

The Plainfield Co-op To Your Health!

Winter 2011



Hours: *Monday-Saturday 9a.m.-8p.m. Sunday 9a.m.-6p.m.*
Phone: 454-8579 **Website:** www.PlainfieldCoop.com



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Co-op Board Members

Chris Jackson, President
 802-595-3623
 Gail Falk, Vice-President
 802-777-0528
 Les Snow, Treasurer 426-3800H,
 229-1888 W.lsnow@fairpoint.net
 Rebecca Armell, Secretary
 426-3034.
 rebeccaarmell@rocketmail.com
 Mike Peabody 454-0195
 Joseph Gainza 454-8550
 Sue Chickering (229-6232)

Committee Contacts

Building: Sam Clark (479-5793)
 Finance: Les Snow (426-3800)
 Newsletter: Glenda Bissex (454-7895)
 Equity Action Team (EAT): Les Snow
 (426-3800)
 Community Center: Doni Cain (454-1478)

Cover art by Owen Bissex

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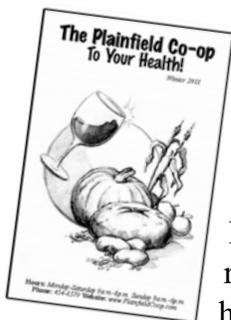
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About This Newsletter



Winter is often a time of sniffles and sneezes. This newsletter includes articles that offer good health for our bodies--teas, a salve, healthy fresh produce at reduced prices. And good health for our dear earth--ways to reduce wasteful

packaging, and new frozen organic veggies from our region (not California!) And for our economic health, a focus on co-ops and co-ops co-operating.

Thanks to our cover artist, Owen Bissex, who also provided the other art work for this issue. We welcome contributions of both words and images from our community. Deadline for the spring issue is Feb. 5, 2012. Contact Glenda Bissex, newsletter co-ordinator (454-7895) or any member of our committee:

Doug Davenport, design and layout
Joseph Gainza, Board Liaison and editing
Debra Stoleroff, editing and recipes
Alan Taplow, advertising and distribution

Shopping at the Co-op on a Budget

by Gail Falk

We all know that wholesome, organic, locally-grown food sold at the Co-op is healthier for families and for our planet. But many people think they can't afford to buy their groceries at the Co-op.

The Co-op is committed to providing affordable, healthy food for our community. Here are some tips for stretching your dollars when shopping at the Co-op.

Shop in the Bulk Section

You can save money by buying common items such as popcorn, cooking oil, oatmeal, honey, and pasta from the bulk bins. And don't forget bulk dish detergent, shampoo, and liquid soap.

Buy Discount Produce

Our discount produce section always contains a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. They may be blemished or past

their prime, but they are still full of health and goodness. Make a big pot of soup from a bag of discount veggies.

Become a Working Member

Members who work one hour per week get a 4% discount on purchases. Members who work two hours a week get an 8% discount, and that can really make a difference!

Buy by the Case

If you order items by the case, you save 20 per cent over the regular store price. Order items that store well and that you use often, such as canned tuna, canned tomatoes, or juice. Split a case with a friend.

Do you have other suggestions for how Co-op shopping can be more affordable? Let the staff know your ideas. ♦

News From the Grocery and Bulk Departments

by Jeannine DeWald

I have been working on studying financial trends at the Co-op over the past couple of years. In terms of sales, the grocery and bulk departments have actually declined, while other departments such as frozen, which includes all meat products, have seen an increase. The expanded product line in grocery has not increased sales as hoped, despite the addition of many lower priced products.

It is a challenge to balance the cooperative model with the availability of lower-priced, organic packaged foods. If we look back at the early years of the Plainfield Co-op, members put forth their capital and labor in exchange for access to natural and organic foods that were costly and difficult to obtain in the traditional grocery market. This was before the time of packaged organic, when the Co-op sourced whole, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, dairy and grains.

With the explosion of the natural foods industry came many new brands of

natural and organic packaged products which were initially available mostly at natural foods and specialty stores. In more recent history, the natural foods industry has spread into large chain grocers, many of which now offer their own natural and organic branding at very competitive prices, often retailing at prices below the wholesale price available to small stores like the Plainfield Co-op.

In the interest of responding to the member survey, where the concern over rising prices seemed to be on the mind of much of the membership, the Co-op has been working to source more competitively priced packaged products, and is ready to introduce better deals on quite a few items, including canned tuna, olives, tomato products, new cereals and ready to eat meals. We will also be doing more in the coming months to promote these items, making them easier for customers to find, and making the price decreases more noticeable. Some of these items have already arrived, such as Natural



Strafford Organic Creamery

53 Rock Bottom Road,

Strafford, VT 05072

(802) 765-4180

info@straffordcreamery.com

<http://www.straffordcreamery.com>

Delivery to the Plainfield Co-op every Friday

Value Organic tomato paste at \$1.29, down from \$1.99. Natural Value diced tomatoes are available at \$1.99 per 14.5oz can, as compared with Woodstock brand which we have previously offered at \$2.49. We have replaced Amy's canned chili with Field Day brand, which is a full dollar cheaper at \$2.79 per can, and still organic. Field Day cereals priced at \$3.99 will be arriving soon, and Field Day organic and conventional (but still non-GMO) olive oils have replaced Zoe brand in 1 liter and 500ml sizes. Liters of Field Day Organic olive oil (approximately 33ozs) are priced at \$12.99, compared with Zoe which cost \$13.99 for 25 oz. New affordable products in the ready-to-eat category include canned pasta meals, priced at \$1.79 and \$1.99.

You can find these items with our canned soups and chilies, and they are a reasonably priced option for quick lunches and snacks. We are also looking to other distributors who can offer us better deals on certain products. Tree of Life is among these companies and offers much better pricing on certain items, including some juices, meat and

vegetable broths, coconut oil, organic jams, nut butters, gluten free cookies and crackers, and more. Look for these items arriving over the coming months, and we'll make sure we make them easy to find and the savings easy to see. We are also able to offer all of these new items at a lower shelf price without compromising the department's profit margin, an issue we have been struggling with pretty consistently.

We are also working to revitalize the bulk department to make it more accessible to our customers. We have already created a new Gluten-Free section in the department, which includes the addition of Bob's Red Mill Gluten-free Baking Flour. Thanks to the input of several members, and Co-op staff member Anji, we have recognized the importance of keeping our gluten-free bulk items as separate from the bulk flours and other gluten-containing items as possible. The first section of the bulk dry-goods as you walk in the door is now entirely gluten free. We also shifted around many of our other items to make the department as a whole more organized and products easier to find.

PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER

Space available for your:

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Meetings

Parties

Workshops



Art Gallery Exhibitions & Special Events

\$9/hr. for Co-op Members, \$15/hr. for Non-Members

Events: \$35 for Members, \$50 for Non-Members

Scheduling Book at Co-op Register

More Information? Call Doni Cain, 454-1478

Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op

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I will be adding cooking directions to the grains, beans, and pastas to help make the department more customer friendly as well as offer more meal planning ideas. The idea of soaking beans overnight can be daunting to some, especially if it is a new cooking venture, but it is a very cost effective and healthy way to eat. Fourteen ounces of soaked and cooked dry beans can cost up to 75% less than a can of pre-cooked beans of the same size. Dry beans also offer better nutrition, better flavor, and keep well; they just take some more planning.

The Co-op offers bulk rice in several varieties at very affordable prices. One cup of dry rice weighs about 1/2 pound at an average cost of about fifty cents and serves up to four people. Add some butter or oil, and spices from the bulk herbs department and compare the cost (about one dollar or less) to packaged seasoned rice which goes for between two and three dollars per box, even at larger retailers.

The bulk department, and bulk-buying in general, is really the essence of the true

cooperative- -the ability to purchase healthy food in volume for the purpose of making it available to a greater portion of the community at a reduced price. While we realize that life can be hectic, and our membership consists of busy families with full schedules, who want to be able to find healthy packaged food items at a good price; we also want to remind everyone that taking advantage of bulk item pricing makes the Co-op a much more affordable place to shop and keeps us all closer to the roots from which our little store has grown.

We welcome any input on new products or ideas from our membership to help us continue to work toward lower prices in all our departments as well as any suggestions on what the staff can do to make our products more accessible to our customers. We have a new suggestion box and bulletin board located next to the fresh brewed coffee area. Just drop a note in the box and we'll post our response on the board beside it. We hope everyone enjoys the new products we are offering and we look forward to hearing from you soon. ◆

Board Report *by Chris Jackson*

Yet another annual meeting has come and gone. This year's event went smoothly, with few agenda items, leaving plenty of time for open discussion, a fun and informative guest speaker, and of course a delicious potluck dinner, this time with musical accompaniment.

The attending membership first heard updates from the board, the Management Collective, and the building committee. The reports showed that the Co-op overall is on pretty solid footing with board, staff, members and volunteers working together to keep our very special store thriving and moving forward. Probably the greatest accomplishment of the year has been the

completion of the renovations. Many people have given their time to see this through and it has been a great accomplishment and example of what our community is capable of. The staff also recognized the hard work of some of the every day working members who have helped a great deal around the store.

The membership voted on a proposed bylaw change presented by the board. Up to and including this meeting, the board had to wait until 15 days prior to the Annual meeting to receive agenda items from the membership. This did not leave a very big window to get the postcards in the mail and to the membership in a timely

fashion. The board proposed the bylaw be changed to 25 days prior, and this was passed by the membership.

We had only one board seat open, which was Les Snow's. Les agreed to continue and there were no other nominations. I think I can speak for everyone at the meeting that we are thrilled that Les will continue to serve the Co-op with his diligent work, commitment, and knowledge.

With some time left, we were able to include discussions brought up by the members. This included ideas about the suggestion process, pricing, and organic versus conventional produce.

Also in attendance were two representatives of The Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) who tabled at the event and gave us an introduction to their organization. NFCA is more than 20 food co-ops in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut that are working together toward a shared vision of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.

The minutes for the meeting will be posted on the website. Special thanks goes to Amy Lester for doing a great job facilitating the meeting. Amy stepped up at the last minute after Paula Emory was given an opportunity to occupy Liberty Plaza and represent Vermont in Wall St. Thanks again to Rebecca for taking notes during the meeting.

After the official business, we had a guest appearance by local writer Ben Hewitt, who read from his new book *Making Supper Safe*. He started with a reading from the first chapter which told the tale of a night of dumpster diving with a couple of local characters who many people in the

room recognized from the colorful descriptions. The talk also included lots of important information on food safety from a rather unconventional perspective and discussions of how this affects our individual health and the health our local food systems. Finally, we shared food and further discussion with a delicious potluck feast. Local artist Heidi Wilson provided some beautiful background music.

Although the meeting went well overall, the attendance was still pretty light. We were

Shaved Brussels sprouts salad

by Glenda Bissex, thanks to a great Italian restaurant in St. Louis

If you think Brussels sprouts are a bit dense and bitter, try this incredibly light-textured, crispy and delicately flavored salad.

Make the dressing in advance so the rosemary can steep. Whip together:

- 1/3 c. olive oil
- 3 T white wine vinegar
- 1 T lemon or lime juice
- 1/4 t sugar

add a sprig of rosemary

For each serving of salad use about

- 2 medium-sized Brussels sprouts
- 1 T toasted almonds (slivered or

sliced)

a sprinkling of finely grated cheese, such as Romano

Remove any stem and wilted outer leaves from the sprouts. With a small, sharp knife slice the raw sprouts VERY thin, cutting from top to bottom, as if you were making cole slaw for tiny elves. Toss with the remaining ingredients, using enough dressing to moisten well but not to drown.

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just able to have a quorum for the voting processes. There were other events going on, particularly an important action regarding Vermont Yankee. The great thing about our community is that so many of us are involved in other important work. The board will announce next year's meeting soon so that people can plan accordingly.

Finally, as was announced at the meeting, the board is hosting a World Cafe on December 4th from 2-4:30pm at the Community Center. A world cafe is a

powerful tool in which a group of people creatively explores and discusses important questions in the relaxed atmosphere of a cafe. We will be transforming the community center into a bohemian cafe where coffee, tea and snacks will be served. Beer and wine will be byob. Questions about the Co-op, its place in the community, and its future will be posed for people to discuss in this fun, open forum. For more information on this model, please see theworldcafe.com. We look forward to seeing you there! ♦

Occupy a Health-Generating Economy *by Les Snow, Treasurer*

Worldwide, 2011 has been a year people have taken to the streets to demand the end of oppression, be it economic, political, religious or otherwise. As a treasurer of a food co-operative, I have found some related big questions between the lines of our financial reports. Two being, "What part has the dominant economic system played in that oppression?" and "What part does an economy based on cooperative principles play in creating happy and healthy lives for all?"

I've found some answers to those questions in a 2010 book by John Restakis titled *Humanizing the Economy: Co-operatives in the Age of Capital*. What a great and timely book! After reading it, I went back and took notes so that I could better summarize what I had learned, but then I saw the back cover text did a better job of that than I could. "Corporate capitalism is failing to meet even the most basic needs of billions of people around the world, undermining the foundation of healthy societies, caring communities, and personal well-being. With over 800 million members in 85 countries, the co-operative movement is positioned to help create a more equitable, just, and humane future"

In *Humanizing the Economy*, the author details the co-operative movement's place in economic history and provides examples of local and regional economies around the world where co-operatives are prominent in the lives of most residents. Restakis also takes on the myth promoted by many politicians that free market capitalism is a foundation of democracy, and shows how a co-operative based market economy promotes democracy and is responsive to the needs of all.

I highly recommend this book. It helped open my eyes to the history of the co-operative economic model being used by people around the world in response to oppression and injustice, as well as a tool for communities working together to provide for themselves. It only seems fitting that the year seeing the beginning of the Occupy movement be followed by United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2012.

Now, back to those financial reports. ♦

Plainfield Co-op Financial Summary, 2007-2011

Profit & Loss Statements, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Jan-Sept 2011
Sales	701,489	804,805	803,121	883,455	709,469
Cost of Goods Sold	511,709	547,849	545,612	600,990	495,019
Gross Profit	189,780	256,956	257,509	282,465	214,450
Operating Expenses	213,577	250,337	267,150	268,138	218,141
Net Operating Income	-23,797	6,619	-9,641	14,327	-3,691
Other Income/Expenses					
Other Income	21,708	14,821	14,285	12,256	14,246
Other Expenses	8,632	10,925	2,100	2,082	2,319
Net Other Income	13,076	3,896	12,185	10,174	11,927
Net Income	-10,721	10,515	2,544	24,501	8,236

Plainfield Co-op Balance Sheets, 2007-2011

ASSETS	12/31/2007	12/31/2008	12/31/2009	12/31/2010	9/30/2011
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings	4,187	41,982	23,359	45,002	19,774
Accounts Receivable	1,112	153	520	0	0
Other Current Assets	45,800	50,380	51,080	51,002	48,876
Total Current Assets	51,099	92,515	74,959	96,004	68,650
Fixed Assets	59,518	80,384	84,846	100,364	99,463
Accumulated Depreciation	-45,681	-49,793	-49,793	-63,881	-65,772
Cap. Imp. Deferred Revenue	0	0	-24,282	-15,851	-2,153
Other Assets	0	0	44,095	26,239	40,955
TOTAL ASSETS	64,936	123,106	129,825	142,875	141,143
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	35,797	37,623	46,527	48,558	46,286
Other Current Liabilities	-2,427	3,134	3,280	4,664	10,911
Total Current Liabilities	33,370	40,757	49,807	53,222	57,197
Long Term Liabilities	0	43,755	36,182	28,115	22,127
Total Liabilities	33,370	84,512	85,989	81,337	79,324
Equity					
Common Stock	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972
Retained Earnings	36,306	22,107	35,320	30,967	47,611
Net Income	-10,712	10,515	2,544	24,599	8,236
Total Equity	31,566	38,594	43,836	61,538	61,819
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	64,936	123,106	129,825	142,875	141,143



One of the real perks of Co-op membership is access to direct buying. That usually entails sacks of oats and boxes of fruit juice but it can really be almost anything that a member wants to get in volume at a price closer to wholesale cost. Generally, my department doesn't figure into this much; few vegetables or fruits can be managed in bulk by consumers, except during canning season. Putting up the season's bounty adds durability to the product at the expense of labor in the waning months of summer. But this, too, is a great time to stock up on produce. In fact, it's the cheapest and easiest time to do so. Most of what is available now is generally sold at a low price to encourage volume purchasing, along the whole of the supply chain. It's also very durable in proper conditions, thus stretching the dollars invested. In my opinion, Co-op members should further take advantage of their connection to the world of organic and locally-sourced food by ordering larger quantities of storage crops while farmers still have some to sell. In another few weeks, this will be a much harder thing to accomplish.

Buying a box of canning tomatoes or pesto basil basically puts you on the vegetables' timetable. Those vegetables are highly perishable, require large amounts of energy to process, and specialized environments for storage. It's not that it isn't worth it but really, even in their processed state, these are really just garnish. You can't smear tomato paste on a sandwich and call it a BLT. They can contribute enormously to the

success or failure of a meal but they are almost never stand-alones on the dinner front. That responsibility falls to the lowly commoners of the produce world, the so-called "utility crops." These cheap and reliable workhorses of our pantries are the backbone of many winter dishes. And since they are consumed so heartily, used so readily, why not sock some away before the winter buries us all?

Potatoes and carrots are the easy winners in this regard. There are almost no ways to prepare a potato which are not immediately appealing to everyone. Carrots make for some the best and most nutritionally dense snacking of any raw root available, not to mention their contributions to nearly every dish into which they are incorporated. Beets are like fat carrots and can be so sweet as to practically be a dessert (by the way, try making a beet cake, sometime; hit me up for a recipe). Benchwarmers like turnips and parsnips are durable, flavorful, and scrumptious, though less varied in their application. Squash are sweet and varied in texture. Onions and garlic are amazing for their ability to take a rote meal and add a savory element that brings the dish into a realm of enhanced delectability and spice. Even leaf vegetables like cabbage have a frost tolerance that make sled dogs look like amateurs. Cabbage even comes in its own compostable, storage-safe wrapping. And for fruits, apples are an obvious choice. Storage varieties like Empire will hold for months upon months in even moderate refrigeration. Case in point, the apples that are harvested by Champlain Orchards for their fall crop are the ones we are eating in May of the next year.

And guess which one is used for cider as a last resort? The humble and sweet Empire. Here's a good clue for a fine storage apple: if it is quite red on the outside, then it's generally a keeper. Ask an orchardist or do some research to be sure. Notice, though, the Empire is like a ruby, hard and red; the greener Northern Spy and Mutsu rarely make it all winter for that reason. Galas tend to wither. Few other fruits are really cut out for being socked away in a shed, cooler drawer, or basement without some kind of preparation.

As an aside, in my experience, it's probably best to avoid the "winter weirdos", like celeriac and daikon, for bulk storage purposes. While they are unique and delicious vegetables, they just aren't as applicable in as many ways, as far as I'm concerned, at least not the same as carrots and potatoes. As a result, you will go through them more slowly and be less likely to notice decomposition until it is too late. It's best to stock up on "high turn" vegetables, if for no other reason than that it makes quality control a natural add-on to the process of actually using the crops in question.

I know many people in our community store what they grow. That's wonderful. Food resilience is a smart path to tread. But putting away a little more of the great produce grown by your neighboring farmers and friends is just as shrewd a move, if you have the space to store it and the simple know-how to make it work. I once built a serviceable root compartment from an old Rubbermaid tote, perched atop a compound bucket to deter rodents, left on a pallet in an uninsulated basement, and filled with plastic bags of roots. Another I had was just a canvas bag left in a closed-off pantry,

mostly for onions and potatoes, though I did have to move things around when the temperatures got brutally cold. Squashes I've kept did well sitting out on a part of the kitchen counter, away from moisture and colder conditions but in the open, nonetheless. Here's a link to some information compiled by Cornell University: <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/factsheets/vegetables/storage.pdf> This is a decent overview of the conditions in which certain vegetables are best stored. A cold, moderately humid room or refrigerator compartment will keep most of your late-harvest crops quite comfortable for weeks and weeks. Onions prefer less humidity and potatoes like more of it. I feel as though I'm probably preaching to the choir, here. It's an easy guess that anything which stores for "months", as shown in the far right column of the fact sheet is a good candidate for bulk purchasing. But you can always call or talk to a farmer you may know about their opinions and observations. No one will be better able to describe their crops' capacities for winter storage.

Roots getting limp? Put them in a covered dish or bag of cold water. The colder, the better. Even leaving them outside on a frosty night isn't too much for them. This won't work on potatoes or onions but carrots and beets can be inflated and



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deflated like tires, it seems. Most storage crops can even take a couple of freezes, though it's best not to let it get that far. Onions and potatoes really can't be frozen more than once, and even then, they are essentially shot, thereafter. For dishes in which texture does not figure prominently, they are

fine, but stir fries and homefries are almost out of the question. I have saved these frostbitten victims for mashes and soup, as that is about all they're good for.

Buy a big bag of carrots. And a box of apples. And a sack of onions. These are delicious things that keep well, sell cheap, and are usable in just about every recipe worth making. Your co-op may take a cut in profit from this thrift but in the end, it works out better for everyone, at every point in the equation. The farmer gets a lump sum, the co-op converts product to cash more efficiently, and the frugal shopper makes off with a savings of upwards of 20%, by unit. Give a call, leave a note, or contact the Plainfield Co-op Produce department's Facebook or the Co-op's website. I love hearing from people with an eye on vegetables. ♦

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We all know that over-packaging is a problem. Unless you are OC (obsessive-compulsive) about taking care of the environment, your vigilance about packaging choices may slide when you have impatient kids in tow and want to get home from your long day of work. Mostly, we make pretty good choices about packaging – I mean we shop at co-ops right? But we (and co-ops) can always make our best better.

There is definitely a packaging choice dilemma. One dilemma is the choice between the lesser of two evils (paper or plastic) and the other is ease of access at that moment when your kid is pulling on your arm or you are racing to beat the imminent snow storm. Here is some information, new old choices and suggestions to consider.

Plastic:

Info: When it comes to packaging, plastic is comparable to nuclear waste. There is no good way to get rid of it; it has a really long half-life (in this case, it doesn't biodegrade); the production of plastic is really CO₂-emission heavy and toxic, and it harms unsuspecting animals who eat it from the landfill or ocean garbage dumps.

Suggestion for Individuals: If you are going to use plastic bags, reuse and reuse and reuse them until they fall apart. Stuff your old plastic bags into your shopping bag when they are dried from their washing. Place similarly priced foods in one bag.

Suggestion for the Co-op: Don't offer plastic bags. Or, make them harder for us to find. ☺

Paper:

Info: Paper bags are made from trees that breathe in the CO₂ we emit so, yeah – not a great choice. Similar to plastic, the production of paper bags is toxic to the environment but paper does biodegrade. They can be reused, but you can't wash them.

Suggestion for individuals: Reuse, reuse and reuse. Place similarly priced foods in one bag.

Suggestion for the Co-op: The Co-op already does a great job making reused paper bags available, but, perhaps, the Co-op could make first choice reused paper bags. Make us ask for new ones.

Cloth:

Info: One of the most prized, purposeful presents I ever received was a set of three small, homemade, muslin cloth, food-bags from Betsy Brigham. They are made from cotton, which, unless grown organically, is applied with toxic chemicals when grown. However, they are washable and have lasted forever (at least 10 years). When I throw them away they will biodegrade.

Suggestion: Make your or buy your own cloth food-bags (see Betsy's cloth bag pattern in this newsletter). Keep a stash of cloth food-bags in your larger shopping bag.

Suggestion for the Co-op: Have cloth bags available as a regular packaging choice for customers. (Yes, there might be a surcharge for new cloth bags – it is the price we pay for our lifestyle.)

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No Packaging: Need I say more? If this is an option, choose it. Choose to think like a person who doesn't have options for packaging.

One of Democracy Now's headlines on November 4th was "*Monster*" Increase in Carbon Dioxide Level in 2010.

"The U.S. Department of Energy says the global output of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that causes more heat to be trapped in the atmosphere, has soared to the largest amount on record ... The total amount of carbon pumped into the air

globally jumped by 6 percent in 2010... a "monster" increase. Pollution from China and the United States accounted for more than half the increase in emissions last year."

(Democracy Now, 11.4.11)

We are all aware of the larger and smaller choices we can make to lessen our carbon footprint (the amount of CO2 emissions for which we are personally responsible). Packaging choices amount to a small individual action but with a world population of 7 billion people the plastic and paper bags add up. ♦

Cloth Bulk-goods Bags, DIY Style *by Betsy Brigham*

Soon after I first joined the the Plainfield Co-op, I made a few simple but sturdy cotton bags to hold all the flour, beans and oatmeal I was buying every week for my young family. Now, over twenty years later, I'm still using them. That's some serious reuse! If you'd like a long-term alternative to paper or plastic bags, here are some basic directions for making your own cloth bags. It's not rocket science—they're just rectangular bags, after all—but there are a couple of tips that might save you an unfortunate bursting of seams.

Start with a piece of sturdy cotton, such as a heavy unbleached muslin. Make sure it's washable, non-stretchy, and tightly woven; you shouldn't be able to pull the fibers apart with your fingers. You'll also need a piece of cord that's easy to tie and untie, such as a shoelace, and access to a sewing machine.

For each bag, cut a long rectangle (about 10 inches X 30 inches). Hem the short ends with a double fold, so the raw edge is completely sealed and can't unravel; you don't want any stray threads to end up in your oatmeal. Then fold the rectangle in half, bringing those newly hemmed edges together. Sew the two side seams together with a narrow seam (1/4"), then flip the bag inside out and sew those same edges together again, ever so slightly wider this time. This is called a French seam; it's wicked strong and makes unraveling practically impossible. Now your bag is right-side out and nearly finished.

The last step is to attach the cord. Fold your cord or shoelace in half to find its center. Place this center-fold along one side seam, about 4-5 inches from the open end (further from the end than you think you'll need), with one end stretched out across each side of the bag parallel to the opening (kind of like it's

hugging the bag). Sew it onto the side seam right next to that center-fold, securing it both front and back at the same time, and go back and forth a few times so it's super-secure. Voila! You're done. Before you use it, I'd suggest throwing it in with your next load of laundry. Then weigh it on the Co-op scale and mark the tare weight with a permanent marker.

One last tip is worthy of mention. Whenever you decide your bag has carried enough rice or cornmeal to deserve a wash, turn it inside out and give it a good shake—outside or in your bathtub. Then leave it inside-out to launder. If you don't, residual food dust can leave an unappetizing, sticky mess on the fabric that is virtually impossible to get rid of. I learned that lesson the hard way.

May your new cloth bags carry your provisions from Co-op to pantry for decades to come. ♦

**LAYOUT AND DESIGN
PERSON NEEDED
FOR CO-OP NEWSLETTER**

We need a design person to take over the editing and layout of our newsletter. It is currently being created in Quark 8 but, if you prefer, we have some older layout templates in InDesign that you could modify to match the current layout theme.

CONTACT GLENDA BISSEX
454-7895. - LOW PAY (Co-op
discount) BUT INNER REWARD
FOR DOING ESSENTIAL
WORK.

Healing Salve

from Debra Stoleroff

1 part comfrey leaf
2 parts calendula flowers
1 part St. Johnswort flowers
olive oil (enough to cover herbs plus
1-2 more inches)
bees wax (1/4 cup to 1 cup of oil used)
lavender, rosemary or any other scented
extract combination you like.

Place the herbs in a glass container.
Cover the herbs with olive oil then
pour in one to two more inches of oil.
Place lid on tightly.

Place the jar in a warm, sunny spot for
two weeks. After two weeks, strain the
herbs from the oil (I use cheese cloth
for this). You can increase the potency
of your oil by putting more herbs in
the oil that has already been infused
and letting it sit for another two
weeks.

When you are ready to make the salve,
pour the oil into a stainless steel pot
and add beeswax. Heat over a low
heat until beeswax is completely melted.
Add some lavender and rosemary oils
or any other scented extract combination
you like.

Test the consistency of the salve by
dripping a bit on a surface (linoleum
or paper towel). Wait until cool. If
you like the consistency, pour the oil
into small glass jars or any other jars
or tins you will be able to get your fingers
into. Cover and let cool.

This salve is helpful for cuts, scrapes,
etc. and rashes.

Herbs for Health *by Dorothy Wallace*



Herbs can be potent medicine and one of the most powerful is *Camellia sinensis*. This lovely plant is the source of a classic “cuppa tea.” It is an evergreen shrub or small tree with pretty yellowish flowers about 1.5 inches wide with 7 to 8 petals. Folk medicine and current researchers tell us that tea is an antioxidant, provides benefit to our metabolism, intestines, immune system, heart, and brain. It can aid in cancer prevention, weight loss, and balancing blood sugars. It even inhibits the growth of bacteria that cause bad breath. There has been more research on green tea, so we tend to think it must be superior to black tea. White and green teas do have a bit more antioxidant action and less caffeine—but the health benefits of all teas are myriad. Some people prefer the lighter, “grassier” taste of green and white, while others enjoy the full body and flavors found in black tea. As always, moderation is the key. Excessive tea consumption has been linked to caffeine addiction and liver damage (only in susceptible individuals). The jury is out on what we put in our tea. One study says milk or lemon may block the healthy effects, while others have found no adverse effects. Sugar is always a bugaboo, but organic sugar or honey in small amounts sweeten the brew and, therefore, increase consumption. The Plainfield Co-op carries boxed (teabag) tea from companies such as Twining,

Tazo, Yogi, Haiku, and Celestial. All of our bulk teas are provided by the Vermont companies *Love & Tea* and *Vermont Tea & Trading*.

To brew a hot cup of tea, start with cold water, boil it, and then, if called for, cool to desired temperature. If you are making a whole pot (or jar), preheat your teapot by filling it with hot tap water, swirling it around, and then completely draining it. Use a rounded teaspoon of tea per 8-ounce cup, plus “one for the pot,” especially if adding milk. If using a single-serving tea ball or scissor, fill it just halfway to allow the tea leaves to expand. Pour the hot water over the leaves. Stir a few times during brewing. This allows the tea to unfurl and move freely in the water. At the end of the brewing period, stir the pot one last time and pour the tea into cups. If your pot does not have a built-in strainer, use a tea strainer. Top quality tea can be infused three or more times. Just add more hot water and steep for less time with each brew.

These descriptions and brewing recipes for the bulk varieties (all organic) carried at the Plainfield Co-op are only suggestions. Let your taste buds be your guide. If the results are not to your liking, try using a lower temperature, brewing for more or less time, or adjusting the amount of tea leaves. You don’t have to use a thermometer. Remember that 212°F is the boiling point and it is perfectly acceptable to just cool the water slightly.

Sweet and mellow green tea comes from young spring leaves so that the flavor is closest to the fresh tea leaf. It is custom-

ary to serve it plain or with sweetener and/or lemon.

- Genmaicha. Roasted rice is added for warm taste and scent. Boil water, then cool to 176° to 185°F, steep 3 to 5 minutes.

- Gunpowder. Gunshot-shaped pellets “explode” when steeped. Full-bodied and smoky. Boil water, then cool to 180°F, steep 3 to 4 minutes.

- Jasmine. Green tea infused with jasmine flowers. Boil water, then cool to 158°F, steep 1 minute.

- Spring Green Spiral. Classic green, pure and tender. Boil water, then cool to 180°F, steep 3 to 4 minutes.

- Sencha. Tea leaves are not ground. Balance of sweet, bitter, astringent, and rich changes with time steeped. Boil water, then cool to 185° to 200°F, steep 3 to 5 minutes.

Black teas are strong and vitalizing. Serve plain, or with sweetener and whole milk or lemon.

- Ceylon. Crisp, citrus aroma estate tea. Boil water to 210°F, steep 2 to 3 minutes.

- Darjeeling TGFOP (Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe). Musky, spicy flavor, delicate finish. Boil water, then cool 180° to 190°F, steep 2 to 3 minutes.

- Earl Grey. Premium Ceylon Pekoe, scented with aromatic Oil of Bergamot. Use boiling water and steep 4 to 6 minutes.

- Earl Grey, Decaf. All the flavor without the caffeine. Use boiling water and steep 2 to 4 minutes.

- English Breakfast. Traditional blend of fine Assam goldtip teas. Use boiling water and steep 4 to 6 minutes.

- Irish Breakfast. Robust blend of Assam CTC (crush-tear-curl). “The cof-

fee drinkers alternative.” Use boiling water and steep 4 to 5 minutes

- Keemun. Fruity, flowery, with hint of pine. Use boiling water and steep 4 to 6 minutes.

- Lapsang Souchong. Dried over burning pine for strong smoky flavor. Boil water, then cool to 185° to 200°F, steep 3 to 5 minutes.

Special teas

- Flowering Peach Green. Magically blooms before your eyes. Use clear teapot or glass jar for full effect. Delicious with hint of peach. Boil water, then cool to 180°F, steep 5 minutes.

- Kukicha Twig. Japanese blend made of stems, stalks, and twigs. Mildly nutty, and slightly creamy sweet flavor. Boil water, then cool to 155° to 180°F.

- Oolong. Withered under the strong sun and oxidation before curling and twisting. Mellow and smooth. Boil water, then cool to 176° to 185°F, steep 4 to 6 minutes.

- Pu-Erh. Earthy flavor, fermented after drying and rolling. Like wine, the older the better. Boil water Boil water, then cool to 190° to 205°F, steep 5 to 7 minutes

- Silver Needle King White. From the first harvest and minimally processed. Smooth and a bit sweet. Typically served plain. Boil water, then cool to 149° to 158°F, steep 1 to 2 minutes.

Experiment.
Play. Taste.
Enjoy. ♦



Building Committee Report *by Sam Clark*



Building Committee Members as of 10/11: Sam Clark, Nancy Ellen, Joe John, Margie Yoder, Jeannine DeWald, Mike Russell and Allen Banbury.

This building committee has been working together now for several years. During much of that time, major building projects have been planned and carried out. It might seem that our job has been primarily to push through and carry out such projects, but the planning process that we have been working under is just as important as the physical projects. Even though we may not be undertaking any huge projects in the next couple of years, the planning function is still valuable and worth continuing no matter who is on the committee, the staff, and the board. Here is a summary of how the committee sees our job:

1. Committee membership: The committee has been large at times, and small at others, but we have to have a board member on the committee, or someone to coordinate with the board. We also need very strong staff participation.

2. Developing proposals: Our big job is to develop clear proposals out of good ideas. Ideas for projects come from members, staff, or the committee. Often problems with the building, or the functioning of the store demand attention. To turn an idea or problem into a proposal usually calls for some brainstorming and sharing of ideas.

Developing a buildable, fundable proposal usually has involved discussion, brainstorming, maybe some research, drawings or sketches and some budgeting.

We don't work up every idea that comes along. Some person or group has to advocate for an idea and be willing to put some work into it. We will support and work with any group which wants to do this.

3. Review, Revision and Presentation:

Every proposal needs some sort of review, revision and presentation. Larger projects are presented to the staff, the board, and the membership which usually leads to great revision and improvement of the plan. None of the good ideas go anywhere until the staff, committee, board, and members are on board and willing to help. For example, the design for the back of the store went through many cycles of revisions, reviews, and more revisions, with budgeting at each stage. It got better each time. It's a powerful process; we're using our group wisdom and creativity. It's fun, too.

4. Funding: So far the board, the staff, and the Fundraising Committee have found the money needed for projects. Member dues are also directed to capital projects.

5. Getting the job done: Volunteers and committee members put in many hours. There may be paid professionals working depending on the job. If appropriate, there will be a construction supervisor.

The Committee and staff do follow up work.

10/11 REPORT ON CO-OP PROJECTS:

Currently, money isn't available for significant improvements. However, all member dues go to capital improvements and are held in a capital improvement account. There is currently over \$8,800 in this account. The Board has a goal of holding \$10,000 in that account for emergency uses.

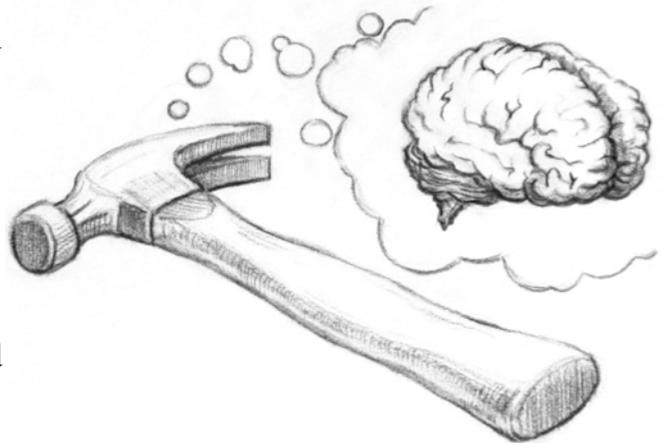
Huge effort went into the back-of-the-store project. More was accomplished than originally planned. There are still some projects that need to be finished by winter including: repair to cold air return; trimming and sealing of four windows and office door; trap door to furnace room; misc. store fittings; metal thresholds at floor level changes; and bolting in a 4x4 column. The committee asked the board to allocate \$2000 for these projects.

For several years we have wanted to paint the high gable wall facing Kerrin McCadden's yard. We think this should

be the next major project. Because of new lead rules, this will be costly. Nancy will get estimates from painters.

Possible future projects the Co-op could undertake in the near future include: improving accessibility and the upstairs "kitchen"; a cafe idea; improvements to decks/porches and outside seating in good weather.

The Building Committee is definitely looking for new members. It is a fun and productive committee to work on. We need people to work on the planning issues, come to our meetings, and add some leadership. We welcome folks who like to do practical projects, but don't want to go to meetings very often. That's another good way to further the work of the Co-op. ♦



Littlewood Farm



*Growing organic produce
for the
Plainfield Coop since 1988*



End of Recreation Field Road, Plainfield
www.littlewoodfarm.org*454-8446*littlewoodfarm@gmail.com

Co-ops Cooperating *by Gail Falk*

Our Co-op is one of 24 food co-operatives in Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Maine working together through the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA). NFCA describes itself as “a network of food co-ops committed to a shared vision of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.”

Some of the NFCA member co-ops are old and established dating back as far as the 1930’s and 1940’s, and others are recently launched. Four new food co-ops are in start-up phase in our region. Looking around the room at the fall member meeting, the youth and energy of the participants was striking. This movement respects its past, but is being carried into the future by a new generation of smart young thinkers and doers.

Together NFCA’s member grocery stores represent the buying power of 90,000 members in our region. They employ over 1,400 people, and have combined annual revenues of over \$200 million. A 2007 survey found that the member stores purchased more than \$33 million in local products, including \$10 million in fresh farm products and \$18 million in locally-processed foods.

NFCA serves as a point of connection and promotes collaboration with food producers co-ops in New England, credit unions; the New England Farmer’s Union, NOFA, and the National Cooperative Grocers Association.

Although the name sounds bureaucratic, the work of NFCA is exciting for us here in Plainfield. Here are some of NFCA’s current initiatives:

1. Promoting the United Nation’s International Year of Co-ops. The UN declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-ops recognizing the contribution of co-operative enterprise to social and economic development and sustainability. Around the world about 1 billion people belong to co-ops. NFCA is developing materials for co-ops to use at a local level to educate our members and our communities about the principles and value of co-operatives. A film maker in Massachusetts is working with his co-op in the Pioneer Valley to make a feature-length film called “Food for Change” about food co-ops.

2. Food sourcing. NFCA is working in cooperation with an Addison County producer cooperative to develop a line of New England grown frozen foods, including frozen corn, beans, and spinach. Watch for these!

3. Sharing strategies for food access. At the September meeting, NFCA sponsored a terrific panel where four different co-ops described ways they have promoted access to healthy co-op food for low income people. NFCA provides a great way for us to learn the successes and also the pitfalls of ways to draw in low income community members.

4. Promoting co-op producers. NFCA has materials to remind us that we can support the co-operative movement by choosing to purchase food from producer co-operatives. Some of the producer co-operatives in our region are Cabot Creamery, Deep Root, Organic Valley, and Equal Exchange.

For more information on NFCA, go to www.ncfa.coop. ♦

Farm to Freezer *by Erbin Crowell*

Neighboring Food Co-ops Launch Frozen Fruit & Vegetable Pilot

Your food co-op works hard to source products that strengthen the local economy, support sustainable agriculture and grow the cooperative movement. Food co-ops have been innovators in the food system, from organic and fairly traded goods to rebuilding local and regional economies.

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA), a network of more than 20 food co-ops in New England has identified a range of products that could be grown, processed and consumed closer to home. Among the most compelling are frozen fruits and vegetables. While our region has a vibrant tradition of family farms and agricultural co-ops, much of the frozen produce on our shelves is grown on large, industrial farms, and processed by distant corporations.

What would it take to change this situation? The NFCA has partnered with Sunrise Orchards in Cornwall, Vermont, to find out. “We are excited, in a year of so many challenges for farmers, to release a line of regionally sourced, family farmed frozen produce,” said David Dolginow of Sunrise Orchards. “And it wouldn’t have happened without the partnership of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association.”

Working in collaboration with family farmers, farmer co-ops such as Deep Root Organic Co-op and the Pioneer Valley Growers Association, and processors including Farm to Table Co-Packers, the Vermont Food Venture Center and Green Mountain College’s Mobile Flash Freezer, the NFCA and Sunrise Orchards are piloting products that are grown, processed and packaged right here in the Northeast, including:

Blueberries. Our delicious highbush blueberries were grown by Green Mountain Orchards and Harlow’s Sugar House in

Putney, VT. The growers practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to control insect pests, weeds and diseases in their fields.

Green Beans. John’s Farms in Plainview, NY, has been growing a variety of produce in the central New York area since the 1950s. The farm uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to produce the Caprice, Labrador and Lewis bean varieties for our frozen green beans.

Sweet Corn. Our delicious, non-GMO sweet corn is grown by Gill Farm in New York State. First planted by John Gill’s grandfather in 1937, the farm now produces a wide variety of produce using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods.

Organic Broccoli. Founded in 1986, Deep Root Organic Co-op is a pioneer in regionally grown organic produce, offering a wide variety of vegetables from their 14 member farms in Vermont and Southern Québec. Their co-op supplies our food co-ops with organically grown broccoli.

“We have really appreciated the opportunity to work with the NFCA on this project,” says Anthony Mirisciotta, Deep Root Organic Co-op’s general manager. “This collaboration has produced some great, regionally sourced frozen foods that can be enjoyed year round, as fresh as the day they were picked. This is what really excites us!”

We hope that you’re excited, too, and will look for these products in your co-op’s freezer, try them out, and tell us what you think. Neighboring Food Co-op Association frozen fruits & vegetables are easy to find — they’re packed in a clear package so you can easily see what’s inside. For more information, please visit www.nfca.coop/farmtofreezer.

Erbin Crowell serves as Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association, a network of more than 20 food co-ops — including yours! — community-owned by more than 90,000 people. Together, we are

...continued on page 22

building a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative

enterprise. For more information and a map of member food co-ops, please visit www.nfca.coop. ♦

Plainfield Community Center Report *by Doni Cain*

The Co-op has a goal to offer at least three free workshops at the Community Center every season. I would like to thank Chris Jackson for the fermenting workshop he offered and Nicko Rubin for this summer's tree-planting workshop. We have several workshops in the making for this fall/winter. Alexis Smith will offer a massage workshop; Lauren Akin will give a self hypnosis workshop; Blake and Lisa will offer a partners yoga class and I will teach another screen printing workshop. Dates and times for these classes will be posted on the wall dedicated to the Community Center in the Co-op's lobby and on the Co-op's website. We would love to offer as many free workshops as possible, so if you have any ideas or would like to host a class, feel free to contact me and we can work it out.

Besides free workshops the Community Center sponsors free events and classes to help the Co-op meet its goal of building a sense of community. If an event is sponsored by the Community Center, the Co-op will waive the rental fee, can help advertise, and offer other support for the event. Requirements for a Community Center sponsored event are that the event is driven by a community theme, open to the general public and free of charge. A suggested donation can be set, but all donated money goes to the Community Center. Some current examples of Community Center sponsored events include the use of the Center by home-schooled students and Community Potlucks. The next potluck is Friday Nov. 25th. We encourage everyone to bring their best Thanksgiving leftovers. In the coming months there will be many

more Community Center sponsored events such as Robert Pougner's free Kung Fu classes.

The Co-op strives to keep the Community Center accessible to everyone. We keep rental fees very reasonable (ongoing classes are \$9/hr for members; \$15/hr for non-members and events are \$30 for members and \$50 for non-members). You can easily rent the community center at the Co-op register or from the Co-op's website (www.plainfieldcoop.com). On the website you can also find an up to date calendar to find available rental dates or to check dates and times of events or classes. We will do our best to help with needs for special equipment and always try to be as accommodating as possible.

I would like to thank Jerome Lipani for the great art show opening last month which included a live performance. In the spirit of Jerome's desire to start a Plainfield art collective, he and Alexis Smith organized the collaborative art show that is currently up. Some upcoming gallery shows include a collection from Robert Pougner and a Bread and Puppet archival collection. We are currently collecting submissions for next year's shows. Collections stay up for 4 to 6 weeks and the artist gets one free opening and one free closing. If you have any interest in having a show at the Community Center contact Alexis Smith at 454-4662.

The Community Center is run by a Co-op committee. There are currently five people on the committee who meet about once a month. We mostly do visioning for the

space, help each other with public relations, decide on workshops and gallery shows and work to keep the space vibrant. We are always in need of more people and energy and would love to have anyone interested in joining the committee come to any of our meetings. Committee meeting times are posted at the Co-op on calendar in the entry of the Co-op and on the website. Committee members receive a 4% discount at the Co-op as well. Our next meeting is dedicated to visioning. We will focus on the direction we want to see the Community Center take in the next year and beyond. This meeting is scheduled for Dec. 13th at noon. Details will be posted at the Co-op.

If you have any questions about renting the Community Center, hosting a free workshop, putting on a Community Center sponsored event, joining the Community Center Committee or any other question related to the Community Center feel free to call me (Doni) at home 454-1478.

Community Center Shows

From mid-August through November 7, the PCC hosted a series of Climate Justice/ Social Justice Issue Art Shows presented by LivingTheatreVT in solidarity with the Wall Street Occupation movement, the 350.Org movement and the Vermont Bioneers Conference. Installations included a one-person show by Jerome Lipani called *The Great Turning: From the Homocentric to the Cosmocentric Universe*, a digital/photo/assemblage show, and within it on the Autumn Equinox, performance of the *Dreamtime Opera*, a new work composed/ written/danced by the collective: Alexis Smith, Tara Gita, Brian Tokar, Phyllis Rachel Larrabee, George Peskunck Larrabee and Jerome Lipani. Texts used included those of Bill McKibben and Brian Tokar, as well as selections from Julian Beck, Rumi, Tagore and Aristophanes regarding the role of the artist within any

given society as a signaller through the flames.

This effort morphed in October into a collective group show on the same theme. Now the strikingly original paintings of Marijke Russo, Marina Epstein, Claudia Bagiackas, and Benjamin Davis joined the assemblages of Tara Gita and Jerome Lipani, the searing prints of Elinor Randall, the poetry of Len and several of the *Beanie* series by David Klein. Janice Walrafen contributed large paintings of the Gulf Spill Oil Rig as well as the Vernon, VT nuclear power plant. Golden True's *Great Purification* painting found an agreeable context! An Opening of this show, called *ParadiseLost/ParadiseFound*, was given on October 16, a big weekend for the ecology movement in Vermont! A percentage of sales was offered to the WGDR pledge drive, the possible beginning of an interactive link between the PCC and WGDR.

LivingTheatreVT thanks the Co-op for providing space that facilitated a great deal of development for the participating artists. The dream of a newly functional arts collective, directly and creatively connected with the Plainfield Co-op staff, is in the early vision stages, as noted in Doni's article in this issue. Please join us for future collaborative efforts! It is our hope that many of us in this community will find our particular resonance reflected in arts events such as the above. We see the arts as a community-building exercise. As artist/farmers, artist/technicians, scientist/artists, artist/scientists, Artist/Activists. we are all contributing to the global renaissance in science and the arts and education which will re-evaluate the culture of post-industrial capitalism in the creative spirit of self-change. The focus is on energy-resource management. And it starts with each one of us!

We thank you for your support, and we invite you to join us!

Jerome, Alexis, Doni, Mike ◆



Plainfield Cooperative
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