

The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

Spring 2018



SNOWDROP

Hours: 7 days a week 9AM-8PM

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Newsletter Advertising Rates

Ad size	Single issue	4 Consecutive issues (prepaid: 20% discount)
Full page	\$75	\$240
Half page	\$50	\$160
Quarter page	\$25	\$80

Copy Deadline:

May 15 for the Summer issue

Ad copy should be submitted to:

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P.O. Box 347
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lhecchi@myfairpoint.net

When your copy is submitted,
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Plainfield Co-op to:

Rosemond London
Plainfield Co-op
P.O. Box 266
Plainfield, VT 05667

Electronic graphics files preferred, but we are able to work with any clear copy. For questions about ad copy, contact Sarah Albert, 802-476-0526 or sarah@vmlink.net



About This Newsletter



Spring is a time of change and a time of regrowth and new growth. Spring is happening at the Co-op as we say goodbye to some people who

have served us long and well—pillars of the Plainfield Co-op Bob Fancher and Jeannine DeWald. Spring is happening as bright, new faces appear in the store and will appear on the Board. Our annual meeting is coming up in April, where we hope to see some new members and hear some new ideas.

Though everyone who serves us adds their special color and fragrance to the garden that is our Co-op, as individual flowers come and go the garden remains and thrives, watered by the Co-op spirit that has nurtured us for many years through all kinds of weather.

The newsletter committee will miss staff liaison Karen Starr, and her dedication to cooperation and community.

Without our members and shoppers, the Co-op would be an empty space. You'll see a random sampling of them on page 13.

We welcome your contributions to the newsletter—art work, photos, letters, articles, questions, suggestions. Submissions are due to the editor by May 15 for the summer issue.

Sarah Albert, layout and design
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Eliza Cleary, Twinfield Community Service volunteer ♦

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?

Contact Rosemond London at the Co-op

Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op

President's Report

by Jean Hamilton,

My astrological friends tell me that recent months have been cosmically aligned to support deep examination, reimagining and setting new courses. I can't claim to know anything about astrology, but I am interested to see these dynamic movements at play in myself, this community, and in so many larger social and political paradigms. Evolution is the stuff of life: exciting and rewarding, but also painful as we uncover old wounds, stretch new muscles and feel the anxieties about an unknown future.

And so, after a winter of introspection and consideration the Co-op is launching into spring with a new staffing and management structure. Since last October, Board and Staff have worked in close partnership through the Management Restructure Group (friends call it the MRG) to explore, understand, propose improvements for, and birth an organization that is strong, happy, and resilient. If you are curious to learn

more of the details of this process, please review our recent meeting minutes and/or reach out to one of the Board members. Also, remember you are invited to attend Board meetings (regular meeting is the 4th Monday of each month at 6:15 pm) and your questions and ideas of how our Co-op can best serve the needs of this community are always welcome.

Working through this transition has also been a chance to observe and celebrate the rewards of working in community. Like the pain that comes with evolution, cultivating community asks us to work: to invest our bodies and hearts, to listen even when we don't agree, and to sit with the discomfort of dynamically emerging solutions. Every time I go to the Co-op I feel the benefits of 40+ years of neighbors cultivating this community resource. Today we reap these benefits: a neighborhood store stocked with nourishing and pleasing products,

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All Meat Is Not Created Equal

Different meats affect our health and environment differently. Lamb, beef, cheese and pork generate the most greenhouse gases. They also tend to be higher in fat and have the worst environmental impacts, because producing them uses the most resources--mainly feed, chemical fertilizer, fuel, pesticides and water. Lamb has the greatest impact. Beef is second. Cheese is third. Beef has more than twice the emissions of pork, nearly four times more than chicken, and more than 13 times as much as vegetable proteins such as beans, lentils and tofu. But vegetarians who eat dairy aren't off the hook, because pound for pound, cheese generates the third highest emissions.

Meat Eater's Guide to Climate Change and Health. EWG.org

staff who work creatively and whole heartedly to keep our store running even in the most competitive marketplace, the feeling of neighbors leaning in to help— stocking shelves, curating art shows, playing with children, managing websites, editing newsletters, oh and so much more! And as someone who spends a good amount of time volunteering for the Co-op, I can say that the best benefit is the empowerment I feel working with my neighbors to create a potent and durable community asset.

Wishing you could get in on this super power feeling? Here are a few ideas:

- Become a working member. The Co-op could really use some marketing help. If you have a marketing mind and want to lend some time

building a marketing plan and/or promoting the Co-op, be in touch: jean.myung.hamilton@gmail.com There are lots of other opportunities to contribute to the Co-op through working membership, so come share your skills.

- Consider running for the Board! The Annual Meeting is coming up in April, and we currently have two open slots on the Board.

Keep shopping at the Co-op. There are lots of places to buy groceries, but if you value having this neighborhood store filled with goodies from near and far, please make the Co-op a regular stop. You'll be rewarded with delicious discoveries, convenience when you most need it, and community in the making. ♦



Treasurer's Report

by Bob Fancher, Treasurer

Back on Track

I am happy to say that 2017 was a much better year than 2016. We made a profit in 2017 and our Sales increased 3.7% to \$1.16M! The year was exceptionally strong through September and we were making record profits. Then in October/November we hit a slump and our Sales and profit dropped way down. December picked up again and we finished the year strong with a modest profit.

We are not sure why Sales fell in the fourth quarter. The big dairy/meat/beer cooler was out of service for a while and that did not help at all. To increase Sales this year, the Board and staff are taking a look at the Co-op's marketing strategy and you'll be seeing changes in 2018.

Taking a closer look at 2017's Sales, most of the individual departments in the store increased Sales compared to 2016 with the Deli department leading the way with an amazing 45.6% increase. Our largest department, Produce, gained 8.6%.

The Cost of Goods Sold (COGS) increased 4.7% which was more than Sales increased and that held down the Gross Profit (Sales minus COGS) to a 1.9% increase over 2016.

Our Expenses dropped 2.1% from 2016, despite an 11.0% increase in our utility bills. The wages portion on the Expenses for 2017 was 3.3% lower. It was partly due to more efficient operations and partly that some of our highest paid people left. Actually, several people got

raises as they were promoted to buyers. Thanks to the Co-op staff for a great job in reducing expenses, which really helped the bottom line.

Considering its size, our small Co-op sells a surprisingly large variety of healthy and natural food and products. About 40% of our products are from local suppliers. Many are individual farms in our immediate area. Plus, we have a fantastic staff that is knowledgeable and friendly. And, our studies show that, for similar products, our prices are very competitive in our area. So, now our job is to get the word out to more people – the Plainfield Co-op is the place to shop!

Looking Forward (and Back)

The Co-op is in an exciting period of change. 2018 will be a time for new faces and new ideas to keep our Co-op growing and providing the very best food you can buy.

This will be my last report as Treasurer. Alicia White will take over as the new Treasurer. Alicia has a lot of financial experience and will do a great job. Please get to know her; you will be glad you did.

I have really enjoyed my time on the Board of Directors. I have met many truly amazing people who are all working hard to make the Plainfield Co-op the best it can be. As always, thanks to all our members and other customers for their continuing support. ♦

Report on next page

2017 Profit & Loss Comparison

Ordinary Income/Expense	2017	2016	% change
Sales	\$1,159,975	\$1,118,203	3.7%
Cost of Goods Sold	779,104	744,973	4.7%
Gross Profit	380,871	373,229	1.9%
Operating Expenses			
Personnel	272,865	286,793	-4.9%
Administrative	21,809	19,326	12.9%
Building	30,519	28,132	-4.9%
Operating	53,929	53,002	8.5%
Total Operating Expense	379,122	387,252	-2.1%
Net income From Operations	1,749	-14,023	112.5%
Other Income	4,147	4,908	-15.5%
Other Expenses*	2,676	4,474	-40.2%
Net Income*	3220	-13,589	123.7%

*Some items are not available until later in the year and are not included in the above numbers. The items are dividends paid to our members and depreciation expense.

Eat Your Organic Spinach (But Avoid Conventional)

The USDA recently retested conventional spinach for pesticides, having last tested it in 2008. In the last decade there has been a sharp increase in pesticide residue on the crop. USDA samples show more pesticides by weight on spinach than any other crop, including up to 16 pesticides and metabolites of pesticides found on each sample. Permethrin, linked to ADHD in children, was among the most alarming residue found—and on 75% of the samples. Spinach also appears to be particularly “good” at taking up DDT residue left in the soil, a pesticide banned in the 70s. DDT residue was found on half of the spinach samples.

Cornucopia Institute News (cornucopia.org) from research by the Environmental Working Group



Bob Fancher has not been with the Co-op an exceptionally long time; but in his five years as Board member, Treasurer, and tech expert he has contributed exceptionally and become a Pillar of the Plainfield Co-op. As he now leaves most of these responsibilities (though he will continue to provide tech help and financial advice), we give our thanks to Bob Fancher—to quote a former Board member—“a good man.”

Being something of a small business analyst myself, one of the first things I noticed about the Plainfield Co-op was what a functional and well organized website it has. Usually, website updates get forgotten and abandoned as the more pressing work of making sales and stocking inventory grab people’s day to day attention. But maintaining a useful website is a perfect example of how even one Member-Worker can make a big difference at our Co-op. For five years, Bob Fancher has done that and so much more.

Bob and his wife Kathy moved to Plainfield in May of 2013 to be closer to his daughter (Dawn Fancher) and her growing family. Just one month later, Bob joined the Board and became the Treasurer because the Co-op needed someone who was good with numbers and Bob had previously worked with budgets, financial reports, and accounting. Bob has served in that role on the Board until this past month. While Bob has stepped off the board, he continues to be generous with his volunteer time. He’s still at the helm of the website and now is providing accounting support and consulting to the Co-op staff.

Another thing about Bob, he has excellent taste. When I asked him to describe some of his favorite things about the Co-op, here’s what he had to say:

“The Co-op is a social center for our community—everyone is always talking to each other in the store. It’s not a grocery store where you keep your head down. When I moved here, I knew nobody and but was made to feel welcome instantly. Also, everyone appreciates when you help. The staff, the Board, the community, everyone is engaged. The Co-op introduced us to organic food and we are converts now because it tastes way better. And I love those cakes in the corner.”

Our Co-op is strong because of the contributions and engagement of our members. Between Bob, Kathy, and Dawn (former staff and bookkeeper), the Fancher Family has served as a strong pillar of our Co-op. Thank you Fanchers!

Jean Hamilton, Board president

Bob was one of the first people I met when I started working on the Communication and Newsletter committees at the Co-op. He dedicated a lot of time and talent on the electronic newsletter and was extremely valuable in the process. Bob has always been there to help, support, and get things done. Thanks Bob! I will miss you and the Co-op will miss you too.

*Lorraine Checchi
(Communication and Newsletter
Committee member)*

During my three years on the Co-op Board, mostly as an inconsequential seat warmer, Bob was a hard working, multi-talented backbone. As a knowledgeable treasurer, he dealt with all the Co-op's complexities and challenges with wisdom and aplomb. His technological savvy was invaluable when we created the electronic sales flyer. He opened his home for committee meetings. And most important, his warm and genial good humor helped oil responses to the political and interpersonal dynamics that seem inevitable in a small, highly inter-dependent, organization.

Warm best wishes Bob.

*Art Chickering
(former Board member)*

In the Fall, 2013 issue of the Co-op newsletter I introduced Bob Fancher to readers as a new Board member who recently moved to Plainfield with his wife, Kathy. The opportunity to talk with Bob about his background in applying information technology to manufacturing and the factory floor, and his experience as a diversity trainer, helping groups with diversity in age, race, ethnicity and gender, make better decisions, gave me the distinct impression that Bob would be a great asset to our Co-op. I was right, in spades.

Bob hit the ground running. He started on the Board as our Treasurer, and helped steer the Co-op through the transition to an equity model of membership. Working closely with the Management Collective, Bob has overseen the dramatic growth in sales over the last few years. He has been in the middle of the effort to expand the size of the store to allow for more products to be carried and provide a better experience for our growing number of shoppers. If that

were not enough, Bob has rebuilt the Co-op web page, made it more user friendly and far more interesting.

But, in my mind, as important as they are, these are secondary achievements. More important than any technical skill, Bob instinctively gets cooperation. He is that rare person who has both the head and heart of a cooperator. He is one of the best listeners I know. He believes deeply in community and collaboration. He is absolutely dedicated to making the Co-op a success, both financially and socially.

Having been at many, many Board and committee meetings with Bob, I can also attest to the fact that he has the patience of Buddha.

Bob is stepping back after several years of distinguished service to our Co-op and the larger community. I am grateful that he taking care of his health, and that he and Kathy will remain neighbors and friends. Thank you Bob.

Joseph Gainza (former Board member)

Although he was not a member of the Co-op staff per se, we were sad to have Bob Fancher leave the Co-op Board. But we are happy that he is taking care of himself. In recent memory the Management Collective has not had a more skilled or supportive Board Treasurer. Bob was welcome at any meeting of the Collective, welcomed both as a friend and trusted voice of counsel. His IT skills also saved our butts more than once. Really, Bob and Kathy Fancher have become such a generous part of the community that it feels like they have always been here. Big thanks and appreciation!

Karen Starr (Management Collective)

It was our great good fortune that Bob and Kathy Fancher moved to Plainfield from Connecticut when Bob retired. They came to be near their daughter Dawn and her family, and bought a house in the village. Soon they were regular patrons at the Co-op.

Bob had a business background, and we were delighted when he agreed to join the Board in 2013. From the beginning Bob was a quiet anchor for the Board. He listened carefully to all opinions; he added his own thoughts only when he had a definite opinion, and his opinions were always carefully thought through.

Shortly after Bob joined the Board, our longtime treasurer Les Snow resigned. Bob stepped right into the key role of treasurer, and we had a seamless transition as Bob quickly learned what was needed. As treasurer, Bob brought clarity and transparency to our financial activities. His reports made complex financial matters easy for lay people to understand. His reports to the Board and to the membership at Annual Meeting always emphasized the positive, but were realistic about challenges. One of his major contributions was to arrange for a review of the Co-op's financial practices by a professional accounting firm; the review found our financial practices to be basically sound but made several solid recommendations for improvement. When the membership voted to transition to an equity form of membership, Bob was one of the key members of the transition group that worked out the details and answered questions from staff and members about the nitty gritty details.

Bob's contribution didn't stop at his role as treasurer. He completely revamped the Co-op website to be the clear, functional tool it is today. He

transferred the membership email list into a format that enables electronic mailing of our newsletter and other member notices and then did the e-mailing for every issue. For several years he was a Board liaison to the Building Committee.

Bob served as a key member of the Strategic Planning Task force. He arranged for a flood plain survey of our property, and investigated the various requirements for the Co-op to get a permit to expand. To get the process going, he jumped in and came up with a practical working design for the expansion and he coordinated our communications with the Planning Board and other government agencies. Besides that, he designed and tabulated the results from our membership survey, and wrote the chapter on building renovation for the Strategic Plan. Over the past year, he has served on the Building Finance Committee. When the Board decided that it made sense to incorporate the Community Center as a tax-exempt organization, it was Bob that did the research on the practical implications of this change, and then prepared the paperwork for filing as a nonprofit corporation.

Besides all this, Bob always was the first to volunteer for the menial jobs the Board needs to get done – stamping envelopes, setting up chairs, clean-up after meetings, manning our table at Old Home Days.

Throughout the tensions and conflicts that swirled around the Board and the MC during his years of service, we could always count on Bob for his positive attitude, his helpful spirit, and the great range of skills he shared so generously. Thank you Bob!!

Gail Falk (former Board President)

The Shifting Landscape of Food Insecurity

by Karen Starr

Food insecurity is a new term for an old problem, one that is not going away any time soon.

Food insecurity refers to USDA's measure of lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food-insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

<http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2015/overall/vermont>

The United Nations in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognizes food security as basic to a just society.

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

In spite of efforts to ameliorate food insecurity, there is evidence that an increasing number of our neighbors, friends, and family are having to rely on assistance on a regular basis.

...Emergency food from pantries is no longer being used simply to meet temporary acute food needs. A majority of the clients being served by the Feeding America network (54%) have visited a food pantry in six or more months during the prior year.

...seniors are disproportionately represented among clients visiting pantries in six or more months during the prior year. Over half (56%) of elderly clients aged 65+ are recurrent clients, meaning they have used a pantry every month within the prior year.

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hungers-new-staple/>

In our little state, which has more public support for hungry folks than many others, 159,270 Vermonters qualify for federal nutrition assistance programs like 3SquaresVT (27%) Furthermore,

The number of our state's residents who live on the razor's edge of vulnerability to hunger is much higher than revealed by food insecurity statistics. This number, which includes 36,423 children, illustrates that Vermonters receive low wages and struggle to make ends meet.

<https://www.hungerfreevt.org/hungerinvermont/>

In fact, according to the Berkely Labor Center, "Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of enrollees in America's major public support programs are members of working families; the taxpayers bear a significant portion of the hidden costs of low-wage work in America."

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Fall Management Report

by Karen Starr

This time of year is always a midpoint of something. We're just not always sure what. One minute there's snow, the next rain, mini mud seasons, and stunningly crisp night skies followed by snow evaporating into clouds of low hanging mist. It's felt a little like that at the store the last couple of months as well. There's been a lot of turnover in staff, including long time folks, and lots of healthy re-evaluation of management structure. Jeannine Dewald was the latest Management Collective member to move on. Jeannine worked at the Co-op for the last ten years and was a vital member of both the buyer and finance teams. We feel her loss in big ways, but we are happy she has been able to return to school and pursue new life goals. Chris Carnes also left the Co-op to move with his family to Burlington. Good luck with everything, Chris! We wish them both all the best.

Fortunately, we have some remarkable staff who have stepped up to take on vacated roles at the store, while the Board and Management Collective continue to put their heads together to design a new management structure. Kayla Pelloni has taken on Bulk, Deli and Bakery; Jezebel Crow has moved into Tea and Herbs, and is now Cheese Buyer; and Laura Conklin is adding Household, Gifts, and Supplements to her buying roster. Rosemond London is our new Office Coordinator, and a brave woman she is. Chloe Budnick continues to deftly coordinate the Buyers during this transitional time.

Although he was not a member of the Co-op staff per se, we were sad to have Bob Fancher leave the Co-op Board. But we are happy that he is taking care of himself. In recent memory the Management Collective has not had a more skilled or supportive Board Treasurer. Bob was welcome at any meeting of the Collective, welcomed both as a friend and trusted voice of counsel. His IT skills also saved our butts more than once. Really, Bob and Kathy Fancher have become such a generous part of the community that it feels like they have always been here. Big thanks and appreciation!

As Spring continues to unfold, so will the design and implementation of our new structure. We are fortunate to have many skilled and dedicated Board members at this transitional time, as well as such excellent Board & Management relationships. Board members have put in an extraordinary number of hours, exhibited tremendous respect for staff and management, and clearly love this little co-op. The staff and Management Collective have been with them every step of the way. Thank you all so much! Change is always stressful and there will no doubt be many awkward moments as we shift gears, but please be assured that the Co-op remains in good hands, hands that love the community and are deeply committed to seeing the Co-op thrive into the future. Needless to say, this year's Member Meeting will be an exciting and informative one. Please do plan on coming. Bring good food and friends. Until then, be well, see you in the store. ♦

CO-OP PROFILES



Newest Co-op member (2/4/18) and newest Co-op staff member (3 months ago)

Georges Elan Ore (*right*) has been a life-long Co-op shopper and devotee, though only signing up for official membership now. In the Old Days, Georges' parents used to drive to Boston to Erehwon in a VW to pick up supplies for the young Plainfield Co-op—an 8 hour trip.

Why Georges shops at the Co-op: “Is there any other place? It has everything I want and none of the things I don't want. It always feels like family here.” Georges' favorite foods at the Co-op: Rhapsody red miso, because it's local and the best, and the produce because it's “carefully curated.”

Tim Llewelyn (*left*) moved here two years ago and joined the staff three months ago “to meet the community.” He's found a lot of interesting people here.

Maurie Peaslee is a true co-operator, being a member of Buffalo Mountain and Hunger Mountain Co-ops, and Honest Weight in Albany. He lives in Cabot and finds Plainfield a convenient place to shop, especially when he's making trips to Plainfield Hardware. His favorite foods to buy at the Co-op are coffree, especially Ring of Fire, and kombucha.



Julie MacAdam (with mushroom eyes) lives in Marshfield and works in Plainfield. She shops at the Co-op because it's close to home and she can get nourishing food here. She especially likes the root veggies and the bacon.



Stella Brown (*right*) says, “I love it here—it's always like social hour.” She lives across the street from the Co-op as her mother, Dorothy Wallace, did many years ago. (Dorothy became one of our long-time staff members.) Stella's Co-op favorites are Aloe Water (watermelon flavor) and fresh-made coffee—“the best.”

At the counter checking out Stella Brown was staff member



Stella James (*left*), who used to live in Kentucky, where she went to Berea College (*great place!* - ed.). Inspired by her roommate from Montpelier, she visited Vermont and has been working at the Co-op almost a year. She sees the Co-op as a place to meet people and be in the community.



Dan Sharp lives across the street from the Co-op. He shops here because he likes the people and also the coffee, lagunitas, and cat food. ♦

How Is Your Coffee Grown?

by Gail Falk

When we buy local foods, we can know directly how our food was raised. If we are curious, we can visit a farm or talk to someone who knows the farmer. But all the world's coffee is grown thousands of miles away.

As coffee consumers, we care whether the workers who grew our coffee were fairly paid and treated justly. We know that it matters to the planet and our own migratory birds if was grown in environmentally sustainable conditions. And we would like to know that our coffee was grown without poisonous pesticides.

Because consumers want to know how their coffee was produced, certification programs evolved. Our coffees now come with a bewildering array of logos designed to tell us how ethically and sustainably our coffee was produced. There are rivalries and contradictory claims by the various certifying organizations, and the situation is complicated by the huge range of growing conditions, farming models, and labor and political conditions within the coffee industry. There's definitely more to understanding what certification means than looking for a pretty logo. But just because coffee certification standards and the coffee industry are complicated doesn't mean we shouldn't try to understand them.

Here is a primer about the major coffee certification programs. Each of these certifications requires third party auditors. The coffee producer, and, in some

cases, the roasters or buyers, pay a fee to the certifying agency.

1. **Bird-friendly** (Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center) This is the *only* true “shade-grown” certification. Criteria include ample shade cover for the coffee plants by a diversity of mostly native species and buffer zones along waterways. To get the Bird-Friendly logo, coffee must also be certified *organic*. The Bird-friendly standards also protect water and soil quality and biodiversity.



2. **USDA, Vermont Organic, or Oregon Tilth.** The USDA has standards for organic coffee production similar to the standards for other crops, limiting the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, and requiring soil and water quality conservation measures. The USDA and other organic certifying organizations contract with individuals or organizations in the country where the coffee is produced to verify that the crops meet organic standards. Organic certification also requires documentation along the supply chain.



Coffee is the world's largest single organic crop. Many uncertified coffee farms are “passive organic”: by choice, tradition, or lack of money they forgo chemical use. But, unless they are certi-

continued on next page

fied, there is no way for the consumer to be sure. Organic coffee is also frequently shade grown, but the organic standard does not require this.

3. Fair Trade USA and Fairtrade Labelling organizations (FLO). For

those of us who want assurance that the workers who grow and produce our coffee are paid and treated justly, the recent schism between these two organizations has made our task as consumers harder. Fair Trade USA pulled out of the international FLO group in 2012 and adopted a new logo and new standards that accommodate large plantation-model growers. The new standards were intended to make it easier for big coffee companies like Starbucks and Green Mountain to buy more Fair Trade products. Equal Exchange, which produces much of the coffee sold at the Plainfield Co-op, vigorously opposed the new standards and continues to work to maintain the focus on small farmer cooperatives that the FLO label guarantees. If you want to be sure your coffee was sourced directly from small-scale farmers who were paid a fair price, look for the FLO label. However, many consider the Fair Trade USA label to be better than nothing. The Fair Trade USA logo means the coffee comes from farms that protect workers from unsafe conditions, pay at least the local minimum wage, and say they are working toward paying a living wage.



4. **Rainforest Alliance** certification means that most (but not necessarily all) of the coffee in the bag is sourced from farms that have met standards intended to promote sustainability and protect farmers, local communities and the environment. Rainforest Alliance coffee is non-GMO and the standards include many good soil and water quality practices, but Rainforest Alliance has recently weakened its “shade grown” requirement. Now the only certification that guarantees “shade grown” coffee is Bird Friendly.



There are many reasons why coffee from farms with excellent environmental practices are not certified, and why coffee roasters may choose not to carry certified coffee. For instance, some of the highest quality coffee is grown at high altitudes or in other places where temperatures are so cool that coffee plants need direct access to sunlight or where shade is provided by clouds rather than trees. The lack of a logo doesn't necessarily mean the coffee was grown unsustainably or that the workers were not treated well. Some coffee roasters, such as Starbucks and Counter Culture, do their own assessment of farm labor and environmental conditions and have their own in-house standards, but these standards are less robust. For a discussion of this complex subject, go to coffeehabitat.com.

If you are someone who wants to know that the coffee you grind for your morning cuppa was grown sustainably by workers who were treated fairly, look for Bird Friendly, Organic, and FLO certification. Have a second cup! ♦

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At the Co-op we're very aware of how difficult it can sometimes be to feed ourselves and our families. We work hard to get the best prices available for the community. We accept EBT and support Twin Valley Senior Center in small ways, like providing occasional supplies for their meals program at cost. You can contribute to their gift card at the register! We also sponsor gift cards from time to time for community members going through rough patches. Below we've put together a selection of resources and organizations working to help feed hungry Vermonters. Some of us might need to take advantage of what is offered. Others feeling flush might want to volunteer or donate.

If you are interested in working to address the core issues of food insecurity, The Vermont Worker's Center is a great place to start! Visit their home page at <https://www.workerscenter.org> for details of their campaigns and events. Or call or drop in: Vermont Workers' Center • 294 N Winooski Avenue, Burlington VT 05401 • (802) 861 4892

Resources

EBT/SNAP

3 Squares Vermont

1-800-479-6151

Info online and online application

<http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT>

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Low income Vermonters over 60 can apply for both 3 Squares and CSFP
1-800-214-4648
<https://www.vtfoodbank.org/share-food/csfp>

For assistance with applications and more:

Vermont Food Bank

802-477-4136

<https://www.vtfoodbank.org/nurture-people/3squaresvt>

Capstone Community Action

20 Gable Place, Barre

802-479-1053

Food Shelf and Pantry

Just Basics Inc.

Trinity Church

137 Main Street, Montpelier

802-262-6288

Tuesday 10am-12pm, Wednesday 10-11am, Thursday & Friday 10-11am, Saturday 10am-12pm

Onion River Food Shelf

2 Upper Depot Road, Marshfield

802-223-6548

Wednesday 10am-2pm

Old Brick Church

6 Church Street, East Montpelier

802-456-1399

2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month 2-5pm

Capstone Community Action

20 Gable Place, Barre

802-479-1053

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am-12 noon & 1-3pm

Food Notes from Chloe

Jasper Hill: Moses Sleeper is on sale for March \$.75/lb off and Harbison is on sale for April at .75 cents off per piece.



Here are some other new/local items:

Frozen

New and Local: **VT Dinners** out of Brattleboro, found in the freezer. vtdinners.com

“Our meals are made with real ingredients from local farms. You won’t find any of the artificial coloring, preservatives, sweeteners or high sodium found in conventional processed foods. Best of all, because they’re frozen, you can enjoy delicious local ingredients year-round. Our vision is a world in which great local food brings people together, even on the busiest days.”

Regular price of \$8.69, sale of 10% off for March of \$7.89



Local/Different packaging—**All Souls Tortillas** are still here! We had been getting bulk All Souls tortillas, but are now getting them prepackaged. Same product; same deliciousness. Still in the freezer.

Refrigerated

Sobremesa

These folks are located in Marshfield; *“All of the produce used in our products is grown in Vermont. That which we do not grow ourselves is sourced from other small family farms in Vermont.”* The Co-op has long carried their Fiesta Roja, but we are now branching out, having at least 2 flavors at a time of kraut/kimchi/other exciting ferments, AND keep an eye out late Feb/early March for their Beet Kvass in the drinks cooler!



Meat

Sadly, **Maple Lane organic beef** has had some changes and are no longer distributing...they are on to other projects. BUT, they did set us up with their friends at **McKnight Farm** in East Montpelier, also selling organic beef. We’ll mostly be carrying ground, stew/kabob/occasional steaks, BUT roasts and pretty much anything else can be special ordered!!!

We’ve gone from every other week to a weekly delivery of **Sugar Mt Farm pork**.

Hochschild Family Farm has been selling to the Co-op for a few months now, and it is going well! They have lots of roasts that can be special ordered! These folks are located in Plainfield.

Can't wait until those sweet, green stalks start popping up in the spring!

Asparagus Soup with Lemon and Romano Cheese

Adopted from Jennifer Segal

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients

2 bunches asparagus ($\pm 2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs)	6 cups low sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons unsalted butter	Salt & freshly ground black pepper
2 medium yellow onions, chopped	2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Romano cheese
Handful fresh herbs, such as thyme, dill or basil (optional, for garnish)	

Instructions

1. Melt butter in large pot over medium heat. Add onions & garlic. Cook until soft and translucent, ± 10 min.
2. Cut the tips off asparagus spears and set aside. Cut spears into $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces.
3. Add chopped asparagus (except for tips) to the pot, along with chicken broth, 1 teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper. Bring to boil, then cover and turn heat to low. Simmer for ± 15 min. until vegetables are tender.
4. Meanwhile, bring a small pot of salted water to a boil. Cook reserved asparagus tips for a few minutes until tender-crisp. Drain & refresh under cold water or in ice bath. Set aside.
5. Purée soup until completely smooth. If necessary, pass the soup through a fine sieve to remove fibers. Return soup to pot and bring back to a simmer. Stir in lemon juice and cheese. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper and more lemon juice if desired (you may need up to a teaspoon more salt).
6. Ladle soup into bowls and top each bowl with asparagus tips, fresh chopped herbs, more grated cheese and freshly ground black pepper if desired.

A former student brought a pot of of this Chai tea as part of her presentation for her Renaissance learning experiences. Now I often treat myself to it.*

Debra Stoleroff

Chai Tea

Ingredients:

2 cups of water	2 TBL fresh ginger
5 cups of milk	3 black peppercorns
20 cloves	1 TBL dried peppermint leaves
2-3 cinnamon sticks	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup maple syrup or honey
1 tsp. cardamom	

Place water and spices in saucepan and heat to boiling. Boil for three min., reduce heat and add milk, honey, peppermint and black peppercorns. Heat until the chai almost boils. Turn off heat. Cover and steep for 10 min. Strain and serve

*Renaissance Is the name of Twinfeild's personalized learning program that I have directed for the last 20 years.

New Products Oo La La!	
Babette's Table Charcuterie	Erika Lynch, our Plainfield neighbor is turning heads and wowing palates with her new line of charcuterie. Didn't make it to France this year? These babies will make you glad you stayed home to get in on the yummy.
Jimmy's BBQ Sauce	Another neighbor, another reason to love Plainfield. You all know Jimmy Kennedy from the River Run days and once again he is making our lives more delicious. Slather this sauce on your favorite protein as it's finishing on grill or oven.
Sweet Rowan Cheddar Cheese	Super creamy, kid friendly cheddar from one of our favorite small, pasture-based creameries. What up West Glover!
New boxed wines	Oh boxed wine – so maligned. We drink boxed because you can get great wine at a lower price and it keeps longer in the box. It's a perfect option for your 'house wine' or to share with the crowds at the potluck.
Rotating beers and ciders	Laura is bringing in lots of new cider and beer options. A recent favorite is Doc's Draft Raspberry Hard Apple Cider. Chloe says, "Its pink. Its pretty. It will make you feel special."
Not to be missed in Coffee and Tea	Coffee and Tea have some nice new offerings: Brave Coffee now in bulk! And don't miss the very special offerings from Ben Youngbaer's Setting Sun Teahouse on E. Hill Rd.
VT Dinners – Frozen!	Frozen dinner, from Vermont grown vegetables? Now there's a great solution for on the go meals. Spaghetti Squash Pad Thai? Mmmhmm.
McKnights Organic Beef	Another neighbor feeding us well. Seth Gardner is now selling fresh organic ground beef from his organic herd in E. Montpelier.
Nutty Steph's CBD Chocolate Bars	Soothing CBD, scintillating dark chocolate. Can't beat this treat for yourself or that special someone who's feeling the lack of sunshine.
Battenkill Brittle Muesli	Speaking of sunshine, these beautiful, bright yellow bags of muesli will help you wake up and say good morning with a hearty, healthy breakfast. We serve it up with yogurt, milk/alternatives and even bake it on top of fruit.

Thank you Vermont producers for so much delicious food!