

LSP Staff Changes

During the summer of 2000, fresh off a stint as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Paraguay, **Amy Bacigalupo** joined the Land Stewardship Project staff in Montevideo, Minn. She immediately set to work helping the organization expand the Farm Beginnings Program to the western part of Minnesota. That set in motion a highly productive two-decade career at LSP that has come to an end. Bacigalupo has



Amy Bacigalupo

left LSP to spend more time on her family's apple operation in western Minnesota and to coordinate the Organic Fruit Growers Association.

As a class facilitator and later director of the program, Bacigalupo played a key role in making Farm Beginnings one of the most successful and respected beginning farmer training initiatives in the country (*page 32*). The follow-up training initiative, Journey-person, was designed and implemented with her guidance, and Farm Beginnings is now being taught in over a dozen states because of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and the Farm Beginnings Collaborative, both of which Bacigalupo took the lead on creating and supporting.

More recently, Bacigalupo served as program director and co-managing director at LSP, and led efforts to make opportunities in agriculture available to more farmers of color, including Indigenous people. For more on Bacigalupo's legacy, see *page 4*.

After eight years of doing the kind of behind-the-scenes work needed to make a

nonprofit organization run smoothly, **Amelia Shoptaugh** has left the organization to pursue other interests. She joined LSP's staff in 2013 as an office manager, and most recently served as the organization's human resources and operations director. In that position, Shoptaugh developed a human resources department from scratch and led efforts to modernize LSP's technology infrastructure. She also created an employee handbook and coordinated various aspects of the organization's internal operations.



Amelia Shoptaugh

Sean Carroll has been named LSP's new policy and organizing director. Carroll recently received a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Minnesota's



Sean Carroll

Humphrey School of Public Affairs. He has over 15 years organizing experience, and has worked as the national field director for the HEAL Food Alliance, organizing director for the RE-AMP Network, and federal field associate for Environment California.

Carroll can be reached at scarroll@landstewardshipproject.org.

Jenna Sandoe, **Amber Monaghan**, and **Charles Spencer** have joined LSP's staff as operations and support specialists.

Sandoe has a degree in environmental studies and political science from the University of Minnesota-Morris. She has organized around local food issues, worked as a GreenCorps volunteer, and was a produce manager and bookkeeper for a small food co-op. In 2020, she started her own vegetable operation near Litchfield, Minn. Sandoe can be reached at jsandoe@landstewardshipproject.org.

Monaghan studied apparel design and theater arts at North Dakota State



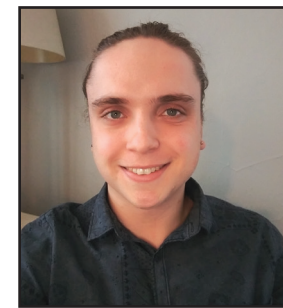
Jenna Sandoe

University and apparel technology at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. She has worked as an administrative assistant for Homeservices Insurance and Royal Sales, and an office administrator for Virtual Officecenters. Monaghan has also served as an event designer for the company Festivities. She can be reached at amonaghan@landstewardshipproject.org.



Amber Monaghan

Spencer has a degree in communications, media, and rhetoric from the University



Charles Spencer

of Minnesota-Morris. He has worked as an administrative assistant for Neighborworks Home Partners and the YWCA of Saint Paul, as well as a translator and clinic coordinator for Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity. Spencer can be reached at cspencer@landstewardshipproject.org.

Ryan Perez is LSP's new data specialist. Perez has a bachelor's degree from Macalester College and has worked in various capacities to utilize technology as a changemaking tool. He is the owner of Movement Impact LLC, and served as a database manager and democracy program director for COPAL, as well as database manager for the Patricia Torres Ray for Congress campaign. Perez serves on the board of Minnesota Alliance With Youth. He can be reached at rperez@landstewardshipproject.org.



Ryan Perez

Laura Schreiber, **Aleta Borrud**, and **Sarah Goldman** have joined LSP's Policy and Organizing team.

Schreiber has degrees in urban studies and public relations and a minor in leadership from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. She has worked as an intern for LSP in various capacities, including as coordina-

Staff, see page 7...

tor of the 2019 Family Farm Breakfast at the Capitol. During the 2020 election, she worked as an organizer for LSP's sister political advocacy organization, the Land



Laura Schreiber

as well as the organization's board of directors. She has spoken and written extensively about the need to provide quality, affordable healthcare for rural residents. As an LSP



Aleta Borrud

organizer, Borrud is focusing on healthcare issues and she can be contacted at aborrud@landstewardshipproject.org.

Goldman has a degree in environmental studies from Carleton College and has worked extensively in food and farm policy. She mostly recently worked as a senior research program coordinator for the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future, where, among other things, she was the lead author of the report, "Essential and in Crisis: A Review of the Public Health Threats Facing Farmworkers in the U.S."

She also led a team of researchers in investigating policy that supports sustainable livestock production and worked for the National Farm to School



Sarah Goldman

Network, the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, and Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore.

Goldman is focusing on local foods and farm transition issues and can be contacted at sgoldman@landstewardship-project.org.

Maura Curry has joined LSP's Bridge to Soil Health team. Curry has a degree in geology and biology from Brown University, and has worked as a farm bill specialist for the North Dakota Association of Soil Conservation Districts, an assistant farmer at Aurora Farms, and a policy and political intern for Food Policy Action. Curry, who is working with LSP's



Maura Curry



Barb Sogn-Frank

Soil Builders' Network and helping disseminate information about soil health to farmers, can be reached at mcurry@landstewardshipproject.org. She previously worked for the organization as an organizer. In her new role, Sogn-Frank is working with Soil Builders' Network members. She can be contacted at bsognfrank@landstewardshipproject.org. □

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Want a quick primer on everything from regenerative farming techniques and the negative repercussions of factory farming to how to write a letter-to-the-editor and make sure a lease agreement meets your stewardship goals? Check out LSP's collection of fact sheets at www.landstewardshipproject.org/about/libraryresources/factsheets. □

Jo Ann Thomas: 1953-2021

In the mid-1980s, a new organization called the Land Stewardship Project hired organizers to travel to counties in the Upper Midwest that were suffering the worst farmland erosion. Their job was to facilitate meetings where farmers and other rural residents could talk about the impacts of this erosion as well as possible solutions. One of those organizers was Jo Ann Thomas, a native of Missouri who had already worked as an organizer for Minnesota COACT (Citizens Organizations Acting Together). After a long battle with cancer,



Jo Ann Thomas

Thomas passed away Feb. 19 on her farm near Winona, Minn., surrounded by her family. She was 67.

A few years after its founding, LSP hired Thomas, as well as Doug Nopar, to organize community meetings. Nopar and Thomas were later married, and raised two daughters, Elizabeth and Sylvia, on their farm. While at LSP, Thomas also organized the initial performances of *Planting in the Dust*, a play written by Nancy Paddock for LSP that featured a woman discussing her concerns about farmland stewardship. The popular play went on to serve as a major organizing tool for LSP in rural communities and was performed internationally.

After leaving LSP in 1985, Thomas was extremely active in various community projects in southeastern Minnesota. She served as the director of Houston County Women's Resources and co-director of the Women's Resource Center in Winona, and eventually opened up a homeopathy practice. No matter what endeavor she was involved with, she was known for demanding justice in a straightforward, loving way.

Nopar, who went on to work for several decades as an LSP organizer before leaving in 2020, says even after she departed the organization, Thomas continued to show an intense devotion to its principles of stewardship and justice on the land. □