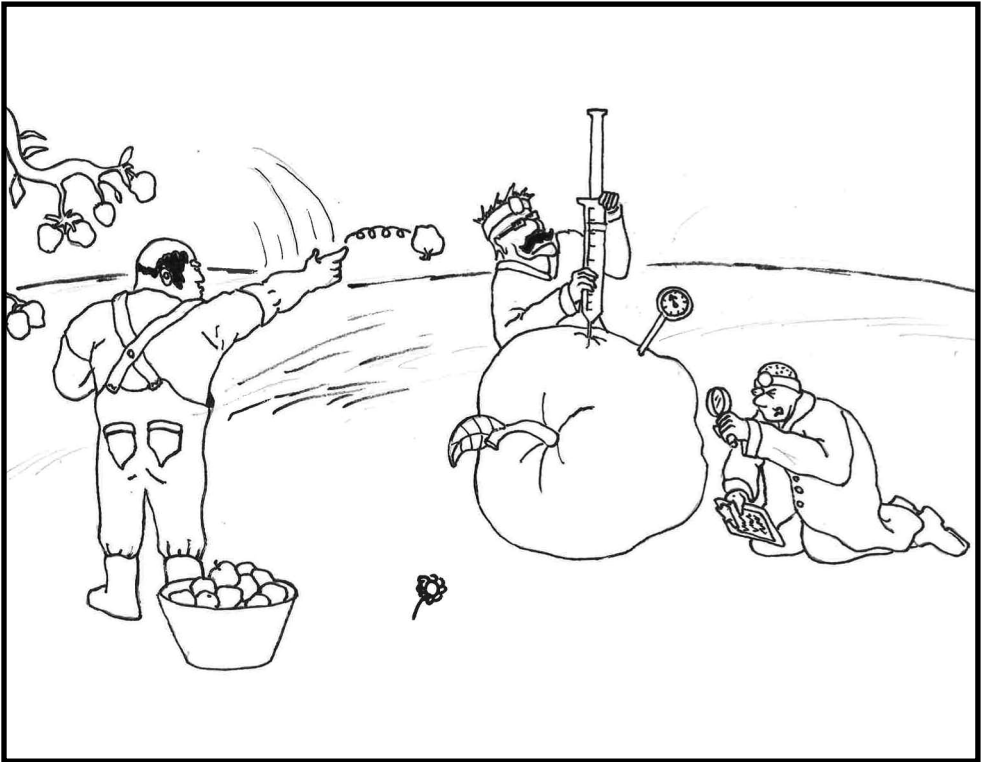


The Plainfield Co-op

Spring 2013

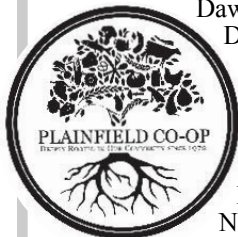
- Food Fights -



Hours: *NEW* – 7 days a week 9AM–8PM

Phone: 454-8579 **Website:** www.PlainfieldCoop.com

Management Collective



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 Dawn Rose Kearn
 Dorothy Wallace
 Jeannine DeWald
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 Karen Starr
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Artists for this issue:

Henry John, cover & page 4
E. Randall, page 5
Betsy Brigham, pages 7 & 15
Jerrie Nash, page 10

Newsletter Advertising Specifications

RATES		
Page Size	Single Insertion	4 Insertions (prepaid) 20% discount
Full Page	\$75	\$240
Half Page	\$50	\$160
Quarter Page	\$25	\$80

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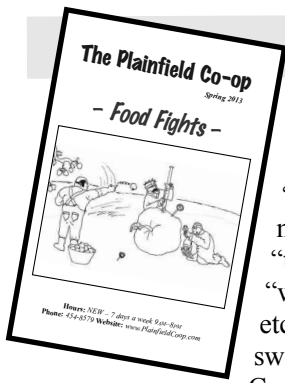
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About This Newsletter

Discussion about “organic,” “local,” “commercial,” “healthy,” “too expensive,” “where’s it from?” etc. has been swirling around the Co-op. We wanted to

continue it in this newsletter to help us all make more conscious and informed choices. The issues are complex; there’s lots to be learned and pondered. Much more could be said, and we hope you’ll let us hear from you so we can keep the conversation going in our next newsletter. Email your comments to <glenda@bissex.net>.

Once again we’re happy to showcase the work of a young artist, Henry John,

a sophomore at Twinfield, on our cover and p. 4 (the recumbent eggplant). Other illustrations are favorites from previous newsletters by Jerrie Nash, Betsy Brigham, and E. Randall (Randy). Artists, young and old, if you’d like your work to be seen here, please contact any member of the newsletter committee (listed below). We prefer our art work, like our food, to be local.

Glenda Bissex, co-ordinator (454-7895)
Sarah Albert, design and layout (476-0526)
Joseph Gainza, board liaison and editing (522-2376)

Karen Starr, staff liaison and writer (232-4646)

Debra Stoleroff, editing and recipes (476-3154)

Alan Taplow, advertising and distribution (454-4675) ♦

Behind the Scenes at the Building Committee

by Mike Russell

We’ve been busy at the Building Committee; here are some of the projects we’ve been working on:

1. When we remodeled the back of the store, the duct work was never adjusted. We’ve adjusted and balanced the system, making the store more comfortable and increasing the efficiency of the furnace.
2. We’re welcoming Kathleen Hayes as Maintenance Coordinator for the Co-op. She’s been tackling many of the odds and ends of building upkeep. Thanks Kathleen, not a small job!

3. We’re still looking into creating a separate coffee area.
4. The landscaping to finish off the canoe take-out is in the planning stages. Work is due to start this spring.
5. We addressed the deflection of the Community Center floor joists, by adding more supports that carry the load down into the crawlspaces.

That’s what we’ve been up to this winter. We will be looking for some volunteer help with landscaping in the spring. Enjoy the late winter, everyone! ♦

Of Apples and Onions: Board Report *by Chris Jackson*

Much has been accomplished with the Co-op over the last couple of months. The Management Collective has completed its multi-year plan, the POS system is in place, and equity is approved and being planned, among other things. With all that is going on, we are still looking at some of the bigger questions regarding how we continue. One of those questions is healthy food.

Our Ends policy states the Co-op “will be an outlet for healthy food and other goods.” This short sentence may seem clear but is a potential can of worms and one that can be very challenging to interpret and implement.

What is healthy? The Management Collective (MC) has interpreted this policy as: “The MC will insure that the Co-op carries a full line of groceries, including a full line of whole foods so that community members prepare their own healthful foods as best meets their dietary needs and personal definition of ‘healthy.’ When selling processed or prepared foods, including convenience foods, the MC will prefer, almost always, all natural products with fewer additives. The MC will have a very strong bias against artificial additives. The Co-op will also offer personal care goods that are free of chemicals, or have fewer objectionable chemicals than comparable products.” The Board has



accepted this interpretation, based on what we know of membership preferences, and thus empower the Management Collective to adopt this interpretation in the operational decisions.

Members at meetings, through surveys, and in the store have expressed their opinion on this issue (sometimes vehemently). What we put into our bodies is a very personal decision and often the information we receive from so called experts just confuses us all the more.

Organic vs conventional is a big theme, especially when balancing affordability with health. Making this choice can be daunting, but I found this list of the so called “dirty dozen” presented annually by the Environmental Working Group helpful when having to make this choice. These are said to be the most pesticide-contaminated foods, so buying organic would be advised:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. apples | 7. grapes |
| 2. celery | 8. spinach |
| 3. sweet bell peppers | 9. lettuce |
| 4. peaches | 10. cucumbers |
| 5. strawberries | 11. blueberries
(domestic) |
| 6. nectarines
(imported) | 12. potatoes |

The “clean 15” are foods that have minimal residues when grown conventionally:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1. onions | 9. eggplant |
| 2. sweet corn | 10. kiwi |
| 3. pineapples | 11. cantaloupe
(domestic) |
| 4. avocado | 12. sweet potatoes |
| 5. cabbage | 13. grapefruit |
| 6. sweet peas | 14. watermelon |
| 7. asparagus | 15. mushrooms |
| 8. mangoes | |

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Of course this list doesn't take into account ecological and social health in the production of food, but may help you make health decisions when faced with cost.

There are many considerations in health and many different ideas of what to eat. I'm sure if I set up the Co-op based solely on what I personally feel is healthy for me and took away everything that I found unhealthy, the store would look radically different and there would be much fewer customers and probably some angry members. The best we could do as a board is make sure you are being heard in what you find healthy so we could continue to communicate your needs and desires to the Management Collective.

Over the next three months the board will look at venues such as surveys, meetings and discussions, online and off, with the membership on this issue. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to us and let us know what is healthy to you. ♦

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piano method has students playing immediately!



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— Alex Noyes, student, Plainfield, VT

Free Introductory Session

Nicholas Mortimer

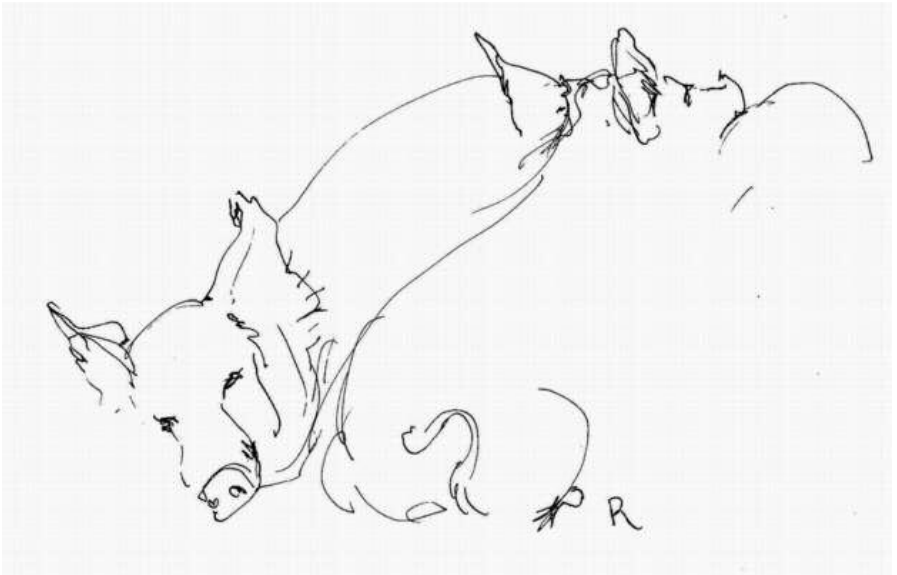
Licensed Simply Music Teacher

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ages 4 to 104



The Numbers *from Les Snow*

Profit & Loss Statements, 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	2012 Budget	2013 Budget
Sales	804,805	803,121	883,455	942,072	963,609	1,022,320	1,003,746
Cost of Goods Sold	547,849	545,612	601,457	654,211	645,275	684,954	676,979
Gross Profit	256,956	257,509	281,998	287,861	318,334	337,366	326,767
Operating Expenses	250,337	267,150	271,609	289,837	312,914	313,200	311,462
Net Operating Income	6,619	-9,641	10,389	-1,976	5,420	24,166	15,305
Other Income/Expenses							
Other Income	14,821	14,285	12,187	17,483	15,630	12,000	14,500
Other Expenses	10,925	2,100	5,933	4,274	4,154	4,400	6,400
Net Other Income	3,896	12,185	6,254	13,209	11,476	7,600	8,100
Net Income	10,515	2,544	16,643	11,233	16,896	31,766	23,405

Plainfield Co-op Balance Sheets, 2008-2012

	12/31/08	12/31/09	12/31/10	12/31/11	12/31/12*
ASSETS					
Current Assets					
Checking/Savings	41,982	23,359	43,510	21,763	29,024
Accounts Receivable	153	520	0	646	177
Other Current Assets	50,380	51,080	51,002	43,226	46,137
Total Current Assets	92,515	74,959	94,512	65,635	75,338
Fixed Assets	80,384	84,846	99,463	99,463	133,954
Accumulated Depreciation	-49,793	-49,793	-65,772	-65,772	-66,710
Cap. Imp. Deferred Revenue	0	-24,282	0	-7,958	0
Other Assets	0	44,095	10,078	47,131	16,798
TOTAL ASSETS	123,106	129,825	138,281	138,499	159,380
LIABILITIES & EQUITY					
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	37,623	46,527	52,497	39,056	42,216
Other Current Liabilities	3,134	3,280	4,276	14,433	14,322
Total Current Liabilities	40,757	49,807	56,773	53,489	56,538
Long Term Liabilities	43,755	36,182	27,926	20,194	24,941
Total Liabilities	84,512	85,989	84,699	73,683	81,479
Equity					
Common Stock	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972	5,972
Retained Earnings	22,107	35,320	30,967	47,611	55,253
Net Income	10,515	2,544	16,643	11,233	16,676
Total Equity	38,594	43,836	53,582	64,816	77,901
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	123,106	129,825	138,281	138,499	159,380

*Based on preliminary December 2012 financial statements.

DRAPER ELECTRIC

John Draper

Plainfield, VT

802 - 522 - 5570

45johnd@gmail.com

Serving Central Vermont since 1987

What Are Those Beeps? The New Registers

by Mike Peabody

At some point, everyone outgrows something they thought they would have forever. For the Co-op, it's the old registers. While they were probably sufficient 20+ years ago, in recent memory they have been like the proverbial round hole through which we are trying to shove a square peg. The limitations placed on us by both the kinds of information we can give to the mechanical registers and that which we can extract have finally become counterproductive. That's why we've moved on to digital point-of-sale (POS).

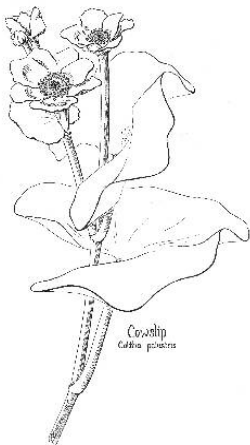
Compare to home accounting: Imagine if your bank made you call all spending either "Food", "Car", or "Medicine." Where would you put the shovels and birthday presents you buy, all year? What about your taxes? And what if this bank's statements only used those three labels to tell you where your spending went? How much time would you spend figuring out what your expenses really looked like, when that

work should and can be done by your bank? I think anyone would dump a bank that made their life that difficult in a heartbeat. And that's what we've decided to do about our registers. The way they

process money in and products out works for very small, very simple operations; but the storefront is running close to a million dollars a year in sales and too many things have been falling through the cracks. We can't readily get what we want or what we need from the ole cash registers anymore, so it's time to move on.

I'd like to think the membership is on board with the Co-op's attempt to stay modern, but I also understand the perspective that feels this is just more computing and screens and new for the sake of new. It's OK to have those reservations, in my opinion, but our decision also ties in with the move to equity in 2014. To make a long story short, managing dividends and tracking member sales is next to impossible for us without picking up some POS technology. Some co-ops still allow for members to mail in all their year's receipts and then the staff and board calculate dividends, equity reimbursements, etc., based on those numbers. The papercuts must require OSHA logs in those places.

I want the membership and all of our customers, board members, and friendly walk-ins to know that we, the staff do and will continue to appreciate your patience at the registers. We talk about how pleasant and considerate people are, all the time, and this is a special circumstance. From the bottom of our (collective) heart, thank you for giving us time to understand these new registers. It's our Co-op and we're all trying to make it better, every day. ♦



More Than a Grocery Store

by Joseph Gainza

When you become a member of the Plainfield Food Co-op, you also join an international movement creating working alternatives to the dominant economic model presently wreaking havoc in society and the natural world.

Non-cooperative businesses generally operate for one purpose only: profit for the owners, whether individuals or stock holders, the famous (or infamous) “bottom line.” Co-operatives, generally, have three bottom lines: income to keep the business viable, personal and community empowerment, and environmental sustainability. As you might imagine, the second and third purposes of co-operatives, in order to be successful, require members to more than simply shop.

When you sign up to join a co-operative, you declare that you are a member of a community, and accept the responsibility to help it achieve its purposes and goals. You agree to live up to the principles which distinguish co-operative enterprises from for-profit businesses.

So, what are these co-operative principles? They are listed below; in future newsletters we will more fully discuss each principle and its implications for active membership in your co-op.

1st Principle:

Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without

gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle:

Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle:

Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle:

Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-

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help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter to agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

**5th Principle:
Education, Training and Information**

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public—particularly young people and opinion leaders—about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

**6th Principle:
Co-operation among Co-operatives**

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Co-operatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1995. Co-operatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern co-operative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844. ♦



What Products Should Be in Our Co-op?

by Joey Klein

The topic of what products belong on the shelves of the Plainfield Co-op is often brought up at our Annual Meeting. I find there are two distinct lines of expectations that are behind the answers that we discuss so regularly. These sometimes conflicting expectations go back to the very reasons co-ops were started in Vermont.

The first expectation is that our Co-op will carry as full a line of organically produced products as possible. Whole grains, flours, and beans were extremely hard to source when the back-to-the-land folk began to arrive in Vermont in numbers in the late 60's. Living in the Brattleboro area at the time, we had no local source at all. One choice was to drive to St. Johnsbury, to Hatch's Natural Foods. Another choice was to drive to Boston, to the Erewhon store. Sometimes we bought smaller quantities from Walnut Acres in Pennsylvania by mail order, very good quality but expensive. The local co-ops formed in the 1970's to remedy this situation. Many started as buying clubs, splitting up 25# and 50# bags of organic grains among the mem-

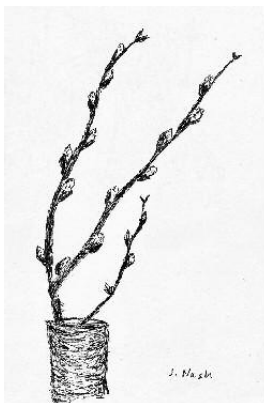
bers once a month. As demand grew, the co-op store front businesses were begun.

With time, these stores increasingly became marketing outlets for the bur-

geoning organic farming and local product movements. The co-ops' customer base began to include more people who were not gardeners and homesteaders, but wanted to eat the best produce, meats and dairy products. The co-op stores have been a major engine in the spread of organic farming in our state. Keeping organic products widely available remains a focus of our co-op stores. Wines and beers were added due to member requests.

The other goal of grouping our purchasing power into a consumer co-op is to obtain lower prices. "Food for People, not for Profit" was the co-op's bumper sticker. This concept is at the heart of the cooperative business model. The members are the owners, and any profit gained in the course of business is returned to the members in discounts or dividends. Managing co-op businesses is an art that requires balancing the wish of the members for lower prices, the need for improvements to the co-op's infrastructure, and the desire to pay livable wages to the co-op staff.

Some organic products are at the high end of what people can afford, and our co-op has responded to member concerns by continuing to carry lower priced alternative choices of basic needs such as milk, butter, cheese and bread. Our management is balancing the needs of the members with the needs of the Co-op as a business. Co-ops are small enterprises located in small towns, and are never going to be as cheap as super markets and convenience stores. Your patronage is your vote to keep the Co-op going. ♦



No Strawberry is an Island

by Glenda Bissex

*No man is an island entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main...any man's death
diminishes me, because I am
involved in mankind, and therefore
never send to know for whom the
bells tolls; it tolls for thee.*

—John Donne, *Sermon*

This newsletter issue is about the choices we make when buying food—an effort to offer information not widely available to help us make more conscious and informed decisions. It is not a guilt trip. Not everyone can afford to buy organic—or to buy everything organic. Many of us can afford to buy organic selectively. As Chris Jackson says in his article, we can try to avoid some conventionally farmed produce that contains more toxic residues than others. Strawberries contain more, including 13 different pesticides.

Comparing a box of commercially grown and a box of organically grown strawberries, I look at the prices, then at and my wallet, and the choice seems clear. I can't see the chemicals, feel what they may do to my body, or their effects far beyond me in space and time. Only when I'm aware of all these things can I make a conscious choice.

You could say that commercial strawberries and other produce, cost more when you look at the collateral damage created by years of herbicide and pesticide use, whether applied from the ground or by aerial spraying (as in apple orchards). And years of petroleum-based fertilizer that slowly kills the

living soil. These costs are not apparent as I contemplate the box of commercial strawberries. But other humans, and other living creatures, and our environment pay for the dollar or two I could save on the less expensive strawberries. The collateral damage includes:

Farm workers who breathe in the toxins, and have them cling to their clothing and their skin, yet have no health insurance if the chemicals sicken them. If they cannot work, they cannot support their families.

Bees and other beneficial insects such as lady bugs and lacewings. Many of the world's crops rely on pollinators. Without them there would be no strawberries. How ironic that we are poisoning insects that enable plants to bear fruit! Bees have been dying off in the US at an alarming rate—nearly 30% of our bee population, per year, since 2006. Research indicates the pesticide clothianidin, a nerve agent brought to us by Bayer, is at least partly to blame. It is a systemic poison, pervading the entire plant including flowers and nectar, even if it's used merely to treat the seeds (most frequently corn and canola).

The soil. Pesticides can remain in the soil for years as we poison the earth that feeds us. We can kill the soil, too—the micro-organisms that make soil a living substance able to sustain life. Petroleum-based fertilizers don't help keep it alive.

Water. Agricultural poisons seep into ground water and run off into streams

continued on page 15

Organic: It's Not Natural (or is it?) & Other Bizarre Tales from the Food Wars

by Karen Starr

If you think it's confusing to shop the aisles of your local grocery store these days, you're certainly not alone. And that's just the way the food industry likes it. Forty years ago food buying clubs, the ancestors of our modern food co-ops, came together to purchase "health foods" such as brown rice, whole wheat flour and other freakish items. Now almost everything at the grocery store is labeled "low fat", full of "wholesome goodness," "natural" and a dozen other euphemisms generally having nothing to do with what's in the package. A recent survey discovered that when shoppers were offered a choice between food items labeled "natural" and "organic," the majority chose "natural," thinking it to be the healthier product.

The industry banks on our confusion, but there are some signposts that can help us find our way through their smoke and mirrors. In this article I'll focus on three topics: decoding USDA "organic" packaged food labels, avoiding Genetically Modified foods, and organic certification of produce. Shopping for packaged food requires especial vigilance. For one thing, the food industry is constantly consolidating and this means that ingredients in your favorite products are likely to shift along with company ownership. Many packaged foods also contain hidden Genetically Modified Organisms. So if you're going to buy prepared foods, label reading is essential.

Organic Labelling

Probably the organic certification program that folks are most familiar with is the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program. Only farmers and producers certified under this program are allowed to display the white & green USDA ORGANIC logo on their products. The National Organic Standards Board recommends policy standards for the National Organic Program. Each representative to the 15 member board is appointed by the Secretary of the USDA. As one can imagine, this gets a little bizarre when, like current USDA Secretary Vilsak, you have a close relationship to industry bullies like Monsanto. In 1997, even before the USDA's in-your-face chumminess with Monsanto, the NOP Standards Board recommended the acceptance of GMOs, the "fertilization" of fields with sewage sludge, and food irradiation into the NOP standards. Only after over a quarter of a million negative comments from the public did the USDA relent and change the regulations to exclude them.

The program's history pretty clearly reflects the industrial food industry's influence & interest in cornering the organic niche market. Corporate representatives consistently appointed to the Standards Board have shown their lack of commitment to organic farming & production by repeatedly attempting to weaken the standards.

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Keeping this in mind, the peculiarities of the USDA's organic labeling begins to make some sort of perverse sense. If you look closely at the labels used on packaging you'll discover there are basically four categories of "organic":

100% Organic (organic ingredients only) May display the USDA organic logo.

Certified Organic (a minimum of 95% organic ingredients required; 5% of ingredients can be anything on the FDA's GRAS list [Generally Regarded As Safe] excluding GMOs, and products utilizing sewage sludge or ionizing radiation) May display the USDA organic logo.

Made with Organic Ingredients (can contain anywhere from 70-95% organic ingredients, the remaining ingredients cannot be irradiated, GMOs or fertilized with sewage sludge, but they can be produced with pesticides and any other methods or ingredients not expressly excluded, GRAS again) May display the USDA organic logo.

Contains Organic Ingredients (contains less than 70% organic ingredients,

but the remaining 30% can contain pesticides, herbicides, sewage sludge, irradiation and GMOs as well as any other FDA approved ingredients) These products are not allowed to display the USDA Organic logo.

Clearly, these designations are meant to benefit the food industry since they only serve to confuse the hell out of the rest of us. What it allows the industry to do is market food products as "organic" when in many instances that is far from the case. Reading the fine print on labels and being aware of the industry & government's esoteric distinctions turns out to be really important in making sure you get home with what you wanted.

Foods labeled "100% Organic", "Certified Organic", or "Made with Organic Ingredients" should not contain GMOs. However GMOs are allowed as ingredients in products labeled "Contains Organic Ingredients." Some of the more invisible GMO ingredients include: soy isolates, soy lecithin, GMO contaminated honey and bee pollen, rennet used to make hard cheeses, tocopherols (vitamin E), lactic acid, modified food starch, fructose

continued on next page

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

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(any form), lactic acid, xanthan gum, and nearly all sugar not noted as cane sugar is genetically modified beet sugar. The Institute for Responsible Technology is an excellent resource for the latest science on the dangers both to human health and the environment posed by GMOs. They also have a helpful guide on how to avoid GMO ingredients. Their website is: www.responsibletechnology.org

Organic Certification

The NOP covers regulation of a whole range of agricultural systems including farming systems, processing, and distribution. And for that reason, I won't be going into those details here. For anyone interested, the best source of information is probably the Vermont chapter of the Northeast Organic Farmers Association. (<http://nofavt.org/>) But basically, the NOP dictates that any agricultural producer selling more than \$5,000 a year in products and advertising them as organic must meet program certification. Agricultural producers selling under \$5,000 a year in product are not obligated to be certified, but can only verbally advertise their products as organic. They may voluntarily certify under the program if they wish.

Farmers enrolled & certified under the NOP must abide by guidelines that specify what agricultural inputs can and cannot be used. Organic livestock production regulations specify what medicines and feed are allowed and, in some instances, quality of life standards. Farmland, and or livestock, generally must be managed according to NOP regulations for a period of several years before qualifying as organic. (During this period, producers may market their

products as "Transitional.") Certified farmers must be well versed in the standards and provide a comprehensive plan for meeting them. The program also requires detailed production and sales records, and the separation of certified products from non-certified.

The USDA's National Organic Program uses what is known as 3rd party certification. That is, neither the USDA nor other farmers in the program conduct the required on site inspections. The certification bodies are approved by the USDA, which also relies on them to certify out of the country agricultural products. Surprise inspections are also a possibility. Fees vary from \$400 to \$2,000/year. Unfortunately, there have been a number of questions raised about the effectiveness and veracity of NOP certification. The Cornucopia Institute has several good reports on this issue on their website, www.cornucopia.org

Another kind of certification gaining popularity is the Participatory Guarantee System. These systems have been very popular with small local producers and those who have serious critiques of the USDA's NOP. Perhaps the best known PGS in New England is Certified Naturally Grown. CNG is based in New York State, but certifies farms in the Northeast, including in Vermont. (Another popular program is "The Farmer's Pledge".) Legally, farms opting for CNG cannot advertise as "Organic" as they don't participate in the USDA's NOP. However, Certified Naturally Grown standards are based on the NOP Standards and farmers also submit to yearly inspections. CNG members pay an annual fee to be inspected and certified by other farmers in the program, non-CNG farmers, extension agents, master gardeners, or

continued from previous page

customers. All participants' products are tested for pesticide residues. Farmers who opt for PGS certification choose it for a number of reasons including affordability, a desire to have more input into setting meaningful organic production standards, keeping inspection face to face with consumers & other producers, and seeing localized inspection as an important part of building localized food systems.

At one time the idea that we are what we eat was considered a poetic sentiment held by new age crack pots, their brains addled by a subsistence of brown rice and root vegetables with a little seaweed thrown in for good measure. Today, with so many ingredients in our food we cannot pronounce; crops produced in a complex soup of artificial fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; animals routinely dosed with antibiotics & raised in factory feedlots; & genetically modified organisms the industry is hell bent on shoving down our throats, it seems clearer than ever that we need to really pay attention to what goes into our bodies. The corporate food industry is not interested in making our job any easier, as their agenda is not ours. The closer to home we eat of things and ingredients we can actually identify, the better off we'll be. And for the rest, we'll have to become serious label readers, which includes reading between the lines and understanding more about how our food is produced and where it comes from. I hope this article will be a help toward that goal. ♦

Strawberry, continued from page 11

and rivers and lakes, damaging fish, frogs, and other unintended victims.

These are direct effects, not "side effects." They are not minor, inconsequential, or inadvertent. They are very real, as the victims of collateral damage know.

I'm sure I've not included all the effects of chemical farming (not to mention the potentially disastrous "side effects" of GMOs), but the ones I have mentioned are enough to make me pause when I'm shopping. I have to pause because I still get hooked by "low" prices. I'm brought back to awareness by visualizing a series of concentric rings, expressing the ripple effects of my food choices.

At the center is me--my body and my pocketbook. Beyond me are the farm workers and the bees and other beneficial beings. Beyond them, our earth and waters. We may think and act as though all these are separate, but they are interconnected, to our benefit and to our peril.

Visualizing these concentric rings connects me to all that has created the box of organic strawberries. I envision supporting not only my own health but the health of the workers who picked these berries, the insects who pollinated them, and the life-sustaining soil in which the plants grow. I am grateful that all are connected, and that together they bring me these beautiful strawberries. ♦



From the Roots (cellar)–Recipes from Debra Stoleroff

It's March. I don't know about you, but just about now, the last of the root vegetables I stored in my root cellar (aka unheated basement) are needing to be used. Why not cook up some Root Soup or bake some Morning Glory muffins?

Curried Root Soup

This is the kind of soup you can experiment with to find the flavoring most favorable to your palate. Add more curry or ginger, omit apples, add another vegetable etc.

Ingredients:

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| 1–2 TBL olive oil or butter | 2 turnips, diced |
| 2 LARGE onions, coarsely chopped | 1–2 apples (Granny Smith, Fuji, or whatever variety is still available) |
| 6–8 cloves garlic, finely chopped | ½ tsp. fresh gingerroot, minced |
| 6 cups chicken stock (or chicken bouillon) | ½ tsp. salt or more to taste |
| 1–1½ cups apple cider | ½ tsp. cumin |
| 1 celery root (celeriac), diced | ½ tsp. curry |
| 3 potatoes, diced | ¼ tsp. cinnamon |
| 2 sweet potatoes, diced | ⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper |
| 3–4 parsnips, diced | |
| 3–4 carrots, diced | |

1. Sauté onions and garlic in large soup pot (preferably enameled cast iron or cast iron)
2. Add ginger root and spices. Continue to sauté for 30 sec.–1 min. (don't burn spices)
3. Add root vegetables. Sauté for two minutes.
4. Add chicken stock and apple cider. Bring to boil. When vegetables are soft, blend the soup in a blender or just mash veggies.
5. Cut apple into medium bites and add to soup. Cook soup for another 5 or so minutes to soften apples.
6. Final touch: sprinkle each bowl with tamari roasted almonds.

Morning Glory Muffins*

You must try baking Morning Glory muffins if you haven't ever eaten one. They are delicious, and carrots from your root cellar are a main ingredient.

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1¼ cups sugar | 1 cup (8 oz.) crushed pineapple, drained |
| 2¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour | 2 cups grated carrots |
| 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon | ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts |
| 2 teaspoons baking soda | 3 large eggs |
| ½ teaspoon salt | 1 cup vegetable oil |
| ½ cup shredded, sweetened coconut | 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract |
| ¾ cup raisins, light or dark | |
| 1 large apple, peeled, cored and grated | |

continued on next page

Boot Camp, Sauerkraut, Ecstatic Dances, Permaculture and more at the Community Center

by Mike Peabody, Community Center Manager

I've taken on the responsibility of managing the Community Center but that doesn't mean I do the work, myself. I want to thank everyone who helps make things run smoothly, sets up and cleans in a timely and tidy fashion, coordinates art shows, and generally makes this a space worth having. The Co-op is proud to offer our unique space to our community. When I was growing up, public spaces were not easy to come by, except for church basements and such. It's really a miracle our town still has this venue and that it's as easy to use it as it is.

Ecstatic Dances, Boot Camps, Shape Note sings, Movie Nights, and the usual cast of characters have helped keep the Community Center vibrant and diverse, catering to a wide variety of community

needs and interests. Check out the calendar at the Co-op for a listing of upcoming events. You can see it on the web, too, at plainfieldcoop.com/calendar. Remember that you can use Onion River Exchange timebank hours to rent the space, if you're tight on cash. And that if your event is free and open to the public, you are usually able to get it listed as a sponsored event at no cost.

What's been happening at the Community Center?

Contact Improv continues into March. I'm not totally sure what's going on up there but it sounds like a really, really good time. Details can be found on the website's Community Center calendar.

continued on next page

Muffins, *from previous page*

1. Position a rack in lower third of the oven and preheat to 350 degrees F. Line standard muffin pans with paper liners. Set aside.
2. Whisk together sugar, flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt into a large bowl. Add coconut, raisins, apple, pineapple, carrots, and nuts, and stir to combine.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs with the oil and vanilla. Add to dry ingredients and mix well.

4. Spoon batter into muffin tins, filling to top of each cup. Bake for 35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into middle comes out clean. Cool muffins in pan for 10 minutes, then turn onto a rack to finish cooling. Yield: 16 muffins.

*This recipe was created in 1978 by a woman named Pam McKinstry who had a restaurant on Nantucket Island. The recipe was first published in *Gourmet Magazine* in 1981, and in 1991 was chosen as one of the magazine's 25 favorite recipes from the past 50 years.

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The Co-op's Revolutionary Red benefit ball came off beautifully (as could be expected) and if you get a minute, be sure to thank Kristin Brosky, Jessi Robinson, Monica Bettis, Nancy Ellen, Fallon Ellis, Belinda Jestice, and Karen Starr for all of the work spent making this such a lavishly Socialist spectacle.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom held its V-Day dance in concert with the global women's One Billion Rising event.

Did you see the "More Pies, Less Pipelines" buffet/infoshop/concert, back in December? More than 60 people showed up to see what musician Heidi Wilson and co-conspirators the Gillard Brothers had to say about the proposed tar sands oil pipeline, which would cut through the state.

Dana Woodruff pulled together not one, but two, indoor farmer's markets, upstairs. Local makers presented a variety of wares, ranging from sauerkraut to love potions, micro-dioramas and herbal tinctures. She's talking about doing more, in the coming year. Get in touch

with her (or me, since I may actually have her phone number, someplace) if you are interested in being a part of a future market.

And What's Ahead?

Co-Collective Manager Karen Starr is planning a series of workshops, slated for the last Sunday of each month, on a variety of topics. Permaculture and tree pruning are the ones coming up soonest but stay tuned for more throughout the year.

Co-op Board meetings have come back in-house, taking place the second Tuesday of every month at 6PM. Last year, the meetings were held at board members' homes, due to a variety of schedule conflicts.

We are looking at a Bible study group on Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, and probably more things I can't even conceive of right now. It's always something new and exciting, that much is for sure. One last thing, if you or someone you know has a set of Community Center keys that hasn't been returned, please just bring them back to the Co-op. No hard feelings. We're almost out of keys. ♦

PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER



Space available for your:

Classes

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 Mike Peabody 454-8579



Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op

— The Art Box —

The Plainfield Community Center Gallery is busting out some awesome new local talent this spring. We are currently hosting Bradford artist **Nila Anaya's** work, which opened on Feb 17th and will close on March 21. Do take some time to view it before you shop at the Co-op!

Saturday, March 9th, 7PM: We will be celebrating **International Women's Day** with a return of the infamous **Pisces Party**, Vt Pie Girl Co. Birthday Pie, Live Music Opening with Alexis of Champagne Dynasty and Eliza. Headlining the evening: Senayit, "an artist who is capable of guiding her listeners on an intimate journey by awakening tribal and grounding energy." (www.senayit.com)

Sunday, March 10, 11am-3PM: "Spirit and Creative Soul", an Art and Healing Event inspired by Nila Anaya: Donations are suggested. Refreshments, Henna tattoos, Chair Massage, Reiki Healing, Readings, Sound Healing and Chakra Balancing and Visual Art by Nila Anaya: "Rediscovering myself has been a spiritual journey. I find that my art is a direct result of this new awareness. The diversity of my work is a reflection of this path. You will see an array of styles which encompass my love of colors along with a spirit of innocence." Music by Don & Jen: (www.DandJMusic.com) Their jazz- and folk-inspired originals and covers appeal to a varied audience. We look forward to sharing this amazing experience with everyone.

The Sacred Harp Shape Note Sing will follow at **3-5PM**.

Saturday March 23rd at 7PM:
"Here We Are" Photo Exhibit Opening with New Film Screening
These photographs are part of a traveling exhibit that document Vermont's 20th Anniversary Celebration of the closing of the Brandon Training School, produced in a VSA Vermont class taught by Photographer/Farmer Melanie Webb.

Mark Utter's movie **"I Am In Here" A View of My Daily Life with Good Suggestions from my Intelligent Mind** (Written by Mark Utter, Directed by Emily Anderson and Jim Heltz, Produced by VSA Vermont, 30 minutes) The screening will be followed by a 45-minute "Talkback" with Mark Utter.

"Do you want to know what it's like to be thought of as stupid?" This was Mark Utter's experience for most of his life. Mark's autism prevents him from speaking his thoughts. This day-in-the-life movie uses humor to highlight the contrast between people's perceptions of Mark and the intelligent man trapped inside.

For more information:
<http://www.vsavt.org/i-am-in-here/>
Emily Anderson, VSA Vermont Inc./Awareness Theater
Director of Creative Performance and Cultural Access (802) 655-4606
www.vsavt.org/www.awarenesstheater.org

For Gallery Events, please contact: Alexis Smith: freealexis@hotmail.com



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