks cannot attend in person. RSVP to Doug at dr.tobagopepper@gmail.com.

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATION

Tuesday, February 18, 7-9 p.m.,
Zoom. RSVP to Quai with G&CC

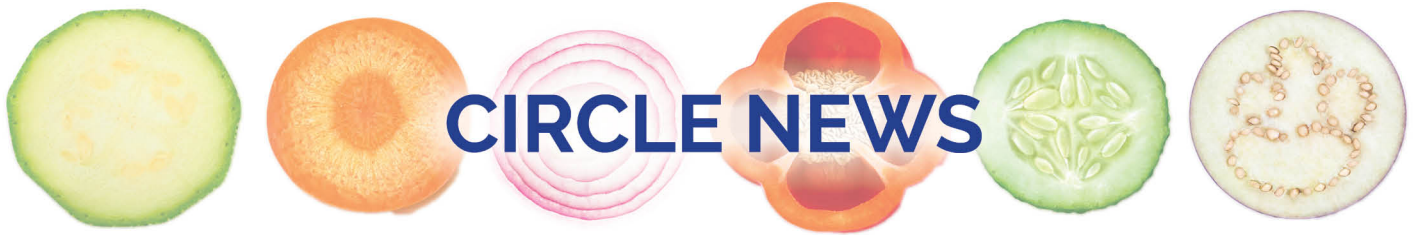
in the subject line: quaifranklin@gmail.com

If you're interested in observing or helping with G&CC work, please send your request to gov-com@commonground.eco.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL TASK GROUP

Contact Becky at blaskody@gmail.com to offer your participation.





LAND STEWARDSHIP CIRCLE

As the calendar prepared to flip into 2025, one final lightning storm overtook the landscape, and our stalwart supporter Grandmother Oak stood tall in the purple glow. The skywater fell, and lightning flashed directly overhead. A rush, a thrill, **a charge to bring us into the new year.**

Twice the snow has fallen and stuck, bringing beautiful sights out on the Land. A snowflok even showed up to the barn one frosty night, wanting to lend a hand. The cold seemed to last forever. Multiple days went by without it getting above freezing. Community activity on the land slowed but did not completely stop. Some fires, some tours, some mostly blissful seeding and transplanting in the tunnels (darn you, potting mix ice cubes!), and even a jaunt out onto the frozen surface of the pond. We hope the beavers and otters and other critters have managed to stay warm enough.

The Farm Team is incredibly hard at work (and warm, thanks to the household over at the Nest!), **transforming the farm business into a co-operatively held enterprise.** Through many meetings related to business strategy, marketing, budgeting, and more, there is a coherent vision coming together for this next growing season. One example of clear messaging, a phrase that calls out the villain we are taking down one small CSA step at a time: **“We live in an industrial food system that mistreats the land, makes people sick, and breaks our relationship with the earth and the food we eat.”**

All together, we will tend to beautiful relationships in the garden this year that heal and nourish us.

Beyond the garden, **Gonzalo initiated “Operation Dragon,”** instigating a long-awaited



Photo by Paul

The Nest is seen on a snowy January day. It's been a warm haven for the Farm Team on these cold days.

acceleration of beautification around the garden/barn/farm spaces. No longer neglecting back rooms, 2025 is the year we feel prouder than ever in the spaces we gather for community meals and events. Come on out anytime this February to help organize, clean out, tidy, and shower the Land with love.

Many projects are possible, only a few will probably be completed or progressed in any meaningful way. **What about a bathhouse, or a solar kiln, or a patch of blueberry bushes, or a cob pizza oven? Or perhaps a proto-Common House?** The folks on the Land Stewardship Circle continue to prioritize to make our dreams of greater resilience, vitality, and vibrancy on this landscape a reality.

[See CIRCLE NEWS, page 5](#)

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

Planning work with the County and with our site engineer, Bobby Tucker, slowed a bit over the holidays, but **we are now completing applications for Erosion Control and Storm-water permits** — those are the big (expensive) ones — as well as some others. Barring unforeseen bumps in that process (looks good, but who knows?), we will shortly have the regulatory approval to solicit bids and then begin infrastructure construction. **This is a huge step ... and it means that the financial and legal side is even more where the action now needs to be.**

It's still unclear how ownership is to be organized. Herculean efforts by Paul, especially, have tracked multiple promising paths to probable dead-ends. As we know, current economic options just do not fit alternative cooperative (dare we even say, non-capitalistic) structures and ideals, at least without huge effort and cost, and sometimes not even then — but more work and follow-up is needed. As always, volunteers are very welcome! **On the financing side, progress is also slow, but we are readying some key documents and procedures, including a procedure for lot/site selection and a pledge form for formalizing financial commitments to enable infrastructure-**



Photo by Hope

Folks hang out at The Nest after a potluck.

building. A model for financial planning is also in the works.

On the Forum, [this document](#) continues to be the best guide to P&D's overall work. We continue to be committed to jump-starting building the Common House in order to support community-building. We need people to help plan, organize and actually begin building on the site—hopefully soon! Please go to the Forum threads (there are two) on [Building the Common House](#) for more information and challenge yourself to step forward to take an active leadership role.

MEMBERSHIP CIRCLE

Please join us in congratulating Nikki and Gonzalo for advancing to the next level of membership. We are all the richer for getting to know them more deeply through the discernment process.

We are excited by the growing number of Common Ground families with children and expecting parents! This past month, **MC sponsored a brunch for families with young children**, giving us an opportunity to simply break bread together. The group shared hopes and concerns for life in the future village, and Paul talked briefly about the **long-held dream for a school at Common Ground.**



Photo by Hope

A pine cone snuggles in ice.

[See CIRCLE NEWS, page 6](#)

CIRCLE NEWS, from Page 5

Our Circle also sponsored the Community on the Ground (COG) meeting in January. We focused on linking members to tasks that need doing and also bringing attention to the Bios section of our website. On the project front, **Quaye and Quai are spearheading a new member data portal initiative.** This has involved revising our Jump On In (JOIN) form for new members. Lots of progress has been made and we are looking forward to testing the portal in February. Community input will be welcome then, too!

GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS CIRCLE

Our IT Task Group is working on a membership database and an accompanying web interface where members will be able to update their own data. Quaye is working on the web presence and Quai is working with him to build the back-end database, importing the tables and many fields of data currently being maintained by Ren. We hope to be able to release it this spring.

If you're interested in helping with the IT Task group, let us know by writing to IT@commonground.eco. You don't have to have tech-



Photo by Lucas

Kai plants lettuce in the shelter of a tent.

nical skills. We could use help with planning, communication, and scheduling.

MEMBER HAPPENINGS

CGEV Members may list their events not sponsored by CGEV Circles as an FYI. Supply title, date, time, location, links, and description.

Herbalicious Explorations Class, led by Melanie Yukov

When: Six Sundays, March 30, April 13, May 18, June 29, September 28, October 26, 1-5 p.m.

Where: On the Common Ground Land! Why not get to know the plants right under our noses?

For more details and regis-

tration, visit <https://root-risewellness.org/herbaliciousexplore>.

It's here by popular demand — an intro to foraging and herbal medicine-making course where you will sip on delicious tea, hand-craft and take home your own medicine, learn plant identification, forge connections and much more!

Spots are limited! And this is a course that builds, not individual classes.



From Rachel Wilde: Interested in expanding your veggie

recipe repertoire and more? I recommend **Eat Like a Farmer** at www.farmbelly.com or on Substack. Janey first introduced me to Farm Belly a couple of months ago when she was sharing a recipe at one of our potlucks.

Michelle Aronson and her husband and son live on 10-acre farm in Alamance County. She teaches gardening and cooking classes, does a weekly newsletter on Substack and has a YouTube channel and an Instagram presence. To help people “learn how to grow, cook and eat like a farmer.”