



WILLY PAGE WAITS OUTSIDE CORN MAZE WHILE OTHER KIDS CONSULT MAPS.

Pictures by Jacob Kramer

The FARM Calls it Cornapalooza . . . Islanders Can Just Call It a Party

By JACOB KRAMER

Szerroch! "Where is the zucchini bread?" *Szzwerregh!* "Do you copy? Kitchen to Farm Stand. Where is the zucchini bread?"

Scherrch! "Zucchini bread is on the way."

"Roger that," Alex Mahedy dials down his walkie-talkie with a sigh and is ready to be interviewed. He has an air of professionalism that you might not expect from a person his size. Mr. Mahedy is a CIT at the FARM Institute, and is helping littler kids in the kitchen with their cooking — sometimes their food gets waylaid between the production and distribution ends of the operation.

When asked if his experience at the FARM Institute has shaped the way he thinks, he says, "Oh, definitely. I want to support the agricultural world. I really want to help that out because it's struggling so much. People are using pesticides and they're hurting the animals."

The animals at the FARM Institute in Katama seem quite happy. There are two litters of spotted pigs racing around their pens. Geese and turkeys roam freely, perching on picnic tables. Lemon and Lime, the angora goats, rest peacefully in their pen. Nearby a flock of white chickens are raised ethically for human consumption. Out back is a Friendship Garden that has a tepee with gourd vines creeping over it, making for a sort of vegetable shelter.

The institute is all about getting people jazzed about agriculture. Rob Goldfarb, the summer programs and events

coordinator explained, "The FARM Institute is a nonprofit organization with a mission to engage and educate the community in sustainable agriculture. Everything we do is in an effort to educate and engage the community, and teach people what a farm is, where food comes from, and the importance of the dignity of labor."

To do this, kids are introduced to gardens and animals at a young age, and are given responsibilities and chores they can feel good about doing. "This is a teaching farm where kids get to run the farm. With that comes a sense of responsibility and community and they become empowered. The kids are given opportunities to find their pursuits and passions through working in agriculture," said Mr. Goldfarb.

The FARM Institute has programs for people aged two and up, starting with the Wee Farmers and the Sprouts. There is also a program called WISP, the Work Income Sharing Program, where kids work in a production garden and sell vegetables at local markets and to restaurants. A year-round program called FIT (Farmers In Training) prepares older kids to enter agriculture and teaching. At every level, kids are pushed to be responsible and independent. Said Mr. Goldfarb of the seven-year-olds doing commerce at the institute, "The kids at the farm stand — they love it! They're seeing the real value of food. They're using real dollars, real math, and are learning the cycle of food."

Alisa Amador, a kid working at the

farm stand was enthusiastic about the autonomy offered there: "My favorite thing is there's so much responsibility, and we're not afraid we'll be doing something wrong. They let us cut the vegetables off with real knives! I don't even think my mom would let me do that."

Alex Vasiladis, age seven, felt like his experience at the farm would shape his future jobs. Petting some medium-size piglets, he said, "I want to be a scientist or a farmer. Maybe a scientist who studies farming."

So: The FARM Institute is totally great. What can non-campers do to get involved and experience the glory that is 162 acres of farmland, community and love? Rob Goldfarb has an answer: CORNAPALOOZA.

Perhaps you have seen the delightful posters around the Island, perhaps you have heard the radio spots on WMVY, featuring a hoe-down kind of song by Kevin Keady of the Cattle Drivers.

Said Mr. Goldfarb: "It's a party, pure and simple. It's to help raise money for the future of the FARM Institute, to celebrate the year-round Islanders who have worked so hard to keep this Island running smoothly, and it's for visitors. We're putting the culture back in agriculture, and offering a show of how much fun a farm can be."

Tickets are \$20 for people over 21, \$10 for younger kids, and free to those under three. There is a \$5 parking fee to cover the cost of reseeding the lawn,



ALEX VASILADIS AND THE PIGLETS HAM IT UP.

which gets damaged from car traffic. Keeping the admission price low was an important parameter for the party planners. "The money goes to support our year-round programs, and we don't have the high-priced ticket of other benefits, so it's a much more inclusive event," said Mr. Goldfarb. Once in, all activities are free to festival-goers. Food is à la carte, and beer has been donated by Offshore Ale, the proceeds from which will go to the FARM Institute.

The big draw is likely to be the eight

hours of music, which begins at noon and ranges from bluegrass (the Cattle Drivers and Ballyhoo) to salsa (Sol y Canto) and Brazilian (Edson Lima Band). This variety of musical stylings is in keeping with the FARM's philosophy: "We need different crop rotations when we're planting, and it's the same with culture. We need that diversity," said Mr. Goldfarb.

There will also be games, including finding a carrot in a haystack and tug of war. Scarecrow making, face painting, fortune telling, and garden tours are



NINA HARRIS CLOWNS WITH KIDS AT FARM CAMP.

among the other activities that come with the price of admission. The Corn Maze will also be open, and musicians will be stationed inside it, providing a sort of aural compass for those with an ear for it.

My brother and I got lost in the corn maze. We circled back on the same spot many times. We got hungry and tried to eat the corn. Don't eat the corn.

Said John Chta: "The thrill of the maze is the challenge. And it's so hard you have to use a map." Katie Metrano and Kelly Java had no trouble. They

completed the maze without a map in 15 minutes. "We totally went with our instincts," said Ms. Metrano.

Another bonus: "You'll be stunned by the beautiful maze attendant," said maze attendant Caitlyn Colley, adding, "It's extremely exciting, [with] food, drinks, music and fun."

Cornapalooza begins at noon tomorrow and goes to 8 p.m. at the FARM Institute on Aero avenue in Katama. For directions and more details, see farminstitute.org.



CAMPERS LEARN THE FUN OF MONEY AT FARM STAND.

Saturday's Lineup of Entertainment

Face painting: 2 to 6 p.m.
Games for all ages: 1 to 6 p.m.
Fortune telling: 2 to 5 p.m.
Theatre group/tours: 2 to 4 p.m.

All day:
Human race machine
Scarecrow booth
Human race machine
Food and beverages

(Main) Hay Wagon Stage
Noon to 12:15: Pinch Squeeze & Release (FARM teachers)
12:25 to 1:10: Sol Y Canto (Children's show)
1:20 to 2:05: Maynard and Milo Silva (Blues duet)
2:15 to 3: Cattle Drivers (Bluegrass)
3:10 to 3:55: Garrett Brennan (Solo acoustic)
4:10 to 5:10pm: Bobby Dorough with Al Shackman and Chris White

(School House Rock and jazz)
5:20 to 6:05: Sol Y Canto (Latin Salsa/Jazz Adult Show)
6:20 to 7:05: Edson Lima Band (Brazilian)
7:15 to Closing: Ballyhoo (Bluegrass)

Special Guest Musicians in the Corn Maze:
1 to 2 p.m.: Mike Olcott
2 to 3 p.m.: Rob Myers (acoustic rock)
4 to 5 p.m.: Bluegrass/folk



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Reginald Turner, Producer
 - The Panel of Elders
Former Senator Edward W. Brooke (invited), Judge Benjamin Hooks (invited), Myrtle Evers-Williams (invited), Dr. Adelaide Cromwell, Dorothy Burnham and Dr. Kenneth Edelin
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ADDITIONAL DETAILS & TICKET INFORMATION AT: WWW.CHARLESHAMILTONHOUSTON.ORG

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