

SUMMARY OF FELLOWSHIP OF PREPARATION MAKERS INTERVIEW
WITH MAC MEAD
FALL 2018

PRE-INTERVIEW SURVEY RESPONSES –

How long have you been making preparations?

42 years

Do you currently make the preparations as an individual, a group, or as part of an organization? If a group or organization, with whom?

I currently make preparations with the Pfeiffer Center. Part of our One-Year Part-time Practical Training in Biodynamics course is teaching the making and using of all the preparations. The course meets once or twice a month from Sept.-June and the preps and peppers are made and used at the appropriate times. We try to bring in the natural science and Spiritual Science aspects of each prep. There are times, like when I make certain peppers do or an experiment with a preparation, that I will just do it with the Pfeiffer Center interns and staff and not with our public course.

Please describe the location where you make the preparations (climate, soils, landscape).

I am based in Southern New York state. It used to be zone 5 but are merging into being zone 6, with our coldest temperatures being in the low single figures and only exceptionally below 0 Fahrenheit. We get approx. 48" of rainfall yearly.

Average first frost is Oct. 10 and last one May 10. Our soil is a sandy clay loam and is well drained. We are in a glacial moraine area, hence the name of our county -- Rockland. The landscape is moderately hilly with low areas tending to have more clay and high areas more sand/gravel proportionately.

Which preparations do you make and on average how much of each?

We make all of the preparations each year as well as Barrel Compost, tree paste and weed, insect, and vertebrate peppers which I like to call "pepperations."

Each year we bury about 60 horns of 500 and make one or two horns of 501. We make all of the compost preps, with yarrow being our smallest amount due to challenges getting bladders. We usually make about one pint of the yarrow prep, one quart of 503, 1 gallon of 504, ½ gallon of 505, ½ gallon of 506, 2 oz. of 507, and ½ gallon of 508.

How do you obtain preparation making ingredients?

We grow each of the preparation plants and do the harvesting/drying here. We get the horns from Viroqua Biodynamic Supplies and the manure from our sister operation Duryea Farm of the Fellowship Community, which has a small herd of Jerseys. The animal sheaths and skull we get from Threshold Farm, which is two hours north of here.

Do you distribute the preparations to others? If yes, to whom? Do you sell preparations? If so, what do you charge?

We make the preparations primarily for the Pfeiffer Center and the Fellowship Community. Sometimes if we have extra we will give them away, but we do not sell them.

Who have been your primary mentors in learning how to make, store, and apply the preparations?

I will say with great gratitude that my primary mentors were coworkers with Ehrenfried Pfeiffer. My main teacher was Evelyn Gregg. Other mentors were Dr. Paul Scharff, Peter Escher, Howland Vibber, Erica Sabarth, Margaret Selke, Willi Ringwald, John Hoffman, my wife Ellen Mead, and, last but not least, Rudolf Steiner.

AUDIO INTERVIEW OCTOBER 2018 –

This is Brian Wickert and Mac Mead on October 29. (Marjory House joined later.)

What was the doorway that led you to biodynamics?

I grew up in a farming area in Connecticut. My father was not a farmer, but we were surrounded by various kinds of farms -- vegetable, tobacco, dairy -- so often for summer jobs I worked on hay farms. But also, I lived in a beautiful area. I had the opportunity to be out in nature all day long every day. When I go back there now, I can find white oaks, yarrow and basically all the prep plants. In the town was a private school that had a really good quality education. One of my friends got me a job on his father's tobacco farm and it was actually during that summer -- I think I was 17 -- that made an inner commitment to do farming but more not just to farm but to bring somehow nature and education together.

After college, I ended up being a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. To find work for alternate service, a friend of my fathers had a handicapped son at the Camphill Village, Copake, New York and he knew conscientious objectors worked there. He was going to go visit his son and I went with him, and it just blew me away. I had never heard of anthroposophy or Rudolf Steiner or these things, but when I drove in there the architecture of the buildings -- that kind of the anthroposophical architecture with different angles and different colors -- was just like the sculpture I had been doing in college. Just from the window of the car I could tell something very special was going on there. I met some really nice people and one of the special needs adults came up and said, "You know, they are doing a kind of farming here where the soil gets better every year." I was so naïve it was the early 70's -- the word organic barely existed and there was not this big dichotomy between conventional and organic. I did not realize, actually, until that moment, that there were methods of farming where the soil got worse, and for me that was a sin. That may be a funny word to use but I love nature, the main thing in my life was nature, the beauty of nature, and to think that something was damaging that as a practice. And, then to realize that there is an alternative.

Anyway, I worked there but they did not need help on the farm then. I worked in a book bindery. But there I met the work of Rudolf Steiner which I really appreciated. To tell you the truth, I just liked the fact that you were free to approach it as much as you wanted, you could read a book at whatever pace you wanted. At that time, you were either like atheist or totally into religion or dependent on gurus and none of those spoke to me, but I sensed a freedom in the Spiritual Science of Rudolf Steiner. So, I worked at Camphill Copake for two years and found I really liked community.

While I was there, I met people from the Fellowship Community in Spring Valley which is two hours south of Camphill Copake. It is a similar kind of community except caring for the elderly is their focus. When I left Camphill Copake, I looked into being a teacher or going to Emerson College or going to Eurythmy School or being a biodynamic farmer, and I thought that I did not want to be any one thing. I applied to be a coworker at the Fellowship to do whatever was needed. The Fellowship is located in Spring Valley, New York, which is

where Ehrenfried Pfeiffer lived out the last years of his life and where there has been biodynamics since the 1920's, a long heritage, a well-established anthroposophical community.

I rolled in there in 1975, I was 25, and came there to do whatever was needed. It was a combination of what we might call human care, moderate nursing care, maintenance, repairs on buildings and gardening. I was there a week when someone came in and said, "Hey, there is an older guy out in the field there that needs help. You are the new guy, why don't you go out and help him?" I went out there and he needed to have a bucket of 500 stirred. This was Howland Vibber, who worked with Pfeiffer at Pfeiffer's Farm for many years. He said, "Have a seat," and told me "Do this," "Do that." Then he went up on his tractor and would just continue to plant cover crops and I stirred for an hour.

Howland's wife Mathilde ("Dickie") did lab work with Pfeiffer. She did the crystallizations and she was an excellent biodynamic gardener in Spring Valley. This was the sensitive crystallization process that Pfeiffer developed with Erika Sabarth in the lab, for which he was granted an honorary doctorate from Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. It was a pretty accurate diagnostic tool for major illnesses such as cancer and leukemia, and this is back in the late 1930's. Hahnemann was a homeopathic hospital, and Pfeiffer conducted thousands of tests showing the efficacy of this method, which he developed from suggestions by Rudolf Steiner to be able to show the etheric forces working in matter. He is more commonly known for the chromatography which he adapted. He didn't invent chromatography, but he adapted it to soils and blood tests to show life qualities, life vitality. The sensitive crystallization process is much more complicated, much more involved, but much more sensitive to the qualities of soils or seeds or blood

Pfeiffer died in 1961 and his lab went until the early 70's. Here in Spring Valley, he had a biochemical research laboratory from 1946 to about 1971. After he died, Dr. Koepf came over and helped to run that, so there were many coworkers of Pfeiffer's who helped run the lab and did the experiments on gardening... Many of them had retired to the Fellowship when the lab closed, so they retired as older individuals to the Fellowship. Dr. Paul Scharff and his wife Ann started the Fellowship, and Dr. Scharff knew Pfeiffer from the time Dr. Scharff was a young boy in Ohio. Pfeiffer used to stay at their farm and taught him how to make the preps. Dr. Scharff went to medical school and he did his residency in New York City so they could live here in Spring Valley and he could work with Pfeiffer in his spare time. So, he worked with Pfeiffer in the lab whenever he could. He did an ag course study group with Pfeiffer for the general area and was Pfeiffer's doctor.

Pfeiffer asked Dr. Scharff if he would continue the lab after Pfeiffer died and Dr. Scharff did not feel he could because he was starting the Fellowship Community and had his own medical practice. But, he offered to take some aspects of the lab -- the crystallization chambers, the chromatography chambers -- to the Fellowship and he set up rooms for the lab at the Fellowship. Then, Erika Sabarth who was one of Pfeiffer's main coworkers for decades, came and lived at the Fellowship and helped keep the lab going on a modest scale. It was not as a commercial entity anymore, it was just to do research, experiments and so on. So, there was very strong support for biodynamics through Ann and Paul Scharff from the beginning of the Fellowship until this day.

Raising food for the main dining room and the community just starting to burgeon. There were more buildings, more people needing more food, so we started using available fields nearby and grew gradually. When I came to the Fellowship, somehow the need was for someone to really get a handle on the vegetable growing and so it was like a match. Between the Threefold Educational Foundation and the Fellowship Foundation -- two not for profits with adjoining properties -- they probably owned about 250 acres, and Threefold for many years had a biodynamic garden and a biodynamic farm and dairy. That dairy closed in the early 70's when New York State outlawed raw milk sales and, but meanwhile the Fellowship had started in 1966 and was expanding its biodynamic work. So, the Threefold Foundation was cutting back and the Fellowship was expanding, and I had

the opportunity to be there as it was starting to expand and basically learned all my biodynamics there. I just started learning and reading, and I had all these great teachers. Peter Escher was there, Margaret Selke.

At that time, we had to haul in all of our manures. Rockland county is just across the river from New York City basically, up a little bit to the Northwest and, but as the crow flies, we are only 20 miles from New York City, 35 miles driving. It is a very suburban county, and, at that point, there was one dairy farm left in the county.

What inspired you to begin making preparations?

If you want to focus in on prep making, Evelyn Speiden Gregg was my main teacher. She wrote the book *Companion Plants*. Evelyn made the preps with Pfeiffer for, I understand, about 20 years and she and her husband retired here to the fellowship and she taught me. She also spent time with Gandhi, and I think that is another impulse that is very important for biodynamics. Gandhi's gesture of home rule -- weave your products, have your own salt, the Indian people living in that country should rule the country. For me, that is a bigger image of the contained farm.

There was also a retired butcher who taught me how to go to a slaughterhouse and get the casings and how to sort bull horns from cow horns. He was a great butcher. He made friends right away with the inspectors and they let him go right in on the killing floor with me, and we could get the casings and separate off the intestines from the mesentery.

Also, the Scharff's. Dr. Scharff and his wife were pretty busy, so they did not have so much time, but they were the ones who inspired us.

How has your preparation making changed over the years? What insights have come to you as your preparation making has evolved?

Probably like most people, you get started and there were teachers who said do this, do that. I would read the ag course, but for a while you are still figuring out what goes in what and what time of year it gets buried. It takes you a while to even wrap your head around what you are supposed to do, never mind do it. But then you start doing it.

I think you have to pair prep making with using them. They have been inseparable for me. You are making them, and you are using them, and that is how you learn. Personally, I think it is important to pursue some kind of knowledge, be it written or oral -- conversations with other people -- just to get different perspectives. And then to observe. Spray a field and then go back later and look at it. You notice things. You put preps in a compost pile or on the field, and you notice something. It is hard to observe when you are in production,.

I basically still make them in the same way, but I gained more and more experience. The challenge is to increase the quality of your preps. Those are fine little things, with the location where a prep is buried and timing and plants and materials -- how to do it better and better and how to teach it to more people. Most of the preps you make once a year., it is not like you can practice every day. That we only make them once a year makes it important to know where and who else in the area makes preps, so you go and share this experience. Your knowledge becomes greater if you can make them two or three other places rather than just make them once a year.

For me, what changed is more an inner knowledge. You know that you are dealing with things much greater than you will ever understand in a lifetime, you are doing things that are touching in on forces or energy that are much bigger than you can fathom, and you are grateful to Rudolf Steiner that he could have the perception to suggest these beautiful things as ways to work and bring the earth forward. This is true wisdom and not just of nature but also of the human. It is related to the deep wisdom that the indigenous people feel tied into, so close to, and it allows those of us who do not have that indigenous wisdom to tie into it and touch into it in a practical way, and do something for the environments' future bearings.

I find when you see the preps and use them, all of a sudden -- you never know when and it is a blessing -- something will click, you will have an "aha" experience. An example is that you mentally you wrestle with why *yarrow* blossoms in a stag bladder. And then, we had a field called "Yarrow Field," which was not so suitable for vegetables, so we never plowed it, we just left it as a meadow. Yarrow grows in it naturally. One day, the sun is setting, it is late in the season, and standing there right in a yarrow patch in the field, is a stag, a full raked stag standing in the middle of the field looking at me and for me that was confirmation of yarrow and the bladder. For most people with logic, that does not necessarily confirm things you know, but for me that was like, someone granted me the privilege to have this strong experience. I just stood there for 20 minutes and finally I had to go get the tractor that was parked on the other side of the field, and the deer ran off. For me, the stag had the same stature wherever it is, a meadow, the woods, as the yarrow does. Yarrow has stature, a stag has stature that is similar. So, then you read about the prep, how it seems to create this radiant quality, that it can radiate through a pile as big as a house. You can experience that power, but it does not all click sometimes. Sometimes you can be studying or reading, and you have that special experience.

Chamomile is a similar prep for me. It is the one Steiner talked about after the yarrow. It invigorates and brings in the vitality, it is the one that balances against the harmful effects of the fructification -- your lettuce or spinach or rhubarb bolting, the harmful effects of going to seed, so things get bitter and tough. We are trying to grow things that are sweeter and tender as vegetables let's say. There are some things you want to go to seed, but you are trying to bring in food quality. The chamomile supposedly balances this. Going from the foliage and leaf to seed, you are talking about going from the cool, moist to the warm, dry. When does that occur? In our climate, it occurs in the middle of May. Mid-May is when our frost days end and going from your early leafy crop, cool loving cabbage and lettuce and spinach to your warm loving crops which have more to do with flower or fruit. When does chamomile flower? Here, it flowers right there in mid-May, it flowers in this balance time between the cool and the warm, the wet and the dry, and so chamomile has this little signature as a plant. And, Steiner gives us the indication that you should bury it where the snow stays the longest and where the sun hits, right? That is a hard spot to find because you might find your snow on the north side of a barn but the sun does not hit there, so you look around and you finally find a hillside where the storms come from the northwest, they drift snow onto the south side of this hill and that is where the sun hits. That is where we bury our chamomile. So, what is that, the sun and the snow? That is your cool, wet and warm, dry. Picture a chamomile blossom, yellow center, a field of white petals, that is the sun on the snow.

Those are things that come to me, and, for me, that is ongoing, I am always looking for other experiences and insights, but each prep has its own beauty with the earth, the plant, the animals, time of year. We should go to every prep and find things like that. Your intuitive capacity would increase.

The other thing I realized is that a lot of what we are doing with the preps is working with elemental beings. That is something that changes from when first you are just making them and using them and getting some experience. But, the more I worked with them, the more I felt that we are actually nourishing elemental beings in different ways with different preps. You know, 500, with beings of the earth, and 501 more with beings of light and air.

One of my first intense experiences was with *valerian*. Valerian is related to phosphorus and warmth and helps create a sheath of warmth for the compost pile. In orcharding, valerian is used to help protect an orchard against frost during blossom times. I would always wrestle a little with it, what happened? When you spray valerian, what is it doing? Is it strengthening the tissue of the plant, how does it do this? At one point, we bought the neighbor's farm and we are talking about ten to twelve acres of apples. It is bloom time and we are expecting 27-28 degrees during full bloom. We are nervous. So, I stir valerian in the late afternoon of that day and then I just drive through the orchard with a spray gun attached to the safety roll bar of the tractor, just spraying straight up in the air and then I just drive in between the rows of the whole orchard, go home, and waited. The next morning, you find out it just went down to 32 and you hear from the forecaster that it did not get quite as cold as they thought it was going to get last night. My real experience was, ah ha, I am working warmth spirits with valerian, I am working the fire spirits, that is what is going on. Somehow spraying it invites them in and perhaps your intention makes a difference. Perhaps if we were all really developed, purely intention alone would do it. I think intention is really important, but personally I need the assistance of preps. Somehow the deed of doing it, not just the valerian sitting in the bottle but putting it in the bucket and stirring and spraying is necessary for the right things to happen and I think horn manure is similar.

BW: Let me go back for one second. When you said you needed the assistance of the preps, would you also be asking for assistance of elemental beings? Perhaps you work with elemental beings though when you are doing valerian spray? You are asking for the help of the preps, but also the elemental beings and you know the intentions and forces, but there is something more than just intention going on.

MM: Yeah. Rudolf Steiner was very acquainted with the elemental beings. You read *Man as Symphony*, lecture seven -- he is talking about his buddies, beings that he knows. So, they speak a certain language that I do not know. I have never seen them, but I have this interest.

A very important thing that has changed for me about the preps is that, when I first started making them, the mainstay of biodynamics was applying the preps. We were also into raised beds and making kind of a farm organism, but we had no animals here at the Fellowship. After a few years we got chickens and a few years after that we got sheep, but they were still hauling in cow and horse manure from other farms, prepping it, putting on compost on all the fields every year. But I had this kind of life research question of, how true is it at the beginning of lecture two that it makes an enormous difference that the animals, for your fertility, are on your own farm? What is the difference between a local home sourced manure versus trucked in? I was the guy driving the dump truck going to get all of these manures and it is a lot of work and time and cost and so gradually we started getting our own home-sourced manures but it was limited because we were planting about 12 acres of vegetables so some chickens and sheep do not quite do it.

It was not until we bought the neighbor's farm in 1997, Duryea Farm -- a three-generation family farm, basically a vegetable and orchard -- and that gave us a possibility to get some larger animals, first horses and then we got cows. We started with one heifer from Seven Stars Farm. My wife and I went down with our 4-H group and we begged David Griffith to either sell or give us a young Jersey heifer, if one was available from his biodynamic herd. Three months later he called up and said he had one.

So, we started with one heifer. This heifer was maybe four months old. It had been born just as winter hit in Pennsylvania, so it was raised in a barn, had a nurse cow mom, had not been out on the fields yet. We brought it to our farm in the middle of March and there was some green grass. We brought the calf there in the early evening, put it in the stall, and the next morning we let our first calf out on the grass. And, what does it do? It does not look at the grass at all, it goes to the dirt around a fence post and starts eating the dirt. I find this

interesting and think that probably now it will go for the grass. But no, it takes some more dirt and starts eating it and swallowing it and I am thinking, oh my goodness, maybe this calf does not quite know what to do. Then someone drives up with a tractor through a dirt road, there is a little bit of dirt on the tires, the calf goes over and starts licking the dirt on the tires. I am getting quite concerned. After about half an hour, it started nibbling at some grass. Now, it had never had grass before and I know about the milk stomach and the grass stomach and all that stuff but it took me a day or two to realize, that this animal wants our biology, wants our farm in her. She wants our soil. Whatever it is in her gut, from now on she is just going to be our soil improver. Steiner talks about this cosmic qualitative analysis that the animal does. I think any animal does it. A worm does it, a rabbit does it, a cow does it. Any animal, wherever it is living, transforms the plant life that it digests into what is needed for right there.

That was an enormous revelation. So, then, fast forward to a few years. We have more cows and more horses. We have stopped hauling in manures, we are making compost piles and prepping them, and we are getting the compost out to the fields. But, we do not have the volume of manure yet that we had when we trucked it in and we cannot do every field every year. So, we pick and choose. We do two or three one year, then another two or three the next year. At one point I get the manure to a field that I had been farming for, probably, 25 years, with rotations of the various vegetables going through. At the time, we had a grouping of early roots and greens which included leeks, onions, beets, and chard. I was planting them in a place where I had planted them maybe three or four times over the 25 years in the same beds. The difference is that the preceding fall we had put on this homegrown, home-sourced cow and horse manure treated with the preps. The only difference is it has received compost with home-sourced manure instead of hauled in. The vitality of those vegetables took an enormous leap. You could see it in their form, their color, their vigor, and for me that was the answer to my research question and it struck home to me that the heart of biodynamics is the self-contained farm organism, the farm individuality, the home-sourced manures – or, if you want to include draft power or seed raising or all of these other things that can be for the farm from the farm. That is what biodynamics is and the preps refine that. They educate the manure. They enhance the quality of your compost, manures or your field, but the main heart of biodynamics is the farm individuality, the contained organism. The preps enhance that. The importance of the preps has not declined. It is the opposite. But for me early on it was the preps, preps, preps, and that is biodynamics.

I now see it is more the whole farm individuality in which the preps are applied to enhance, to educate, to refine. Like a human being, we want to be educated and grow, we want to develop and mature and be better. That is what the preps do for the farm individuality, and each one has its organ, its role. The nettle and all the blossoms, the skull and the horns, they each have their nuance and, actually, if you looks at the preps, they are made from all these different aspects of a whole landscape. The crystal from the mountain, the oak bark from the forest, the yarrow from the meadow, chamomile from the garden or dandelion from all over the place, the equisetum from the swampy, wet -- we have the privilege here where I live to have a farm like that. We have got the mucky swamp to lay our skulls in and it happens to be surrounded by a circle of white oaks. To have been in the same place for 40 years and gradually unfold from a three-acre garden to a 40-acre mixed farm with dairy, it is a thrill.

What unique techniques in making preparations have you adopted, that you feel may be useful to others?

I know there has been a lot of focus on the *horn manure*. It used to be pretty easy to make. Every year you dug it up and it is all transformed. But over the years it seems to be a little harder to get it to transform, you have got to be a little more careful, you have got to do everything just right. So, something I found that has made a big difference is the time of burial of the horn manure. My inclination as a farmer, is that every fall – starting in early September or even towards the end of August – is to start thinking about caring for the earth for next year,

I am going to get my cover crops on, to get compost on, my whole orientation shifts from plants to the soil. It was only when I started working for Pfeiffer Center ten years ago that I started working with a suggestion by Steiner that the sun is different in each zodiacal sign, it has a different quality. In the second week in September or so, the sun goes into the earth sign Virgo. I am talking about the actual constellations, not the astrological one. I think it is the longest sign in the sky and is for the whole second half of September, all of October, and the first few days of November every year. So, like a month and a half. And, it strikes me that the horn should be experiencing as much of that as possible since it is a prep for the earth.

When I came to the Pfeiffer Center, the routine was that we teach a year-long course of one Saturday a month and it was in mid-October that the preps were made, including burying the horns. We were getting sometimes not complete transformation digging them up in the spring or early summer and I thought, let's switch our schedule and do the horns in September. So, for three years we buried horns in mid-September and horns in mid-October, and for three years we got 100% transformation of the September horns -- a nice dark brown, neutral or woody smell. With the October horns it varied but we were not getting complete transformation, maybe 70% or 65% transformation. Sometimes we put them back in for a while, but we got the same result basically for three years. So now we just bury all our horns in mid-September and then we do a bunch for the festival on September 29.

I also experimented with depth several years ago. Some were three feet deep, some were two feet deep, some were twelve inches, some were on the surface. We found some differences; I would have to check my records. We also experimented with locations. But, the real difference was actually time of burial and the sun. I think it has a very positive role on the development of a prep to bury them where they get full sun and in well drained areas, good soil, all the other things. But I think full sun, except for like the oak bark prep.

Another variation we do is with the **501**. We have done the usual grinding of quartz crystals into a powder. We use a cast iron mortar and pestle and whatever you want to call it, a masher that we welded up for breaking up the crystals, then we mill them between two glass plates.

We are mortaring the crystals to a size where we put them through an average window screen. Once they get through that screen they go to the glass plates. It is like quarter inch glass plate that is maybe 18" x 12." When we put the powder on and we spray it with water, so you do not get silica dust in the air. You just get it moist. Then you hold a wine bottle on its side in your hand and you go in circular motions and back and forth or whatever the person wants to do. You are just kind of abrading it¹ on the glass plates. Keep going and then, at one point, the sound changes -- it is not just grating, it is a smoother sound. Then we go by feel -- we have another very fine screen, but often we can just go by feel. It is no longer an abrasive sound; it is a softer sound. But then it gets kind of a silky feel, so then we go to feel.

We are doing this in a workshop with 30 people. We will have grinders and sieves and maybe 12 people with bottles milling. We come to an agreement of how fine we are going for, and we learn in the process. Then we collect the fine stuff and we usually do one horn that way.

The variation we do is one that Wali Via suggested to me. There is indication that Steiner has in his footnotes in Malcolm's translation, about adding field soil into the mix, soil from your fields. So, I like to do that. I am pretty sure that's the way Wali does it. We are often doing a soil test at some point in the year, so we have samples from each of the fields. We just take some of our soil test samples, mix them together, mill them a bit, get them a little fine and we might screen them a little. We use Wali's recipe, which is one third field soil from

¹ "To rub or wear away especially by friction, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/abrade>, access 6/15/19)

your farm, one third sand from your farm, with one third powdered quartz. We have a screen it goes through and we pack the horn with that mix. Wali commented to me that when he first started doing this it really transformed the nature of his crops. So, we use both. We spray the regular 501 and this. I am still getting used to it, it is only a couple of years now we have been doing this but I kind of like it.

I do think the use of 501 does take some judgment. Horn manure, I think, is good almost any time, I have never seen damage from horn manure, but I have seen that if you have drought conditions and the plants are not rooted well where it stresses them, it is asking too much of them. So, we try to be a little careful how we use horn silica.

With **yarrow**, we get local deer bladders The variation is the question I have heard about whether you use dry blossoms from the previous year and get the bladder up early in the summer, or wait until the blossoms are fresh, which here is like early July. I have read that some people are concerned that the bladder should hang for the whole summer. So, we have done some trials with bladders stuffed in early June with dry blossoms from the previous year moistened with yarrow leaf tea before putting them in the bladder. And we have stuffed the bladder with fresh blossoms in early July -- a month later -- and hung them. Both times they were hung in the sun in the summer in the same place, and we buried them in the same pit but we put little dividers between the bladders so we can dig them up and tell whether they are from the dried blossoms or from the fresh. So, how do you measure the difference is an age-old question, how do you measure quality in preps. But, just looking at it and a kind of gut little impression is that I like the ones from the fresh blossoms. The finished prep seems to have a little more vitality to it. It was also nice to do, to go out to the yarrow patch and harvest the fresh blossoms and get them off their stems and put them right in the bladder and hang it up. When we hang them up, we put a little cheesecloth around the bladder and tie it and hang it from that because sometimes with the weather the bladder cracks and it pops. Then the dry blossoms can fall out a little, we have had that happen. So, we started using a little cheesecloth which I know some others do too, so that is not so unique at all.

About **chamomile**, Steiner has hints in his notes that you could hang the chamomile and the dandelions in the sun for the summer like the yarrow. I have never done that because it is enough that you pull off making the preps the usual way, if you make all of those in the fall. I have saved some intestine and mesentery from this year's fall prep making so, if we get to it in the spring we may try hanging a chamomile sausage or two in the sun for the summer, and perhaps a dandelion mesentery package One thing we try to do, if we can, is to do our major harvest on a flower day. I have school classes on call. I can call the teachers and say, "It looks like Wednesday is a good flower day to pick dandelions," or something like that. Sometimes you cannot do that. Chamomile is multiple harvest, you cannot do them all in a flower day, but **yarrow**, we can, it is usually a one-day harvest. The **valerian** is a usually a one-day harvest for the year, though sometimes it will be multiple. That is one of the limited ways I use the calendar in prep making. I do not go with the calendar for prep making, except maybe avoiding a black out day or an eclipse. But I do try to use flower days if possible.

For the chamomile, we already talked about a little, but I try to bury it, like he suggested, not too deep so it will get the sun and snow and try to work with not burying it too deep.

We generally bury preparations in a field or pasture, except for oak bark prep. We try to avoid perennial bushes that may have roots that will invade the prep, but in a drought year I notice sometimes the grasses will send their roots desperately out and find your preps for nourishment. To avoid this as much as possible, we may dig a hole that is only a foot or 18 inches in diameter to bury the sausages and mesentery. We will skim the sod off in a broader diameter circle, like a three-foot diameter circle around the prep hole to eliminate the possibility of invading roots from grasses into the preps. We also mulch the site with a little bit of straw, because when you bury them in the fall, you do not know what the weather is going to be in the spring.

BW: What about **nettle**, anything unusual with nettle you do?

MM: We use a synthetic window screen to line the bottom of the whole. It is a little bit flexible and soft. I have made the nettles in different ways. When I was at the Fellowship, I always did it in the fall. When I came to the Pfeiffer Center, Gunther was burying them in the spring or early summer, so I just continued how he was doing it. They are nice and pre-flowering when we do this. It is often early June, and we just go scythe down a cart full. We let them sit for a while, so we are burying them more towards the end of the morning. Then we pack them in the hole and walk on them, so it's kind of like a bale of nettles. Then we put the same kind of screening over them and hold that upper layer of screen down with the same kind of tiles I described. We place a whole bunch on top of the screen and then put a loose layer of peat on the top before we add the soil. For many years I did not use any screening, I would just be able to eye the difference between the prep and the soil. But, we are using the same hole each year now and the soil gets darker each year and then it gets harder to distinguish. The screen seems to help because then we just dig it up and peel back the screen and you have got this thin layer of finished prep. We do not separate leaves from stems, but the stems are gone pretty much by the time we dig it up a year later.

When we bury the bladder, the sausage, the mesentery, or the nettle, we try to make a very flat-bottomed hole, and you want it in fertile soil. You go down about 18.” I make the bottom of the hole very flat and smooth. With the bladder, the sausages and the mesentery we put in the prep and then we have unglazed ceramic tiles that are about three-quarters of an inch thick, about seven or eight inches long, and about four inches high. I put those on the perimeter of where the prep is, so they are sticking up four inches or so as a slight little box around where the preps are. This is so that when you start digging to find them, you can dig coarsely with a shovel. But, as soon as you hit those ceramic tiles, then you have to be careful because you know that the bottom of each tile is the level of where the bottom of each prep is. Then you fill in the holes. For the nettle, the screen serves the same purpose as the tiles. We also put four stakes in the corners, the outside edges of where these holes are and we have a ton of rocks, so we make a circle of rocks around the surface on the top of the hole, so it is very obvious. But, they are basically in cow pastures so we can come back, and those cows will have knocked the stakes over. Once you hit those tiles, you are going to use a trowel and spoon and fingers. Because, the sausage is gone, the bladder is gone, the mesentery is gone. Nothing but pure blossoms remain, and it can be tricky sometimes to find them.

BW: So, are you saying that your mesentery, your intestines, are dissolved when you dig them up?

MM: Oh yeah, oh they are gone.

BW: Mine are never gone, that is interesting.

MM: Really, wow.

MH: We put them in a clay pot, so you can tell the mesentery or the intestine itself is gone but you can tell where it is. It is nice and dark in the pot.

BW: Ours actually have the skin still on them.

MM: But are they in soil, are they touching soil?

BW: Oh yeah, they are in soil.

MM: There might be little chunks of fat if they were on the edge of weeds or something, but the bladder is gone, the other form is there, obviously. When we bury those three preps -- **yarrow, dandelion, chamomile**, -- we just bury directly in soil. For the **nettle**, we make kind of a larger rectangular hole. We will sometimes put a thin layer of peat on the bottom when we happen to have some, but I am not sure how essential that is. Then I put the window screen. Then we harvest nettles that morning, fresh.

Dandelions we do differently. We use the mesentery as opposed to the peritoneum. That is how I was taught, and I know it says both mesentery and peritoneum in the questions and answers in different places, but I was taught just the mesentery. One experience I had with the butcher I told you about was when we were able to work with a freshly slaughtered cow carcass, still warm. The mesentery, the layer between the two, was filled with warm yellow fat, so we peeled the mesentery layers apart and we scooped out this yellow fat. For me, when I see yellow dandelion blossoms in the spring -- you go through a cold winter and the snow and all of a sudden you see these cheery yellow blossoms -- I had this image of this yellow fat going into yellow blossoms. That is opposed to the peritoneum, which is enclosing the whole abdominal cavity. It is thicker and very voluminous. Anyway, so we choose to use the mesentery, nothing against the peritoneum but that is just how I was taught at the time to do it.

We tend to sew it. You are going to get less mesentery, much less than with the peritoneum, so it is a little more precious. Instead of just folding it over the dandelion blossoms and then tying a string around it, we actually use needle and thread and take the piece of mesentery -- whatever shape it is, it always comes in different shapes depending on how he has cut it -- and start sewing like you are sewing up a sock with needle and thread. In our classes, that was great. There were always people that loved this, and we had three or four people with a needle and thread just going at it at the same time as other preps were being made. You get a lot of blossoms in there and can pack it real tight.

Valerian we have to grow it in our gardens. It does not live wild here, but it lives wild three hours north of here, so we dug up plants to get it going. Actually, now we just grow it from seed in our greenhouse and plant it out. It tends to like the cooler side of gardens or fields in areas where it does naturally grow, so we tend to put it in out on the southern edge of the field which tends to have a little bit of shade and is a cooler, maybe moister spot. We wait until the blossoms are white -- we flick the stem, if the blossoms are falling off that is okay, they are ready or even getting close to being too ready. We harvest chamomile and dandelion blossoms mid-to late morning when they are fully open. Valerian we try to get a little earlier than dandelions, maybe around eight or nine o'clock, when they may still have a little dew. We cut the stalks, then bring them inside and pick off the petals, the flower heads. We then run the valerian through one of these old-style hand-cranked meat grinders, so they come out like little pellets. The calyx is with the flowers, we are not just getting the white petals, so it is kind of a green mush.

I have pressed it in different ways. I used to do book binding and I had a book binding press I have used. I once used two circular saw blades with a bolt through the middle. We wrap the pulp of the valerian flowers in a fine mesh -- I usually use a synthetic cloth since it is strong and fairly tight woven but not absorbent, so the liquid just goes right through and does not get absorbed by the cloth. We fold this cloth over. It is a little like making cider from apple pomace.

BW: So, the synthetic cloth would be like a polyester or something like that, or nylon?

MM: Maybe, I do not know. I have the same cloth I have been using for 20 years. A little piece of synthetic that I find works, so, I just rinse it out and dry it and save it for next year. When I came to the Pfeiffer Center,
© Fellowship of Preparation Makers

Gunther put the pomace into this cloth and just rung it like you would ring out a washcloth. When I first saw it, I said, “Naw, you are not going to get good juice out of it that way, you need a vice or some machine.” But, I was amazed how much came out and that is how I do it now. I just ring the daylight out of it. I do not put too much in each batch. I have heard Harald Hoven, after he rings it out, puts it in a door jamb and then shuts the door so it presses it more. The side where the hinges are.

We drain it into a bowl. And then we use a funnel and put it into amber bottles. We use old medicine bottles, 20 mL or the 50 mL. Depending on how much liquid we have, we try to use bottles that will be mostly filled by the liquid, so you do not have a lot of air space. I think it might not store as well otherwise. So, you have got the fluid and a certain amount of sediment. We then put a loose cap on these, and then put them in our cabinets at room temperature in the dark for a couple of weeks to ferment.

When they ferment, it gets this nice smell that is unique, assuming that is the quality test. Then I just cap it off and store it where I keep the other preps, in a dark wooden box we keep in a cool place. When Owen Holder worked here and he worked with Heinz Grotzke, he and I were asked to gear up to make preps for the U.S. because JPI had not started yet. Owen Holder was very involved in biodynamics through Heinz Grotzke, he worked at Meadowbrook Herb Gardens where Heinz Grotzke worked for years and he was an artist at making the preps. I would grow the blossoms and he would get the animal parts, and we were gearing up for kind of larger scale production and then, thank goodness, Hugh Courtney started JPI. So, we backed off.

BW: So, go back to the **valerian** for a second. After you squeeze it, do you strain it again?

MM: No, I use a very fine cloth in straining it and squeezing it. It is a very fine mesh so not a lot of sediment gets through. A certain amount does, and I just let it sit in the bottle. It ferments about two weeks or so, so it gets that nice smell, then I cap it off and store it. Some people refrigerate it. Owen would refrigerate it, but I am not so big on the refrigerator. But, I do not then strain off the sediment, I just leave it. For the most part it lasts, but some years it will go flat. In prep making, you never know exactly what your variables are and how it is going to go. I will have a prep from 2014, a valerian that smells just perfect. I might have one from 2016 that has gone flat, it does not have the bouquet in the smell anymore.

BW: So, when say flat you are referring to the smell.

MM: Yeah, it gets a neutral smell, or it smells just a little like manure. I cannot describe the bouquet. It has its unique smell. You get the same smell as when you buy it as a sleep medicine, the liquid, it will also have that smell. It is made from the roots, the sleep medicine. It is a unique smell, my favorite smell. So, I kind of quickly fell in love with it.

These things, too, have sensitive tests like chromatograms or sensitive crystallization to test the flat versus the bouquet. The whole thing of quality testing, that is a big, big thing. I have not had the time to get so into that, but I think that would be important in the future.

BW: So, I am just writing down here to work on a chromatogram or extensive crystallization for the level of the vibrance for valerian juice.

MM: I call it bouquet of the blend. Kind of like wine testing.

BW: Yes. And I do not know if you are into the peppers, but actually, let's talk **equisetum**.

MM: We do equisetum. We have some locally that we harvest. We hardly need to dry it versus fresh. We pack the herb into a pot, cover it with water, simmer it for 20 minutes and then we have a concentrated equisetum tea that can be used immediately. I have used it in orchards and on seedlings in my greenhouse. Then, we like to let that water sit with the herb in it to ferment, so then you have fermented equisetum to use ferment. It sits for a good part of the summer.

We make it and start using it at the end of February or March in our greenhouse, to be a preventative for fungus. In March, I will use some in the gardens or in the orchards as a prophylactic measure. We will make one or two batches and it gets this kind of lemony sulfur smell -- it is another smell thing. I have the recollection on some call with Steve Adams that it ferments better if you leave the herb in it, you simmer it, you let it stand. You could take the herb out and let it stand and ferment, but I think he said it lasted better if you left the herbs in.

Yeah, so the other thing is the **peppers**. I am into the peppers; I always have been. I feel they are very important, an underused thing that takes commitment and attention. It is like, this is going to work, and you make it work. I have seen them be very effective, but it takes time, it is a long-range approach. It takes a few years to work; sometimes they work quickly, sometimes they do not work at all. It is a little more fickle, but I have seen very positive results from them for weeds. You are not going to eliminate the weeds, but you are going to take the pressure off. It knocks the reproductive capacity out of them. They will not be as vibrant; they will not be as competitive. And then insects, I have seen great results for that. Some insects are more pernicious, so it is not as effective. For some, though, it is quite effective. You may have to use other organic pest controls so you get a crop for the first year or two, but if you are making the peppers and applying them they can be very effective even if they don't totally eliminate certain pests. I have kids who grew up farming with me who went on to farm or apprentice on other farms, and they will call me up and say, "What the hell are all these bugs? I have hardly even seen these bugs."

BW: Do you use peppers every year?

MM: Some pests we cannot find any more, so we cannot pepper them.

BW: That is a nice problem.

MM: Mexican bean beetle, and I hardly can find potato beetles anymore. But, it often decreases your problems and may not totally eliminate it. Then you have your rodents, your vertebrate peppers -- the deer, woodchuck, rat, whatever you got, that I think takes the pressure off but that is more fickle too. That is a little harder to use because those animals can move, they are all over the place.

What are the biggest challenges you face as a preparation maker? Which preparation is the greatest challenge for you?

I think the biggest challenge is just getting great quality. It is challenging to get deer bladders, and they are relatively small so that is a limiting factor actually, in prep making, the bladder. We used to be able to buy them interstate, but now that is illegal.

BW: Could you explain that, it is illegal to what?

MM: We used to be able to order elk bladders. I understand that the red deer Steiner talks about in Europe is more like our elk. When I first started we were getting mail order elk bladders from Jackson Hole, Wyoming. You'd get them dried and packed, just in the mail. But after the whole mad cow thing in England, it became

illegal to ship those. I think Hugh Courtney would know all about that. At least I have never seen it as an available prep material that you could mail order. Of course, it would not be local either. So, as far as our compost preps, that is always our lowest volume prep, yarrow. It did not used to be an issue.

It also comes down to the expense for the cow horns. We are limited in the amount of 500 we can make to the Pfeiffer Center and the Fellowship, which is our neighboring farm. I would be inclined to make more and make horn manure more available for local people and the people who take our courses. They come and take a course, they learn how to make it, use it, stir it, spray it. I would love to be able to just give them some. And we do not sell preps, that is another question down the road. We do not sell them, but we make them available. We mainly only have extra 501 and the barrel compost, but not enough extra of the compost preps to make them available. Horn manure is kind of a tight commodity.

I mean, it is a challenge just to pull off prep making and using them. They sit so nicely in their jars, just to do it takes a lot. But, we have the fortune of actually teaching it and having a course where it is scheduled and so we are making them, all the preps every year as part of our training.

Has your work with the preparations changed your perspective in life? If so, how?

I told you how I got into the spiritual science was through a cousin talking to me about karma and reincarnation and this led into doing meditation. And, when you meditate you experience pure joy, an inner light. Where does that come from? And when I saw those vegetables I described to you after we finally got home-sourced cow manure treated with the preps, when I saw the radiance and vibrance of those vegetables, I thought, "This is not from what is sitting in the soil there, it is something that is shining through there. I wonder if that is the same thing that is shining through in meditation? Is there a center, a healing, light-filled center that we can access through meditation? Does the earth have a similar light-filled, healing center that can shine through biodynamics?" That is from working with and using the preps, and just seeing their effect which is a big mystery. You spray 501 and you see the plants change, they start to shimmer. What is going on there?

The other thing, along the same line, is that if there is such a thing as karma and reincarnation -- that we have been here before and we are going to have other lives, that we have played a role in choosing where we are, who we are with, what we are doing; for me what that means is I have to wake up to where I am, who I am with, what I am doing. I should learn from what I am doing. I should learn from who is around me. I should have gratitude, appreciation. I should be able to absorb what is around me but also give back to what is around me. We are growing together, we have some time of destiny together, we should help each other,. So, when you read the qualities of each prep, what each compost prep does -- look at the **yarrow**, it brings a radiance, it brings an energy, a quickness and mobility into the soil, to your crops. **Chamomile** brings vitality, it brings balance, it brings harmony. **Nettle** brings intelligence, it brings a sensitivity to your compost, to your soil and to your plants. It makes the soil able to individualize itself according to what crops are there. For me, that may be how to speak of the soil and how you give what is needed.

BW: For the particular crop?

MM: Yeah. You have potatoes, they like an acid soil. You have peas, they like a sweet soil. What are you going to do, go checking the pH, get a bag of lime? If you have intelligent soil it can change, it can give to the peas and the next year it can be the right thing for the potatoes. **Oak bark** creates a harmonious beautiful balance that can help with the diseases, but it is the **dandelion** Steiner says makes the plants more sensitive, more able to get what they need and draw from their environment, even from the meadow or forest nearby. The

soil and plants get what they need from the environment. And the **valerian** goes onto the light and warmth, providing that for an environment.

For me, those qualities in plants and soils are what the human beings should have. I would call them “karmic qualities.” How to be aware, awake, sensitive, take in what is around you and give what is needed. So, you are in a conversation where it is maybe appropriate to say nothing or it maybe appropriate to say this or that. It is a give and take. The whole thing is giving and taking, that is what being human is. That is what the preps are all about, they are trying to teach the soil how to give and the plants how to take. And this nutrition is way beyond vitamins and omegas, this or that carbohydrate. You try to instill in plants what would make people more human and help them to grow and develop into human beings. The whole exercise of doing all of this through meticulous biodynamics, what you have got to go through to make preps and use them. You have to work in community, you have to work with other people, so it is on and on, the social value of biodynamics. That is the deep insight from which I work, that we are doing for the earth what we are trying to do for human beings. It’s all part of growth and development.

What advice would you offer to new preparation makers?

Well, first I would say just do it, -- make them, you learn from them, they are teachers. I think it is important to study as well, -- read the ag course, that is always inspiring. And, there is some good stuff out there from Koenig, Klett, Pfeiffer, and others. That helps. You just kind of do it and study it, get others involved, make it social. Community based or regionally based, build festivals around it, gatherings, potlucks, that kind of thing. We teach this course every year now. We have quite a mixed group so each year now I am averaging about 30 people from all kinds of backgrounds. Some are farm interns, farmers, organic farmers; some are people who want to be a farmer, some are landscapers, some are teachers. Some have bought a property and they have heard about biodynamics. Some have no clue that there are going to be cow horns and intestines and skulls. But, when we have our day of making the preps and we are stuffing skulls and intestines, everybody gets into it. There is something so special about it. There is a glory of something beautiful happening that we have the privilege to participate in and the people pick up on that. When we review the course and ask people their favorite workshop, it is usually the prep making.

What social relationships have you developed as a preparation maker?

As a prep maker, you are doing work that enables others to use them and to benefit from their usefulness.

It is great making and using preps with kids. Kids usually pick it up right away, they do not have the inhibitions or the blocks, they do not have the mental arguments in their heads. It is so fascinating, you are making the preps and some kids -- I am talking about teenagers -- they just have a nose for it, they love it, they want to do it. They are digging up the preps and it is like, “Get out of my way.”

It is also great with therapeutic work; we are working with special needs adults.

For some people it is in them, and for others it is not. Even within biodynamics, you know, some are not as big on the preps. They are not such a priority, it is not a big draw, is more the farm organism or whatever.

What do you and the preparation makers in your vicinity need to meet the demand for preparations in your area?

The Pfeiffer Center is very tight economically, and so is the Fellowship. Most people are. I know I could get more preps out there without selling them to people in the area if we were able to make more horn manure. That is the first one I think of. That is, for me, the kind “go to” beginner’s prep if I had more. It is a question, what would help? Something like someone wants to make a donation to make horns more available.

There are not that many farms in our area immediately where we are, we are a pretty suburban area. The next area going north is the Hawthorne Valley Area, and they have a whole kind of network with Camphill. They have a whole circle of their area that we do not really interrelate with.

Would collegial sharing with other preparation makers be of interest to you, beyond this interview? If so, how can we help you to develop relationships with other preparation makers?

I am interested in collegial sharing. Alex Podelinsky came to the U.S. probably in the early 80’s and anyone who was a prep maker pretty much showed up. There was a circle of maybe 20 people and we just talked. We just went around the circle for each prep, people just sharing how they did it, what was different, the possibilities, just one prep then another. It was nice.

BW: For the collegial sharing, time is your most limiting factor.

Yeah. I do a quite a bit of it here, we have got a lot going on here collaborating between the Pfeiffer Center and the Fellowship. What I do every day all day, with a fair number of meetings around that.

Do you have a vision for the future of preparation use in North America?

MM: I think you could almost merge this into the next question.

What steps can or should be taken to make the understanding and use of the preparations more accessible to the world?

Some people are closer to what biodynamics is about or spiritual science. Young people are looking for it, even people that might not quite know they are looking for. They get exposed to it and it’s like, “Ah, okay.” I think using the preps or biodynamics is part of the whole bigger picture, not just going out there and convincing people biodynamics is the best, it needs to be part of a bigger something. I personally think the connection with spiritual science is important for biodynamics, not that it is always brought together. I have learned to appreciate more through the study of basic spiritual science, and I find it very enlightening. Certain books or lectures about silica, the preps and about minerals from based on Steiner’s work; they bring together natural science and spiritual science and they take biodynamics forward. They are very related, and I think people are actually looking for that. Science from a normal point of view but enlightened by the spiritual science. For me, the ag course is enormous, it is rejuvenating, but there are quite a few other lectures about the creation of minerals, plants and animals -- things very basic to farming, images that are very beautiful, inspiring, of where do the plants really come from, where do the animals come from. For me without that it is hard to make sense. So, I think it is important to accompany biodynamics with spiritual science in general.

BW: This is not a question on the list, but could you explain to us the Natural Science Section that you belong to? A lot of people, when I talk about biodynamics, they maybe have never even heard of the Natural Science Section.

MM: Out of the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, a center was created that is called the School for Spiritual Science. To join, someone needs to be a member of the Anthroposophical Society for at least two years and be ready to make a commitment to bringing spiritual science into one's own inner path and be willing to represent it in the world. The School of Spiritual Science has Sections, for visual arts, performing arts, math, astronomy, natural science, medicine, etc. At first, biodynamics was part of what is called the Natural Science Section.

Around 1981 or so, out of the initiative of Sherry Wildfeuer and Rod Sholdice, at a meeting at Camphill Kimberton, the North American Agriculture Section was formed. At that time, it was part of the Natural Science Section. Someone came over from Europe and we met with them, and then we had an annual meeting. We have had annual meetings ever since then, usually in the winter.

I remember asking Manfred Klett, who has written a lot about biodynamics and is an incredible person, about the purpose of the Section, and he said one is to meet the esoteric needs of the members of the section and the other is to do spiritual research. So, as a farmer you can feel isolated, you are doing biodynamics at your own place. You can travel a little but not a lot, you can feel a little isolated. Often themes were picked for the annual conference and you could know that and work on the same theme. You may not even be able to make it to the meeting, but somehow doing it with others helps to meet your spiritual needs as a farmer. So, it involves some work and some studies and getting together. Sometimes the theme even coincided with a theme out of Dornach, so you perhaps have biodynamic farmers working internationally on the same theme in different groups across the globe, and you pick that up at some point in the year. I found that inspiring. The research work is whatever a person is doing in their work or life. I am always working, and I am always studying or trying to understand what I am doing better and maybe teach it to others.

The biodynamic farmers were originally part of the Natural Science Section, which was teachers of science and others. At one point, 15 or 20 years ago, the Agriculture Section became its own Section. It is not just part of the Natural Science Section anymore, both in Dornach and in North America. It is a smaller group. Sherry Wildfeuer has been very active, along with Harold Hoven, me, Malcolm Gardner, Rachel and Steffen Schneider, and several others. I think it is a little like the Fellowship of Preparation Makers. We have a group that can support each individual as well as a group. The Agriculture Section has often addressed certain issues in biodynamics, even prep making. I think prep making was an issue for a couple years in a row -- the future of the preps in the U.S. -- and I think it is out of that the Fellowship of Preparation Makers was formed. The first meetings that they had in Copake were sponsored by the Section, so that kind of birthed the group and then it had its own life of its own. The next thing was seed saving. There were different people collecting seeds -- Hugh Williams, Harold Hoven, the Corymbs. Again, I think it was a meeting in Copake. Tom Stearns from High Mowing Seeds was there and others and out of that came Turtle Tree Seeds becoming the main source of biodynamic seed in the US at that time.. The next one was BD training, and that went on for several years, how to help BD training occur in a good way in this country. That is what birthed NABDAP (North American Biodynamics Apprentice Program) which has now transformed into a farmer foundation year. That was a big deal to bring that about and Thea got hired to help with that once it got rolling. More recently the question has been how to support young farmers who are beyond the introductory stage, who need to make a living and are inspired by Spiritual Science.

Now that we have asked our questions, what questions, comments, or concerns for the preparation making community?

Well, I love what you guys, what the Fellowship of Preparation Makers is doing, it is so important to help coordinate the preps. There is a whole being of the preps and it needs fostering and they are so important. Whatever works, conferences or workshops or offering it forward. Gradually I think more and more people are just going to be drawn to it and just see the need, including the public, the consumers. We need to mention that to all the consumers, I mean, people more and more are going to be drawn towards the quality of biodynamic food.

And, gratitude to all those people on the other side of the threshold that have helped bring biodynamics and prep making as far as it has come. They are around, they are supporting, they are rooting for us. The so called dead. They have put their lives into it. And, we here on earth schlepping around and doing our stuff and I know there are a whole lot of individuals there that are helping.