

Ridgetop Runner

Connecting the Farm School Community

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Southern Rail

The Farm School's friendship with the South is strong. Consider, for example, the ratio of Alabamans to New Englanders on the PVS staff or the amount of okra and collard greens grown in our fields. Anyway, this weekend offers a chance to celebrate one of my favorite aspects of Southern culture: bluegrass. This Saturday, July 12, at 7:30 p.m., the renowned bluegrass band Southern Rail will shake loose the stiff boards of the 1794 Meetinghouse in New Salem. On banjo, mandolin, and guitar, Southern Rail has been offering heart-stopping harmony, inspired improvisation, and hilarious banter for 30 years. This will be a great show.



Kyla

Kyla first encountered the Farm School as a summer camper, but she came back as a staff member each summer throughout college and took a full time job at the Program for Visiting Schools after graduation. Nowadays she splits her time between the garden and the kitchen. Her favorite place on the farm, however, is way up on the top of the north pasture, where she can look out over the hills and valleys of central New England. She likes working at the farm because the community is beautiful both visually and holistically, with eager children and hard-working staff cooperating to build a simple life close to the land. Next year, Kyla will leave the farm for a new adventure as an apprentice to a book-binder in Easthampton, Massachusetts.

Something Strange in the Neighborhood

"Is there anyone down here?" Jason's voice sounds eerily flat in the damp stone cellar of the house at Maggie's Farm. "Is this your home? Is this where you live?" Maggie's Farm is where I live of course, along with the ten other student farmers, and frankly that's plenty of people in one small house. "We're not here to hurt you," Jason continues. "We just want to know more about who you are."

Jason is a member of Indy Ghost Hunters, a paranormal investigation team based out of Indianapolis, Indiana, for nearly fifteen years. He's really at the farm to visit Lisa, but he brought along some of his ghost hunting equipment just in case. The back corner of the basement feels creepy to him, and he wants to check it out. He arms us with a digital thermometer for measuring air temperature, an Electro-Magnetic Field detector, a digital camera, and an audio recorder. Here we go.

"If you are here," Jason calls into the darkness, "do something to let us know. Bang on a pipe. Make a light bulb flash. Tap one of us on the shoulder." For me, that's it. The last thing in the world I want right now is some supernatural pat on the back, and I've got no problem letting Jason know it. The other apprentices in the basement seem to feel the same way, and Jason backs away from requesting that kind of contact. We creep around the basement in a huddled group, scanning with the temperature gun and waving the EMF detector. I'm starting to lose interest, when suddenly the thermometer drops to 15° F and the EMF starts clattering. I can feel the shivers up my spine, but it's over in a minute. Was that a ghost? "It was certainly something," Jason admits. "I can't say for sure, but if I had to bet on it I'd say you guys aren't alone here."