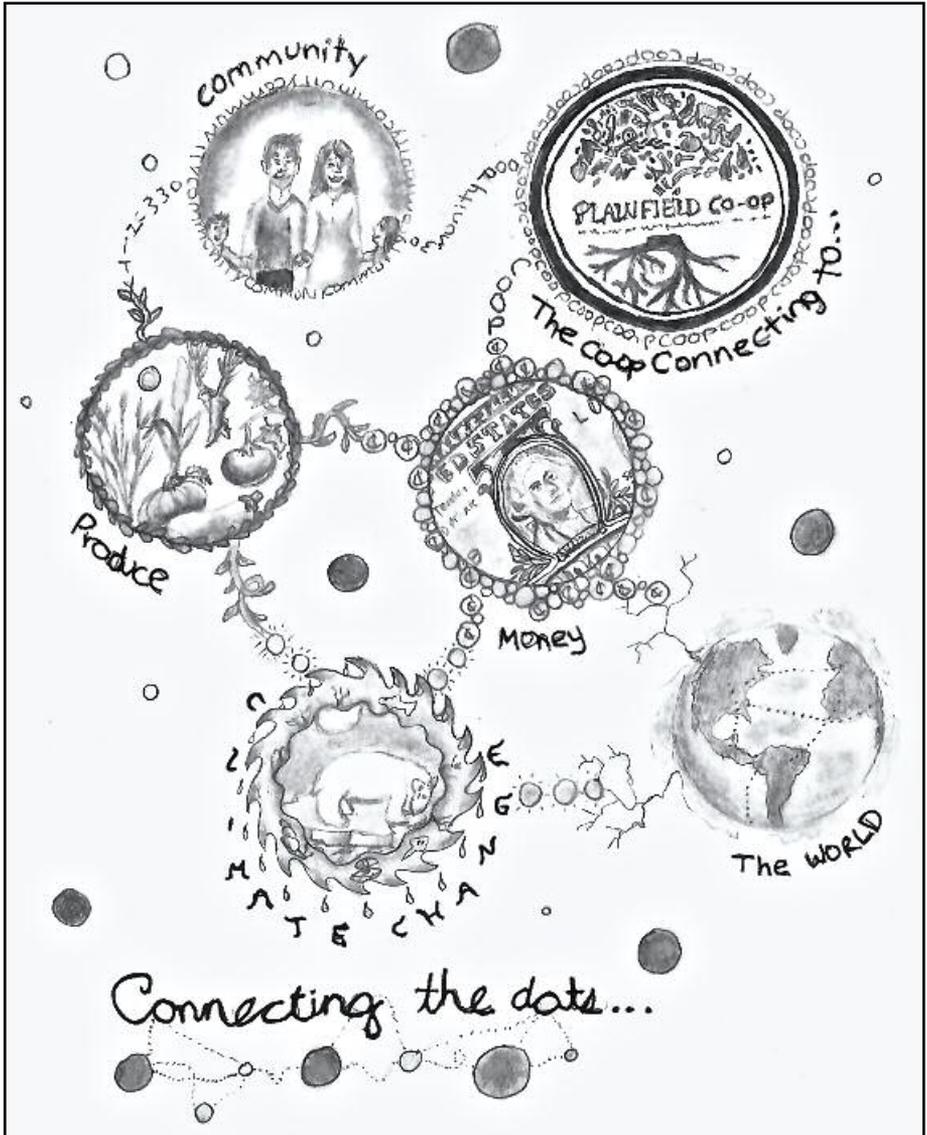


The Plainfield Co-op

Summer 2014



Hours: 7 days a week 9AM-8PM

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

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Margie Yoder
Mike Peabody
Nancy Ellen
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Questions: 802-476-0526 or sarah@vtlink.net

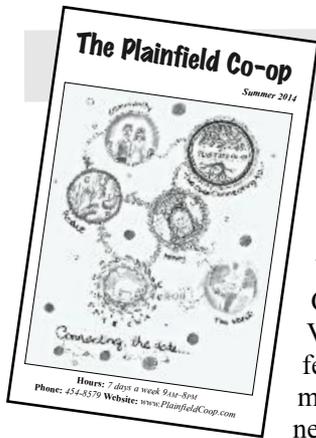


Fresh Organic Pies

Horse Drawn Rides

Firewood For Sale

Massage Therapy



About This Newsletter

Our theme this issue is **Connecting the Dots**, two big ones being California and Vermont. A new feature of Co-op memories connects our past to

our present, as does Jeannine's article on bulk ordering. Our spice and herb department connects us to flavors from around the world. We are part of a web of connections, as the cover shows.

Our cover artist is Braden DeForge, a Twinfield freshman. He not only enjoys doing art with pencil and sometimes paint, but also outdoor activities such as biking and hiking.

Is this quarterly newsletter-- in print or online--the best means of communication between the Co-op and the community? How many people read the newsletter online? In print? We don't know. Would shorter, more frequent

newsletters be more effective? (They would require additional newsletter volunteer staff.) Should the content be different? With the Co-op website being revamped, should all communications be electronic?

The Board and the Newsletter Committee are asking such question now. Only YOU can help us answer them. Respond to anyone on the Newsletter Committee (contact info below) or the Board (contact info on p. 2). We will also be taking a survey in the store.

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 (802-249-2301)

Debra Stoleroff, editing and recipes (476-3154)

Our thanks to Erika Farnham for her help in getting our printed newsletters ready to go into the mail. ♦

LittleWood Farm
Plainfield, Vt.
802-454-8466

Spring Greenhouse Sale:
May 10th - June 22nd



What Are We Here For?

by Gail Falk, Board President

When you dash into the Co-op for a bottle of milk and a loaf of bread, you probably aren't pondering why the Co-op is here.

One of the jobs of the Co-op Board is to define our broad purposes (called Ends) and review how well we are meeting our Ends.

In April, the seven Board members plus Management Collective Link Mike Peabody spent a half day together reviewing our Ends. We made some wording changes to the old Ends, and added some new purposes: affordability, sustainability, and greater awareness of the role of co-operatives.

The Ends provide important guidance to the staff and to committees, and they are the focus of our strategic plan. As

we repair and renovate our building, the Ends will guide our priorities. Here are the new Ends. Tell us what you think.

The Plainfield Co-op will

1. Distribute healthy, affordable food and other goods
2. Actively seek local producers and growers, and support the local and regional economy.
3. Sustain the environment through its operations and the products it offers.
4. Increase awareness of cooperative principles and of other cooperative businesses.
5. Foster awareness about the quality and source of our food.
6. Build connections that are essential for a vibrant community. ♦

NEW MEMBERSHIP CARDS

The Co-op is now supplying members with new, durable membership cards. They are white and printed on flexible, writable plastic. You may have been given a yellow card at the beginning of the year. These were a temporary arrangement until the white cards arrived. You are welcome to keep using the yellow cards. They don't expire until March of 2015. But there's no reason not to get a newer one the next time you come into the store. Just ask and you will receive!

Since 2013 memberships expired at the end of March, the blue cards issued last year will be of no use to you. As always, you can just use your name or member number at the registers here at your Co-op but if you present your blue card to another, like Hunger Mountain or Buffalo Mountain, they may refuse to honor your membership in Plainfield.

Financial Good News Again!

by Bob Faneher

In financial news, we had a very strong first quarter in 2014. Our Total Income (how much we take in at the register) was up 10% over 2013. The Gross Profit (the Total Income minus the Cost of Goods Sold) went up over 12% from last year. And, to go along with the great sales numbers, our Total Expense (the non-product related expenses) went down almost 20% from 2013!

These are great numbers for us to start the new year with.

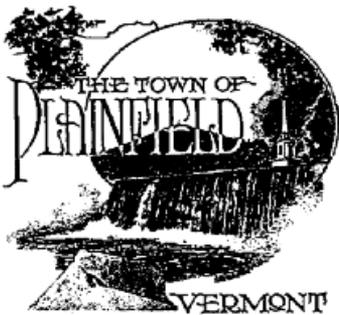
Supporting our suppliers, especially our smaller local suppliers, is very important to us. We are always striving to pay invoices on time and reduce our backlog. As a result, we also had a huge improvement in the amount we owe our suppliers. The total amount we owe went down an amazing 29% from last year.

2013 was a very good year and to have this much improvement for 2014 is just great. Thanks to the staff for their tremendous efforts. And thanks to our members for their continuing support.

Also in the first quarter, we changed from the old annual membership fee to the new equity payments for members. With the equity plan, each member purchases a share of the Co-op for \$180. The purchase can be divided into annual payments of \$20 each. (You can also pay ahead by paying more than \$20, if you like.) This year's payments were due by March 31. A big Thank You to the hundreds of members who have paid. If you missed the deadline, simply mention it when you check out at the register, and they can take your payment.

This year is off to a great start. Help us keep the momentum going and make 2014 a record year. ♦

MESSAGE FROM THE PLAINFIELD SELECT BOARD



The parking area around the Plainfield Fire Station is shared by the Municipal Building, the Plainfield Coop and Plainfield Fire and Rescue. Please pay attention to the signs and park accordingly. **The Fire and Rescue parking spots must be available to the volunteers who respond to emergencies at any time of the day or night.** Please respect their service to our community and the need for their quick response.

Management Collective Report *by Mike Peabody*

Well, even though it's nearly summer, spring is finally here! Everyone is breathing a sigh of relief, soaking up the sun, and getting seeds into the ground. We've been busy at the store as well. There's always something more to learn about the utility of our new Point of Sale System. We are happy to report that our January inventory using the new software was mercifully faster than previous ones. The Building Committee has been inspecting the building from stem to stern and drawing up a plan for upgrades, upkeep, and repair over the next few years. The coffee bar put in this winter has been a big hit. Be sure to check over there for the pastries and other goodies that won't fit at the counter. Kathleen Hayes, our staff maintenance and all round handy woman, should be done renovating the kid's play area by the time this edition of the newsletter is out. New coats of paint and a bit of redesign to make the space more accessible have been her focus. It's going to be awesome!

We want to remind shoppers and members to check out the path and boat launch Friends of the Winooski built last fall for the community at the back of the Co-op. There are also two picnic tables in the back yard for people to use. Although re-siding the back of the building has been put off for a bit, we do plan to start some landscape planting this summer and fall. We'll keep you posted as we'll be looking for a few volunteers and a few plant donations.

It's been two years since the Management Collective drew up the Strategic plan for the Co-op. We've

accomplished quite a few projects and goals, but it's time to lay out plans for the next few years. As soon as the Management Collective receives the revised organizational Ends (goals) from the board we'll begin working on the plan. If you have ideas or thoughts you want to share post them on the suggestion board!!

Please welcome back Jonna Wissert, who is a second time around employee for the Co-op. Drew Sy joins her in our recent hiring. Both are familiar faces in town and we're very happy to have them on board. They'll be working a lot of weekend hours so stop by and say hello if you haven't already. We already don't know what we did without them.

We recently reorganized the dairy cooler to make the display sections a little more coherent and show product to better advantage. But we know it can make people crazy looking for stuff, so please don't hesitate to ask for help finding things. We're constantly scheming to find those extra inches in the store to carry more items you want or we think you'll appreciate. So please be patient with us when we temporarily turn your world upside down with our occasional resets!

We decided to run a small ad in the summer and fall issues of the Vermont food magazine *Local Banquet* to see if we can bring in a little more casual tourist trade. We're pretty excited because it's a great quarterly publication that showcases local farmers and producers in the state, often many of our supply partners. Copies are available in the store at publication. Check out the summer issue! It's a sweet read and free! ♦

Building Committee Notes

by Allen Banbury, Chair

As the Co-op goes into the future it does so with the membership, the store staff, the Management Collective, the Board and the physical plant that houses all the activities of both the Co-op and the Community Center. As the Board tries to facilitate all that the Co-op has become it has turned to the Building Committee with the burning question:

What is necessary to assure us that our building will meet our needs safely, functionally and economically as we go forward?

A team of Co-op and Building Committee members who have contracting and building experience and a lot of history with improvements to the building, and other volunteers, in an effort led by Sam Clark, met and went through the building with the proverbial fine tooth comb. The intent was to look at structural concerns, safety concerns, access concerns, thermal efficiency concerns, roofing concerns, plumbing concerns, electrical concerns, lead based paint concerns, and cosmetic concerns. A ten-year maintenance and improvement plan is being prepared by Sam Clark, with input from a wide variety of persons besides those who did the initial study, and will be submitted to the Board with recommendations for issues that need to be dealt with, a suggested timeline, and estimates of cost for the suggested work.

Unfortunately, the financial realities are such that all can't be dealt with next year, hence the suggested timeline. The Board will have to set priorities and allocate the funds. As we are a Co-op, you may be recruited and have the opportunity to be involved in providing

the labor. As work is scheduled and accomplished you may see it as you shop or use the building and you will read about it in this newsletter.

You probably noticed that the children's play area is being worked on with new flooring and paint. I am sure that your kids have noticed.

The flooring in the back of the store was installed when the new cooler was built and the store back was completely refurbished. The floor in the store front, though, is badly in need of attention.

While decisions are made as to exactly how and what is to be done, a sample of the flexible flooring that is being installed in the play area is being tried in the entry hall to see how it might hold up to continued traffic and outside dirt. If we can do something without closing the store down and removing all the shelving, it will certainly be to our advantage.

When you have concerns to bring to the Building Committee's attention, drop them in the suggestion box near the coffee corner or speak to a member of the committee:

Allen Banbury
Sam Clark
Kathleen Hayes
Mike Russell
Joe John
Doni Cain
Mike Brosky
Mike Peabody
Bob Fancher
Michael Horowitz
Joseph Gainza
Nancy Ellen ◆

Neighboring Food Co-op Association Third Annual Meeting

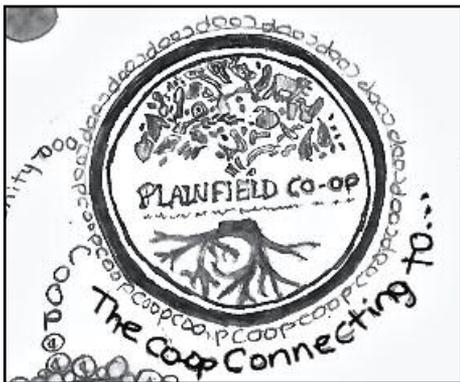
On March 29th, the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) held its Third Annual Meeting, hosted by the Putney Food Co-op at the Putney School in Vermont. The meeting brought together a record 100 co-operators from more than 40 food co-ops, start-up initiatives and partner organizations from across our region including reps from farmer co-ops, co-op support organizations, food security organizations, and the Plainfield Co-op. [Guests at the gathering included representatives from the Cabot Creamery Co-op, CDS Consulting Co-op, Cooperative Fund of New England, Cooperative Grocers Network, Food Co-op Initiative, Hunger Free Vermont, National Cooperative Business Association, National Cooperative Grocers Association, New England Farmers Union, and the UMASS Five College Federal Credit Union.]

NFCA President Glenn Lower, General Manager at Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op (VT), welcomed attendees. “As Chair of the Board, it’s thrilling to see such a large gathering, and especially so many new co-ops,” said Lower. “It is very exciting to see how far we’ve

come in creating a sustainable organization that connects our co-ops in so many ways.”

Roger Noonan, President of the New England Farmers Union (NEFU), was keynote for the gathering, emphasizing the collaboration between NEFU and the member co-ops of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association to influence policies affecting family farmers and fishermen in our region. “The NFCA and its members represent some of the best advocates for local and regional food,” said Noonan. “And we look forward to continuing and expanding this partnership between producers and consumers to create positive change in our food system and communities.”

Executive Director Erbin Crowell and Bonnie Hudspeth, Marketing and Outreach Manager, reported on the activities of the past year, and NFCA’s priorities moving forward. Some highlights included NFCA’s growth, with two new member co-ops joining in early 2014; an update on the “Cave to Co-op” partnership with Provisions International that promotes local artisan cheese makers and has moved 14 tons of regionally produced cheeses through our neighboring food co-ops over the past five years; and progress on healthy food access work, with three NFCA co-ops launching new programs making healthy food and co-op ownership more affordable to low-income community members. Also, NFCA’s work with the UMASS Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative to develop classes on co-



continued on next page

ops and a certificate program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Small groups considered a call by the International Co-operative Alliance for feedback on the core co-op principles of Member Economic Participation; Education, Training and Information; and Concern for Community. Lunch topic tables gave attendees the opportunity for networking on everything from managing successful member loan campaigns to collaboration among co-op board members, from linking existing food co-ops with start-ups to organizing truckload sales and managing store expansions.

Afternoon workshops offered an opportunity for food co-ops and partner organizations to dig deeper into the topics of GMO labeling and co-op pro-

grams making healthy food and co-op ownership more accessible to low-income community members. Suzi Carter of Food Co-op Initiative offered a session on membership development for the start-up members of the NFCA.

“It is exciting to see so much energy and enthusiasm among New England’s food co-ops,” said Pat Sterner of the National Cooperative Business Association, a special guest at the meeting. “The collaborative thinking on future trends and issues for food-coops is impressive. We’re looking forward to continuing to work together as we grow the co-operative economy across the country.”

For more information on the Neighboring Food Co-op Association, visit www.nfca.coop. ♦



California Drought: How Not to Feed a Nation

by Karen Starr

In the middle of mud season, it's hard for us here in Vermont to imagine devastating drought. Unfortunately, it's not a problem for Californians. For the last three years a stubborn high pressure zone has parked itself off the West Coast preventing rain from reaching the Sierras. Snow pack, a primary source of water for California, was 12% below normal this year with little expectation of rains to come. California agriculture supplies fully 15% of the nation's food supply to the tune of \$45 billion a year. Last year farmers paid \$135.00 for one acre foot of water. In February 2014, the cost was a whopping \$1350.00. As chronicled in the book *Cadillac Desert* by Marc Reisner, Western expansion has been exceeding its watery means for over a century. So just who are the prominent players in the California drought scenario?

Municipal water use ranges from 113 gallons per capita on the coast to 736 gallons per day in the interior. But the town of Vernon in LA County is a stunning outlier. The factories located within town raise the per capita water use to 94,000 gallons per day for each of its 112 residents.

During the growing season 60 million gallons of water a day are diverted to illegal marijuana plots, many hacked out of the wilderness. This is twice the volume consumed by the city of San Francisco during the same period.

Chief Sisk has called for California to recognize the water rights of the Winnemem Wintu. She argues that continued abuse of the rivers and land can-

not be resolved by technology, such as raising the Shasta dam which would also flood her nation's territory without their consent. She calls for the state to live within its water means and to respect the water rights of other life such as Salmon, which is sacred to her people.

Industrial agriculture, industry and energy extraction have all trumped wildlife in the scramble for water access. Migrating waterfowl, amphibians, mammals, and fish have all been seriously impacted. There is now talk of trucking salmon upstream to their spawning tributaries.

Hundreds of thousands of Californians have signed petitions calling for a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing. In 2013 the Western Organization of Resource Councils reported that fracking consumes 7 billion gallons of water a year in just four western states: Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, and North Dakota.

Agricultural activities, primarily industrial monoculture farming, consume 80% of California's available water supply. It's this last category of stakeholders that affects us most in Vermont.

Without getting into a lengthy discussion, the practices of corporate agriculture in the Central and Imperial Valleys of California are far from sustainable. The U.N. and other organizations have repeatedly declared that the hope of feeding the world rests with small, organic diversified farms, not thousand acre mono-cropping dependent on

continued on next page

Drought, *continued from previous page*

chemicals, artificial fertilizers and wasteful of water resources. The situation in California holds a number of lessons for us here in Vermont. For our ecosystem to continue to take care of us, we need to be vigilant in caring for the life around us in all its forms.

Developing local food sheds ensures our ability to feed our communities, without over reliance on other regions. Even though we may be swimming and sliding around in it at the moment, water is infinitely precious and not to be taken for granted, especially in this time of climate change.

Because of the drought in California, we may see higher prices for dairy products and meat nationally, but thanks to our local dairy and livestock farmers, it's unlikely we will see a shortage.

Similarly our local farmers will keep us well supplied with summer and fall vegetables such as tomatoes, broccoli, green beans, summer squashes, and lettuces and greens. Local fruits such as blueberries, strawberries, apples, pears, etc. hopefully will also have a good year.

Winter crops such as cabbages, squash, and locally raised grains, if all goes well, will be in good supply. Come winter, however, we can expect to see higher prices for many veggies and likely short national supply of some.

The major impact of the drought for us will be in the nut and citrus department, also things like avocados. These are all



tree crops which require year round water. To survive, many orchardists have taken the drastic measure of cutting down trees to adjust to reduced water allotments. California produces 99% of the country's almonds and walnuts and 98% of its pistachios. These crops are expected to decline at least 25% which will drive prices up. California is also a major source of our avocados, lemons, limes, grapefruit, and all the various varieties of oranges. So we can expect higher prices here as well.

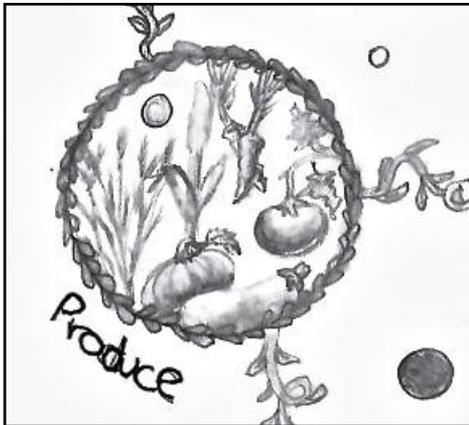
It remains to be seen how well East Coast growers like Lady Moon Farms will pick up the slack in crop production. But whatever the growing season holds this year, we can be sure it will be the beginning of a shift in national agricultural patterns as California struggles with an ongoing, possibly historic, drought. It's also a good time for all of us consider how we take water for granted. ♦

Do you know that it costs your Co-op anywhere from \$900 to \$1100 per month for credit/debit card processing fees? Please help your local co-op by paying with cash or check. Thank you.

Produce and Weather

by Steve Bosserman

With much of our winter produce coming from the West coast of North America it's important to pay attention to the weather and climate of that region. Starting last November, California and other parts of the West became affected by an intense ridge of high pressure which moved precipitation towards the Mid-West. Most rain and snow that falls in California does so between December and March; this year, with the exception of two precipitation events coming out of Hawaii, almost no rain or snow fell during that period making it the driest on record. By the end of April, Sierra snowpack was just 33% of normal and 75% of the state was in either Extreme (D-3) or Exceptional (D-4) drought according to the Drought Monitor Report.



The first that I became aware of it was early this year, noticing how healthy and beautiful West Coast produce looked. This seemed counter intuitive to me until I realized that the West was having summer in their winter. However, this

high quality will not remain the case for long; California has already had two previous years of drought, making this the third. Farmers have been adjusting to these conditions by moving away from “water hogs” like almonds and tomatoes and growing produce that requires less water. With the exceptional nature of this year’s drought it is difficult to imagine how quality and price will not be affected; perhaps drastically.

The West’s high pressure ridge did not spare the East; air moved far north of the ridge and, pulling very cold Arctic air with it, dropped down on us. Our winter was highlighted by what climatologists are calling the “Polar Vortex”. The high pressure ridge that caused these conditions has weakened but is still dominating the continent; dry and hot in the west and cool in the East. With that, we are getting off to a slow spring with cooler than average temperatures. But I think it is fair to say we are in a happier state than the West. Already we are seeing greenhouse produce like Russian kale, lettuce, spinach, radish, and sprouts and we continue to have cellar crops, like carrots and parsnips, available to us. With our growing season getting underway we can also look forward to our own gardens so look for High Mowing Seeds, starts from Friends and Neighbors, and compost from Vermont Compost. How does the forgoing connect the dots? All our weather is related but causes profoundly different effects depending on place, and all of our capacity to grow food is dependent on our climate being kind to us. ♦

World Flavors

by Dorothy Wallace

Spices and herbs are at the heart of an explosion of interest in international cuisine. To celebrate this spirit of curiosity, experimentation, and global connectedness, a World Flavors section has been added to the Co-op's herb cabinet. In our little co-op, you can select from Cajun Blackened Spice, Chinese 5 Spice, Curry Powder, Garam Masala, Herbs de Provence, Italian Seasoning, and Taco Seasoning. This selection will change depending on sales and your suggestions.

So what about the ka-zillions of other spice blends? Here are a few recipes to get you started. Three are adapted from Madhur Jaffrey's *World Vegetarian*, and Duqqa from a newspaper clipping, origin forgotten.

Each is just one version of many variations. Among many other possibilities: ginger is sometimes added to Amchar Masala; oregano and/or savory to Zahtar; cloves, saffron, or turmeric to Advieh; and caraway or even flour to Duqqa.

And plenty of switches are made. For instance, if you have a recipe that calls for Szechuan (Sichuan) pepper, substitute with 2 tsp freshly ground black peppercorns, 1 tsp lemon pepper, and 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest. Herbal trivia: Szechuan pepper is not related to the familiar black or white Piperaceae nor to the Capsaicin chilies. It is the fruit pod of the prickly ash tree.

For millennia, cooks used a pinch of this or that, perfected, substituted, and created new (now traditional) tasty, spicy world flavors.



Duqqa (*dakka, dukka, duqqah*) from Egypt

- 1 TBS coriander seeds
- ½ tsp black peppercorns
- 1 TBS fennel seeds
- 3 TBS roasted pistachios or hazelnuts
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- ¼ tsp salt (omit if nuts are salted)

Heat a small cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add coriander and peppercorns. Toast, stirring constantly, for about 30 seconds (until aromatic). Add fennel and toast 30 seconds longer. Add cumin, toast until pungent. Cool completely in small bowl. Grind to fine (not powder) consistency with spice grinder, mortar and pestle, or clean coffee grinder. Add nuts and regrind lightly (don't let it turn to paste) and (if using) add salt. Will keep for several weeks in air-tight container in refrigerator.

Uses: add to hummus, dip, or eggs, roasted veggies, salad dressing, pasta dishes. Dust flat bread, fish, or chicken with duqqa and olive oil, then bake or fry until crispy.

continued on next page

Amchar Masala (*Trinidadian Mixed Spices*) from the Caribbean

- ¼ cup coriander seeds
- 1 TBS cumin seeds
- 2 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp brown mustard seeds
- 1 tsp fenugreek seeds

Roast all ingredients in a small cast-iron skillet over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes until spices are somewhat darker. Cool in small bowl. Grind very fine with clean coffee or spice grinder. Store in airtight jar in dark cupboard.

Uses: sprinkle on stews, meats, or tomato-based dishes after they've cooked (said to be particularly good on goat or pickled mango).

Advieh (*Adwiya, Persian Spice Mix*) from Iran

- 3 3-inch cinnamon sticks
- 1 TBS cardamom seeds
- 1 ½ tsp cumin seeds
- 2 TBS dried rose petals

Combine. Use spice or clean coffee grinder to grind as finely as possible. Store in airtight jar in dark cupboard.

Uses: chicken, rice, bean, or stew.

Zahtar (*za'atar*) from Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean

- 2 TBS roasted sesame seeds (cooled)
- 2 TBS dried thyme
- 1 TBS ground sumac (substitute with lemon pepper)

Combine. Store in tightly closed jar in cool spot or freeze.

Uses: roll soft cheese in it, add to plain yogurt, potato salad, or sprinkle on bread/toast and cream cheese. ♦

Strawberry Avocado Salsa

A sweet and savory salsa that can be eaten with chips, on tacos, or on meats. (from *Cooking Light*, 2009)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup finely chopped strawberries
- ¼ cup finely chopped peeled avocado
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- ½ teaspoon grated lime rind
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped seeded jalapeño pepper
- ¼ teaspoon sugar

Preparation: Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl; toss gently. Serve immediately.



New Cheeses

by Mike Peabody

I've added a few new cheeses to the roster. These little beauties will enhance your every summer picnic, barbecue, cheese plate, and potluck. They are:

- Paneer (hormone-free!)
- Red Wax Gouda (USA by Dutch standards)
- Lazy Lady (The goat cheese classics have returned!)
- Sliced Swiss (from Cabot)
- Organic Sliced Cheddar (from Applegate)

You're going to want to pay attention to the cheese season ahead. Grain prices have forced a spike in dairy commodities, resulting in across-the-board hikes. Cabot, in particular, will be increasing



their cheese prices by \$.20/lb, which I am making an effort not to pass on to my department. This may or may not be sustainable in the long-term but I know that these are popular cheeses throughout the community. I would like for people to get the food they need, as long as it doesn't put too much pressure on the Co-op. But I think we can take the hit, especially if other stores increase their shelf prices, since I think that will help drive our sales of those same Cabot products. Stay tuned. ♦

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12 Most Important Foods to Buy Organic



When it comes to fruits and veggies, there are 4 things the Environmental Working Group (EWG) wants you to know:

- Pesticide contamination is widespread.
- Washing doesn't eliminate it.
- Avoiding produce isn't healthy.
- Buying organic is the best solution.

But wait, organic produce isn't always available or affordable. These 12 fruits and vegetables carry the highest pesticide load, so get them organic if you can:

Apples, Celery, Cherry tomatoes,

Cucumbers, Grapes, Hot peppers, Nectarines (imported), Peaches, Potatoes, Spinach, Strawberries, Sweet bell peppers

EWG also lists two baddies that don't meet all of its criteria for "most contaminated" but are still of grave concern because samples are commonly contaminated with highly toxic insecticides:

Kale/Collard Greens and Summer squash ◆

Missing Monarchs?

Buy sustainable, organic or GMO-free products. Crops genetically engineered to resist herbicides encourage more intense spraying. "Roundup ready" crops are a major cause of milkweed loss throughout the Midwest and are thought to be a key reason for the decline of monarch butterflies. Milkweed is the one plant critical to monarch caterpillars' survival. Preserve milkweed plants on your land.

Strawberry Agua Fresca

Spanish for "fresh water," agua fresca is a refreshing, fruit-infused drink that is served throughout Mexico. Depending on the ripeness of the strawberries, adjust the amount of sugar for desired sweetness. (Cooking Light, 2005)

Ingredients:

4 cups water
½ cup sugar
6 cups hulled strawberries
¼ cup fresh lime juice (about 2 limes)

Preparation:

Combine water and sugar, stirring until sugar dissolves. Place strawberries in a blender, and process until smooth. Combine the sugar mixture, strawberry puree, and juice; stir well.



More Than Just a Receipt

I know most of us aren't keen on holding receipts (trust me, I know; I buy the paper rolls). For those who do, you may or may not have noticed that, toward the bottom, the following text appears:

¢X.XX (XX%) of the Items purchased came from LOCAL sources

How does this work? We attach a "tag" to items in the database produced and provided by local vendors (which, by the Co-op's reckoning, is anything sourced/value-added in Vermont). When that item is sold, the registers note that it was local and when the time comes to print a receipt, it adds up all the value of local purchases. What you see is your total contribution, per sale, to the local economy.

Pretty cool, huh?

Mike Peabody

Save Big \$\$ by Bulk Ordering

by Jeannine DeWald

When Plainfield Co-op was first born, members pooled their purchases together with the intention of creating better access to healthy foods at an affordable price.

Members filled out order forms, dollars were put together, orders were placed, and soon after, bulk quantities of grains, nuts, legumes, produce and other goods arrived to be broken down and picked up.

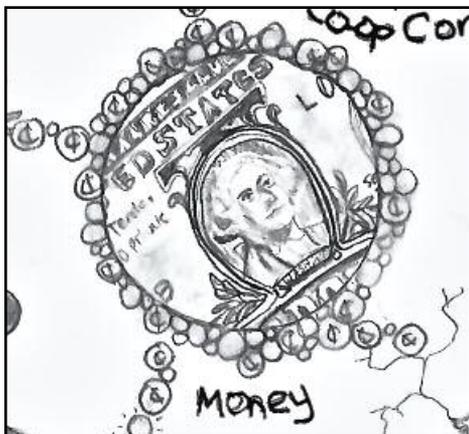
Members took turns placing and receiving orders, and because there was very little overhead, members often got great deals on their purchases. Membership put purchasing power, and the right to know your producer back into the hands of the consumer. The pooling of time and resources strengthened the sense of community among the membership, and within a few years, the Plainfield Co-op opened its doors as a storefront.

Forty years later, the sense of community is still strong here at our co-op, and 2013 brought record sales to the store with over seven percent growth. Small farmers and local producers are still at

the heart of our organization, but as the Co-op has grown, so has the large scale organic and natural foods movement. Today our shelves are filled with all types of products, much of which are produced by large companies and arrive at the store by the truckload. Our staff has grown to accommodate the growth of the store and its membership, and as a result, we find ourselves in the position of being a small retail store with a full staff that needs to be paid, in competition with giants like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. Chain groceries have swooped in on the natural foods movement as well, and more and more we are faced with new competition in keeping our prices low while staying true to our core beliefs.

One of the best ways to maximize buying power as a member of the Co-op is to take advantage of our special order program. We offer significant savings on items purchased in bulk or by the case, and members are welcome to split cases with each other if, for example, twelve jars or fifty pounds is just too much for one member. Many items are also available in singles or threes and other various quantities. Depending on the department, most items in the store are marked up forty five to sixty five percent from wholesale. Standard members may purchase bulk quantities for only thirty percent above wholesale. In addition to their register discount on regularly priced items, working members are offered special order pricing at only fif-

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teen percent mark-up. Members can save even more by purchasing items when they are on sale through our distributors. Our new register system makes special ordering easy. No deposit is required. Simply place your order with any staff member and we'll notify you when it arrives. The price is entered into the system, so any cashier can ring you out.

The Co-op is able to offer low prices on bulk quantities because the labor involved is minimal, and we don't need to worry about spoilage or turn-around time. One of the ideas we have been kicking around among the staff involves the creation of a special order program with high working member involvement. Working members could manage the posting of monthly sale items online and

in the storefront, and provide a space for members to sign up for split cases. Staff would still manage the ordering and receiving of product into the store while working members could break cases down for distribution and purchase. This idea is still in its infancy, but we encourage members who think this might be something they'd like to participate in to please let us know. If we had a few members who were interested in the idea, and felt able to commit to a long-term project, we could begin the brainstorming session on how a new program like this could function, and hopefully be able to get it off the ground. In the meantime, all members are encouraged to inquire with staff about any items they are interested in ordering in bulk, and we hope you take advantage of the savings we have to offer! ♦



Are you losing money each time you shop at the Co-op?



Member/owner purchases count toward their year end dividend; the more you spend, the larger the dividend. But this only begins to happen when you pay \$20.00 a year toward a full share at \$180.00 – you can of course pay the full amount anytime. The sooner you pay the annual installment, the sooner you begin adding to your dividend account. Ask the staff for more information



Co-op Memories

by Pat Mayhew

Back in 1972 or so Tony and I heard about a co-op that was starting up in Plainfield. We had moved to central Vermont a few years earlier and had belonged to the Berkeley Co-op in 1964, which was a large supermarket like the Hunger Mountain Co-op today. We had enjoyed the experience, so decided to join the fledgling Plainfield Co-op. It was really a buying club, which operated at first (at least for breaking down the bulk orders) out of the New School, an alternative elementary school on Maple Hill. There the neighborhood orders were picked up by neighborhood coordinators, which we were for a couple of years; it was a rotating job. We took the neighborhood order to our house, where our neighbors picked up their order every month. The neighborhood pickups were a great chance to meet our neighbors and share food ideas, as we were discovering new ways to eat better and with more interesting recipes, not just the old weeds-and-seeds menus of the '60's. Though the Co-op mainly centered on food, there were other things we ordered: our first x-country skis from Sweden and our first bee nucleus for a hive. There was even talk of insurance and other things.

Upstairs, the old Grange Hall, still with the large red velvet thrones" from Grange meetings, became a gathering place for the "alternative community," hosting dances, Christmas bazaars, and movie nights when the projector routinely broke down and intermission was called while it was repaired. Several Dick Hathaway-led auctions were held

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Linoleum block poster by Scottie Harrison for the 1978 opening of the Co-op store.

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to benefit the Co-op. I remember a contra dance with the Azarian family band, during which I went downstairs for something and was terrified by the ceiling bouncing up and down as the dancers stomped upstairs. I also fondly remember the lovely annual Christmas bazaars. It was enchanting entering the upstairs room, with live music and scents of herbs and spices and evergreen decorations, to see booths of artisans' crafts and winter produce, and people merrily chatting up and down the aisles as they bought their Christmas gifts. And, of course, there were the never-to-be-forgotten evenings with Barney and Freddie Carlson interviewing a chosen community guest each time and an accompanying community supper.

When Tony and I were on the Board, about ten years ago, a big topic (even then) was equity, which was so controversial that it's only now become a reality. Attracting new members (working, preferably) and appreciating them became an important issue for me. The

new membership committee drew up a pamphlet for new working members, orienting them to their duties. We hosted a member appreciation party each year in the town hall, with a contra dance free for members, which was a lot of fun. And in the summer we had a picnic at the Rec Field with live music circle dancing, croquet, badminton and more. Randy's annual winter rummage sales made a lot of money for the Co-op.

We are so lucky to have been part of the Co-op, the fruition of several dynamic community members' vision back in the early 70's. We grew so big, encompassing most of central Vermont's communities, that we finally broke up, Montpelier becoming the central co-op for the area, and the Plainfield Co-op getting back to a smaller, more manageable size. And that's what it is now, with great team management, increased sales and community presence, and much local, nutritious food. As funky as the building seems to some, I still walk in with a sense of pride and coming home. ♦

Limber De Coco

This typical Latino recipe comes from Vanessa O'Niell who shared it with two students who are studying Latino cooking through Twinfield's Renaissance Program. The description is written by Andrew Riley.

This recipe takes literally 5 minutes to prep and eat combined, and it happens to be the most delicious drink I've ever had. You put into a blender all of the ingredients aside from the ice to get a creamy delicious base after blended, then you add the ice and give the blender one more good mix. Pour into cups and enjoy the taste of Puerto Rican culture!

Pineapple juice
Coconut milk
cinnamon

coconut preserves
ice



Busy, Busy Community Center

by Mike Peabody

There's a lot happening at the Community Center (and more all the time!) so I'm presenting this overview in a bullet-list.

- The Community Center has been hosting the production, "Backstage at the Rainbow Cattle Co.", a photographic project by Evie Lovett, sponsored by the Vermont Folklife Center, which tells some of the story of a group of drag queens from the Dummerston area. The shots are excellent and the subjects are lively, even in prints. If you are reading this before May 29th, please do see the show before it's gone.
- Waiting in the wings are a Tae Kwan Do class and weekly Reiki. There's some paperwork involved so they aren't ready to go, yet. Be on the lookout for these sessions.
- African Drum lesson classes started at the end of April. Chimie, the instructor, has scheduled these into

the middle of June. They will even rent you a drum!

- Amy Leventhal has added another Boot Camp to her schedule, Wednesdays starting May 7th. This class ends the first week of July so don't miss out on mid-week sessions.
- Amanda Franz rebooted her Contact Improv class, which goes until the end of May. She's also excited to present a gallery show, opening at the end of May.
- Shape Note wraps up for the season in June. Check back in September, when they resume their monthly Sunday afternoon sings.
- Workshops were going strong throughout the spring and are winding down for the summer. If you have ideas about educational touchstones for our community, get ahold of Karen at the Co-op.
- Ecstatic dance is still happening. They are still ecstatic.
- Petra continues with Aikido twice a week, Sunday and Tuesday. Interested? Show up and get your feet on the mat.
- Bread & Puppet's Total This & That Circus performance at the end of February was a blast. I'm glad we continue to be an outlet for their expression.
- Central Vermont High School Initiative has had seminars, classes, and music in our Community



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Center. I understand they will continue to make use of the space.

- The Village-building Convergence's Mad Pie Hoedown fundraiser helped out our local Transition organizers, Adrienne Allison and Ben Graham. Be on the lookout for VbC's summer event.
- Grateful Dead dances are still happening but you really have to ask around about them. They tend to sit quite comfortably under the radar.
- The Co-op Beach Ball was a really fun (and funny) time. Surf was, in fact, up.
- Jackie Batten presented the film, "Out Here", about queer farmers in the U.S., a few weeks ago. By all accounts, a great experience, complete with Q&A from the filmmaker.
- The Co-op sponsored a benefit dinner for political prisoners in Mexico.
- Maple Hill School presents a student art show on May 16th.

One last thing: Thanks to a generous, anonymous donation, the Co-op was able to buy a fancy new projector for the Community Center. This means that movie nights are about to get a serious boost in presentation quality. Want to show a film at the Co-op? Give me a call (454-8579). ♦

Have any favorite old Co-op photos? We're working on the Co-op's new webpage and we'd love to include a few more vintage images on the site. If you have something you think would work please give the store a call (454-8579) and ask for Mike or Karen. Thanks!!

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