



Journal

September 2010



**STARCROSS
COMMUNITY**

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GREEN TOMATO LAMENT

I did everything right. Wonderful heirloom seeds were chosen and each planted in a careful plan to be harvested at proper times. They all grew into fine little plants in the greenhouse. Transplanted to the garden, they responded wonderfully to organic TLC. Blossoms came. Bees and breezes did their things. Green fruit appeared and swelled. And?

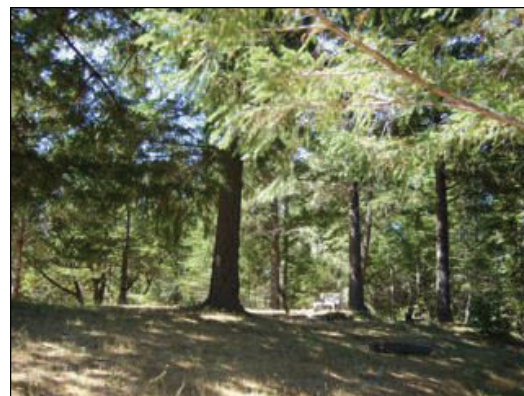


Mid-September and not a single red tomato! I take this personally. No matter that it was a weird cool summer or that no one around me has red tomatoes either. This is a personal affront! I did everything right!

At every stage of life we have Green Tomato problems. The extreme pressure-cooker of competition for youth is troubling. Don't make it into the right pre-school and the rest of your life will collapse like a row of dominos. And, if you have learning problems you are often just out of the picture. Ok, suppose you do all the right things and graduate from the right college with the right degree. There is a recession. Your dreams collapse. Green Tomatoes. It

just keeps going on throughout life. I get some of the same "unfair" frustrations in my supposedly "Golden Years".

My thoughts jumped to Viktor Frankl (1905-1997). Kind of a big jump from Green Tomato experiences to the pioneer Existential Psychiatrist. Frankl began his healing career with Viennese university students who failed in some way and felt their life was over. Suicide was rampant. His efforts helped to turn that around, and in time led him into general issues of the vacuums which sometimes consume us with emptiness, boredom, apathy. Then it became personal when Frankl was a slave laborer in a Nazi concentration camp. In this Hell he discovered the essential human need to always find meaning in life, especially in the midst of suffering. I always want to remember one of his great statements:



**When we are no longer able to change a situation –
we are challenged to change ourselves.**

Ok. Chances are many of the tomatoes will ripen. How nice for us to have them in October and to be canning sauce when it is cooler. But also there is beauty all around me now. Not in the garden perhaps but if I lift up my face, as the Psalms keep reminding me, the beautiful colors of autumn are beginning just outside the garden. I know this is pretty trivial compared to those who are facing making choices between paying for medicine or food. Or have uncertain medical futures. But, perhaps this year of the Green Tomatoes will remind me that it is possible to find meaning in life despite the frustrations, disappointments, and even sufferings that will come my way.

Your brother, *Toby*

THINGS COMING UP ...

Holiday Flyers and order form —

People have been asking us when they can start ordering holiday gifts from Starcross. Sister Marti says the flyer should be mailed mid-October and online a bit before that. We will be featuring all your old favorites – Noble Fir wreaths, trays of delicious dried fruit, Extra Virgin olive oil and lavender infused body oil, as well as books by Brother Toby.

Starcross Christmas Faire —

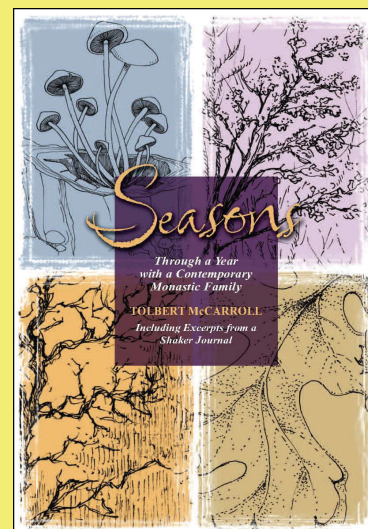
Please join us in the 1904 farmhouse for the annual Christmas Faire on **Nov. 27th**, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Holly and friends will be there from 9 to 5 to show you all the wonderful items for sale. Save on shipping costs by picking up any of our holiday offerings. We'll also have Shaker herbs and teas, homemade apple butter and a limited amount of "Olio Nuovo", our freshly made extra virgin olive oil treasured by chefs and foodies.

Organic Certification coming soon!

For the past year Sister Julie has been working to get our extra virgin olive oil officially certified organic. It is a complicated process but it looks like we have cleared the last hurdle. We expect certification in time for the November harvest.

Readings and Book Signings with Brother Toby —

If you are in the Northern California area, please stop and say hello to Brother Toby at one of these events. He will be reading from and signing copies of his new book SEASONS at: Copperfield Books in Sebastopol on Oct. 12th, 7 pm; Gallery Book Shop in Mendocino on Oct. 29th at 6:30 pm; and Readers in Sonoma on Nov. 9th at 7:30 pm; River Reader in Guerneville TBA. He will also present a talk "An Evening with Brother Toby" at the Kendall Jackson Wine Center in Santa Rosa on Nov. 17th at 7:30 pm. And of course, he will be available for signing books at the Starcross Christmas Faire, Nov. 27th from 9 am to 5 pm. If none of this works for you order on line or give us a call.



**STARCROSS KIN WORLDWIDE
IS HAVING SOME TROUBLE IN AFRICA**

Our project supporting AIDS orphans in Uganda is solid but the financial difficulties affecting the world and especially nonprofits has finally hit us. We had hoped to take in some new children as older ones finished school and began their careers. But we commit to children for the long term, until they are launched in life. We don't feel able to do that right now even though the need is great. Many who have been supporting us have been hurt by the recession. We are hoping others can lend a hand at this temporary time of need. If you have a special interest in these wonderful needy children, now is the time to help. Any amount you can send to SKW (34500 Annapolis Rd, Annapolis CA 95412) will be greatly appreciated. Thank you.