

Today's Tour was a slow and thoughtful drive down I89 and a scenic Route 2 on the drive home.

I stopped in at L.A.C.E. in Barre and Ariel took a short break to catch me up on how business has been since they opened. It's been good. The interior of the store being ever-changing as new products and seasonal goods come through the door.

I had heard from two of our other cafes that the price of flour had more than doubled, so I asked Ariel how she was affected by this. She was distressed but before she got too far a long in her tales of woe she paused and looked at me and calmly told me that these are the times when she goes back to her original mission for L.A.C.E., "To provide a commons where Vermont Family Farms and their communities can exchange information, celebrate food and build fellowship together." I see that she has created a place to emphasize the products and produce and crafts and skills of our neighbors; our neighbors who share our mail route, our neighbors on the farm around the corner, our neighbors in the town nearby. She said, "This is when I realize how much we need each other."

We can't be good at everything but we are all good at something. Somewhere near you is someone who raises animals for meat and chickens for their eggs; someone who grows really good onions, someone who spins wool into yarn, bakes mouth-watering cookies, grows grain to make flour, makes medicines from the plants. Someone who gives reassuring hugs, tells funny stories, reminds you to breathe, carries banners for Peace. "We all need each other," she said. "Yes, we really do," I agreed.

We don't know how the high price of flour will ultimately affect our baker friends. But when it does, it will affect us, too. We are all connected in some way, some how. I'm reassured knowing friends like Ariel care so much about her neighbors.

Let's take care of each other.