Hello everyone,

     Today we have a nice sunny day with beautiful blue skies.  It seems like this is the first sunny day we have had for weeks.  The rain has been so frequent this spring and summer that my hayfield has still not been cut the first time.  It should be about ready for a second cutting by now.  The weeds have been flourishing in my garden and I have sadly fallen behind them, but though I have lost a few battles with the weeds I have not yet lost the war, nor do I intend to.

     Bernadette and I went with St Joseph parish high school kids to West Virginia to help repair trailers and houses last week.  We had a great time.  The young people were so friendly and kind to each other and to the families we were helping.  They played games and worked hard much of the time.  I don't think I saw one of the high school kids using their cell phones all week, except to play music or take pictures.  They played cards and soccer and talked with each other.

     So the season is about to start.  I have been debating whether to start this Thursday or next.  Next week I will have green beans and summer squash and perhaps beets and carrots, whereas none of these will be ready this week.  But, I have tons of kale and Swiss chard and collards and I can scrape up a few other vegetables to make a box, So I decided to start this week.  The first box will be ready this week on Thursday.  The decision on when to start will have no bearing on when the season ends.  That will depend on the how the garden is holding up in late October, how cold the frosts have been and things like that.  So I will have the boxes at Maureen's back porch on Thursday by 5:00.

     The address is 1117 N St Joseph St  South Bend.  It is about 2 blocks north of the river.  Maureen asks that we park in the front of the house and walk to the back porch rather than driving in her alley, as the alley is a dead end.  Maureen also asks that we be careful shutting the gate because there is a very fat and a very sneaky black cat that will escape if the gate is open, not that she walks very far when she gets out since she is so fat.  The trick to closing the gate is to make sure a rod on the latch falls into the hole in the ground.  For new people, the boxes will be stacked in rows with each name visible on the top of the box.  I re-use the boxes all summer so please return your old box when you pick-up the vegetables the next week.  Some people carry their vegetables home in bags and leave the box at the back porch, so they don't have to remember to bring the box back the next week.  Both systems work for me.

     I also have eggs for sale.  If you would like a dozen or two eggs in your box each week I can put them in.  They cost $3.00 per dozen.  The hens are truly free range as they roam all over our yard and garden and the neighbors' fields every day.

     Finally I like to put a recipe in these newsletters each week.  I really appreciate when you guys share recipes also.  If you would like, you can just "reply all" and send some of your favorite ways to prepare these vegetables or some interesting recipe you found and would like to try.  The person who has been my best source for recipes is not joining us this year after many years of being a member.   I don't cook much, so we need recipes.  This first week we have lots of kale so I thought I would talk a bit about our new favorite way of eating kale.  We have eaten kale chips and we have sauteed it with onions and garlic, but this spring we have mostly been eating it fresh as a salad.  We chop the kale into bite sized pieces after removing the stems (though I like the taste of the stems and think they taste like the core of cabbage).  Then we sprinkle the leaves with salt and toss them for 3-5 minutes.  Then we let it sit for about 15 minutes.  The leaves get very tender and edible.  Then you can add whatever dressing   or other kinds of fruits, nuts, cheeses and vegetables that you like in salad, such as black beans, or walnuts, or feta cheese, etc.  Try it and I think you will start buying much less lettuce.  I won't have lettuce in the boxes until late September as I think summer lettuce in the Midwest is quite bitter.  Have a beautiful day.  Brett