

# EDITOR'S MIXING BOWL

I'm writing this missive on a magnificent fall evening. It's warm enough outside that the doors and windows have been left wide open, and the full moon is flooding over my waning vegetable garden. I can humbly report that, under my inexpert management, the impoverished soil of south Berkeley has supported the production of one plump, radiant-orange kabocha (a Japanese winter squash that makes a good stand-in for a pumpkin). Cucumbers flourished here as well, and tomatoes rallied, as they can be counted on to do, but the peppers, eggplant, beans, and zucchini offered only a few, sorry contributions to my dinner table.

One latecomer to the garden, an adopted zucchini start that was being discarded mid-season by a local nursery, is putting on a puzzling post-season performance. From the moment I brought it home, the poor, pot-bound plant unfurled one or more promising blossoms per week. But this was all to no avail, since every one of those blossoms was a male. However, now, as the slanting rays of the autumn sun barely reach between the tall houses to kiss this plant each day, I see that the last blossom (the only female flower this plant chose to produce) has resulted in a swelling upon the stem. A couple weeks from now, I hope to be slicing a tiny zucchini into my omelet.

But in fact, I hope for a whole lot more...

The outcome of this fall's election is unlikely to make much difference in stemming the environmental catastrophe our consumer society has wrought, and the bank crisis seems but an echo of that more systemic problem. But here in the East Bay, I see that we are busy living out and testing solutions. I see many of them in the course of my work on this magazine, which focuses on our local efforts to get off the grid of corporate food production. I see them too in the greening of many local institutions. And I hear them spoken as well, ever so softly, in ideas that resemble the jobs-creation programs of the WPA during the Great Depression.

Last week a press release landed on my desk that indicated some are now speaking in full voice about creation of green jobs. One such voice is that of Van Jones, an acclaimed social justice and environmental activist who lives here in Oakland. In 2007, Jones spearheaded a Green Jobs Corps proposal to the City of Oakland, but since that time, his ideas have grown to fill a book. In *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems* (HarperOne, 2008), Jones explains how we might rescue the economy and the environment simultaneously by investing in the growing green-collar economy. If you visit Jones's website, vanjones.net, you can learn more about the book and get blown away, as I was, by the phenomenal list of national and regional organizations that are deep into carrying out this vision.

May our efforts bear fruit in the seasons ahead.

Cheryl



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**EAST BAY**

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