

THE SOWER



SPRING/SUMMER 1995

The American Farm School

NO. 138

NEWSFLASH!

American Farm School to Found College

May 12, 1995 — Meeting today in New York, the Board of Trustees of the American Farm School voted to establish a college of agricultural studies. The founding of a college program is the latest step in the Farm School's 90-year tradition of growing to meet the changing needs of Greek agriculture.

When the Farm School was founded in 1904, Greek farmers in general grew only enough to feed themselves and their families. Today, farming has become agribusiness, accounting for a significant part of Greece's exports. As the business of agriculture has become more demanding, the level of training its practitioners require has increased. The Farm School's new college will build upon the strengths and successes of its secondary and continuing education programs and will ensure that the School remains the preeminent agricultural training center in the Balkan region into the next century.

The Farm School's reputation, combined with a demand by agricultural businesses for employees with strong management and technical skills, makes the new college attractive to Greek students, many of whom have already expressed an interest in a college run by the School. Courses will be conducted in English, emphasizing technology, environmental sustainability and the latest management and marketing techniques. At the college's core will be the values that have always been part of a Farm School education: practical skills, entrepreneurship and commitment to community.

News of the college comes after this issue of *The Sower* went to press, but its importance warranted sharing with the Farm School's friends immediately. Expect to hear more about the college in coming months.

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Pre-Christian Graves Unearthed at AFS



Operations Manager David Willis inspects one of the graves discovered on campus.

Building construction projects are always activities fraught with potential pitfalls. Add a tight time and budget schedule and setbacks are almost inevitable, setbacks that can come in unexpected ways. Take the refurbishing of the AMAG (American Mission for Aid to Greece) complex here at the Farm

School in preparation for its new tenant, CEDEFOP (the European Union's center for the development of vocational training). In this case a rough-and-ready Farm School building which has been frequently reinvented since its construction during World War II has once more been given a new function, one that requires bringing it up to the

rigorous modern building standards of the European Union in the space of seven short months.

Because of this, the renovations were much more than the thoroughly-necessary plaster-and-paint facelift for the venerable structure. Careful study and the requirements of CEDEFOP demanded foundation reinforcements, complete electrical and information systems rewiring, installation of new doors and windows, new plumbing and a roofing job which sees the old terracotta tiles meticulously lifted, cleaned, and put back one-by-one after checking the timbers for rot. Glass extensions are to be added at either end of the complex to accommodate a formal entrance and cafeteria, and — the crowning touch — a sunken three-story building is going up in place of the squat cinderblock storage shed which sat across from the Cincinnati Hall guest house.

It was with this last undertaking that the trouble came, but in a richly-textured way that many of us see as so typically "Farm School." The opening of the foundations of the new building soon revealed other foundations of the *continued on page 3*

Two New Arrivals on Campus

Below: Paul J. Condellis, Vice-Chairman of the School's Board of Trustees, presents student council president Asterios Kambouris with the keys to a new tractor to be used in the

School's practical training program. Speaking to the assembled students, Mr. Condellis noted he was making this gift to the School on the 43rd anniversary of his start in the farm machinery



business. The Paul J. Condellis S.A. company is the exclusive New Holland distributor in Greece.

Above: "Grant," the latest calf born at the Farm School through the embryo-transplant technique, receives a licking from his birth (but not biological) mother. This healthy young Holstein was named after the School's Chairman of the Board, Dr. Glen Grant, who happened to be visiting campus at the time of birth.

School that perhaps no one had suspected. To the chagrin of the construction crew but the wonder of campus residents, the back-hoe soon uncovered a simple tile-covered tomb some 2,000 years old.

The state Archaeological Service immediately called a halt to all construction work and, for twenty-four hours, the AMAG renovation project's fate hung in the balance. In the end, however, a team of archaeologists was found, and, in the space of a hard, long week, the entire grave site was excavated. One after another, pre-Christian graves were uncovered until a total of twelve were revealed. After being examined in situ, the finds were removed for further study, allowing construction to continue. They were the graves of simple peasants who died about 200 BC. The bodies were laid out with a few valued possessions — a ceramic cup, a copper ring — and oriented to the path of the sun, then covered over with large ceramic tiles before the soil was replaced. It was to their land that Dr. House came at the turn of this century to establish the Farm School. It was their latter day descendants (the Greek archaeologists who gathered up the earthly finds, the construction workers, the students who came to see the discoveries) who now respectfully made room for the future.

Director's Column: A Time for Renewal at the Farm School

The lilacs between James and Princeton Halls are in full-scented bloom as I write, and the nightingales have returned to their songful posts all over campus. Change and rebirth are evident, too, in the man-made. The renovation of the AMAG complex under the pine grove near the front entrance (see grave story on the facing page) proceeds apace, as do the research and planning that accompany our college feasibility study. These activities put a certain bounce in the step of even the most winter-weary among us, allowing for a recommitment to the practical training goals to which the School and its staff members have dedicated themselves for most of a century.

The arrival of the premier European Union vocational training think tank at the Farm School — "CEDEFOP in AMAG," a veritable alphabet soup — is an event worth noting. Representing a European commitment to the development of effective vocational and professional training, the agency is relocating in September to Thessaloniki from Berlin. The Farm School will rent the renovated AMAG to the Center as tem-

porary office space while their permanent headquarters are under construction on School property adjacent to our campus. As CEDEFOP is the first European Union agency to be based in Greece, it is a mark of great prestige that the organization chose to locate its headquarters at the Farm School. We look forward to working alongside our European colleagues and to benefiting from contact with the Center's professionals and visitors.

This arrival is well-timed to coincide with new thoughts of our own on the School's role in vocational and professional training in Greece. For some time I have been convinced that in order to fulfill its stated mission into the 21st century, the Farm School must offer higher-level studies. These new programs will be informed by a commitment to integrity, and will also allow increased and in-depth exposure to information technologies, business and environmental sustainability, and work experience.

The fact of the matter is, increasingly, that dynamic modern economies and technologies demand individuals with a level of training which it is difficult for them to acquire at the secondary level alone. So it is that Greece, the Balkan region, and their agricultural sectors are entering into an era of increasing economic liberalization and attendant international competition which will — in fact already is — affecting their fortunes dramatically.

Our planning efforts in response to these fundamental changes center around both college-level and continuing education programs, and the market survey we undertook during the winter revealed an active and high degree of interest in both. Such programs will complement, but never replace, our secondary program, which I believe will always be at the School's core — our inspiration as well as our heritage.

George Draper
Director

Albanian Minister Observes AFS Balkan Program



Albania's top agricultural official joined participants from the Agricultural University of Tirana at the American Farm School in April during a two-week short course on "Agricultural Resource Management" organized by the AVATAR Project (the Farm School's ongoing initiative to introduce professional agricultural education in Albania). AFS Director, George Draper, begins a wagon tour of the Farm School campus with Albania's Minister of Agriculture and Food, Mr. Hassan Halili (center).

The Language of Flowers

A two-year program of transnational cooperation among agricultural schools in Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Greece is about to yield a "common horticultural language" to be used by American Farm School students and their counterparts throughout Europe.

These students have the opportunity to complete advanced training in one another's countries and will share a common market for their products and services. Developing common terminology and curriculum elements in their



Dutch students joined Farm School students this winter for a short course in learning English through horticulture.

training today will ease their ability to communicate and exchange ideas in the future.

Sponsored by the European Union program "Petra," staff of the Instituto a Granxa in Spain, CVPO voor het Vlaams in Belgium, Clusius College in the Netherlands and the American Farm School in Greece have created a series of "toolboxes" in several contemporary horticultural subject areas, according to the interests and institutional strengths of the partner schools. The "toolboxes" to be used by agricultural school teachers in their curricula consist of a manual written in English, accompanied by transparencies, slides, computer diskettes and related videotapes.

Led by Dean of Students, Nicos Papaconstandinou, Farm School teacher Tassos Pougouras has contributed toolboxes for the Operation of an Information Dissemination Center as well as Biogas Facilities. Writing jointly with the other Petra partners, Mary Chism and Nicos Savvides have created toolboxes for Tissue Culture, Greenhouse Construction and Horticultural English. The Spanish, Dutch and Belgian partners have

covered Landscaping, Commercialization of Horticulture and the Forcing of Tulip and Lily Bulbs.

According to Nicos Papaconstandinou, the new manuals and other teaching materials contained in the toolboxes "are the best teaching materials in Europe" because they are prepared by the actual teachers who will use them. The manuals and toolboxes will be produced and priced for distribution through the bookstores designated to sell European Union publications in each member state.

The Petra partnership has called for close professional collaboration. Regular working sessions hosted by each of the partner schools will help participants get to know conditions and needs in the different countries. These staff exchanges have also increased opportunities for student exchange visits. "We know each other well now; we know how to help each other," says Nicos Papaconstandinou.

Later this year the Farm School and its Spanish, Belgian and Dutch partners look forward to translating elements from their horticultural toolboxes into their native languages for widespread national adoption.

Ecological Corner Community Gardens



Olives, spinach, herbs, fennel and flowers are some of the first products of the School's Ecological Corner Community Gardens.

Every Monday afternoon, the southeast corner of campus comes alive with the sights and sounds of 15 families at work in the School's community gardens. The Farm School Community Garden Program, a pilot project in the School's developing "Ecological Corner," provides participants with hands-on observation of nature and its various life cycles while teaching and demonstrating sustainable agricultural techniques.

Open to staff members, friends of the School and local residents, the structure of the project encourages the development of community-building skills. Gardeners share tools, propagation material and other resources, cooperate in common tasks and offerings and lend their

assistance where required on other projects in the "Ecological Corner."

Although gardeners may be found at work every day of the week, Monday afternoon has been set aside for shared gardening time when Beatrice Winterstein, the Farm School's consultant on organic cultivation, is available for advice and assistance. Gardeners move into the classroom at sunset for weekly lectures on various aspects of organic gardening.

Participants are now enjoying produce from the garden's first growing season: spinach, fennel, snow peas, herbs and flowers, among others — all free of synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides and hormones. Prevention of pests and diseases is achieved through companion-planting techniques and continuous crop rotation.

AFS Graduate Experiences Family Farming in U.S.

After six months in the U.S. on a 4-H exchange program, Constantinos Matsos (AFS '93) returned to Greece fired with energy. "Americans are very active people," was the 19-year old university student's most vivid impression. "They work very hard, but they also make time for the things that interest them outside their jobs."

Dinos, as he is known to family and friends, feels changed by his experience living with seven different families in Connecticut and Wisconsin. "I now realize how many opportunities are open to me, not only in my career, but in how I choose to spend the rest of my time," he noted. "I feel I've become more open-minded, and definitely more spontaneous!"

After graduating at the top of his Farm School class in 1993, Dinos entered the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's Agriculture School with the idea that he would eventually run the family's 44-acre dairy farm outside the northern town of Veria. Since his father's death some years ago, Dinos' mother has managed the farm with the part-time help of Dinos and his brother, as well as a hired family. But having studied in England herself as a young woman, she encouraged Dinos to take advantage of an experience that would challenge and inspire him.

With the help of the Farm School's exchange programs coordinator, Mary Chism, Dinos applied last year to the International 4-H Youth Exchange Program (IFYE). This cultural exchange program offers young people with an interest in agriculture the opportunity to live with rural families in other countries.

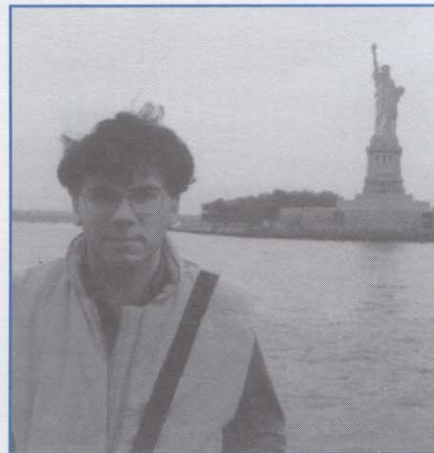
Following three days of orientation in Washington, DC, Dinos traveled to his first host family in West Willington, CT. This homestay was truly an exchange experience as the Schur's daughter Gretchen had been an IFYE representative to Greece the previous year as part of the Farm School's Summer Work Activities Program (SWAP).

Coming from a land badly deforested, Dinos was struck by the greenery of rural Connecticut. "I couldn't get over how many trees there were," he laughed. "You often can't see the houses for the trees." He was also sur-

prised by many local residents' willingness to commute to work for the pleasures of living in the country. "Many Greeks are still leaving the villages for the cities without considering what they might be giving up in terms of quality of life," he said.

During his two months in Connecticut, Dinos stayed with four families. Two ran dairy farms where Dinos helped with family chores and learned about American milk production. Highlights of his New England stay included participating in 4-H fairs, helping to organize a Fourth of July pig roast and learning to play baseball. Before leaving the East Coast, Dinos spent an "incredible" week touring New York City hosted by the staff of the School's New York Office, and later visited Niagara Falls.

Dinos felt welcomed by Wisconsin's wide-open spaces and friendly people. He stayed with three farming families in different parts of the state. One host father was a veterinarian and Dinos accompanied him on his daily rounds of farms. Along with such agricultural experiences as corn harvesting, roofing and manning a cheese booth at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Dinos enjoyed local entertainment with his host brothers and sisters, including homecoming parades and bonfires,



Dinos Matsos finds time for sight-seeing between homestays.

college hockey games, Norwegian suppers and visits to the mall. He spent Thanksgiving Day with the large extended family of his final homestay. "They couldn't believe I knew all about Thanksgiving from our celebrations at the Farm School," he smiled.

"Every one of my host families did all that they could to make me comfortable and help me pursue what I wanted to learn," Dinos summarized. "I wasn't sure what to expect because we don't have anything like 4-H clubs in Greece. But I couldn't have hoped for a better experience."

Memorial Tree Planting



More than 100 friends of the School joined students this past February in planting trees on campus in memory of departed loved ones. Participants say the experience allows them to create a living tribute to the spirit of a family member or friend, while also contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment. Memorial gifts are recorded in the School's Book of Remembrance in the campus chapel of St. John Chrysostomos.

Greek Summer Profile: An Alumna's Odyssey

Many Greek Summer alumni dream of revisiting Greece. Claire Milonas (GS '87) has turned her interest in Greece into a career. She moved there after graduating from Yale in 1992, and soon met a group of young Greek Americans who had noted the lack of a high-quality English language magazine on Greece and Greek issues. They formed a partnership and set out to create an upscale publication for professional Greeks around the world. Less than a year later, the first issue of *Odyssey Magazine* rolled off the presses.

Today *Odyssey* has subscribers in 39 countries and a readership that is growing steadily. Claire is now back in the U.S. managing the American side of the operation after more than two years in Greece. Success has not been easy. She and her partners faced daunting challenges, not the least of which was the skeptical attitude of some Greeks toward their youthfulness.

Nevertheless, the project has been enormously rewarding, Claire says, especially the overwhelmingly positive response of *Odyssey's* readers. She frequently receives encouraging letters,



Claire Milonas, Greek Summer '87

and word of mouth has helped build circulation. The magazine has also given her the opportunity to draw on both sides of her bicultural background, much as she did on Greek Summer.

Greek Summer made her think about her Greek American identity in a new way, she remembers. She had spent

time in Greece but, Claire says, "Greek Summer was an opportunity to do more than visit relatives and sit on the beach. I saw a side of Greece that I had not seen before." She also noted that the energy and initiative of young Americans can be surprising to Greeks. The villagers hosting the Greek Summer participants were impressed by how hard the American teenagers worked on building a road for the village. Claire was reminded of this reaction when she began *Odyssey*.

When she and her partners were in the planning stages in 1992, they went to the Farm School to consult Randall Warner, the School's external programs director who is a veteran of the publishing industry. Claire says that Randy's advice was invaluable, and that she did not underestimate the hurdles that the new magazine would face. After her meeting with Randy, Claire decided to visit her Greek Summer village. She was a little nervous about dropping in unannounced after several years, but when her Greek Summer mother saw her in the doorway, Claire says "It was like I never left."

For information on *Odyssey Magazine*, call 1-800-4HELLAS.

AHEPA Leaders Visit AFS



The Supreme Council of AHEPA (American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association) visited the School on its official visit to Greece last month. Shown here welcoming AHEPA Supreme President Charles M. Georgeson (second from left) and Mrs. Georgeson (third from right) are (l-r) Kyriakos Andreou, Thessaloniki president; Presbytera Niki Sarantos; AFS Director George Draper; and Father John Sarantos, the AFS's resident chaplain.

Save the date!
Saturday, February 24,
1996

Join us
at the Indian Harbor Yacht Club in
Greenwich, CT
for an evening of Greek Dance, Greek food,
and Greek "kefi"
to celebrate
the American Farm School
and the season of "Carnavale,"
the Greek Mardi-Gras!

Dress: Casual or "Come as your
favorite Greek!"

Look for "Save the Date"
cards in October

For more information, call Patricia Mulhern
at (212) 463-8434

Community Committees: The Farm School's Network of Friends across the U.S.

Ever since 1904, when a small group of Americans provided the funds to found the Farm School, the support of friends in the United States has been an important part of the School's success. In recent years, that support has been organized into 14 Community Committees throughout the country. These Committees form a vital network that increases awareness of the School across the U.S. and helps maintain its American dimension. Aided by the School's New York Office, the Committees contribute to the School in a variety of ways:

Greek Summer

Many Greek Summer participants hear about the program through alumni and parents of alumni. As members of Community Committees, alumni and their parents help recruit Greek Summer participants in their areas by suggesting students who would be interested in learning about the program, interviewing applicants and serving as spokespeople for the School and Greek Summer. The strongest supporters of the School are often those who have had an opportunity to visit its campus and see its accomplishments firsthand. Greek Summer alumni comprise a large portion of this group.

Fund-Raising

Americans contribute more than \$500,000 each year to the Farm School. Of the many donors to the School in the U.S. last year, 69% gave within the framework of the Community Committees. Fund-raising events such as Taverna Parties help support the School's programs while bringing its friends together. These events also introduce new friends to the School and give the Director the opportunity to update American supporters on recent developments.

American Know-How

The Farm School has a history of introducing innovative technology and techniques to Greece, often imported from the U.S. The Community

Committees help connect the School with individuals and institutions here in the U.S. that keep the School in the forefront of agricultural education. The School receives valuable input on campus planning, management techniques, vocational and technical training, and other areas from American experts. Through the Community Committee network, the School maintains ties to institutions such as Rochester Institute of Technology and helps the Director develop new institutional relationships through his U.S. travel.



Exchange Programs

The Community Committees also help staff and students from the School take advantage of training opportunities here in the U.S. The Community Committees help to arrange these visits, strengthening the bond between the School and the U.S. and contributing to the high level of academic excellence at the School. Recently, faculty and staff have participated in both academic and agricultural training in the U.S., returning to the School with new ideas and experience. Last summer, seven Farm School students came to the U.S. to attend management training seminars and experience life on American farms, in part arranged through Community Committees.

***Become a part of the
Community Committee
in your area!***

***To find out what you can do to
get involved, contact the Farm
School's New York Office.***

Tad's Portrait Joins Bruce's

Elizabeth (Tad) Lansdale's portrait (right) is now hanging beside that of her husband, the American Farm School's third Director, Bruce M. Lansdale, in a place of honor in the ground floor lobby of Princeton Hall. William Draper, celebrated portraitist, completed Tad's likeness this spring, and it was recently unveiled at a special ceremony at the School. Tad's addition makes the mini-gallery of former School Directors and their wives complete.



From the Archives



Theo Litsas directs a recreation program in the AMAG courtyard circa 1955.

In the summer of 1943 the RAF bombed Sedes (now Themi), the village near the Farm School where the German Air Force troops had been billeted, and the German Command requisitioned Farm School buildings to house its men and administration. Three brick barracks were built in a small pine grove near the School gate and occupied until the Germans withdrew from Thessaloniki in the fall of 1944. This spring the complex looks more desolate than at any time in the intervening 50 years. Birds fly through the unglazed windows, plaster has fallen from the original brickwork, the courtyard is filled with rubble — a spectacle that may call to mind scenes of that wartime era in which the building was first constructed. But, in fact, this temporary demolition marks the beginning of another chapter in the history of AMAG, as it has come to be called: a complete reconstruction of the building.

After the War, the barracks underwent the first of several rehabilitations and refurbishings. The three originally separate buildings were joined together with funds provided by the American Mission for Aid to Greece. "AMAG," as the resulting building came to be nicknamed, thereafter housed a series of programs as varied as that of any other building on campus. There was an immediate need for rural development after the War, and in cooperation with

the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, a series of short courses was designed to teach a broad range of skills of use to farming families. During the 1950's and 60's these courses were attended by agricultural extension agents and men and women from villages in Northern Greece; later, groups of children came to campus as part of the Rural Youth Program. AMAG was the physical center for these activities, providing classrooms, dormitory space, and the recreational facilities so vital to a residential program.

As Farm School program needs expanded, AMAG was used for a variety of purposes. The 1970's saw the beginnings of SWAP and Greek Summer, for whose participants AMAG has served as home away from home ever since. The building also has accommodated a staff apartment, storage rooms, bee-keeping offices, and more recently, an artist's studio and a pre-school children's program. And now, next fall, AMAG will open its doors to CEDEFOP, the European Union's agency for vocational education.

Each use of AMAG has brought together at the Farm School people and ideas to their mutual enrichment. AMAG was founded as an instrument of war, and stands sentinel still in the pine grove at the gate. But the pines create a feeling of deep peace round the building, and AMAG stands guard for education.


Charlotte Whitney Draper



The American Farm School
ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΗ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΚΗ ΣΧΟΛΗ

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THE SOWER

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